

# Derby Homes News



## Winter 2023



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TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS

# tpas



## I'm at a Tpas event



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**New consumer standards**

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**Service update | Gas and electric fires**

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**Meet the new Chair of Derby Homes Board**

[www.tpas.org.uk](http://www.tpas.org.uk)

[@tpasengland](https://twitter.com/tpasengland)



# Welcome to our Winter newsletter

Welcome to the latest edition of Derby Homes

News which I hope you will find full of interesting and useful information.

The picture on the front cover is of members of our Customer Voice group when they attended the Annual Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) back in October. This is an event when tenants from across the country can get together to discuss all things service related, and they also have some fun! The feedback we get from the Customer Voice group is really important to us, it means we can shape our future services in a way that best meets your needs. There is more about this on **Page 12**, don't forget if you have some time, and would like to be more involved the contact details are provided.

As we head into the winter months I know that a lot of you will be worrying about the cost of heating your home. For lots of people there is help available and I would urge you

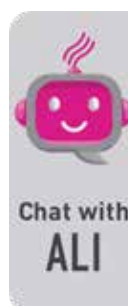
to visit the Community Action Derby website where there is lots of up to date information. If you would prefer you can call them on 01332 346266. Alternatively you can speak to someone at Derby Homes and we will point you in the right direction. There's more information on **Page 14**.

As you look through the newsletter you will see that there is lots of change at the moment, including changes to the way that social landlords must deliver services and we have summarised this on **Page 3**. We will talk more about them in future newsletters and tell you how we are doing against the new performance requirements.

On behalf of Derby Homes I would like to wish all our customers a wonderful festive period and health and happiness as we move into a new year.

*Maria Murphy*

**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**.

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## 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](http://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



**Email us**  
**Customer Service**

[Contactus@derbyhomes.org](mailto:Contactus@derbyhomes.org)

**Rent**

[Incometriageteam@derbyhomes.org](mailto:Incometriageteam@derbyhomes.org)

**Housing Advice**

[Housing.options@derbyhomes.org](mailto: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.



# Social housing and the new consumer standards

The consumer standards are what the Regulator of Social Housing sets out as the specific expectations and outcomes that all registered providers (landlords) must achieve when delivering services for tenants. For most of the homes we manage, Derby City Council is the owner and Registered Provider.

The standards are at a proposal stage, having just undergone consultation with both landlords and tenants. The final versions of them will come into effect from April 2024.

## What are the proposed standards?

There are four standards:

- The Safety and Quality Standard
- The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- The Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- The Tenancy Standard

In simple terms, they're about:

- Providing safe and good quality homes and landlord services
- Being open with tenants and treating them with fairness and respect
- Enabling tenants to access services, easily raise complaints, influence decision making and hold us to account
- Working with partners so tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods
- Fairly allocating homes and managing tenancies

## What will this mean for tenants in the homes we manage?

Derby Homes must demonstrate that we are meeting the standards. We have to certify our compliance in our annual accounts and inform the regulator if we do not feel we are complying. The council

is ultimately responsible as the registered provider and owner of 12,500+ homes.

We must also ensure we support tenants to scrutinise our services and to hold our Board and Councillors to account.

## What can you do?

1. Look out for our news updates on how we think we're meeting the standards
2. See how we're performing when we publish our results
3. Take part in surveys to give us your views on how you think we're doing

See the proposed Consumer Standards in full at **[www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)**



## We're no longer repairing or replacing electric or gas fires

Around half of the homes we manage have electric or gas fires in addition to the main source of heating, which is mostly gas central heating (there are some exceptions).

Providing these is not something we're required to do, so we've been doing this at no extra cost to tenants.

By stopping the service, we will save an estimated **£170,000** (including the costs of removal and making good). This is money we can use towards other key areas, meaning better quality and value for customers in the longer term.



### What happens now

We are no longer carrying out work to fires that are faulty or need replacing. We'll still work through any gas or electric fires that are already booked-in to be repaired or replaced, or those that are still under the manufacturer's warranty.

If your secondary gas or electric fire is not working, you should still report it to us. We'll arrange to remove the fire and you can choose from some options on what you'd prefer to happen to the fireplace. There is no charge to you for any of these options.

**Option 1** - Remove the fire and leave the fireplace as it is – You simply apply for a permit to have your own fire fitted by a suitable contractor.

**Option 2** - Remove the fire, cover the area with plasterboard and paint the wall the fire was attached to.

**Option 3** - Remove the fire and either cover the opening with plasterboard and paint or fit panelling to the fireplace opening.

## No heating or hot water | finding the issue

There are lots of reasons why your heating or hot water might not be working. Sometimes, it's a simple issue that you can diagnose and fix yourself without having to wait for an engineer to come out. Maybe you switched everything off and turned your thermostat right down during summer?

Maybe the clocks have changed, and the time is set wrong. Maybe the batteries in a remote thermostat have gone?

We've recently updated our website with a guide on how to troubleshoot and potentially fix the issues.

If you don't feel comfortable, are unsure what the issue is or how to fix it, get in touch with us and we will happily try to help over the phone or send someone out.





## Stock Condition Surveys

### What you need to know

#### **What is a stock condition survey?**

Stock condition surveys look at the condition of homes to help us assess the life span and plan upgrades for things like:

- Doors
- Windows
- Roofs
- Kitchens
- Bathrooms
- Heating systems
- Boilers
- Electrics

#### **Why we are doing this**

The government expects us to make sure the information we hold is up to date, accurate and make sure your home matches the government's Decent Homes Standard. One way to do this is hiring an independent company to carry out stock condition surveys.

We're hiring a company to carry out these checks on half of our properties. We already hold a lot of information, but by employing an independent company to carry out these

checks, we will be able to say with some certainty, that the information we hold is accurate.

#### **What will happen**

The external company will choose properties that will be surveyed, to make sure we have a representative amount of all property types. If you are selected, you will receive a letter from us with what to expect and who you should expect to be visiting. They will normally visit within two months of you receiving the letter. You won't need to arrange an appointment.

The surveyors will carry ID (identification) to confirm they are who they say they are. If in doubt, you should call us to check they are legitimate.

The surveyor is only there to carry out the stock condition survey. They don't work for us so you won't be able to report any outstanding repairs to them. You should report any outstanding repairs directly to us.





# Maintaining building safety



## Firework safety

If you're putting on a home firework display this festive season, you should follow some simple steps to make sure that everyone has a good time without getting hurt.

Each year, over half of all firework injuries are suffered by children.

Did you know that sparklers get five times hotter than cooking oil? Sparklers are not toys and should never be given to a child under five.



Always buy fireworks from a reputable shop to make sure that they conform to British Standards. They should have BS 7114 written on the box.



Never buy fireworks from anywhere you're not sure about, such as the back of a van or from a temporary, unlicensed market stall.

More information: [www.derbys-fire.gov.uk](http://www.derbys-fire.gov.uk)

## Christmas decoration safety

We love seeing all the houses lit up with all the festive decorations, but remember that extra lights and clutter can increase the risk of fire.

Here are some steps you can take to keep you and your family safe this Christmas:



Always unplug decorative lights when you're going to bed or leaving the house.



Always check lights conform to a safety standard, e.g. British Standard 60598.



Always use an RCD (residual current device) on outdoor electrical equipment. This safety device can save lives by instantly switching off the power if there is a fault and can be found in any DIY store.



Don't overload sockets with too many lights.

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Don't block exits with Christmas trees, presents or other decorations.





## Meet the new chair of Derby Homes Board



**”** *I've been on the board for nine years and have many years experience working in housing.*

*I'm extremely passionate about social housing, I believe it's a basic right that people have good quality housing.*

*I'm extremely proud to have this opportunity to lead the Board and organisation in the future.*

**- Jsan Shepherd,**  
Chair of Derby Homes

 [www.derbyhomes.org/about-us/governance](http://www.derbyhomes.org/about-us/governance)

## Mobility Scooter policy update

We recently reviewed our Mobility Scooter Policy.

The policy will help ensure customers, who are thinking of buying a mobility scooter, are aware of their responsibilities before they purchase one.

We asked customers what they thought of our new policy, and made changes based on the feedback.

### What was said

**85.7%** thought the policy was easy to understand.

**92.9%** thought the policy was clear on how to use, store and charge mobility scooters.

**100%** thought the policy clearly explained the responsibilities of all mobility scooter users.

### Other comments included:

Concerns around access to charging points.

Concern for those that don't have space in homes.

Concerns around the enforcement of insurance.

### What we've done

We will look at providing communal storage facilities in areas that have a high demand for them.

We will provide charging points in all storage facilities provided by us.

We have kept parts of the policy flexible to allow some tenants to store the scooters in the hallway of their home if it is safe and not blocking any escape routes in the event of a fire.

We recommend electric scooter users have insurance for their own protection, but will not enforce it.

View the full policy on  
[lets-talk.derbyhomes.org](http://lets-talk.derbyhomes.org)





## Refurbished homes also help wildlife

We're excited to be installing **70 nesting boxes** at properties in Allenton to help the endangered swift population, which is on the UK Red List of birds of highest conservation concern.

The boxes are being installed on the cast-iron properties in Allenton, which are currently receiving energy efficiency upgrades, thanks to the support of the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

50 of the boxes will sit flush in the new, external insulation layer, whilst a further 20 will be fixed to the outside of the rendering on the properties.

see where most nests have been identified. They've been working closely with Action for Swifts, who have also supplied the boxes. The majority will be fitted on houses in Ashby Street.

The swift population has sadly declined in Derbyshire due to the loss of nesting sites, so creating new homes for them is vital. Houses across the county have had their draughty holes plugged because of much-needed improvements to energy efficiency. Sadly, this means their nest sites were blocked too.

Across the UK, RSPB members and volunteers are protecting existing nest sites and providing new ones. This includes installing nest boxes in church towers,

homes and working with local authorities to make sure Swifts are considered when planning new housing.

Let's hope the birds will use the boxes and return to them every year to raise a new generation of chicks. We'll keep you to date on how well the project is going.





## XL Bully UK ban: Actions for owners

Following a concerning rise in attacks and fatalities caused by XL Bully dogs, the government has added the breed to the list of dogs banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

We encourage all customers who own an XL Bully to check the Government guidance for more information and updates on what you need to do. A summary of the law changes and key dates are below.

### Actions for tenants who own XL Bullies

All tenants who own an XL Bully will need to provide us with a copy of their Certificate of Exemption by **1 February 2024**, to show they are complying with the law. Those that do not provide this will be reported to the police.

### The law changes for XL Bully owners

To help current owners adapt to the new laws, the changes will come into force in two stages.

#### Stage 1

From **31 December 2023**, it will be against the law to:

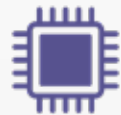
- **sell an XL Bully dog**
- **abandon an XL Bully dog**
- **give away an XL Bully dog**
- **breed from an XL Bully dog**
- **have an XL Bully in public without a lead and muzzle**

#### Stage 2

From **1 February 2024**, it will be a criminal offence to own an XL Bully in England and Wales unless you have a Certificate of Exemption for your dog.



### Conditions for keeping an XL bully include:



**Microchipping your dog**



**keeping it on a lead and muzzling your dog in public**



**Neutering your dog** - If your dog is less than one year old on 31 January 2024, it must be neutered by 31 December 2024. If your dog is older than one year old on 31 January 2024, it must be neutered by 30 June 2024. We recommend that you arrange for your dog to be neutered as soon as possible to make sure that you meet these deadlines.

**If you decide not to keep your XL Bully** you will need to take your dog to a registered vet to euthanise it. There will be a compensation scheme towards the cost of euthanasia if you choose this option.

Read more on [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)





## Supporting the LGBTQ+ Community

We had a great day at Derby Pride alongside Unison in the sweltering September sunshine. There we met our residents and engaged with potential new customers.

### Did you know we are looking to gain the Rainbow accreditation?

In a recent diversity meeting, John Yates-Harold from Derbyshire LGBTQ+, explained that the Rainbow Accreditation scheme was launched in 2021 and provides organisations with the knowledge and skills to better support both their LGBTQ+ staff and customers.

John expressed that he had seen the work that Derby Homes had already done surrounding this and felt that the accreditation will very much tie together the big factors that we had already put in place.

We are now working through six standards which we'll be assessed against. Watch this space next year to see how we get on.





# Lionel Massingham Award |

## Congratulations to St Peters Church

A huge congratulations to St Peters Church who was handed the annual Lionel Massingham Partnership award at our AGM in September. They were deservedly chosen following their fantastic work to help those in financial hardship over the festive period and organise a 'Christmas Lunch on Jesus'. Every year the church approaches our Tenancy Sustainability Team to fund food and drink to help make a real difference to the most disadvantaged people in our community.

The charitable service allows our officers make referrals from our customer base.

Those tenants who are referred through the process receive a supermarket voucher which allows them to purchase food and drink over the festive period.

We made 261 nominations for Christmas 2022 and every single nomination received an Aldi voucher. The scheme continues to grow year-after-year.

### What is the Lionel Massingham Partnership Award?

The award was created to recognise the work of Derby Homes' Board Member, Lionel Massingham, who sadly passed away in 2006.

Each year, Derby Homes' employees are asked to nominate partner organisations who they feel have worked well with them over the last twelve months.

The winners are chosen by a panel of staff and board members and announced at our Annual General Meeting each year.



*Massingham family present Rev Anita Mathews with award, along side Maria Murphy and Jenny Veater.*



*Customer Voice member Lesley, speaking at the Tpas Conference*

## Customer Voice attend the Tenant Participation Advisory Service conference

As part National Scrutiny Week back in October, three of our Customer Voice members (our tenant scrutiny group) headed to Loughborough University for the annual Tpas Scrutiny Conference.

One of the members, Lesley Buxton-Kay, also took part in a Scrutiny Showcase at the end of the conference.

She was on a panel of four tenants, talking about her scrutiny journey and successes with Derby Homes.

It was a wonderful opportunity for the Customer Voice to network and meet other scrutiny groups from across the country.

Tenant scrutiny is one of many opportunities for tenants, to get involved and provide feedback on the services we deliver. These opportunities help us make sure our services are fair and tenant focussed.

Find out how you can get involved visit our website: **[www.derbyhomes.org](http://www.derbyhomes.org)**





## Sprucing up Alvaston

A host of local partners were on the streets of Alvaston recently giving the local shopping precinct a tidy up and a lick of paint.

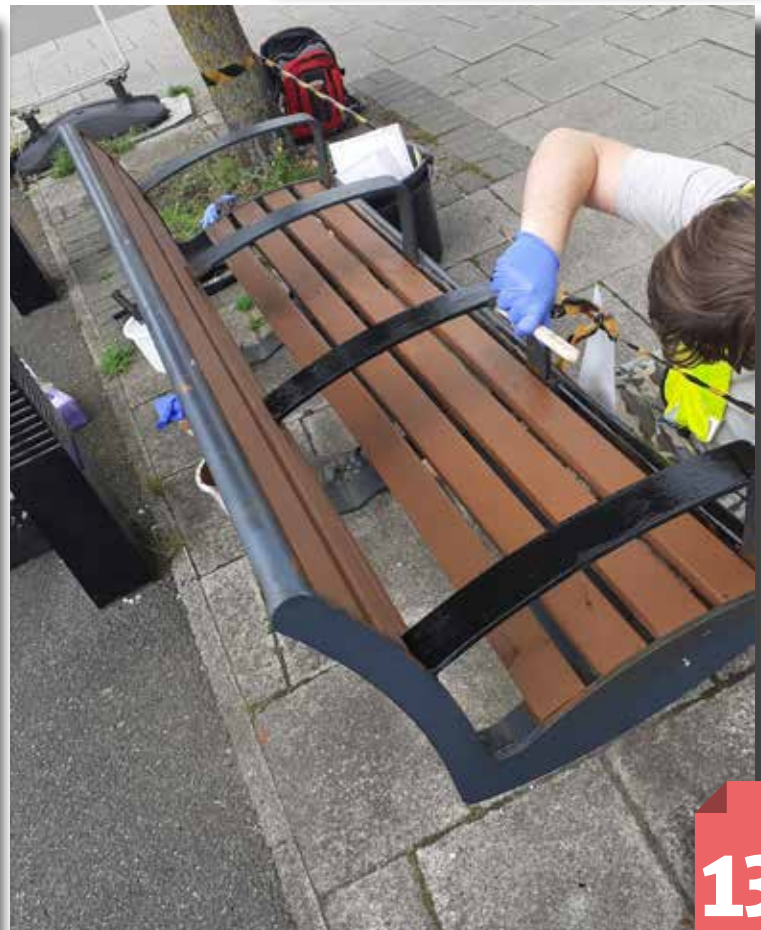
The YMCA and Rolls Royce along with Alvaston Councillors worked in partnership with Derby City Council's Locality Team which included one of Derby Homes Locality Officers to spruce up the street furniture.

This included preparation and jet washing of the furniture, sanding and painting. A local business funded the painting materials and the fish & chip shop provided volunteers

with lunch and refreshments. The benches along with cycle racks and bollards have all been painted and certainly make the area look much better.

We've already received comments from our tenants and private residents of thanks of appreciation for making the shopping area look more attractive to shop and the seating more pleasant to sit upon.

This was an excellent collaboration of local organisations and businesses making a difference to the local community.



# Support with the cost of living

## Derby's **WARM WELCOME HUBS**



Community Action Derby have announced the locations for this winters Warm Welcome Hubs.

### Warm Welcome Hubs are a place to get:



A warm welcome to those in need of a warm space



Health & well being support



A hot drink and a meal



Distribute energy vouchers



Help with online applications



Support and signposted to other organisations

Funding for the hubs is given to organisations in partnership with Community Action Derby, Derby City Council and the Department for Work and pensions.

### Find out where your local hubs are



[Derby.gov.uk/costofliving](https://derby.gov.uk/costofliving)



01332 346266

**SUPPORTING**

**YOU WITH THE**

**COST OF LIVING**

## Common Room and Community Spaces

We also have 22 Community rooms around the city that are host to a range of groups and activities that are open to the public.

You can also hire these for your own groups, activities and events.

Find out what's on, where your local room is and how to book the rooms.



[www.derbyhomes.org/  
community/community-rooms](https://www.derbyhomes.org/community/community-rooms)



01332 956356







# We are DAHA accredited

<https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/>



daha

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

We have been recognised by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) with a national accreditation for our safe and effective response to domestic abuse. This makes us the first Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accredited provider in the county.

As part of the process, assessors interviewed staff from across the organisation. They concluded that we demonstrated a commitment to embedding good practice in response to domestic abuse and to adopting the values and principles of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance.

### What does this mean for you?

The accreditation shows our continued commitment to residents facing domestic abuse. Awareness of domestic abuse is embedded in staff working across all areas of Derby Homes, thanks to regular training and messaging.

Keeping our residents safe, giving them confidence to find support and feeling safe is a priority for the council. We recognise that domestic abuse devastates lives, and we are working to put a stop to it amongst residents and employees.

Our work does not stop with this accreditation. We constantly review our practices and work with partner organisations to facilitate our own learning to continually improve the work we do.

### Reporting domestic abuse

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, then please call the police on 999 or for non-emergencies 101.

Read more: **[derbyhomes.org](http://derbyhomes.org)**

### Safe Places Derby

A network of shops, bars, offices and public buildings in the city centre are offering support to women and girls that are concerned about their safety when they are out.

If you see this Purple and black hand in the window, you can go in and speak to the staff that work there and they will help. You can find the list of safe spaces on **[www.safeandsoundgroup.org.uk](http://www.safeandsoundgroup.org.uk)**



**SUPPORTING  
YOU WITH THE  
COST OF LIVING**

# CHILDREN'S COAT WINTER WRAP UP

Do you have a child or young person  
in need of a winter coat?

Do you have a winter coat you  
can donate?

For more information contact your local Family Hub

**[derby.gov.uk/family-hub](https://derby.gov.uk/family-hub)**



Community Action



## Christmas opening times

We will be closed for normal service from:

**Saturday 23 December 2023 -  
Monday 1 January 2024**

(Reopening on Tuesday 2 January 2024).

We will be operating an **emergency only** service  
for emergency repairs and people who are  
homeless tonight.

## Your chance to tell us.

What do you think about the  
opportunities you have to get involved  
to improve or scrutinise our services? Do  
we do enough to keep you informed?  
Fill out our survey to have your views  
included and help improve things.



Scan to have your say



**[lets-talk.derbyhomes.org](https://lets-talk.derbyhomes.org)**