



# home



Our Customer Magazine  
Winter 2024



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# Hello



and welcome to the Winter 2024 edition of your Customer Magazine...

I'm really pleased that this edition includes the major maintenance works that we are rolling out across Cornwall. Works have already started and, following new funding agreements from the Council, we'll be expanding the scope and speed of the programme over the next two years.

We know there is much to do. We need to ensure we have the contractors in place to deliver an improved service and we are working hard to do this. We'll be publishing the full programme shortly.

Alongside this, we have been looking at our estates

and how we support you to live locally. This edition includes lots of useful information on local activities, how you can engage with us, and how to give us your feedback.

We know you are the best judges of what works (and what doesn't work) and we want to make sure we keep hearing from you so that we can improve the services you receive, more on that throughout 2024!

**Su Spence**  
Managing Director



## Training and funding for our involved tenants



We have been granted £2,500 by property and construction consultancy, Ridge, to support training for our tenant volunteers.

The money was granted from Ridge's Social Value Fund, which aims to deliver social value by making contributions to local communities.

The funding has already enabled two members of our Tenant Scrutiny Panel to attend the National Tenant Scrutiny conference in Loughborough.

Want to become an involved tenant? Contact [myviews@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:myviews@cornwallhousing.org.uk)

“Attending the conference helped us learn and pass on what's new in the world of Scrutiny.”

Richard, Chair of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel



Pictured: Richard and Shane at the National Tenant Scrutiny conference

“Thank you to Ridge for funding us to attend this year's Scrutiny Conference.”

Shane, Tenant Scrutiny Panel member

We are working with Ridge to prioritise the condition of our homes. This will help our planned works program.





# Managing our trees



At Cornwall Housing, we value our trees. So, we've caught up with our Neighbourhood Services Manager, Alastair, to inform you how we manage the trees on our land.

## Can I cut down a tree in my garden?

Trees are a fantastic source of summer shade. But when trees grow large, they can start blocking light and create a huge amount of leaf-fall onto paths.

You are responsible for maintaining your garden. However, for any significant tree pruning you will need to contact us. This is so we can check with the Council for permissions and make sure it is managed in a safe way”.

## How do I ask for a tree to be cut down or cut back?

Wherever possible, we work with residents to preserve our trees. We rarely fell them and only do so where they are dead, dying or suffering from a disease. If you have a concern about a tree in your garden or on the land in your community, call us, or email [groundsmaintenance@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:groundsmaintenance@cornwallhousing.org.uk) with the location and reason and photos if possible.

We follow national guidelines and Cornwall Council's environmental policies. Our aim is to maintain our current trees, whilst increasing the number of trees in our open spaces.



We recently felled a large beech tree in Gunnislake. The tree was suffering from a disease that makes the roots liable to fracture, placing residents and road users at risk. To offset the loss of the tree, we are planting new trees in the Gunnislake area.

# Regenerating Tregurra Park

We have been working in partnership with Truro City Council, Cornwall Council, Developer Mei Loci and the local community to regenerate Tregurra Park in Truro.

A brand-new footpath completed the first phase of the project. The next phase will include outdoor gym equipment, alongside new children's play equipment, sustainable shrub beds and picnic benches. We will also be working with local volunteer groups to help plant shrubs and trees in the park.

Our capital estate regeneration budget, together with £75,000 of Section 106 money has been used to fund the project.

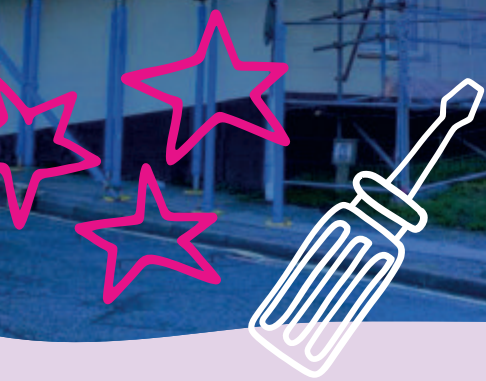


Contact us if you'd like to get involved by emailing [myviews@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:myviews@cornwallhousing.org.uk)

**Residents have told us how happy they are to be able to walk around the park with their dogs and pushchairs. The area is now much more accessible. It is great to get resident feedback and see the positive impacts.**

**Alastair Spencer, Neighbourhood Services Manager.**

# Maintenance works start across Cornwall



This article is part of a series of updates about how we are planning to invest money from Cornwall Council into homes across the county over the next three years.

We are responsible for managing all 10,500 plus Council-owned homes in the region, including general needs housing and older people's accommodation, on behalf of Cornwall Council. Together we are on a mission to improve the condition of those homes – your homes.

We've been listening and you've told us that there are some basic things we need to tackle – stopping damp and mould, fixing leaks and drafts and making homes cheaper to run.

As a result, we are targeting £79M over the next three years on those homes most in need of improvement in 53 separate locations ranging from Bude and Torpoint to St Just and Penzance.

## Your questions – Am I getting an upgrade? When will the works be done?

As we start planning each contract over the coming months and years, we will contact those of you who are affected to let you know about planned improvements to your homes.

If you have a question in the meantime, please contact our customer contact team on **0300 1234 161** or email **info@cornwallhousing.org.uk** (please include your home address as well as your full name).

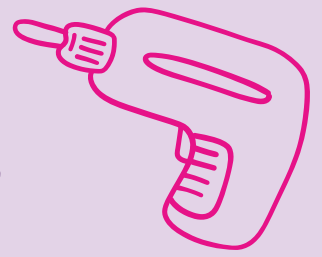


## Scaffolding for re-roofing the flats in Gregory's Court in Bodmin.





# Investing £79M in homes - which works will get done?



Whilst £79M is a lot of money, and is a sizable increase in comparison to previous years' investments, we will still need to prioritise where we spend it because we cannot afford to improve every home, and some do not need it. That means we will look to tackle homes that have been assessed as being in the poorest condition first. That will include the following types of works:

- **Energy efficiency** - Homes needing improvements are properties with an EPC of F and G. An EPC is an Energy Performance Certificate and they are a way of measuring the energy efficiency of a home. If a property has an EPC rating of F and G, the likelihood is the build quality will not be up to modern standards – there may be no cavity wall, the windows and doors may not be double-glazed, the roof may not have insulation and there is unlikely to be any insulation in the external walls.
- **Roofing and guttering** - properties with known issues with the roof. We will prioritise roof works for buildings with more than one home, such as, blocks of flats. Where there are reports of leaks, issues with chimneys and problems with fascias and guttering.
- **Fire safety** - although we have no high risk buildings (tower blocks), the laws about fire safety have improved over recent years and we want to

make sure that our buildings keep up with best practice in fire safety. That might include adding fire breaks to buildings with more than two floors and making sure our fire doors are replaced.

- **Drainage works** – replacing or upgrading septic tanks where there are known to be issues.
- **All other works** – there are lots of smaller packages of work taking place including new kitchen and bathroom replacements, boilers and heating upgrades, electrical upgrades, limited solar panel installations and windows and doors replacements.

Councillor Oliver Monk, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing, said:

“Tackling the housing crisis in Cornwall not only relies upon developing new social and affordable housing for people in the region, but we must also take good care of our existing homes. We share a vision with Cornwall Housing to provide decent, safe, energy efficient homes to people on low incomes throughout Cornwall and this programme of investment demonstrates our commitment to achieving that ambition. It's a new era for Cornwall Housing tenants, as the benefits of major changes across the organisation begin to take effect.”

Su Spence, Managing Director of Cornwall Housing, said:

**“We know we've still got lots more work to do but this major investment plan is a step in the right direction in proving that we are determined to make lasting change that will benefit you.**

**You will begin to see real and meaningful improvements to your homes and neighbourhoods, which will initially target those buildings and areas most in need of investment.**”

**A range of works for flats in Albion Court in Torpoint have started.**



# Your questions answered

## How long should a 'stock condition survey' of my home take?

A 'Stock Condition Survey' is an inspection of your home. The survey helps us assess the age and condition of each building element, so we can schedule maintenance.



**More than 4500 tenants have had stock condition surveys on their home in the last 18 months.**

**This information helps us prioritise major maintenance works or get critical works underway as soon as possible.**

**There are currently three surveys being undertaken by our contractor partners:**

- **Stock condition surveys** – Ridge are working to survey all homes. They will need access to each room, the garden, and possibly the roof space to check for leaks and the condition of the insulation. Surveys take approximately 30-45 mins.
- **Quality assurance inspections** – Kendal King Scott are checking a small sample of the stock surveys that Ridge have undertaken. This should take no more than 30 mins.
- **Carbon surveys** – Dartmoor Energy are working with Ovo Energy to survey high priority homes in Bodmin, Camelford, Chacewater, Millbrook and Torpoint. This survey takes two hours and looks at how well the heating works and the house holds warmth.

More information is on our website and will be included in the spring magazine.

### Should I be charged for a repair?

We share the responsibility for home maintenance with you. This means you **won't be charged for repairs that we are responsible for** if you're a Council or Cornwall Housing tenant.

**There are some circumstances where we may have to charge you.**

These include:

- **damage caused** beyond usual wear and tear or by not reporting a repair
- **neglect** of your home or garden
- **replacement of items** including keys, batteries and lightbulbs
- **claiming a non-emergency repair as an emergency**

More information and a full list of charges is available on our website.

If you report a repair to us, we will advise you if it could be chargeable. Our Customer Service team cannot discuss charges over the phone, but they can ask the right person to call you back.

### Can't replace a light bulb or maintain the garden?

Often a local handy person or home help will be much cheaper than us

For advice finding support at home:

Age Concern **01872 266 383**

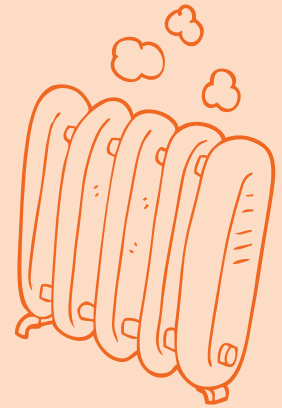
Disability Cornwall **01736 759500**



# Your essential electric and heating services: help us help you



Your electrics and gas, including solid fuel, air and ground sourced heating, all require annual servicing. This is really important to prevent loss of power, heating or hot water, but also to keep you, your home, and your community safe.

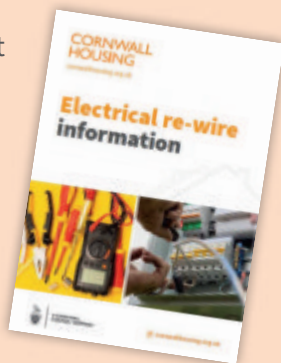


## What does an electrical inspection involve?

Electrical inspections assess the safety and condition of the electrics within your home. The inspection is vital, as it detects if any upgrades are required and can provide early detection of heat, smoke or carbon monoxide faults.

Previously, we aimed to conduct electrical inspections every 10 years. We are now moving to every 5 years.

This year, we will be assessing homes in Bodmin and Launceston. If, as a result of the inspection, your home needs an electrical rewire, we provide you with an information leaflet.



You can read the leaflet before a re-wire is due on our website, or contact us for a copy.

### Your electrical inspection checks your

- consumer unit
- sockets
- lighting
- smoke detectors
- switches
- and more

**If we can't get hold of you to ensure your services are complete, we may need to take steps to make sure that we can get it done.**

Under legal regulations, we can ask for powers to forcibly access a home to undertake a service and make sure it is safe. This is known as an injunction.

However, we don't want to take such forceful action. We are working to understand how we achieve better access to homes, to avoid injunctions in the future.



**After 2 failed appointments, a warning sticker is put on the front door to highlight the importance of contacting us. Legal letters will be sent if an appointment is still not made.**



Concerned you can't make your gas or electric service? Work, caring demands, or health issues making it hard for you to let us in? Call Claire from our Building Compliance No Access team, on 0300 1234 161, who can help make arrangements to meet your needs.





# Investing in our Cornish Unit Homes



We manage many different types of homes for Cornwall Council, including Cornish Units. We currently maintain over 800 Cornish Unit homes, these are recognisable by their distinctive roofs - a 'mansard hipped roof', which envelops the first floor. The first floor, and roof, is a tile clad timber structure, and the first-floor windows poke through the tile structure.

In 2023, we enhanced 39 Cornish Unit homes at Oakfield Road, Falmouth. Using a whole house approach, we have updated the thermal value of the properties, introduced low carbon heating systems and installed more efficient heating.

## Tackling heating loss

Cornish Units offer generously sized rooms, layouts and gardens. But, they can be poorly insulated due to their unusual roof design.

To reduce these issues, so far we have upgraded 90% of our Cornish Unit homes.

Now, we are reviewing the energy performance of all our properties, including Cornish Units. We are working towards the Government's commitment to ensure our homes reach energy performance level C by 2030. We will assess and make adaptations to any homes that fall below this level.

## Combat damp and mould

As with all homes, care must be taken to avoid issues with damp, mould and condensation in Cornish Units. Here's our 3 top tips to help reduce these issues in your home:

- 1. Ventilate** – put your windows on the latch each day to exchange fresh air from outside with stale air and moisture from inside your home.
- 2. Heat** - try to maintain a constant temperature throughout your house
- 3. Reduce moisture** - when cooking or bathing, close the door and use the extractor fan and open a window to remove steam from the room.

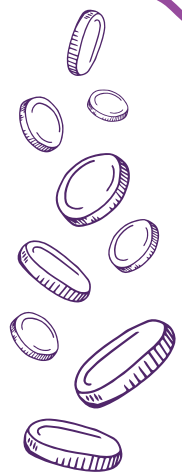


**Did You Know?** There were over 30,000 Cornish Units built in the UK from 1946-1960s, in response to the post-WWII housing shortage.

## Struggling with energy costs?

Some people find draughts much more, and paying for extra heating can be difficult. National Energy Action offer a free support service providing advice to householders on their energy bills and keeping warm and safe in their home.

[www.nea.org.uk/get-help](http://www.nea.org.uk/get-help) or call **0800 304 7159**



## If it just won't budge...

If you are struggling with damp, mould or condensation, require further advice on how to deal with it, or need our help, you can check the advice on our website or email us at: [info@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:info@cornwallhousing.org.uk) or call: **0300 1234 161**





# Listening to you about Damp and Mould

We have a dedicated team who are working hard to support residents to deal with issues of damp, mould and condensation in your homes.

## You said...

Earlier this year, residents told us they wanted a range of visual information explaining what damp, mould and condensation is and how to reduce it.

## We did...

We ran a series of drop-in sessions and door knocks in September across Cornwall. The aim was to listen to residents about their issues and discuss how Cornwall Housing is managing damp and mould. We also provided residents with new leaflets and a video outlining how to reduce condensation and save energy.

## Our new video and leaflets

If your windows are getting steamy or your window ledges are wet, then there may be too much moisture in the air. Our website features some tips to help prevent damp, mould and condensation in your home.

Take a look at [www.cornwallhousing.org.uk](http://www.cornwallhousing.org.uk)

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Tenants engaged

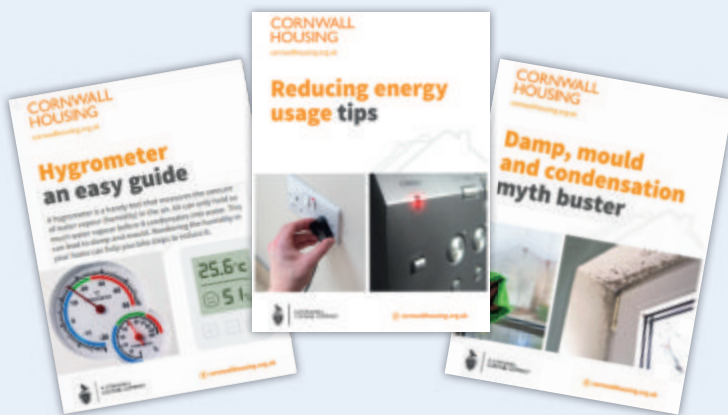
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Communities

## 6 Representatives from

- Our Damp and Mould team
- Our Communication and Engagement team
- Area Housing Officers
- The Tenants' Forum
- National Energy Action

6



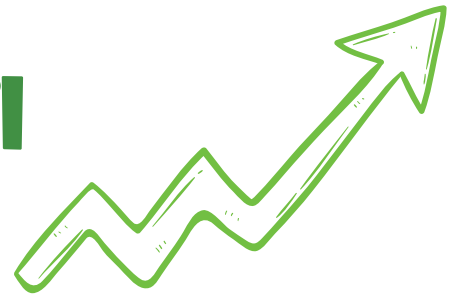
National Energy Action providing energy saving tips to residents



Councillor Olly Monk listening to a resident about their concerns



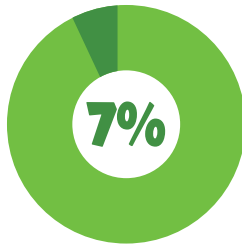
# Why does the Council need to put rents up?



Your rent goes to the Council to pay for council housing services. It is separate from the Council Tax budget that pays for most council services. See the short video or leaflet on our website.

**Rent levels for most council tenants are capped by Government guidance - CPI + 1%, which the Council can follow or set at a lower amount:**

So for example,



This is **7p extra**

for every pound, so an average rent of **£90.27** per week would increase to **£96.60**



**When setting the budget for council housing the Council needs to balance the need for:**

**1**  
Council housing services 'revenue', - money to deliver your housing services - including repairs



**2**  
Council housing services 'capital', - planned maintenance to improve the condition of your homes



**3**  
Creating **new/more** homes



**The major question about how to spend the money is how much to allocate for each when there is not enough for what Cornwall needs:**

There is a huge need for affordable housing in Cornwall with lots of homeless families and residents in temporary accommodation.

The Council had planned to create about 1600 more homes in the next five years but has now prioritised investing all the funding in maintaining current council homes. It is looking at a different funding model to create new homes that will pay for themselves over 30 years.



**Why do rents need to go up?**

**Without an increase, because of inflation the Council and Cornwall Housing will have less money to fund services.**

There are lots of things we need to fix and improve, including a massive programme of maintenance to improve the condition of our homes.



## Your views

In November, we surveyed tenants about the priorities for housing spend, and the difficult choices facing the Council. 123 people took part. You said...

Your main priorities are repairs and maintenance, tackling damp and mould, and new or more homes.

76% of you support selling costly to repair homes, and would sell when the cost of repair reached £75k.

Many of you want reassurances that the sale money will go into social housing, and that new homes will be of good quality.

**Survey results - find the full report on our website**





# Support to manage the rent increase

At time of going to press, the Council is considering a rent increase for 2024/25 of 6.7% + 1%.

The actual rent increase for your home will be sent out in the formal rent notice in late February/early March.

## Who you may need to tell

- If you receive Universal Credit, you must update your online Universal Credit account. This must be done on the date of the change – 1 April 2024 - as the system cannot process the change in advance and any delay may result in under or over payments, which will need to be corrected.
- If you receive Housing Benefit you may not have to pay the full amount as any entitlement will be paid direct to your rent account.
- If you pay by direct debit, you will receive a letter towards the end of March 2024 showing your payment amounts & dates for the coming financial year.

- If you pay by standing order, you need to amend the payment amount yourself with your bank.

## Worried about paying your rent?

We are here to help. Over the past few years our Inclusion Advisors have provided additional tenancy support and financial advice to hundreds of our tenants. We know that for some this is a difficult time, and we want to do what we can to continue to support tenants. If you have any concerns about how this change may affect you then please get in touch with us to see how we can help: email [info@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:info@cornwallhousing.org.uk) or call us on **0300 1234 161**.



## It's never too early to think about Christmas!

If Christmas just gone felt a bit costly, then opening a Christmas Savings Account with Westcountry Savings & Loans (WS&L), your credit union, could be the New Year's Resolution you hadn't thought of making!

The WS&L Christmas Savings Account is an ideal way of planning for what can be an expensive time of year, giving account holders the chance to put something aside on a regular basis for the festivities.

Find out more about making Christmas 2024 more manageable at

[www.westcountry.org.uk/christmas-savings](http://www.westcountry.org.uk/christmas-savings)



We have partnered with Westcountry Savings and Loans and seven housing associations across the Southwest to establish the Credit Union Sustainability Partnership (CUSP). We are working together to promote affordable alternatives to high-interest lenders.

# New year, new home: how can I downsize?



We understand that bidding for a new home can seem daunting. But there are lots of good reasons to downsize! Take a look at some of the benefits below. We've also included some of the challenges, so you can weigh up whether it's the right decision for you.

## Benefits



- ✓ Lower bills
- ✓ If you receive benefits, we can help you apply for downsizing funding to pay for removal costs
- ✓ You'll be moved to 'Band A' on Homechoice, meaning you'll be placed in the highest priority housing need
- ✓ Less responsibilities
- ✓ Less stairs

## Challenges



- Less space
- Moving costs
- Bidding for homes
- Finding a home close to your support network
- If you are looking for a mutual exchange, you'll need agreement from two or more parties

## How do I Downsize?

- Register on Homechoice
- Log in and bid on a property you like
- If successful, Homechoice will contact you

OR

- If you find a mutual exchange, both parties must fill out a mutual exchange form at [www.cornwallhousing.org.uk](http://www.cornwallhousing.org.uk)



## Our Inclusion Advisors can support you to...

- Register for Homechoice
- If you receive benefits, they can:
  - Change your benefits to your new address
  - Apply for downsizing funding for removal costs or to clear rent arrears

**Call 0300 1234 161 and ask to speak to your Inclusion Advisor about downsizing today!**



# Thinking of leaving us? Leave your home clean and tidy and save £1000s



If you are ending your tenancy, you could be charged more than **£2,500** for leaving the property in a poor condition.

We want you to move out with as little fuss and cost to you as possible. So, to help your move go smoothly, we've created a checklist to remind you of everything you need to do before you leave. This will help you avoid being charged.

Don't let your old home get in the way of your new start. Leave us on good terms by:

## 1. Completing your paperwork

- Complete our 'Termination of Tenancy' form at [www.cornwallhousing.org.uk](http://www.cornwallhousing.org.uk) or contact us to request a paper copy. **Remember to give at least 28 days notice - the rent will be owed on the full 28 days.**
- Inform your gas, electric and water providers that you are leaving.
- Clear any rent arrears and pay your rent until the agreed tenancy end date in full OR contact your Rent Management Officer
- Re-direct your mail – grab a form from the Post Office



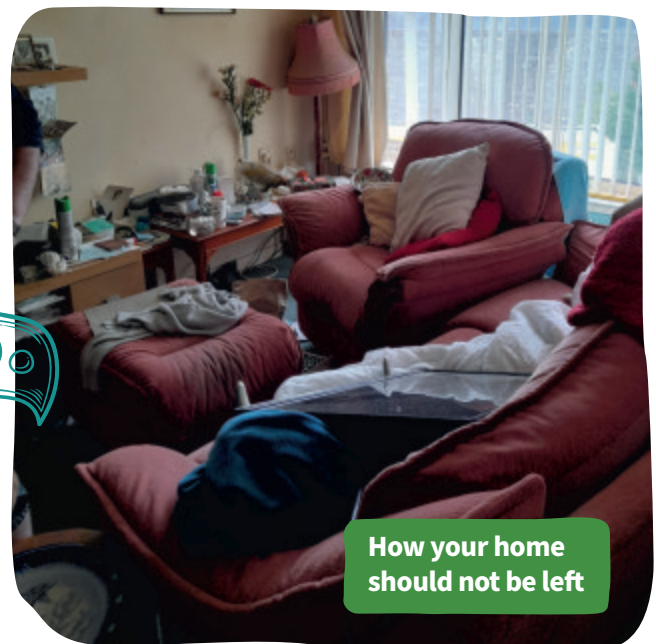
## 2. Packing up all your belongings

- Clean the property
- Fix any damages
- Tidy your outside areas
- Remove all refuse and garden waste



## 3. Handing us your keys

- Place your keys in the key box OR if there is no key box on the property, deliver it to a Council One Stop Shop
- Inform **0300 1234 161** (extension **701550**) that the keys have been left in your designated location.



Clearance charges can be found at [www.cornwallhousing.org.uk](http://www.cornwallhousing.org.uk) 

# You asked us –



# what are we doing to tackle antisocial behaviour?

Thankfully, many residents get on well with their neighbours and haven't suffered from antisocial behaviour. But when residents do experience harassment, alarm or distress we take it seriously. We work alongside local communities and other agencies to investigate and resolve instances of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Sometimes it's more appropriate for the Police or the Council's specialist team to provide advice or take the lead on tackling ASB – we work closely with them to get results as quickly as possible.

## Examples of anti-social behaviour include:

- Noise nuisance – loud parties; shouting; excessive noise from TV or audio equipment
- Criminal damage and vandalism
- Physical violence against people and property

## The following examples are not considered to be anti-social behaviour:

- Noise from children playing
- Personal differences or family disputes
- Disagreements about parking

Find out more about antisocial behaviour and hate crime on our website.

## What happens when I report antisocial behaviour?

Our contact centre team are often the first point of call, they will ask you for details

and check if our teams can help or if you should be talking to the police.

Housing officers will investigate, gathering evidence, and seeing if there is a way to resolve or address the problems. They may:

- Talk to those who have reported their concerns
- Engage with perpetrators to make them aware of the impact of their behaviour and potential consequences
- If appropriate, talk to other people in the community and support agencies
- Issue a verbal or written warning
- Support the community to record evidence
- Engage the specialist support of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team

If the antisocial behaviour is significant, and all other avenues have been exhausted, the teams may go to court to evict the tenant who is causing the behaviour.







Sarah and Cassie outside of a home that was recently issued a closure order due to anti-social behaviour.

“

**Our goal is to resolve, not to evict. We don't like taking action for closure orders, but sometimes it's necessary.**”

Sarah, Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer.

## Taking robust action to keep residents safe - what is a closure order?



Closure orders are only appropriate in the most serious of cases and where all other options have been explored. A closure order is applied for under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. It means that a home can be boarded up so that the tenant cannot return for the time specified by the court. They can be granted if the court is satisfied that a person has or is likely to engage in disorderly, offensive or criminal behaviour on a premises, or that its use has or is likely to result in serious nuisance to members of the public.

Closure orders usually require many months of collaborative work. Our Neighbourhood Enforcement officers usually work alongside Cornwall Council's anti-social behaviour team, Devon and Cornwall Police and residents to tackle anti-social behaviour issues together.

We granted closure orders for two flats in Liskeard last autumn, due to anti-social behaviour.

We worked late to board up the properties and make them secure, whilst work began to permanently remove the existing tenants. We also created a Local Lettings Plan to change the criteria of who can be offered homes in the area.

Both properties are now back in our possession and are being repaired and redecorated, ready for new tenants to move in. Our estate caretakers tidied up the area to bring about a fresh start and open up the previously overgrown street.





# Better Connections

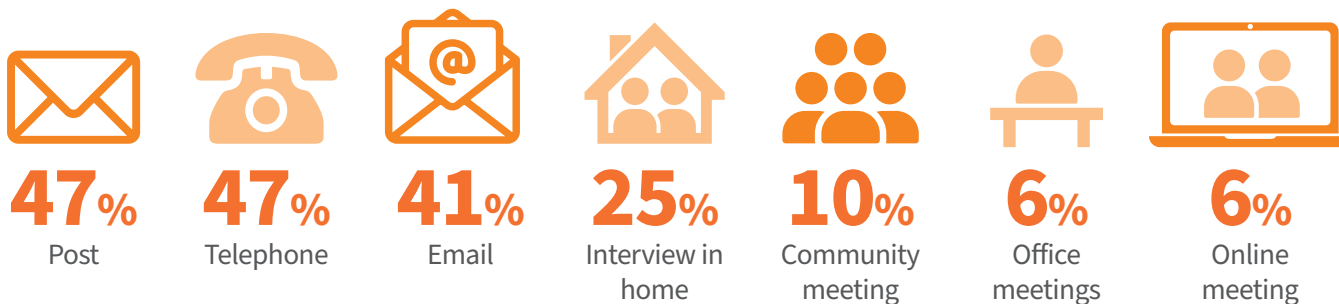
Our communications and engagement survey - July/Aug 2023

## 1125 tenants took part in the survey, which will improve our information and engagement.

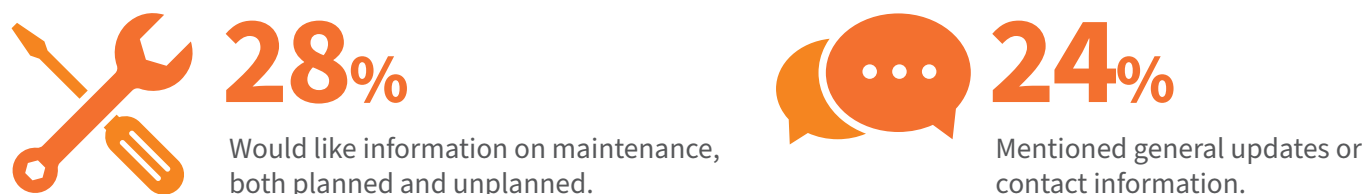
Over 1,000 tenants took part in the survey via email, post and over the phone. We worked with PFA research to conduct our 'Better Connections' survey throughout August. The aim was to update our understanding about how different tenants want to be kept informed and engage with us.

### Some key results from the survey.

#### What ways do you like to give your views?



#### What sorts of information do you want us to tell you about in our newsletter?



We will explain how this feedback influences our strategy for improving our communication and engagement in our spring magazine.

Find out more about the survey and view more results at [www.cornwallhousing.org.uk](http://www.cornwallhousing.org.uk)

#### Tenants that took part in the survey were entered into a free prize draw to win a £100 supermarket voucher!

Bogusia Sierota from Launceston was the lucky winner and was awarded the voucher by her Area Housing Officer, Ruth Ayre.

Bogusia said: "I was so shocked when you rang to tell me the news. I never win anything; I couldn't believe it. Thank you so much. I am very happy and very pleased to receive the voucher."



Scan the QR code to see the full report



# How you can get involved

There are lots of ways you can get involved – from one off activities, to stepping forward to be part of a panel. There will be more information in our spring magazine – and if you’re interested, find more information on our website in our Resident Involvement section, or contact us at [myviews@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:myviews@cornwallhousing.org.uk)



## Join our Communications Crew!

Volunteer to help us improve our leaflets and information – **at a time and place that suits you.**

Currently, a group of 21 tenants give us feedback on draft leaflets, web pages or videos.

We’re getting such great feedback; we want to expand the Crew.



The Communications Crew have helped us improve:

- ✓ Damp and mould leaflets
- ✓ Electrical re-wire leaflet
- ✓ Annual performance report



If you’re interested and want to find out more email us at [myviews@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:myviews@cornwallhousing.org.uk) or call us on **0300 1234 161**



## Get involved with scrutinising our service

**Do you have some time to spare? (On average one day per month?)**

**Would you like to learn new skills?**

**Want to be part of team?**

**We have two tenant-led panels for volunteers that monitor and scrutinise our services:**

- **Tenant-led Scrutiny Panel.** The panel of tenants choose an area of the housing service to take an in depth look at and see how it could provide a better service, and make recommendations to us. They meet online and occasionally in person, on average once per month. Their next Scrutiny exercise is starting in spring.
- **Tenants’ Forum.** The group meet four times a year to monitor and scrutinise how we are performing. They also have optional extra meetings to look at how we are handling complaints.
- Training is provided
- Transport or care expenses and support with IT access are available if required

**The Scrutiny Panel recently looked at the standard of empty homes - find out more about the difference they make on our website**





# From John Harris – Chair of the Tenants’ Forum



## Championing tenants’ top issues

“Damp and mould, its causes and effects have been the subject of nationwide concern over the past year or two. So much so, that it was included in the recent Social Housing Regulation Act. The Tenants’ Forum has been working with Cornwall Housing over the past few months to tackle this issue, which affects the lives of almost all Cornwall Housing tenants to a degree.

Unfortunately, Cornwall is more susceptible than most other parts of the of the UK to damp and mould. With our ever-changing climate (which seems to be getting wetter), the situation will only become worse. The effects of damp and mould have recently been given more urgency, after it was shown to be a major factor in a number of recent tragic events.

So, what is being done to address this problem for the residents of Cornwall Housing? Cornwall Housing have begun to be much more proactive in dealing with health scares and hazards such as damp and mould. Cornwall Housing now have a damp and mould team, put in place to tackle this specific issue.

There has been a limited number of community events throughout the county which have mainly focused on damp and mould in the home. At the events, members of the damp and mould team have given advice and offered practical help to people

living with damp and mould, along with advice on other hazards which may affect their health, home or wellbeing.

The Tenants’ Forum was present at all of these events, offering support and collecting tenants’ accounts of problems, issues and anything else they felt needed saying. Many tenants are currently living in conditions where, through no fault of their own, there is damp and mould and a lack of adequate heating. It is an ever present and growing problem.

As we move through winter, the importance of addressing the worst effects of damp and mould become more important. There is still a long way to go but tackling damp and mould and the effects of fuel poverty are a priority for members of the Tenants’ Forum. We have asked for more Damp and Mould events to be held to provide information and advice to more residents.

**John Harris, Chair of the Tenants’ Forum** ”



# Your beautiful gardens! 2023 competition winners



Christine with 1st place,  
presented by John

I really do love my garden, it's my happy place. I encourage everyone to grow something, even if it's just a few small pots, it gets you out in the fresh air, and you can soon become hooked!



Linda from Cawsand -  
winner, 2nd place



Julie, winner - 3rd place  
presented by Richard

## Enter our 2024 garden competition – deadline July 2024

Find out how on our website





# How do you think we are performing?

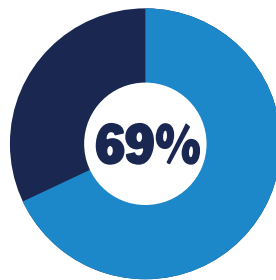


Here are some of our key performance measures at the end of September 2023.

## Our 'Your Call' survey results - Tenant Satisfaction Measures

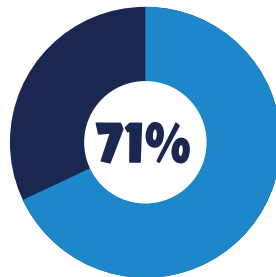
510 tenants took part in the survey by the end of September. Taken together, the feedback is:

Overall   
Satisfaction

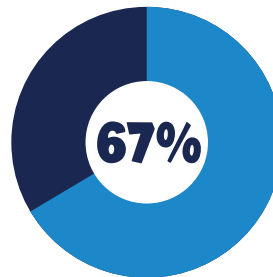


Our second prize draw winner for our Your Call survey - Mr Eddy with his dog

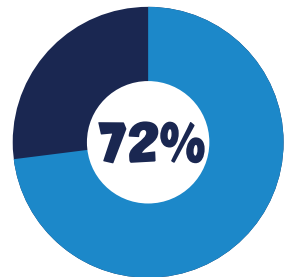
## Repairs & Maintenance



Satisfaction with repairs



Satisfaction that home is **well maintained**



Satisfaction with **time taken** to complete most recent repair

Go to our website for the latest Your Call results or contact us for a postal copy if you are not online.



## Other key performance measures:

- Homes with annual gas service – April - June 99.3% - July – September 99.67%
- Complaints responded to in time – April - June 93% - July - September 94%

We are working with our tenant volunteers on our Communications Crew to develop our performance information to make sure that it is easy to understand and includes the areas you most want to know about.

If there is performance information that you think should be included in the magazine, contact us at [myviews@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:myviews@cornwallhousing.org.uk) or call us.



# How are we learning from complaints?

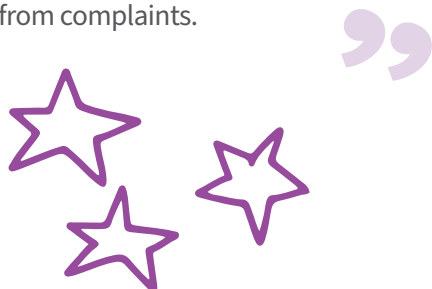
This year we've prioritised improving how we handle your complaints. This has been about making sure that we properly address your issues and respond in a reasonable time. We are also looking at what your complaints are telling us about how we need to improve our services.

**Angie Scott, Head of Customer Services and Engagement said:**

“We know we still have a lot more work to do to improve how we handle the complaints we receive from our residents. We want to provide you with an excellent service and we're working really hard to get there.

We're still receiving a high volume of complaints but our handling of those complaints has improved, particularly when compared with this time last year – we are contacting residents and issuing complaint response letters much more quickly (93% on time). We are also upholding many more complaints when compared with last year, which means we are taking responsibility for failings and trying to make amends with residents.”

“Every three months, senior staff identify key learning from our complaints and the action we will take. We share this with the Tenants' Forum who monitor how we are learning from complaints.”



“I was told it would take two days to take up and replace my front path. The operative arrived and only had one day, so he did half of the path. He said he would come back but he didn't.

I made a complaint to Cornwall Housing about this. There was miscommunication, but eventually it was finished about 2 weeks later. They have now done a really good job. It was a challenge, but it was all resolved well.”

**Mr Kemp, Wadebridge.**



## Tenants' scrutiny of our complaints

The Tenants' Forum, led by John Harris, have been taking a look at the quality of our complaint responses. Members from the group have volunteered to feedback about the quality of our work. They have been provided with access to anonymised complaints and responses from April – September this year.

**At a meeting with complaints staff in December they said:**

“Improvements have been made in how Cornwall Housing is handling complaints, particularly when compared to previous years. But work is still needed to bring them up to a consistently high standard. The main issue is communication – especially keeping residents updated.”



# Cornwall Housing Bake Off



Each issue, we introduce someone from our Cornwall Housing community through their yummy recipes! This edition, Nyree has shared her incredible 'Chocolate Showstopper Cake.' Nyree has worked with us for an impressive 10 years. Her role involves managing all of our older persons' and supported housing schemes.

“ I started baking at a very young age and food has always been a huge part of our family life. I love baking for other people - I always make my children's birthday cakes and I recently baked a huge batch of cupcakes for a Cancer Research fundraiser at work. ”



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

## Nyree's Chocolate Showstopper Cake

- Heat your oven to 160c fan/140c/ Gas 3. Butter and line a 20cm round cake tin
- Put the dark chocolate in a medium pan with the butter
- Mix the instant coffee granules into 125ml cold water and pour into the pan
- Warm through over a low heat until everything is melted - don't overheat. You can also melt in the microwave for about 5 mins, stirring regularly
- Mix the two flours with the bicarbonate of soda, muscovado sugar, golden caster sugar and the cocoa powder and smooth out any lumps
- In a separate bowl, beat the eggs and the buttermilk together
- Pour the egg mixture and chocolate mixture into the flour mixture and stir everything together till you get a smooth, runny consistency
- Pour the combined mixture into the tin and bake for 1hr 30mins.
- Push a skewer into the centre of the cake and if it comes out clean then it is cooked. The top should also feel firm to the touch
- Leave the cake to cool in the tin, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely. Cut the cold cake through the middle horizontally into three slices
- To make the ganache, put the remaining dark chocolate in a bowl
- Pour the cream and caster sugar into a pan and heat until it is about to boil
- Take it from the heat and pour it over the chocolate. Stir until the chocolate has melted and the mixture is smooth. Cool the mixture to let it thicken but so it is still pourable
- Sandwich the layers of cake together with a little of the ganache and then pour the rest over the top of the cake letting it fall down the sides. Smooth over with a knife
- Decorate the cake as you wish, with extra chocolate to add the finishing touches to a real showstopper of a cake - fit for any celebration or get together!

### Ingredients Cake

- 200g Dark Chocolate Chopped
- 200g Butter cubed
- 1 tbsp instant coffee granules
- 85g Plain Flour
- 85g Self-Raising flour
- ¼ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 200g light brown muscovado sugar
- 200g Golden caster sugar
- 25g cocoa powder
- 3 medium eggs
- 75ml buttermilk

### Ganache Icing

- 200g Dark Chocolate chopped
- 300ml double cream
- 2 tbsp golden caster sugar



## Welcoming the new Oakland's Green committee

A new committee has been formed at the Oakland's Green community centre! This comes nearly one year after the closure of its previous committee, which supported the community of Saltash for 38 years.

The community centre has finally been able to re-open due to a generous donation from Travis Perkins Ltd, the UK's largest supplier of building materials. The money has been used to fund resources for the centre and to host an open day.



The Christmas themed open day was held at the end of November and was officially opened by the Mayor of Saltash. Activities were available for everyone to enjoy, including arts and crafts, a tombola, and a bric-a-brac table. Donations were also made from local shops.



Oakland's Green has hosted many events over the years, including coffee mornings, bingo and themed parties, which the new committee hope to continue.



We can't thank Travis Perkins enough for their very generous donation to our opening fund. Their support has allowed us to open the community centre which has been closed for a year. We can now provide activities and resources to the people in our community who need them most. Travis Perkins has truly made a difference in our community and we're incredibly grateful.

**Oakland's Green Committee.**

## Newly refurbished space for Polruan Hostel residents

We hosted an official 'open day' to showcase our renovations to temporary housing accommodation Polruan Hostel in October. The open day revealed refurbishments to 18 flats and shared bathroom facilities, along with an upgraded children's playroom and new heating and toilet facilities.



**It's now a warmer and nicer environment to play with my son.**

**Chloe, Polruan resident.**





# Contacting us

Contact us for anything to do with your tenancy, maintaining your home, or estate services that we look after. To contact us, call our customer service team on **0300 1234 161** or email **info@cornwallhousing.org.uk**. They can also direct you to your Area Housing Officer, Inclusion Advisor, or Rent Management Officer.

## What's the difference between Cornwall Council and Cornwall Housing?

Cornwall Housing manages and maintains over 10,000 properties that are owned by Cornwall Council (including homes, garages, shops, and land in neighbourhoods with Council housing).

## How to contact Cornwall Council

Contact Cornwall Council for issues that do not relate to the management of your home, such as rubbish and recycling, highways and streetlights, benefits, and Homechoice.

For general enquiries call **0300 1234 100** or email **customerservices@cornwall.gov.uk**.

## We're improving our customer service!


This year, we've increased training and created more capacity in the customer service centre. This is reducing call waiting times and improving our knowledge to answer your enquiries, so you don't have to wait for a call back.

## Quicker answering your calls

On average we are answering calls in just over a minute. But there are busy times and quiet times. If you can, avoid calling on Monday mornings or lunchtimes. If it's not urgent, email us or check our website.



## Who is my Area Housing Officer?

You can check on our website. 

Area	Housing Officer name
Wadebridge and Padstow	Lindsay Baxter
Bude and Camelford	Ray Holder
Looe - Polruan	Lisa Dolly
Bodmin	Helena Rance and Cassie Kenny
Saltash	Donna McEvoy
Torpoint	Anna Deeble
Launceston	Vacancy
Callington, Calstock and Gunnislake	Kim Williams
Liskeard	Meg Wilson
St Agnes, Perranporth and rural areas around Truro and Falmouth	Cale Ivins
Falmouth & Truro (temporary)	Dillon Centini
Truro	Robyn Hingley
Truro and Roseland	Vacancy
Falmouth / Penryn and villages - Mylor / Flushing / Carnon Downs / Playing Place / Feock / Constantine	Beverly Coumbe and Samantha Campbell

**CORNWALL HOUSING**

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



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