

# home extra

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**Cornwall Housing  
resident, Ms Fuller,  
chatting with our team  
about her  
electrical safety  
test**



A CORNWALL  
COUNCIL COMPANY



# Hello



## Welcome to the Christmas 2024 edition of your Customer Magazine

As 2024 draws to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on everything we've achieved together this year and look ahead to the opportunities that await in the new year.

From working closely with tenants to shape our services, to celebrating the brilliant things happening in our communities, this has been a year of progress and collaboration. Your input has been invaluable, and I want to thank everyone who has contributed ideas, feedback, or time to help us improve the services we deliver.

As we move into 2025, we're focused on continuing this momentum – with exciting updates to our repairs service, prioritising safety and maintenance, and continuing to work to make a real difference to you, our residents.

On behalf of everyone at Cornwall Housing, I'd like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine and have a wonderful festive break with family and friends.



**Su Spence**  
Managing Director

### OOH to the rescue!

Our 'Out of Hours' team are still here for those unexpected emergencies that just can't wait until 9am. But here's the deal...

They can only tackle emergency repairs. If your enquiry isn't an emergency repair, please wait until office hours to get in touch.

### Christmas opening hours

**Christmas Eve: 9am-5pm**

**Christmas Day: Closed - OOH**

**Boxing Day: Closed - OOH**

**27 -29 December: Closed - OOH**

**30-31 December: 9am-5pm**

**1 January: Closed - OOH**

# Carol 'singing for the soul' in Cornwall



Christmas spirit hit a high note at our Independent Living Schemes this month, as our Engagement team hosted festive sing-alongs to spread some holiday cheer to our residents. Thanks to generous donations from our procurement contractor EEM, tenants tucked into mince pies, cake, and other treats while belting out classic hits from across the decades.

# When it comes to electrical safety, it's better to be switched on

Keeping your home safe is our top priority, and that's why we're on a mission to carry out electrical safety tests in all our homes.

## What's the big deal?

✓ Electrical safety tests help prevent electrical faults or fires

✓ By law, we have to test our homes every five years

✓ We have over 3,000 homes to test over the next year, and we need your help!



**If we can't access your home, it could lead to legal action.**

# Help us keep the sparks flying in the right way by:

## Allowing us access to your home



One of our contractors will complete the test in your home, **it will take 2-3 hours if no faults are found.**

## Clearing the way



We'll **need to check** your fuse board, plug sockets, switches, and light fittings in all rooms as well as testing and replacing smoke detectors.

## Keeping your appointment!



Please **stick to your appointment**, and avoid rescheduling at short notice as these appointments are booked in advance and help keep you safe in your home.

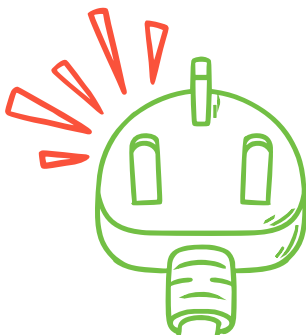
Ms. Fuller has had additional electrical works carried out to improve the safety of her home

"They made me feel at ease and comfortable," said Ms. Fuller, 88, "They worked around my health issues and even finished early when they saw I was tired. I couldn't recommend them more highly. I've been telling my neighbours to get it done."

## Who will be knocking on your door?

**Our trusted contractors will carry out the tests. Look out for operatives from:**

- RTJ Electrical
- Eljay Electrical
- Robert Heath Heating
- AC Electrical
- PH Jones
- Taylor Electrical
- Ecosafe



**All contractors will carry official ID, so don't be afraid to ask to see it.**

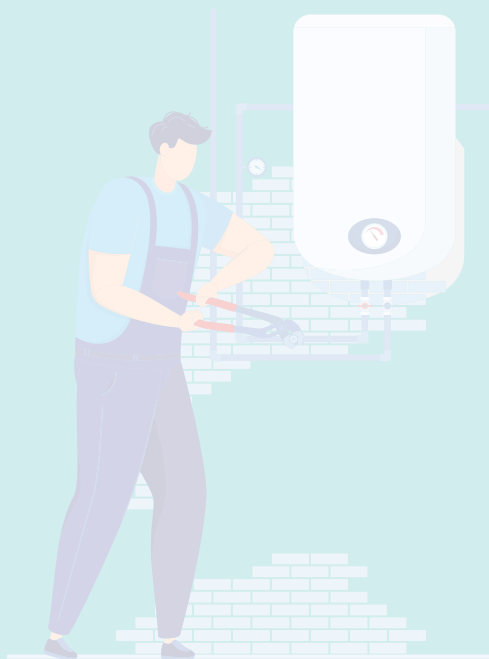
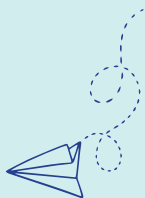
# Repairs... What's the drill?



In the last edition of Home magazine, we shared some updates about the changes to our repairs policy. We just wanted to give you a quick refresher on what it all means.

With our new repairs service on the way, we're now working under an Interim Repairs Policy to help keep everything running smoothly. This means we're prioritising emergency and urgent repairs to keep our residents safe, so non-urgent repairs will take longer during this transition.

Click here to read the full policy and timescales or visit our website [www.cornwallhousing.org.uk](http://www.cornwallhousing.org.uk)



You may hear us talking about emergency, urgent, routine, and planned repairs, and wonder what this means.



**Emergency repairs** are things such as dangerous electrics or uncontainable leaks that could caused damage.



**Urgent repairs** are things like damaged bannisters.



**Routine repairs** include replacing showers over a bath, or internal plastering.



**Planned repairs** are things such as roof and gutter repairs, or concrete and path repairs.

**Scammers are checking their list – and hoping you're on it!**

**Spot their tricks this Christmas with these tips:**

- Being offered dodgy DIY deals? If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Do your homework before saying yes to quick and cheap home improvements.
- Scammers often pose as family or friends requesting money via text or email. Check with your real relatives before sending any cash.
- Found a bargain online? Check reviews and the company's details before buying. Pay by a debit or credit card for added security.
- If you're offered a financial opportunity unexpectedly, it could be a scam. Get advice from a trusted source and don't be rushed into making any quick decisions.

How is a credit union different from traditional banks?



**This is a question that the team at Westcountry Savings & Loans (WS&L) are often asked! In a nutshell, credit unions are not-for-profit, member-owned, ethical alternatives to traditional lenders, offering honest, transparent and affordable financial services for people in their common bond area, which includes Cornwall.**

WS&L are authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Members can apply for competitive loans, including a £500 loan which is ideal for Christmas! WS&L also offer safe and secure savings accounts, and financial well-being information.



[www.westcountry.org.uk/Who-we-are](http://www.westcountry.org.uk/Who-we-are)

# Electrical safety at Christmas

Before you get too caught up in decking the halls, it's important to keep safety in mind. Here are some tips from our Fire Safety team to keep your Christmas bright, but safe.

1. **Check your decorations:** Inspect them for any damage before use, like broken sockets or frayed wires.
2. **Plan ahead:** Make sure extension cords match the power needs of your lights - they will have a limit to how many amps they can take
3. **Don't overload circuits:** One socket = one plug
4. **Keep portable heaters away from curtains and furniture**
5. **Decorating outside?** Only use extension cords and lights marked for outdoor use
6. **Don't trip over cables:** Keep cables out of walk ways and avoid putting them under rugs or near heat sources
7. **Turn electrical decorations off when you're not using them**
8. **Try to get a real tree:** Fresh trees are less of a fire risk and believe it or not they're more environmentally friendly!
9. **If you've got an artificial tree make sure it's fire-resistant**
10. **Use non-flammable tree decorations**
11. **Switch to battery candles instead of real candles**
12. **Keep an eye on your turkey:** Never leave cooking food unattended to avoid kitchen fires



# Learning lessons from complaints

An important part of engaging with residents is learning from complaints to improve our services. We regularly review trends and themes from our complaints as a whole, as well as individual cases.

## Here's an example:

**We did.** We used this feedback to improve how we communicated our 2024 Interim Repairs Policy, featuring the policy highlights prominently in our magazine and on our website. Going forward, we'll make sure to clearly explain any updates to our policies.

**You said** Cornwall Housing hasn't communicated policy changes very well, with the Repairs Policy Guide in September 2022 as an example.

**A huge thank you to the Tenants' Forum for doing a second independent review of our complaints handling**

“

**Angie Scott, Head of Customer Service and Engagement, said:** “The review was incredibly useful once again – so thank you to those who took part. It showed how our investigations and the language in our responses has improved, both in our emails and complaint handling. But it also showed areas we still need to work on, like reducing the number of surveyor visits, and completing repairs more quickly.”

”

**To all our amazing residents involved in the Tenants' Forum, Estate Monitors, Scrutiny Panel and Comms Crew – thank you!**

**This year has been incredibly busy and your dedication has made a real difference.**



# Have yourself a warm, worry-free Christmas

## Are you ready for the Universal Credit switch?

If you get benefits like Housing Benefit or Tax Credits, you'll soon be switching to Universal Credit. You don't need to do anything, unless you get a 'Migration Notice' letter asking you to switch. Please don't ignore the letter! You need to switch within 3 months to keep getting financial support.

## Our top tips for staying warm

- o Layer up.
- o Keep radiators clear to let the heat circulate.
- o Close your doors to keep the heat focused where you need it most.

**If your boiler isn't working, check your condensate pipe isn't frozen.**

Here's 3 easy steps to fix it:

- o Look for an outdoor pipe connected to your boiler. It's usually white plastic connecting to an external drain
- o Thaw the pipe. If safe to do so, pour warm (not boiling) water along the pipe
- o Reset your boiler. All should begin working normally if the pipe is defrosted. If that doesn't work, it's time to call us.

## Applied for Pension Credit yet?

Make sure to do it by 21 December 2024 as you may qualify for this year's Winter Fuel Payment. Find out more at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

# Food for thought

**Unsure where your next meal might be coming from? You're not alone. We've gathered a list of local foodbanks that may be able to provide a helping hand and a full belly when you need it most.**

**Wadebridge, Bodmin, Camelford and Padstow**

Wadebridge Foodbank. 01208 815374

**Truro**

Truro Foodbank. 07721 711669

**Saltash**

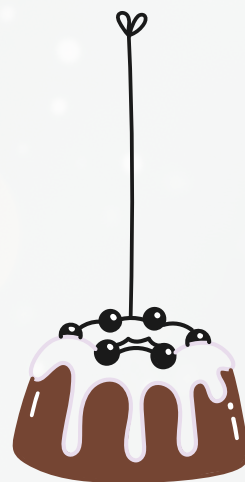
Saltash Foodbank. 0800 328 2124

**Liskeard and Looe**

Liskeard & Looe Foodbank. 07512 011452 / 01579 343742

**Falmouth**

Penryn & Falmouth Foodbank. 01326 618575



Get warm and feel welcome this winter. Local churches, community centres, and businesses have joined forces to provide a "Warm Welcome" space for those in need. These generous spaces offer a place to stay warm, enjoy a hot meal, and connect with others - helping you avoid heating your home during the colder months. [Find a warm welcome near you.](#)

**If you're struggling financially this winter, our Inclusion Advisors are here to help. They can provide support with benefit claims, debt management, advice on where to get additional help, and so much more.**

**To speak to your inclusion advisor, call or [email us.](#)**

# Your views are helping shape our services

## Level 2 engagement – asked

We're working on a Neighbourhoods Strategy to guide how we improve communities, and your input has helped shape it.

This summer, we invited a randomly selected group of tenants to take part in a short survey and share their views and priorities. Here's what they told us:

**299**  
residents took part in our 'Better Neighbourhoods' survey at the end of the summer.

### We asked

When you think of a **good neighbourhood** and community what 3 words spring to mind?

### You said

**Friendly  
Clean  
Safe**

### So, we are...

#### Prioritising safe neighbourhoods

- o Refreshing our rules on anti-social behaviour and pets
- o Working with the police on our estates
- o Reviewing how we safeguard our residents from harm
- o Exploring ways to help domestic abuse victims

If you imagine what a **good neighbourhood or estate looks like**, what needs to be right?

**Maintained  
Clean  
Tidy**

#### Prioritising clean, maintained, tidy neighbourhoods

- o Making sure estate and block inspections are kept up to date
- o Growing our Estate Rangers team
- o Improving our cleaning services
- o Reviewing our contracts for maintenance and parking
- o Changing our waste management and nature recovery projects to keep things looking great

When thinking about **your neighbourhood** what are the 3 most important things for you?

**Clean  
Safe  
Neighbourly**

#### Looking at how we can help foster friendly neighbourhoods

- Supporting activities in our communities
- Launching an Older Person's Community Service - watch this space!

# Hearing your voices when making decisions about rent

**We're gathering feedback to make sure we hear a range of views about your rent for 2025/26**

- Our Rent Management team have shared what tenants are saying in everyday interactions
- The Tenants' Forum have discussed the priorities and challenges of council housing plans
- We've spoken to 10 tenants who took part in cost-of-living interviews in 2022 to see what's changed
- All of this feedback has helped to shape our Rents Consultation survey, with 146 residents taking part

**Your input is influencing the proposals that go to our Board of Directors and Cornwall Council** and will be considered when decisions are made about rents and future plans. Final decisions will be made in February 2025.



**Find out more about our Neighbourhoods Strategy and the Rent decisions in our spring issue of Home!**



**As a thank you, residents who took part in the survey were entered into a free prize draw for a supermarket voucher. Dawn from Millbrook was our lucky winner!**



**01208 637001**

**See this number calling?  
It's our 'Your Call' telephone survey**

If you've got 10-15 minutes to spare, we'd really appreciate your feedback. As a thank you, everyone who takes part is entered into a prize draw for a supermarket voucher. Each month, about 80 tenants are randomly selected for this survey, run by our independent partner, Acuity. These results help form our Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which we report to the Regulator every year. [Our latest tenant satisfaction results are now on our website](#)



**Congratulations to Mrs Howard from Truro, our autumn winner!**

# Stepping into action on our estates

## Your feedback is making an impact

We've been listening to your feedback in our Better Neighbourhoods Survey, and it's guiding us as we make improvements to our estates.

Turn to page 12 to see how we're responding to our Better Neighbourhoods Survey results.

Our Estate walkabouts happen every spring and autumn, and they're not just for us - everyone is welcome to join!

Residents, local councillors, Cornwall Council, and sometimes even Devon & Cornwall Police team up with us to walk through our estates, identify issues, and create plans for improvement.



**See our website for details of where to meet and when.**

# Cornwall Housing Bake Off



Each issue, we bring you a delicious recipe from our Cornwall Housing community, and this time Jo is serving up her vegan Christmas pudding! Jo is our Communication and Engagement Officer, part of the team dedicated to making sure our tenants' voices aren't just heard but are actively shaping the future of Cornwall Housing.

**Jo's top tip:** You can make this up to a week ahead of Christmas. Once cooled, remove the paper and foil, replace with fresh foil, and store in a cool, dry place. Reheat in a pan of boiling water for 1 hour or microwave.

**“Shop bought Christmas puddings tend to be too sweet and not vegan. So, I make my own for my family. Even though my family aren't vegan they love them – it's become a family tradition and doubles up as my Christmas gifts!”**

## Jo's Vegan Christmas Pud

**On your marks, get set... BAKE!**

1. Grease a 1-litre pudding basin and line the base with a circle of baking paper
2. In a bowl, soak the chopped dried fruit in alcohol (or orange juice) for 2 hours, stirring occasionally to soften
3. In a large bowl, mix suet, sugar, and orange and lemon zest with a wooden spoon. Sift in flour, baking powder, spices, and salt. Add grated apple, breadcrumbs, black treacle, and soaked fruit (with its liquid). Mix thoroughly
4. Spoon the mixture into the basin, pressing down and smoothing the top. Cover with a double-layered, pleated sheet of baking paper, then foil. Tie with string to secure and create a string handle for lifting
5. To cook, place an upturned saucer or a small plate in a large saucepan. Stand the basin on top and add boiling water to reach halfway up the basin (avoid touching the foil). Cover with a lid and simmer gently for 4 hours, topping up water as needed
6. Lift the pudding out and cool for 15–20 minutes. Turn out onto a plate, slice, and serve

## Ingredients

- 200g mixed dried fruit
- 50g candied peel
- 100g dried figs, chopped
- 100g prunes, chopped
- 50g stem ginger (add some of the syrup too)
- 100ml rum (or orange juice)
- 100g vegetable suet
- 50g soft brown sugar
- ½ orange, zested
- ½ lemon, zested
- 85g plain flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 apple, peeled and grated
- 40g breadcrumbs
- 1 tbsp black treacle





## Ready to say goodbye to your Christmas tree?

If you're signed up for Cornwall Council's Garden Waste Collection, they'll come and pick it up. If not, you can drop your tree off at your local Household Waste and Recycling Centre to be composted. Or, if you're feeling green, chip and compost it yourself at home!

## Our team is here to help over the festive season



**Call us:** 0300 1234 161

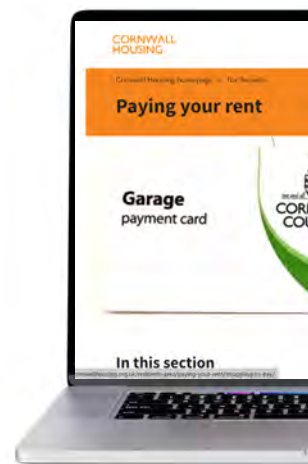


**Email us:** [info@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:info@cornwallhousing.org.uk)



**Message us:** search Cornwall Housing on Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter

## I've got rent to pay



Pay your rent anytime using our 24/7 automated payment line: 0300 1234 200 (tenancy reference required) or online at

[www.cornwallhousing.org.uk/residents-area/paying-your-rent](http://www.cornwallhousing.org.uk/residents-area/paying-your-rent)

## Not an emergency?

Our call wait times may be longer than usual over the Christmas period. Please email [info@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:info@cornwallhousing.org.uk) instead if you'd prefer not to wait!

We also expect the same longer waits during the week beginning 6 January, particularly on Monday and Tuesday. If your enquiry's not urgent, try emailing or give us a call later in the month.