



Autumn 2024 In this issue

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Tenant Participation scores a hat trick!

Hull's tenant reps, councillors, and Hull City Council staff are celebrating achieving three in a row Exemplar Accreditations from tpas, the leading national organisation which works on behalf of social housing tenants to promote tenant involvement and empowerment.

To be eligible to apply for Exemplar status, social housing landlords must have achieved ordinary Accreditation status three times - that's a period of nine years. Plus, we are the first council housing provider to score three Exemplar Accreditations at the higher level.

Achieving this status is a massive undertaking involving all year-round activities from group walks to judging the quality of neighbourhoods, consultations and surveys, to a wide range of special interest groups looking

at particular aspects of the service. The Exemplar assessment is a rigorous process too with interviews, visits by an assessor, and paperwork. All these elements

are to show that there is a true commitment to enabling tenants' voices to be heard at all levels, demonstrating how this is facilitated, and that the results are relevant and meaningful.

It was with great pride when we heard we had got Exemplar Accreditation again and especially the tpas endorsement that our evidence "showed mutual respect not often seen in the social housing sector."



Commenting on this success, Matt Jukes, HCC's Chief Executive said, "I am delighted that Hull is at the forefront of housing excellence. tpas sets the bar high - and so do we! Involving our tenants in everything we do is an ethos which we're working hard to embed within our Housing Service culture. This accreditation confirms we're delivering against that ambition and focussing on meeting the needs and aspirations of our tenants."

Chat with the Chair



As Chair of the Tenants Forum, I'm starting my Chat with a massive shout-out to housing officers and our many, much valued tenant volunteers for their part in helping achieve tpa's Exemplar Accreditation for an amazing third time in a row (see front page). Getting Exemplar status isn't a walk in the park. It involves a rigorous scrutiny to show a long-term commitment to tenant engagement.

I must give a special mention to the Tenant Participation Team (TPT) led by Sally Smith because they are the "boots on the ground." They enable our involvement in a number of ways, including: arranging meetings and listening to what

we have to say; carrying out patch walks with us; checking out health and safety at multi-storey flats; coming along to our pop-ins, and much more. Their support is invaluable, and they are always cheerful, helpful, respectful, and caring. Thank you TPT.

By the time you read this we will know if Kathleen Elvin has won one of the prestigious Make a Difference awards presented annually by BBC Radio Humberside. She was nominated in the Community category for her tireless work as one of our Local Area Champions.

Kathleen takes great pride in her neighbourhood and is constantly looking to improve its appearance and

maintenance.

She started volunteering with the Tenant Participation Team in 2020, litter picking and becoming a local champion. Kathleen herself has collected over 1,000 bags of general rubbish, over 400 bags of recycling, and raised over 700 estate management issues. What's more, she keeps track of the issues she raises, making sure they are resolved. Well done on reaching the awards' shortlist and hopefully we'll be celebrating your success.

Until the next time.

Maureen.

Wanted! Block Champions

We are looking for people who live in high rise flats to become Block Champions. Just like the Local Area Champions, their function will be helping to make the blocks and their surroundings a better place to live.

You may opt for litter picking, checking the communal areas are clear, the quality of grounds maintenance, reporting overflowing bins, or that problems with communal windows and closing of fire doors, and more.

We can have more than one champion per block, and people can give as much or as little time is convenient. Training will be given.

If you are interested in becoming a Block Champion, email tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk



Neighbourhood nuisance

We all want to feel comfortable, safe, and have peace of mind in our homes and neighbourhoods. If anti-social behaviour (ASB) in general or behaviour by your neighbour or neighbouring business is affecting your everyday life, and it can't be sorted out amicably between you, we may be able to help.

You can report ASB on the council's website hull.gov.uk (search neighbourhood nuisance). If the situation is an emergency and health or life threatening, call 999.

We will always try to keep you

up-to-date with your complaint. However, please be aware that sometimes we cannot tell you everything we are doing behind the scenes to progress it, for legal reasons. For your part, please record and share with us as much information as you can. We need good evidence to progress cases against offenders.

This year, from January to the end of June, the Neighbourhood Nuisance Team has:

- received almost 1,600 calls for service in relation to ASB

- supported just over 1,700 victims and witnesses
- dealt with approximately 600 offenders
- used just over 1,000 informal and formal sanctions to tackle ASB.

96 percent of people reporting to the Neighbourhood Nuisance Team said that they would use the service again.

In this issue of Hull Housing News there are a few "You said... We did..." examples where the Team has successfully resolved some of your ASB complaints.

Community Trigger

If you have already reported anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the problem has not been resolved, you can use the Community Trigger to ask for a review of your case. When this happens, we work together with partners, such as Humberside Police, and we share information to try to resolve your complaint.

This is how it works

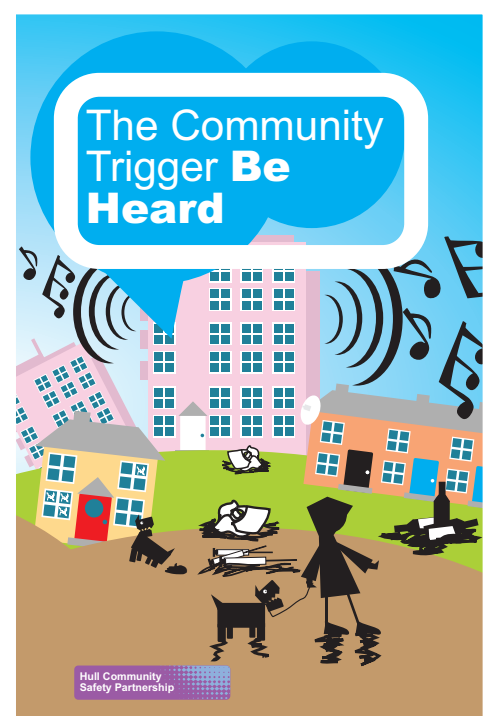
You can use the Community Trigger to ask for a review of your existing ASB complaint if you (as an individual) or five local people have made three complaints about ASB in the last six months to the council, Humberside Police or a Registered Social Landlord, and feel there has not been an adequate response. Account will be taken of the persistency

of the ASB, harm or potential harm caused, whether it is hate motivated, and any action taken so far.

You will be asked to provide details about the times you have complained and about the nature of the ASB. If your case meets the necessary criteria, you can ask for the Community Trigger to review it, and hopefully by working together we can reach a satisfactory conclusion. Full details about requesting and the process involved can be found at hull.gov.uk and search Community Trigger.

The Community Trigger does not replace the council's complaints procedure. You can still make a complaint in the usual way. Also, you still have the opportunity to

complain to the Ombudsman or Independent Police Complaints Commission if you are unhappy about the service you have received from an individual officer or service.



This time the Ask Mark question is about the Regulator of Social Housing and Housing Ombudsman

I know the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman have been around for a while but what's the difference between them?

Patricia, north Hull.

The Regulator of Social Housing focusses on the "big picture" of how a social housing landlord is run and the overall quality of services given to tenants. The work of the Housing Ombudsman centres on complaints which individual tenants have about their landlord and haven't been resolved to the tenant's satisfaction.

The Regulator and the Ombudsman were both given extra powers and have become much more proactive.

Last April, the Regulator introduced four new consumer standards with which all social landlords must comply. These standards aim to protect tenants, improve social housing, and enhance the quality of the services they receive.

The new standards are:

- **safety and quality:** covering services such as repairs, maintenance and planned improvements, health and safety
- **transparency, influence and accountability:** dealing with tenant engagement,

information about landlord services, and responding to complaints

- **neighbourhood:** relating to services such as safety of shared spaces, anti-social behaviour, hate incidents and domestic abuse
- **tenancy:** covering services such as lettings, evictions and mutual exchange.

All social landlords are now required to make an annual return to the Regulator about how they have performed against 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The Regulator has also re-started planned inspections of all social landlords over a four-year period, rather like for schools and care homes. Social landlords, like ourselves, now have a duty to tell the Regulator if we don't comply with any aspect of the new Consumer Standards, and this is called "self-referral".

For the last couple of years, the Housing Ombudsman has also had extra powers to be more active. Social landlords are now required to abide by a Code of Practice on how to deal with complaints, and from time-to-time the Ombudsman will give feedback to all social landlords about good practice.

There is also a new government post of Building Safety Regulator, part of the Health and

Safety Executive, whose focus is on high rise buildings. For more information go to [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk) (search Building Safety Regulator).

Important message from Mark

First, I would like to thank those of you who helped to clean up after the violent criminality seen recently in the city. The people who came to the city's aid showed the real face of Hull, and it was heartwarming to see such community spirit responding to the damage caused by an unrepresentative minority.

Hull City Council's Citysafe and Neighbourhoods and Housing services and ward councillors are continuing to visit residents and businesses to reassure and support communities following these unsettling times. Our Neighbourhood Coordinators, based in the city's 21 wards, are playing an important part engaging, listening, and responding to concerns and feedback from residents, community representatives and businesses directly, and to help everyone in the city feel safe and be safe.

We applaud the role that Humberside Police played during the disturbances, their fast-track arrests, and sentencing by the courts.



Performance focus

This is the second of a new regular feature in Hull Housing News whereby we highlight an area of excellent performance and where we are working hard to improve.

Looking back on how we performed over the last financial year, we are really pleased to report that we carried out all the required gas safety checks in 99.99 percent of council homes. At the end of the year there was just one family for whom we had been unable to carry out these checks. A huge thank you for letting us into your homes. This work is vitally important in helping to keep you safe and sound.

One area of performance where we are working hard to improve is making sure all our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard. The last time in the "Ask Mark" feature we said that our priority is to make sure you remain safe, warm and comfortable in your home. To achieve this, the council has now increased its investment significantly to ensure we catch up with our Decent Homes programme. Meanwhile, we recently contacted the Regulator of Social Housing to highlight our challenges with the Decent Homes Standard.



We will be covering this in a future issue of Hull Housing News.

Another area of very focussed activity is around empty properties. At a time when there is a severe shortage of affordable housing across the city, it's important that the council relets any homes which become available as quickly as possible. Unfortunately this is currently taking longer than we would want, but we are doing all we can to speed up the process.

Beware disrepair touts

Please be careful if you are approached by anyone who knocks on your door, puts a leaflet through your letterbox, phones, texts or gets in touch through social media, or in any other way, advertising with promises of big money compensation if you have outstanding repairs to your council home.

Things aren't always what they seem.

Many legal firms make large profits from these claims. Even if a tenant is awarded compensation they often only receive a very small amount of the money paid out by their landlord. This is because the tenant has signed up to a deal which means their solicitor will take a large part of the compensation to

cover the cost of the legal work they say they have carried out, if you are thinking about making a claim against the council for an outstanding repair, please get in touch with us first.

If it is found that you have been waiting an unreasonable time for essential repairs which you have reported via the appropriate channels, we can pay you compensation and ensure the repair is carried out, this will cost you nothing.

You can get in touch with us by using the myHousing App on your smart phone or go to the council's website hull.gov.uk

You said ...

.. that you were concerned about fires, fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour in general on King George V Playing Fields.

We did ...

... we've installed new lighting to the car park, footpath, and skate park area. The new lighting can be controlled via a timer to reduce the impact on the properties that share the park boundary.

We are also improving the CCTV and lighting at Sir Henry Cooper Park too.

Digital skills

Did you know that Hull Training offers a free, six-week course to help people improve their online skills? For information on how to apply, please call (01482) 615 349 / 616 580 or email learneradvice@hullcc.gov.uk



Be fire risk aware

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) has recently attended several fires caused by washing machines. Each one was caused by a washing machine left on overnight. Depending on your energy supplier, energy isn't always cheaper at night. HFRS advises that appliances such as washing machines, tumble driers and dishwashers which run at high speeds and contain a motor should only be used when you are at home and awake.

We are also urging people not to store gas canisters or petrol cans in sheds or outbuildings, especially if kept alongside flammable items such as garden furniture. Fires can easily start accidentally.

Similarly may we remind people living in flats with balconies not to use the space as storage. As well as being a fire risk, in some cases, it may impede people evacuating the building should a fire break out.



Tell us how we're doing

Every September we take a random sample of one in five of our 23,000 tenants across the city and send them a questionnaire by email, text, or post. This is known as the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR), which asks our tenants how satisfied they are with their home and the housing services they get from the council. Everyone who completes and returns the questionnaire is entered into a prize draw and the lucky winner gets £250.

If you are one of the randomly selected tenants, please fill in the survey. It's very important to us because your views help to inform our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), which indicate where we need to make improvements. Plus we need to submit the results to the Regulator of Social Housing, so the more people who complete the survey, the more accurate the findings will be.

We will send a couple of reminders about returning the survey.

Christmas is coming

It's less than 80 days till Christmas, and there's Diwali in November and Hanukkah in December too. With the cost-of-living crisis still biting, we thought for our "top tips" we'd look at ways to have a great celebration without blowing the budget.

1. Set a budget and stick to it. Make a list of what you need to buy and record your spending against each item. If you overspend by trying to make it the perfect occasion, you risk spoiling the year to come.
2. Don't be tempted to use a loan shark/pay day loan to help cover the cost. These are illegal with high interest rates, no paperwork and can involve people who will resort to threats and intimidation regarding re-payment. If you must borrow money, see if you are eligible to use a credit union such as Hull and East Yorkshire Credit Union - handeycu.co.uk
3. Make sure your rent account is in credit. If you are not in arrears, you get two rent free weeks at Christmas.
4. Do you really need to buy so many presents, especially for extended family and friends? You could agree with them not to give presents or to just exchange token gifts, for example a Thrifty Three Quid Present.
5. Look out for Healthy Holidays Hull over the Christmas period. Across the city there will be lots of activities, many with a Christmassy theme, for school aged children and young people living in Hull. They are all free, and free food too. The Christmas activities will be published in December – go to healthyholidayshull.org.uk
6. Are you worried about money? Don't let it grind you down because there is support out there. If you are struggling to pay your rent, talk to your tenancy officer as soon as possible because with the right guidance a solution can soon be found. Check with the Department of Work and Pensions that you are getting all the benefits and payments you are entitled to. A good starting point for tackling debt is Citizens Advice – tel 0800 144 8848. Advice is available online, by phone and in person.
7. Homemade presents and cards cost less than shop bought and often more appreciated. You don't have to be a crafting or cooking genius. There are lots of ideas on the internet and in magazines to suit all skill levels. If you aren't online at home, go along to your local library for free computer use.
8. Grab a bargain when you see it, wrap it, and put it away till it's time to give it. There are pre-Christmas sales, outlet and seconds shops, Black Friday, charity shops, and goods can cost less online. Make sure that when you buy something for a present that the returns policy lasts till after your celebration.
9. Have fun as a family, especially if you have young children, making your own decorations by repurposing things you'd normally throw away. Colourful junk mail and magazines can be made into ornaments for the tree; turn an old cardboard box into a "gingerbread" house – there are lots of ideas online.
10. Every year in the UK we throw away 227,000 miles of wrapping paper. That's enough to wrap round the earth more than eight times! So why buy it? Again make your own. Reuse old magazines or papers and decorate them with, for example, fussy cut paper frills, painted handprints, or with stencils made from old cardboard – whatever takes your fancy.

Wonderful winning gardens

We had thought that the cold, wet spring might have put some people off entering this year's garden competition. Happily we were proved wrong.

We had a bumper crop of entries, which again, gave our judges the tough challenge of finding our winners.

This year our judges were joined by Ian Anderson, the council's Director of Legal Services and Partnerships. Ian, a keen

gardener himself, said, "It was a pleasure to see the results of entrants' hard work, plus the pride and enthusiasm for their gardens. They bring colour and creativity which makes each one an asset to our communities."

A full list of the 2024 Hull Tenants' Garden Competition winners can be found on the council's website hull.gov.uk (search tenants' garden competition 2024).



You said...

... that cars parking on the pavement on part of Willerby Road were causing an obstruction for pedestrians.

We did ...

... we have installed bollards to prevent cars from parking there. Similarly, we have installed bollards on part of Brantingham Way to stop vehicles using the footpath as a short cut from one road to another.

You said ...

... that a local resident was drug dealing from a garden in the area, which was affecting residents living on Gatwick Garth.

We did

... working together, the council's Housing and Neighbourhood Nuisance Teams, and Humberside Police attended the premises, which resulted in an arrest being made for possession of drugs, and the locks at the house were changed.

Tenants' Forum Meetings

Date	Time	Guest Speaker / Agenda
17 Oct	1-3pm	Policy and Partnership Manager (StreetScene – general update)
21 Oct	1-3pm	Chief Executive – Hull City Council and also energy efficiency awareness session
20 Nov	10-12pm	Session with Regulator of Social Housing

All Tenants' Forum meetings take place in The Guildhall, HU1 2AA. If you would like to attend, please let a member of the Tenants Participation Team know by emailing tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk or phone 01482 612 010.

This document can be made available in other formats (large print, audio, digital copy) and different languages. Email: tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk



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