

OUR VOICE

ENCIRCLE HOUSING NEWSLETTER

Encircle
HOUSING

AUTUMN ISSUE

Welcome

The summer has been an exciting time. New people have been moving into their homes, we have been finding out what tenants think about our services, and our Making A Difference Days have continued with two further garden makeovers.

Improving our services is something we are passionate about. A huge thanks to everyone who took part in our annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey. We have published the results in this newsletter.

We are delighted that 33 tenants have registered their interest to get involved in our services. Plans are being made and we will be in touch very soon.

Earlier this year, we undertook fire assessments to all of our properties. We produced a plan, and the fire safety improvement works, costing over £200,000, started in April and will be completed in December. If we are doing work at your home, we will get in touch to explain what work is being carried out and when.

Peter Aviston
Managing Director

Read the Tenant Satisfaction Survey results on page 2 -3. Thank you to everyone who took part. We want to continue improving with your help.



INSIDE: NEWS • ENERGY SAVING TIPS • COMPETITION

TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you to everyone who took part in our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey. Nearly a quarter of our tenants took part. We are looking at ways to improve this so more people can take part next year.



96.6% of tenants are very satisfied or satisfied with the safety of security of your home



IMPROVEMENT: Our Surveyors are carrying out health checks ensuring locks are secure and working correctly. Improving our 24/7 repairs service.

96.6% of tenants are very satisfied or satisfied that Encircle Housing treats you fairly and with respect



IMPROVEMENT: A Tenant Involvement Strategy. Gathering information to gain greater understanding about our tenant's cultures and undertake training where required.

94.2% of tenants are very satisfied or satisfied with the overall service provided by Encircle Housing



IMPROVEMENT: A Tenant Involvement Strategy and undertaking customer services training specialised to our tenant's cultures.

91.9% of tenants are very satisfied or satisfied that your rent provides value for money



IMPROVEMENT: Making sure our services provide Value for Money, ensure we are getting the best tariff with service providers.

87.3% of tenants are very satisfied or satisfied that Encircle Housing keeps you informed, listens to you and acts on your views



IMPROVEMENT: Hold focus groups to gather tenants' views, Housing Manager's attend tenant meetings and improve our 'You Said, We Did' posters to feedback to tenants.

79.3% of tenants are very satisfied or satisfied with Encircle Housing's repairs service over the last 12 months



IMPROVEMENT: Working with contractors to increase the number of repairs completed during the first visit, making quarterly courtesy calls to tenants and their care staff to check the quality of the repair work carried out and services delivered, and better reporting system of repairs to be completed.

SUGGESTIONS OR REQUESTS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME, AND/OR SERVICE YOU RECEIVED FROM ENCIRCLE HOUSING

1. Wipeable walls

IMPROVEMENT: Our new Homes Standard includes durable paints.

2. Advice on keeping my bills down

IMPROVEMENT: Energy saving tips in this newsletter. Our team are also available to give you further help and advice.

3. Lack of knowledge about what Encircle Housing does

IMPROVEMENT: Our Voice newsletter is here to give you information about the team. You can also arrange to meet your Housing Manager to find out more.

4. To be listened to and communicated with. To be told who people are and when meetings are. For requests to be acted upon and not just empty promises that never happen

IMPROVEMENT: We may not always get it right and we continue to learn and improve. There are also occasions where we are unable to agree to a tenant's request, and we will always explain why.

HOW HAVE WE SUPPORTED YOU TO MAINTAIN YOUR TENANCY?

"You sorted Housing Benefit."

"Our Housing Officer is very nice and greets us, knows our names and is very helpful."

"My housing officer comes, and visits scheme and chats to me about my room and house. She helps me with what is expected of me in keeping a tidy and clean room/home."

"You have supported me very well."

TENANTS GETTING INVOLVED

In May, tenants supported by Sense joined us and our Board member Matthew Spittles for a tea party to celebrate the improvement work carried out to their home.

Over two days we painted the staircase in the main hallway, fitted new windowsills and coving, decorated a vacant bedroom, and laid new flooring.

- ✓ Take part on a tenant panel
- ✓ Take part in a focus group to give your views about something that is important to you
- ✓ Help with interviews
- ✓ Support events
- ✓ Attend events
- ✓ Take part in people's stories
- ✓ Information for tenants
- ✓ Social media

MAKING A DIFFERENCE DAY GARDEN MAKEOVER

BIRMINGHAM

In July, Encircle Housing joined together with Sense and one of our contractors, Caldecotte Group to improve the garden space for our tenants and hold a Wimbledon themed garden party to celebrate. A huge thanks to Paul Sturgess, Managing Director at Caldecotte Group for donating £500 towards the costs, along with purchasing items and support before and during the event.

Pathways were cleaned, the path down to the garden was widened and extended, fences were painted, tall planters were filled with colourful plants and a raised herb and fruit garden was created so everyone could use it. In the early afternoon, the party got in full swing with relatives and friends joining everyone in the celebrations.



BELFAST

Many people came together for the garden makeover in Belfast. The front of the house and rear courtyard was brought to life with colourful planters, hanging baskets, lights, a new bench, and a bird bath.

A special thank you to tenants, Laoisa, Johanna and Holly along with Praxis Care, Four Synergy, Noreen, a volunteer who gave us expert gardening advice, and our contractor Revival Property Services for joining us at the garden makeover.

Thank you to Johanna and Laoisa for making the delicious cakes that we had a lunchtime!

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE TEAMS

HOUSING
TEAMRENT AND
INCOME TEAM

ENERGY AND MONEY SAVING TIPS

THESE ENERGY SAVING TIPS CAN HELP YOU TO BECOME MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT AND SAVE MONEY ON YOUR MONTHLY BILL.

- **Washing clothes:** Half-load settings save very little energy. It is better to do fewer but fuller wash loads.
- **Heating:** only have the heating on if you need to. Turn radiators off or down in rooms that are not being used.
- **Close your curtains or blinds:** Use the natural light during the day and heat from the sunlight. At night, close your curtains to help keep the heat in – but try not to drape them over radiators.
- **Lights:** Turn lights off in rooms that are not being used.
- **Do not use standby mode:** Unless you switch off appliances at the wall, such as a TV they will continue to use energy. You can use Hive Plugs, and switch off at the wall with a quick tap of the app. Find out more at www.hivehome.com
- **Unplug all your chargers:** as soon as your device, such as a mobile phone, MP3 players and laptop is fully charged, unplug it. Not only will this save energy, but it also prolongs the battery life.
- **Use price comparison websites:** if you pay for your own internet, insurance or other bills always search for the best deal.
- **Bank:** make sure the bank you use does not charge any transaction fees. If they do you can change your bank.
- **Credit cards:** if you use a credit card, check it has 0% interest. There are many comparison websites to look at.

REPAIRS HERE FOR YOU



Find out more about Alex and Chris who work in our Repairs and Maintenance team.

"My role involves dealing with some or all the administration work for repairs, planned maintenance, compliance and works for housing vacancies. This includes logging an enquiry through to job completion, working closely with our contractors and our Surveyors to ensure that works are completed satisfactorily and within timescales..

At the end of each repair, I send out a survey and every three months give some of the tenants a call to find out what they think. I really enjoy finding out people's views. I know it's important to provide the right service for our tenants, and how this can help people.

Our team reports to the Board each month, and I provide some of the information for repairs and compliance.

In my spare time, I enjoy weekends away in our motorhome, especially the Yorkshire countryside."



"Hi, I'm Alex, the Asset and Compliance Supervisor covering national."



"Hi, I'm Chris, the Maintenance and Compliance surveyor for the North Region - covering Cheshire to Blyth and coast to coast."

"My role involves scoping planned and reactive maintenance, ensuring that compliance across our properties is at 100%, and helping to support the wider team with anything related to the repairs to the property.

I help our tenants by ensuring that the repairs undertaken are to a high standard and ensuring that we provide a quick service to minimise disruption. I always want to make sure that our tenants feel safe and comfortable within their home. It's equally important for tenants to be happy, so if you see me, please do say hi.

I like to draw in my spare time and listen to a wide range of music, can't beat a good song to seal the day."

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

Get involved and help us to improve your repairs service

Survey: Send back the short survey after your repair work has been completed

Call every 3 months: We call some of our tenants to find out about the quality of work



FIRE SAFETY CHECKS



We want our tenants to keep safe.

Here are some checks to do before you go out or at bedtime.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ Close all the inside doors | ✓ Put keys where everyone can find them |
| ✓ Closed doors slow down a fire | ✓ Use battery operated candles |
| ✓ Un-plug things that use electricity. But not things like fridges and freezers | ✓ Do not leave e-cigarettes plugged in |
| ✓ Check the cooker is off | ✓ Only smoke outside and put cigarettes out properly |
| ✓ Do not leave the washer on at night | ✓ Make sure you know how to safely evacuate your home if there is fire or an emergency |
| ✓ Turn off heaters that are not being used | ✓ Escape routes must be kept clear at all times |
| ✓ Check the doors to the outside are clear | |

FIRE SAFETY TIPS - E-CIGARETTES

Fires can start because of e-cigarettes. Here are some fire safety tips around buying and charging e-cigarettes.

- Never leave e-cigarettes on charge unattended for long periods
- Do not mix components of different e-cigarettes
- Only use the charger supplied
- Ensure you purchase your e-cigarette from a reputable source
- Check the e-cigarette carries CE certification
- Contact Trading Standards over any e-cigarette safety concerns

HOW TO CHARGE E-CIGARETTES SAFELY

- Always use the correct charger and follow the manufacturer's instructions
- Never charge a battery that has been damaged, dropped or struck
- Never plug a charger into a non-approved mains power transformer
- Check your battery has overcharge or overheat protection
- Don't overcharge. Remove the battery from charge when complete
- Never leave a charging battery unattended
- Don't use if wet
- Do not overtighten the atomiser when connecting it to the charger



ELIZABETH'S PUMPKIN SOUP RECIPE

An Encircle Housing tenant, Elizabeth has kindly given us the recipe for her tasty Pumpkin Soup.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons of olive oil
1 large red onion, finely chopped
6 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 large pumpkin (1kg), deseeded, and cut into large pieces
Pumpkin seeds
500ml of organic vegetable stock
Salt

Utensils

2 x baking trays
1 large mixing bowl
1 large pan
Wand mixer

Method

Step 1

Put large pieces of the pumpkin and seeds on baking trays.
Season the seeds with salt.

Roast in the oven at 160 c or gas mark 3 for 30 minutes.

Take the pumpkin out of the oven and leave to cool down.

Scoop pumpkin flesh out of the skin and put in a mixing bowl.

Put the pumpkin seeds in a bowl.

Step 2

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in the large pan.

Add finely cut red onions, gently cook until soft and not coloured.

Add finely cut garlic cloves and cook until soft.

Pour 500ml of organic vegetable stock into the pan, bring to the boil and then simmer.

Step 3

Put pumpkin flesh into the pan and season with salt. Keep stirring.
Simmer for 5 minutes.

Step 4

Mix the contents of the pan with a wand mixer. Place the wand deep into the pot to avoid splashing of the contents.

Serve in bowls. Sprinkle the pumpkin seeds on top of the soup.

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SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Find 10 differences
in this Halloween
scene



CONTACT US

For more information about
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Encircle Housing. Registered Provider of
Social Housing Number 4784 and Co-operative
and Community Benefit Society FCA Number 8071.
Encircle Housing has charitable rules.

IN DECEMBER'S ISSUE YOU'LL FIND...
TENANT STORIES, GAS SAFETY TIPS AND
WAYS TO HELP KEEP YOU SAFE