



Spring 2024 In this issue

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You can help us to help you



Never has there been such high demand for council housing in the city. There are simply not enough homes for those who need housing.

Larger homes are needed most. If you are under occupying a council home that has four or more bedrooms, you may be eligible to access our enhanced downsizing scheme. You could help us to help a family looking for a home. Downsizing from a larger home can also help you save money because you wouldn't be paying as much rent and your heating bills would be cheaper.

Our enhanced downsizing scheme is only available for homes with four or more bedrooms. We have a team on-

hand to help you move. It's all free of charge and the package can be tailored to people's individual preferences. The options include:

- arranging and paying for removals
- disconnection and reconnection of white goods
- providing boxes and help with packing
- reconnection of broadband
- arranging for carpets to be professionally lifted and stored ready to be re-fitted at the new home, or fitting new carpets at the new home
- setting up a TV aerial in the new home
- taking down fitted blinds and re-fitting in the new home
- a two-week, rent-free period whilst you move into the new property

- we may be able to offer you a property of a type and size that you would not normally be offered. For example, single people and couples could be offered a smaller house, if freeing up a large house, when they would normally only be offered a one bedroom flat or bungalow.

Commenting on the new incentive scheme, Assistant Director for Housing Mark Nearney said: "We have families who are in desperate need of a bigger home, but we don't have the stock available. Hopefully, the new scheme will encourage some people living in homes of four bedrooms or more, and don't need so many, to move somewhere smaller."

Chat with the Chair



Having now had the time to consider the results of the latest STAR survey on tenant satisfaction (see page 4), I was disappointed to see that the overall satisfaction levels had fallen for the second year running.

Whilst results were quite good for some things such as such as treating people fairly and the repair service, I was saddened to see that keeping tenants informed had fallen by as much as five per cent in the previous year. On reflection, it seemed to me that almost all the areas where satisfaction levels have gone down are those

directly influenced by effective communications.

Our tenants individually and as a Forum, enjoy a good relationship with people across the council, not just with the Neighbourhoods and Housing Service. We encourage people to use the many communications channels available to get in touch to compliment and complain. In fact, from being able to communicate face-to-face to online exchanges, staff listen to us and are prepared to act on our views. However, where it's not so good is getting feedback on the action taken.

We appreciate that it can take time to achieve an outcome, but we need to be kept in the loop, not left wondering what's happening. Communication must be two-way to maintain trust and good relations. I'm pleased that the Regulator is introducing more questions to the satisfaction survey, especially those relating to communication, information, and feedback, and I'm looking forward to working with the council to develop and implement them.

Until next time.

Maureen.



myHousing Sign up for a chance to win shopping vouchers

Earlier this year, we introduced the new myHousing app, we've been blown away by how popular it's proving to be. Already, over 7,500 people have signed up.

If you haven't signed up yet, don't delay because myHousing has become the "go to" way to do business with Housing. Plus, we are giving away £600 worth of Love2Shop vouchers in a prize draw over the next six months. Everyone who signs up to myHousing between January and end September 2024 is automatically entered into the draws, and two people will win £50 worth of vouchers each month. Search myHousing Hull on the council's website for full competition terms.

If you haven't already created an account, what are you

waiting for? Not only will you have a chance to win, but it also makes it easy to bid for properties, report repairs, and view your rent balance. Plus, we're adding a whole range of new features in the coming months.

Here's how to create and connect a myHousing account:

1. Download the app from Google Play or Apple App Store (search myHousing Hull).
2. Click 'Register' and set up a new account with your name, email address and a password
3. Connect your account using your reference – for Homesearch customers this will be your application bidding reference, and for tenants this will be your payment reference

For a more detailed guide on how to set up your account, please visit our website hullcc.gov.uk and search myHousing. There's a step-by-step video on YouTube - just search Hull City Council/ my Housing.

Digital support

If you do not have a device or internet access, we can help! Please visit our one of our Customer Service Centres or Community Hubs (see overleaf for locations) and one of our friendly advisors will be able to help you set up your account, as well as offer support in getting online. Alternatively, your tenancy officer will be able to support you to create an account.

This time, the Ask Mark question is about anti-social behaviour.

Most of us take pride in the neighbourhoods where we live, but there are always a few who spoil things for the majority.

Anti-social behaviour from vandalism and graffiti to noise nuisance, motorbikes and other problems seem to blight many of our communities. Plenty of people report it, but nothing seems to be done about it. Why don't we hear from the council or police what action has been taken?

Mark Nearney, Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing answers....

The council's Neighbourhood Nuisance Team is responsible for dealing with all reports of anti-social behaviour. It works with other internal departments, such as Neighbourhoods and Housing and external agencies, like Humberside Police, to tackle the issues reported.

It is often difficult to take action on a one-off incident. We need to establish what the problem is, who is responsible, when and where it is happening and how often. That's why we ask residents to evidence a pattern of behaviour and leave monitoring sheets for them to complete. Plus, we always ask if it is possible for the complainant to speak with the person causing the problems before reporting it to the team.

If you report a problem, you will be contacted within two working days, by either telephone,



e-mail or letter. Once you have supplied us with evidence of ongoing nuisance your case will be assigned to an Anti-social Behaviour Enforcement Officer. They will meet you and put together a support package which includes referrals to other agencies and the frequency of contact you should expect. Once an officer is assigned to your case, they will provide you with direct contact details.

For a live case, you will be kept updated on its progress and advised of the outcome. That could include anything from obtaining court orders to more informal sanctions like interviews and warning letters.

For behaviour affecting the wider community, action taken is reported at Area Committees, Ward Forums and in your ward newsletters. Sometimes we deliver letters to homes which may have been directly affected by the behaviour and social media. For example, recently we wrote to 25 households informing them that we had obtained an eviction order for a neighbour who had been warned several times about anti-social behaviour.

You can report anti-social behaviour in a number of ways:

Online

www.hull.gov.uk

and search anti-social behaviour

In person

by visiting any of the council's Customer Service Centres or Information Points

Via e-mail

Hull.Citysafe@hullcc.gov.uk

Telephone

01482 300 300

Meeting the Regulator

Members of the Tenants' Forum recently joined Council Leader Cllr Mike Ross, Regeneration and Housing Portfolio Holder Cllr Paul Drake Davis, the council's Chief Executive Matt Jukes, and Neighbourhoods and Housing senior management team members to meet Kate Dodsworth, Chief of Regulatory Engagement at the National Regulator of Social Housing Office.

Hull Tenants' Forum Chair Maureen Brtistow said. "We are very lucky in Hull that we have a strong and constructive relationship with our



landlord – the council. This was highlighted by the fact that we were invited to participate in such a high-level meeting. It was very inspiring, and all parties recognised that sharing information and working as a team is the key to empowering people."

STAR satisfaction



The STAR survey of Tenants and Residents is a nationally recognised industry standard survey used by over 300 social housing providers which we carry out in the autumn. So, what did you tell us in 2023?

Unfortunately, this year's headline is that overall satisfaction levels dipped since last year from 77.30 per cent to 70.82 per cent, a trend which was reflected nationally. One reason may be because more responses were received electronically. 78 per cent of responses were sent this way, with just 23 per cent by post. This compares with 59 per cent responses by post the previous year.

What were some of the other results?

Overall satisfaction with our repairs service at 76 per cent has gone against the general trend, remaining around the same as the previous year's figure of 74 per cent. This is marginally higher than the national average of 75 per cent. However, satisfaction that as a landlord, we treat tenants fairly and with respect followed the national trend, being 74 per cent, down from 79 per cent last year and below the 78 per cent national average.

Unfortunately, tenant satisfaction with

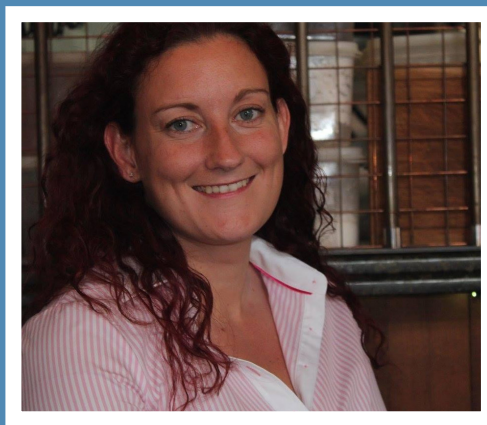
neighbourhoods has been falling in Hull for several years. This year we were asked by the Regulator (see below) to include a new question, and the response was that 55 per cent were satisfied that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods, which is below the national average.

Another area where satisfaction has been falling is keeping tenants informed about things that matter to you, dropping to 65 per cent from 70 per cent.

From April the Regulator of Social Housing requires all social landlords to submit performance against 22 "Tenant Satisfaction Measures" (TSMs). While we have chosen to carry out the STAR survey each autumn for some time, it's now important to keep doing it to provide the regulator with TSM information.

While a slight drop in overall satisfaction seems to be something of a national trend, we want more of you to be satisfied with the services we provide to our tenants. We use the STAR survey to guide how we can improve both service delivery and your experience. Look out for our plans in a future edition of Hull Housing News.

Meet ... Becky Franks, Building Safety Manager



Our priority, as your landlord, is to keep you safe and secure in your home. As a result of the enquiry into the tragic Grenfell Tower fire, new safety regulations have been introduced, which include having a Building Safety Manager responsible for high-rise blocks of flats. Becky Franks has been appointed to this role.

Becky brings a wealth of knowledge, skills, and experience to the role. She has qualifications in construction and building safety management, and has worked in housing for 23 years, the last nine with specific responsibility for fire safety in buildings. Plus, she already has a thorough knowledge of all the high-rise blocks in the city.

In her role, Becky will be ensuring that all work carried

out meets regulatory standards and compliance with the Building Safety Act and associated legislation. She will be developing individual safety case reports for all the high-rise properties and ensuring that each has its own 'Golden Thread'; a complete history of management information, work undertaken and other essential details which will be accessible to tenants.

Becky's work isn't all about regulation compliance, and ensuring work relating to fire and other safety assessments is carried out. As she says: "One of the biggest and most exciting challenges is developing a safety culture. I'm putting a new team together who will become familiar faces around the blocks. We are working on an engagement strategy, to encourage you to

get in touch if you have safety concerns and we will be liaising closely with you about any work being undertaken at the blocks."

Becky's role in promoting a safety culture extends to council staff. She is currently reviewing the competence framework for anyone working or inspecting high-rise buildings; and is constantly looking out for ways to improve working practices as well as ensuring that she and her team are up to date with the latest legislation.

Becky is passionate about housing and you being safe where you live. She says: "My ambition is to guarantee that Hull is one step ahead when it comes to industry best practice."

Keep the date!

When you report a repair to us, we aim to fix it as soon as possible. We will send you an appointment and automated reminder text messages. We also ask our contractors to call you when they are on their way. If it is an internal repair, we need you or a trusted family member or friend, to be present to let the contractor into your home.

Unfortunately, sometimes there's nobody at the premises

when the contractor arrives, and another appointment must be made. Not only does this delay your repair being carried out, it has a knock-on effect delaying other people's repairs too. If the appointment time is inconvenient and no one can be there, please get in touch. We can rearrange and allocate your original appointment to somebody else. For non-emergency repairs you will usually be given an appointment when you make a report. The times

are between 8am and 12 noon, and between 12pm and 6pm.

In some cases (for example larger jobs or multi-trade repairs) it will not be possible to provide you with an appointment at the time of reporting. In these cases, you will be contacted by our contractor to confirm an appointment.

For an emergency repair, our contractor will attend the same day (in very extreme cases) or within 24 hours.

Voice of Tenants



Damp and mould

We thought you might like to know that all Neighbourhoods and Housing staff who may visit you in your home are being trained to

spot signs of damp and mould. If they do, they can then report it to make sure it is dealt with as soon as possible.

MEASLES
Don't let your child catch it
— get them vaccinated with the MMR vaccine

The number of young people catching measles has risen. It's never too late to be vaccinated. You need two doses of MMR one month apart to be fully protected against measles, mumps and rubella.

It's time to make measles a disease of the past.

If you have symptoms of measles, stay at home and phone your GP or NHS 111 for advice. STAY AWAY from GP surgeries and A&E departments — you could spread the illness to others.

Measles symptoms include: high fever; sore, red, watery eyes; coughing; aching and feeling generally unwell; a blotchy red brown rash, which usually appears after the initial symptoms.

i mmunisation
the safest way to protect your child

For more information contact your local GP surgery or visit: www.nhs.uk/mmr

Stop the loan sharks

When money is scarce and prices rising, or you need money to pay off a debt, the offer of quick access to cash can be very tempting.

Too often money lenders operate illegally and prey on vulnerable people. Borrowing from these “loan sharks” is never cheap because they charge exorbitant interest rates and often use underhand and frightening tactics to get their money back. It can be hard to spot a loan shark, but there are

a few warning signs to look out for such as

- no paperwork is provided
- refuses to tell you the interest rate or how much you owe
- increases the amount you owe even though you are making regular payments
- takes items as security such as bank cards, passport or driving licence
- can be intimidating or even violent

If you are on a low income with a poor credit rating and need a short-term loan for a small amount of money, joining a Credit Union may be able to help. Hull and East Riding Credit Union is located at 38 Brook Street, Hull HU2 8LA telephone 01482 778 753. For details of how the Credit Union may be able to help and how to sign up go to its website www.hullandeycu.co.uk



#HullTogether

We'll support
you with the

**cost of
living
crisis**

Food

Fuel and Energy

Health

Money and Debt

Employment

Housing

And much more...

Cost of Living Tips

Money may be tight, but you can still enjoy your free time and save on the pennies.

1. Keen gardeners and DIYers can borrow from Hull's Library of Stuff on Greenwood Avenue. Membership is from £1 joining fee and small charge per item, or £80 annual subscription and no charge per item. If it is your first borrow, please take photo ID, eg: driving licence, passport. For more information and to see the full catalogue of items, visit: borrow.libraryofstuff.co.uk
2. Hull Healthy Holidays run free, fun, and healthy activities across the city during the winter, Easter and summer holiday healthyholidayshull.org
3. Check out the coupons which sometimes come in the local press or fliers through the letter box. These can cover a range of things from discounts to local attractions to money off food vouchers
4. Libraries aren't just for books anymore. Hull Library Services Borrowbox offers digital books, magazines, newspapers, audio books, music, and the library's very own podcast – all free of charge Hull Libraries - BorrowBox
5. If you fancy a cultural outing, you can spend all day in Hull's museums and Ferens Gallery for free
6. Join the growing army of gardeners who are enjoying beating rising prices for fruit and veg in the shops and improving their physical and mental health too.
7. Look out for online discounts for a whole range of things from days out, clothing, food and many more.

Spotlight on Oakington Garth

Since 2020, Garth residents living on Bransholme, have been actively involved in the Oakington Garth Tenants' and Residents' Association (TARA).

Their motivation has been concern about anti-social behaviour on the Garth, including criminal damage, intimidation, and litter. They believe that by getting people together through the TARA they can help transform the area and give the Garth a warm, welcome feeling to visitors and all who live there.

The TARA successfully bid for Winter Warmth and Affordable Warmth funding in the last 18 months and received just over £8,000. The money was spent

on items for the most vulnerable residents to help them keep warm. For example, slow cookers, air fryers, blankets, and bedding were among the items distributed and warmly welcomed.

One recipient said, "The items given by the TARA have helped significantly with saving money and these people have given up their own time to provide such items. Their support for the community has made a great difference to our lives".

Moving forward the TARA will continue to help and support their Garth whenever and wherever possible ensuring that the people feel safe and cherished as a community.



Tenants' Forum Meetings

Date	Time	Guest Speaker / Agenda
18 April	1pm – 3pm	Neighbourhoods and Housing Operations Manager Routine tenancy visits, pre-notice Inspections and year end performance
22 May	10am – 12noon	Healthwatch Hull, Delivery Manager
27 June	1pm – 3pm	Citizens Advice Hull and East Riding
22 July	10am – 12noon	Neighbourhoods and Housing Performance Manager, Business Insight and Quality Manager Performance against Business Plan

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

