Derby Homes News



Made with 100% recycled paper Tribute to long term volunteer Win Buchan Pg.16 pg.4

Budget update | Repairing, replacing and painting fences

Tenancy Standard

Consumer standards

1 April 2024



Performance update | New Regulation begins

pg.10

Policy update | **Complaints**



Welcome to our summer newsletter

Welcome to the summer edition of our newsletter.

The image on the front cover is of Win Buchan, who sadly passed away at the beginning of last year. She was an incredibly inspirational lady, who spent 60 years of her life volunteering, and Derby Homes were lucky to have had some of those vears. You can read our tribute to her on **pg.16**.

A lot has happened since the last edition we sent back in December. We've been very busy making sure we comply with the regulation that came in to place on 1 April 2024 (Pg.4).

Another change that came in to effect in April, was the new Complaint Handling Code, set out by the Housing Ombudsman. You can read all about the changes we've made, and why we welcome complaints on pg.10.

The increase in regulation and wider budget pressures has presented challenges and meant we've had to make some cut backs to make sure we still providing you with the best possible core services (**Pg.3**).

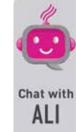
On a positive note, our repairs service is performing much better and are completing more jobs within our target time-scales. We are still facing an unprecedented number of repairs, so I ask that you continue to be patient with us while we work reduce the number of outstanding repairs (Pg.5).

Also in this edition, we have a special on neighbourhood working. The article includes information on the teams involved, what kind of great work they do, and how they tie in with Derby Homes (Pg.8).

The rest of this edition is filled with some good news stories and helpful tips and advice that I hope you find interesting and informative.

I hope you have a fantastic summer, and get to enjoy some of the nice weather. And for the football fans out there... Let's hope England have given us something to celebrate by the time you read this.

Maria Murphy Managing Director,



Derby Homes

REMINDER: If you miss your non-urgent repair appointment,

IT WILL BE CANCELLED



If you need to rearrange your appointment, you must let us know at least 24 hours before. You can let us know by replying to your appointment reminder text or by calling us.



Getting in touch

The best way to contact us is through our website. You can find the answers to most questions, report anti-social behaviour and register for My Account

www.derbyhomes.org



01332 888777

Non-urgent enquiries Monday to Friday - 9AM to 3PM

Homefinder & homeless enquiries Monday to Friday - 8.30AM to 4.30PM

> **All urgent enquiries** Call anytime

M Email us **Customer Service**

Contactus@derbyhomes.org

Rent

Incometriageteam@derbyhomes.org

Housing Advice

Housing.options@derbyhomes.org



07860 097426

Text service for hearing impaired customers Or use Text Relay service

If you would like this newsletter in Large Print, get in touch and we will send one out to you.

Budget update





Repairing, replacing and painting fences

Like all other housing providers, we're having to balance our budgets.

To manage this, we have had to make some tough decisions whilst ensuring that your home remains safe, secure, affordable and of a decent standard. We are looking at ways to make savings, including:

- Reviewing how many staff we employ
- Reducing grants to external partners
- Revising non-essential maintenance in areas like fencing and painting

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to making sure your home meets regulatory standards in decency, that your rent remains excellent value for money compared to the private sector and that our core services are delivered to a high standard.

Changes to maintenance of fencing

From April 2024, we will no longer routinely replace, repair or paint all existing fencing.

Instead, we will focus our fencing maintenance and replacement programmes:

- In communal areas
- Where properties adjoin public spaces. For example, where a rear garden adjoins a park.
- Where there is a safety risk we will assess each case individually.

Any fence that is deemed dangerous will be made safe, but will not be repaired or replaced. For any exceptional cases, we will carry out an individual assessment to inform our decision.

As our new timber fencing is pre-treated and protected, it will usually not be necessary to also paint it when it is installed. This will not reduce the lifespan or the physical appearance of the fencing.

Changes to our painting programme

If a section of an external wall or an internal communal wall needs repainting, we may only repaint that section and not the entire wall or area.

We are officially working to new requirements for social housing from April. It's important you understand what this means for you as a tenant.

Why has regulation changed?

We have all seen too many examples of appalling standards within the social housing sector.

The Grenfell tower disaster in 2017 was the main catalyst that began a move towards a stricter regulation. This was followed in 2020 by the tragic death of Awaab Ishak who died from respiratory conditions from prolonged exposure to mould in his home.

Tenants have said they felt their landlords had failed to listen to their concerns and as a result, the Regulator for Social Housing issued new standards from 1 April 2024.

New Consumer Standards landlords must achieve

Derby City Council is responsible for ensuring it meets the regulation as the landlord and we deliver services on behalf of the council.

In simple terms, the Consumer Standards are about:

- Good quality, safe homes
- Landlords being transparent and accountable
- Playing a role in creating safer neighbourhoods

 Fair allocations and good tenancy management

Closely related to the new regulation is the new, statutory Complaint Handling Code from the Housing Ombudsmen (see pages 10 – 13).

Performance reporting

All landlords must now provide performance data annually to the Regulator of Social Housing. If you've taken part in our Customer Survey, your responses will have formed part of our 'perception measures' and along with other measures we have to report on, these are the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) we must submit to the regulator by the end of June each year.

You can find our Results for 2023/24 on our website and they'll be included in the next newsletter.

Landlord inspections

Landlord performance will guide inspections from the regulator and they will make judgements on how well each landlord is delivering on the consumer standards.

www.gov.uk/government/ collections/regulatorystandards-for-landlords



Keeping properties in good repair 💥





Last year we told you that our repairs service was facing significant pressures due to an increase in the number of repairs being reported. Well, this year we've had even more jobs reported, 3,000 more than last year, and despite this, we are performing better. This time last year we had an average of 6,500 repairs outstanding, we've now got this number down to 5,000.

Prioritising urgent repairs

We are still prioritising emergency repairs and complete 96% of emergency repairs within our target timescale. This does mean that non-urgent jobs can take longer to complete than we would like.

We are currently completing 76% of nonemergency jobs within the target timescales which is up almost 10% from last year. This is down to the measures we put in place:

- **Increased our workforce** to tackle the immediate problem.
- Reviewed the way we schedule work.
- Improving access rates through social media campaigns and contacting you the day before an appointment.

We're in a much better position, but there's still a long way to go. We're still having issues with roofing and plastering jobs due to the sheer number of jobs.

How you can help Is it really urgent? If it's not, waiting a month or two could help us reduce the backlog of jobs.

Make sure you're in. A wasted trip means a delayed repair for someone else. Let us know if you need to cancel or change an appointment. Reply to your SMS reminder up to 24 hours before or call us if it's less than 24 hours. If you don't, we may charge you a £10 missed appointment fee.

Give us access. Make sure we can access the areas we need to work in. Our staff cannot enter a home without someone over 18 years old being home.

Know what to expect. Some jobs can't be completed on the first visit. Sometimes we'll need to order specialist equipment or materials.



Keeping properties in good repair



We've been getting reports of faulty thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs), but when our operatives attend to fix them they find they are working.

We've put together a quick guide that will hopefully clarify how they work and help you solve some common issues.

What are Thermostatic Radiator Valves?

TRVs are a simple and affordable way of controlling the heat output of a radiator and the temperature of a room.

TRVs regulate the temperature of each radiator based on the ambient room temperature, which gives you freedom to control the temperature of each room separately.

It's normal for the radiator to cool down once the TRV detects the room has reached the desired temperature, indicating that the valve is functioning correctly.

the temperature of the radiator.

Typical temperature range of valve numbers

- 1=10°C
- 2=15°C
- 3=20°C
- 4=25°C
- 5=30°C

What to check if you think there's an issue

- Is the boiler working? If not, you should have an error code on the boiler. Check our troubleshooting guide on our website for more information:
 - www.derbyhomes.org/advice-support
- Turn the valve to the frost symbol. The radiator will still turn on if the room temperature falls below 8 degrees, but it should turn off pretty quickly.
- Close all windows and doors The room will lose heat if doors and windows are open, meaning the radiator needs to work harder to get the room up to temperature.

If you still can't find the issue, get in touch with us.

Even if your thermostatic valve is turned down, the radiator may still feel hot. That's because the valve regulates the temperature of the room and not

Keeping properties in good repair 💥



Think before you flush or pour it down the sink

Earlier this year during the heavy rainfall we received lots of reports of gardens being flooded. On Kingsbury Road in Mackworth, several manholes had been overflowing. Further investigation revealed that there was a blockage in one of the sewer pipes caused by a build-up of wet wipes and

fat. This blockage was cleared at the time, but it's important that we all know how to prevent this from happening again.

More information:

www.stwater.co.uk/blockages

Please remember, it's a drain not a bin. Think before you flush or pour it down the sink.

In the kitchen:







Only pour drinks and dishwater down the sink.





Scrape all pots, pans and plates in the bin before washing, that means no leftovers down the sink or toilet.





Do not pour grease or food items down the sink. Even small amounts can solidify quickly to cause a blockage.

In the bathroom:



Only ever flush pee, poo and toilet paper.



Use a bin for items like wet wipes, toilet wipes, sanitary items, nappies, paper towels, cotton buds, hair, medicine, dental floss, razors, cigarette butts.

Responsible neighbourhood management

Every person in Derby should be able to live in a place they call home, with the people and things that they love, doing the things that matter to them as part of a community where they look out for one another.

Derby City Council's Local Area Coordinators bring together Neighbourhood Officers, Public Protection Officers, Derby Parks and other partners including Derbyshire Constabulary, Primary Healthcare, local schools and businesses and voluntary groups who work across the city to achieve their vision.

The aims of Neighbourhood working are:

- Prevent, reduce, and delay the need for formal health and social care.
- Facilitate engaged, connected and independent communities.
- Deliver safe communities, where people feel proud of where they live.



Where does Derby Homes fit in?

We believe that neighbourhood working is the key to working alongside residents to create stronger and safer communities. Our Housing Management service is area based and we also fund roles within the neighbourhood teams.

How Neighbourhood Teams help communities

There are lots of ways the team help communities, from helping individuals overcome personal challenges, setting up volunteer groups and even brightening and cleaning up areas to restore a sense of pride to residents. The focus is always providing people and groups with the skills and tools they need to develop independently without the need for ongoing support.

Friends of **Nottingham** Road **Cemetery**

Friends of Nottingham Road Cemetery

are a small group of volunteers that are interested in the history and help with the upkeep of the cemetery in Chaddesden.

The group has held several family search sessions, which help people find their ancestors burial plots by searching online and through record books. They've also hosted nature walks, guided tours, and a successful open day that the Mayor of Derby attended – With even more to come.

They were initially set up and supported by a Neighbourhood Team, but are now starting to operate independently thanks to the support and start-up funding they have received.

The relatively new group's Facebook page has over 600 followers and is continuing to grow quickly. They always welcome new followers and volunteers.

Find out more:

M FriendsofNRC@gmail.com

/FriendsofNottsRd

Responsible neighbourhood management



Knife Sweep success

One of our Neighbourhood Officers recently worked with Derbyshire Constabulary to carry out a knife sweep in the Sinfin and Osmaston ward in area's where we have issues with anti-social behaviour.

The knife sweep was part of Operation Sceptre, a national campaign focussed on reducing knife crime and raising awareness of the devastation it can cause to communities.

Derbyshire Constabulary set up a stand in front of their police van in the heart of the area, giving out helpful information to residents. A group officers and partners, including our Neighbourhood Officer then walked around the area searching for discarded knifes.

In some shrubs close by, our Neighbourhood Officer found a half machete in its sheath hidden out of sight. This was quickly handed over to the Police.

As part of this partnership approach, we have successfully removed a weapon off the streets in an ongoing battle to make our areas safer.



www.derby.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/neighbourhood-partnerships

Thanks for the feedback

Over the past couple of months we have been consulting with customers through our Let's Talk Derby Homes website on both our anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate crime policies.

Thank you to everyone that took the time to give us feedback.

We are committed to delivering the best possible services for anyone who has experienced ASB and hate crime incidents.

We want people feel confident that they can report incidents to us, and that we will take positive action to deal with them.

Both consultations have now closed and we are going through all the feedback and developing two updated policies. We will keep you up to date with any policy changes once they have been approved by the Board.





Effective handling of complaints

Policy update | Complaints

We don't always get things right, when we don't we want it to be as easy as possible for you to resolve any issues. The Housing Ombudsman have recently updated their Complaints Handling Code which became a legal requirement for all social landlords to follow on 1 April 2024. We have recently updated our policy and web pages to reflect these changes.



Landlords must: Provide a universal definition of a complaint.

Provide easy access to the complaints procedure and ensure residents are aware of it and their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Provide clear information on the structure of the complaint's procedure - two stages and clear response timescales.

Ensure fairness in complaint handling with a resident-focused process.

Take action to put things right and appropriate remedies.

Create a positive complaint handling culture through continuous learning and improvement.

Demonstrate learning in annual reports.

Complete an annual self-assessment against the code.



What we've done

The universal definition is on our website and in the policy.

We've made it easier to find the complaints section on our website and regularly publish information in our customer newsletter on social media.

We've updated our website to provide summarise this information.

Our complaints process puts the customer at the centre so our investigations are balanced and fair.

Our new policy now has a remedy and financial redress section to explain this.

We have a comprehensive training plan. Service managers identify trends and put measures in place to prevent them happening again.

Our complaints annual report is available on out website and includes a section on learning.

Our self-assessment against the Ombudsman's code is on our website.

You can find more information and read our full policy on our website: www.derbyhomes.org/advice-support/complaints

Effective handling of complaints 🖫

Social housing issue? Know how to complain

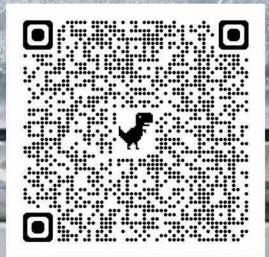
Report it to us.



Make things right

Complain to us, if you're still not happy

Escalate to the Housing Ombudsman, if you're not 3 happy with our final response.





www.derbyhomes.org



housing.complaints@derbyhomes.org



01332 888777



839 London Road, Derby, **DE24 8UZ**



Effective handling of complaints

Social housing issue? Know how to complain.

Know your rights, gov.uk/social-housing

We welcome the governments **make things right** campaign and want to make it easy as possible for you to complain, and get any issues resolved.

Everyone deserves a home that is safe, secure, and well maintained.

Acting on behalf of your landlord, we're responsible for fixing issues including damp and mould, leaks, broken locks or changes you need to your home if you're disabled. We can also help with anti-social behaviour, like noisy neighbours.

Know the steps to get an issue fixed.

Step 1. Report it to us.

Step 2. If we don't get it sorted, you can complain through our complaint process.

Step 3. If you're not happy with the final response from us, you can escalate your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.





Effective handling of complaints 🖫



Step one - Report

You can report issues to us online, over the phone and through email.

Urgent issues

If you have an urgent issue, you need to call us. We are available for emergencies 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Non-urgent issues

If you are online, you should report all nonurgent repairs through My Account. This is an online service, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For anything else, you can email, or call us during our opening times.

Step two - Complain

If you don't feel we have resolved your issue to your satisfaction, you can make a complaint. You can do this online, through email, over the phone, in writing or in person.

Step Three - Escalate

The Housing Ombudsman is impartial, will investigate fairly and can order your landlord to take action.

If the Housing Ombudsman has ruled against a landlord, they must show they are taking action within 6-8 weeks.

Make a complaint



housing.complaints@derbyhomes.org



01332 888777



www.derbyhomes.org



Derby Homes Ltd 839 London Road Derby **DE24 8UZ**

Housing Ombudsman



minfo@housing-ombudsman.org.uk 0300 111 3000

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Housing Ombudsman Service PO Box 152 Liverpool **L33 7WQ**



Respectful and helpful engagement

Getting involved and keeping informed

At the end of last year, we held a consultation about the opportunities available to you to get involved, and the ways we keep you updated.

Thank you to everyone that took part.

It was advertised in the Summer and Autumn edition of the newsletter that was sent to over 12,000 properties.

The results helped inform our Communications Strategy and our Corporate Engagement Strategy.



- It's important that Derby Homes involves customers in service improvements.
- People are less aware of Customer Voice and Mystery Shopping.
- Completing surveys is the preferred method of engagement.

What we're prioritising

- Creating accessible and flexible engagement opportunities.
- Communicating with customers using their preferred methods and advertise opportunities through all channels.
- Publicising how we have used feedback to influence service improvements.
- Providing a wide variety of opportunities for you to scrutinise our performance and hold us to account.
- Engaging with under-represented groups to make sure their views are heard.



Keeping informed What was said

- The highest levels of satisfaction were for the printed newsletter, phone, and letter.
- Most respondents said they used telephone, email, and the website to get information about our services.
- Rating the newsletter, most respondents agreed the articles were about the right length, the writing level was about right and that there was a good range of information included.
- Most respondents said they would expect a monthly frequency for an email newsletter.

What we're prioritising

- More timely and personalised digital messaging to reach customers with news and relevant information.
- Making sure our webpages have correct, up to date information.
- Continually improving and promoting our digital offers.
- Ensuring customers can still access information through non-digital formats if they don't have access to the internet.

Maintaining Building Safety





The past few years has seen the price of energy rise dramatically and with it, the number of people committing energy theft by tampering with energy supplies has also risen. Tampering with gas and electrics is extremely dangerous and puts not only yours but your families and neighbours' lives at risk.

Energy theft works by tampering with the energy supply to bypass the meter. It is extremely dangerous and can lead to serious injuries, destruction of property and even death.

Back in May 2021, an explosion caused by energy theft led to the tragic death of twoyear-old George Hinds who lived next door to the perpetrator.

Not only is this extremely dangerous, it's illegal and can land you with a large fine or prison sentence. It also increases energy prices for the rest of us as we have to pay more to make up for the loss.

If you suspect someone is committing energy theft you can report it anonymously to Stay Energy Safe:

0800 023 2777 www.stayenergysafe.co.uk.

If you are struggling to afford your bills, get in touch with our Money Advice team to find out what help is available.

01332 643394 money.adviceteam@derbyhomes.org

Fire Safety | Candles

Candles can look great, smell nice and give a really cosy atmosphere to homes when used safely. Sadly more than 15,000 candle fires are reported each year.



Here are some steps you can take to reduce the risk of fire:

- Don't burn candles all the way down
- Never leave lit candles unattended
- Keep away from children, pets and anywhere they can be accidentally knocked over
- Never touch or move a lit candle
- Keep away from flammable materials
- Make sure the candle is on a stable, heat resistant surface.

Find out more on Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service website derbys-fire.gov.uk

Community news

In loving memory of Winifred Buchan

Winifred Buchan, a long term volunteer at Derby Homes sadly passed away in February 2023, aged 89.

Win, as she was affectionately known, was a member of the Derby Association of Community Partners, the Customer Voice scrutiny group, the leaseholder forum and also volunteered at her local parish church up until her passing.

She was involved with Derby Homes right from the start (2002), and with Derby City Council prior to that. She was a passionate advocate of improving services for Derby Homes tenants and leaseholders and a valuable member of our Operational Committee.

To recognise the incredible achievement of volunteering for 60 years within the city, Derby Homes planted a silver birch tree in the grounds of Win's parish



church, English Martyrs. Parish priest, Father Mark Brentnall, dedicated a mass in Win's memory, during which Derby Homes' Head of Housing Management, Carl Tring-Willis, paid tribute to her on behalf of the organisation.

Win's friends, members of her parish, volunteers, and employees of Derby City Council and Derby Homes then gathered outside the church for the blessing of the tree and memorial plaque.



Win happy to be part of the DACP - 2003



Win speaking out at an operational committee meeting – 2015



Win at a tree planting event to mark 100 years of council housing. - 2020



Win at a consultation event - 2015



City Board (Operational Committee) -2012

Community news 🖧



Colin's growing his hair for charity

Parkland View resident Colin Walsh has decided he won't cut his hair or shave until the summer to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society.

Colin is a well-known face around the building and is keen to raise awareness of the disease and raise money to help find a cure.

He said: "I've not cut or shaved my hair since January and I'm hoping this challenge with help raise some money for the charity.

"I'm having some fun in the meantime by dying my beard and hair a variety of colours, which has drawn plenty of attention! I've always had short hair, so I'm finding my new facial hair quite itchy!

"I'm going to have a shave during the birthday celebrations on 18 July in front of all my friends at Parkland – so it'll interesting to see how long it will grow before then."



Money can be donated in person at Parkland View, on the day at the big reveal in the summer or online.

Roofing contractor gives back to the community

One of our contractors, JAL Roofing Ltd, have recently replaced the roof of Sumo's Gym, free of charge thanks to the business we had given them.

Sumo's Gym is a commuity gym that's open to people from all ages, and Steve who runs the gym also teaches boxing, Judo, sumo wrestling, power lifting and even free running. He doesn't charge people for the use of the gym and does not charge for his time. He has an honestly box for donations, but that doesn't even cover running costs.

When Steve approached JAL to repair the gyms leaking roof, they decided to go the extra mile and gave him a new roof with insulation, solar panels and battery storage all free of charge. They told us they were able to do this work thanks to the business we had given them in our recent re-roofing project.

JAL have been nominated for Regional Solar PV installer of the year in the Energy Efficiency Awards and have nominated us for Regional Housing Association of the Year.



Community news

make a difference awards

Parkland View resident short-listed for BBC Awards

Maxine Bartlett, a resident of the Council's extra care facility Parkland View, has been shortlisted for the Great Neighbour award at the prestigious BBC Make a Difference Awards.

Maxine was nominated for the active role

she has taken at Parkland View over the years, organising a residents group, social activities and fundraising events.

She has even trained with St Peters Church to become a Chaplain, so she can provide a Chaplaincy service for the residents.

Maxine is always thinking of others. Whenever a new resident moves in to Parkland, Maxine is always the first one to go introduce herself to make them feel welcome and help them settle in.

The winners will be announced in September. We'll be keeping our fingers crossed for Maxine. She truly deserves the recognition.



Happy 100th Birthday Hilda

Derby Homes resident Hilda Millward

turned an impressive 100 years old in April. Her neighbours and some of our team presented her with a cake and flowers to celebrate!

Happy birthday Hilda!



Safeguarding focus (2)





Knowing what to look out for

If someone is misusing your money or stealing from you - or you're worried that this is happening to someone else - it could be financial abuse.

Financial abuse is the mistreatment of someone in terms of their money or assets, such as their property.

Financial abuse can include:

- money being stolen or misused
- fraud
- exploiting someone's financial affairs
- restricting someone's access to money, employment or possessions
- pressuring and coercing someone about their will, lasting power of attorney, property or inheritance.

What to look out for

- Unusual or inappropriate transactions on someone's bank statements.
- Not being able to access cash, through banking or income sources, such as your pension or other benefits.

- Pressure into giving away money to others, leaving them without the money they need to pay for essentials.
- Losing money without any explanation.

Who to report issues to

We know there is often confusion of who to call when you spot an issue.

We have a dedicated team that handles safeguarding concerns, but all of our staff will be able to help you or point you in the right direction if you have a concern.

If you believe a person is at immediate risk of harm and in need of protection then you should call the Police on 999, straight away.

Alternatively, if you want advice from the Police and the person is not in immediate need of protection, you can call the Police on 101.

Find out more on our website: www.derbyhomes.org/safeguarding Room to care, time to share

BECOME A SHARED LIVES CARER

Could you offer a home, or occasional overnight support, to an adult with care needs?

You don't need any qualifications or experience, as training is provided. You'll be self-employed and you will receive an allowance for the support you provide.

More information 01332 640777 | Sharedlives@derby.gov.uk.





Volunteering opportunity

We have exciting opportunities to join our Board and Operational Committee:

- Tenant Board Member
- Tenant Operational Committee Member

As a Board or committee member, you'll be involved in making decisions and monitoring our performance to ensure that we deliver services of the highest possible standard.

You don't need any qualifications, special knowledge, or previous experience to join, as training will be provided.

More information:



dh-governanceservices@derbyhomes.org



01332 255348

Keep a lookout for scams

Scammers are getting more sophisticated and harder to spot.

Remember:

Always check ID if someone visits you Call to check they are who they say they are Never give your card details out if your unsure

Call the police if you feel threatened or to report suspicious behaviour Report online scams to action fraud **www.actionfraud.police.uk**

