

HULL

HOUSING NEWS



Developed for tenants, by tenants, working in partnership with Hull City Council

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Keep warm this winter

With no let-up in the cost of living crisis and a very cold winter forecast, keeping warm and avoiding mounting fuel bills are top priorities for everyone.



Once again, local voluntary groups and organisations were invited to apply for Affordable Warmth and Energy Saving Community Grants, and five of Hull's Tenants' and Residents'

Associations (TARAs), Bayswater Court, Great Thornton Street, Charterhouse, Oakington Garth and Muswell Court were successful. Grants are from the Department of Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund, and Hull City Council. This year they are also being generously supported by Hull-based Ideal Heating.

The Fund focuses on helping households, and particularly those which are vulnerable, with food and energy costs. This year, the fund is encompassing energy advice training, and Bayswater Court is one of many organisations across the city which has taken this option so that they can advise people about how to save energy in their homes. All of the successful TARAs are offering help to keep people warm, such as heated throws, slow cookers, draught excluders, and Bayswater and Muswell are providing food on some days.



To find the warm spaces near to where you live, look at MyMaps at the bottom of the home page on the council's website hull.gov.uk and keep an eye on your Area Team's social media. There will be regular updates on the venues, food pantries, and other handy info, such as where you can get free internet access.

Tenants' Forum is 20 years old. See page 6

Chat with the Chair



Who would have thought that when I became the first Chair of the Tenants' Forum in 2004 that 20 years on, I would be elected again as the current Chair? What a 20 years it has been! And what progress has been made! You can see some of the Forum's achievements over the last 20 years on page 6.

The Forum's successes are many and varied, with a few notable 'firsts', such as the first social housing provider to achieve Tpas (the national experts on tenant engagement), Exemplar status and the first local council housing landlord to sponsor the See the Person campaign (now called Stop Social Housing Stigma). The Forum also came up with a cashless solution which saved the laundries in blocks of high-rise flats, and introduced tenant representatives signing service level agreements with the council.

From the beginning, the Forum's success has been down to the constructive working relationship we have with council officers and councillors. Unlike some Forums across the country, we have never been a 'bolt on' group which ticks a few boxes. We are appreciated. We are experts in the field because we live in Hull's council homes, and we use Neighbourhoods and Housing's services.

We are consulted. We are not afraid to challenge and through our engagement channels, encourage as many tenants as possible to voice their ideas and opinions. The council listens to us and takes our views into account when making decisions.

I have every confidence that this relationship with the council will continue. However, as the new chair I promise you that the Forum will not be resting on its successes over the last 20 years. There is still work to be done. Currently, there is a national housing crisis with unprecedented demand for social housing which is in short supply. Whilst a national response is needed, we can help improve things locally. I want to work with the council to see how we can speed up re-letting empty council properties and bringing more empty homes in the private sector back into use. I want to reduce the time it takes to get repairs done. I'd like to see more Tenants' and Residents' Associations across the city and look at how we can communicate and engage better with people. Working together, I believe we can look forward to another 20 years' success.

Yours,

Maureen.

Domestic abuse

Nobody should have to suffer or tolerate domestic abuse.

This is any behaviour that is:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse.

The parties need to be 'personally connected' to

each other through marriage (previously, currently, or arranged to be), civil partnership, an intimate personal relationship, or have a parental relationship; and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

The 'Safe Spaces' project provides a room at organisations such as chemists if you need somewhere quiet to make phone calls about

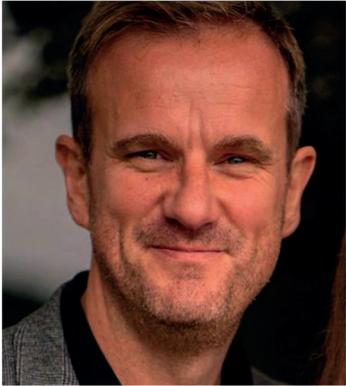
Domestic Abuse. Locations offering safe spaces include:

- Boots at the Orchard Centre, 210 Orchard Park Road, HU6 9BX
- Boots at 247 Greenwood Avenue, HU6 9RY
- Boots at 479 Endike Lane, HU6 8AQ.

Other chemists that are part of this scheme include:

- Boots at the Kingswood shopping centre, Althorp Road, HU7 3DA
- Whitworth chemists 264 – 266 Bricknell Avenue, HU5 4QG.

Meet Mark Nearney



Over the summer, Mark Nearney joined the council as the Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing. Mark brings a wealth of experience to the service.

He has worked in housing for over 20 years in different locations across the country for both local councils and other social housing providers. Most

recently, Mark worked at North East Lincolnshire Council as Assistant Director for Housing and Infrastructure.

Mark says “Ensuring that our tenants have a decent home which is safe, secure, warm, and comfortable is my top priority, not least because of the link between good housing and good health. We cannot create attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods if they are riddled with housing inequalities, and even with very limited access to affordable housing which we are seeing in the current housing crisis”.

Mark is committed to building strong communities which we can’t do if we don’t really understand who we are serving, what they need and what they are asking for and

how can we best deliver this. He said, “To do so, we must listen and respond to our residents and make sure we meet their needs and hopefully their aspirations too. This also extends to partnering agencies working on behalf of the council. My door will always be open to the Tenants’ Forum because they are the eyes and ears of their communities and bring the lived experience of being a Hull City Council tenant”.

As head of housing’s services, Mark is happy to answer your questions, some of which will be answered in Hull Housing News and others will be answered on Hull Council Housing’s Facebook page. Please email your questions to tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk

Ask Mark

Our first Ask Mark question is from Steve:

With the new Building Safety Housing Act 2022 and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 giving more rights, powers, and protection to residents, how does Hull City Council propose to make tenants more aware of what all

of these are and how they can take advantage of them?”

One of the key features of the new legislation and regulation is that we should take account of the diverse needs of tenants. Our approach is to be diverse in our ways of communicating so that we try and reach as many tenants as possible in ways that might suit them. Some prefer print

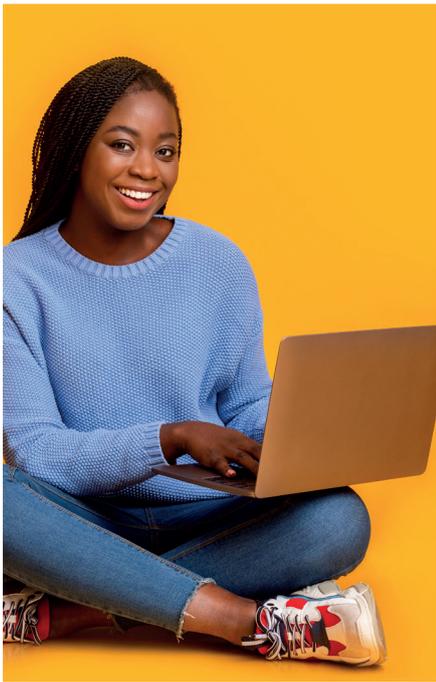
media, therefore we regularly include information in Hull Housing News about how you can raise a concern or make a complaint, and about ways of getting more involved. We also use social media channels and text messaging to keep our tenants informed and, going forward, hope to make more use of our new MyHousing app when it launches after app.

MyHousing

MyHousing will soon replace Housing Online. It will offer a single point of contact which you can access from any digital device 24/7 and

365 days of the year. Plus, it’s much quicker to use.

You will be able to join MyHousing by visiting the council’s website hull.gov.uk and searching MyHousing



Cheaper phone and broadband costs

Are you entitled to money off your broadband and mobile phone packages?

If you receive Universal Credit or Pension Credit and some other benefits you should be eligible for your provider's 'social tariff.' Some providers refer to it as an 'essential' or 'basic' package. Your service would still be the same, just cheaper.

Check out what your provider can offer on their websites or at www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2021/struggling-to-afford-phone-or-broadband-social-tariff-could-help

Live safely and independently



At the touch of a button on a pendant or bracelet, you can be assured that help will be on hand should you need it.

The Kingston Lifeline alarm can give people who need some support the confidence to continue living safely and independently. Furthermore, it gives peace of mind to families and friends that their loved ones have Lifeline protection should they need it.

The Lifeline alarm system alerts its control centre when the button pendant or bracelet is pressed. Also, Lifeline will send an automatic alert if it detects that the heat or smoke alarm has been activated. The system is suitable for all types of people, from older people who might be a bit unsteady on their feet, people with illnesses or

disabilities to lone workers and even people suffering from domestic abuse.

It is simple and easy to use. You just need an electricity socket as the lifeline runs off a SIM card and is now fully digital. Lifeline will provide and set up the SIM card. Once activated, and wearing the pendant or bracelet, Lifeline operates all around the house and up to 50 metres from where the Lifeline box is situated in the garden.

The weekly cost is £5.90. Depending on individual circumstances, VAT may have to be paid at 20 per cent which makes the weekly charge £7.08.

For more information, about Lifeline go to www.hull.gov.uk/council-housing/lifelines

Here to help



We are constantly looking for new and improved ways that we can engage with our residents.

Since the pandemic, we've seen more and more residents preferring online contact. Partly in response to this, we have launched a new website making access online quicker and easier. However, we still need to meet people face-to-face because online or telephone communication, for a number of reasons, aren't for everyone.

This has led to the council developing a new community advice offer, which involves not only council services but advice and support from some of our partner agencies. We have been piloting a number of facilities to assess where face-to-face engagement is most needed.

Currently, you will find us at:

- **Monday**
Sutton Warm Welcome
Sutton Methodist Church – 10.30am-12 noon
- **Tuesday**
Elmbridge Centre
Elmbridge Parade – 10am-4pm
Pennine
Pennine Way – 9.30am-1.30pm
- **Wednesday**
Elmbridge Centre
Elmbridge Parade – 10am-4pm

Spring Bank Community Centre
Spring Bank – 10am-2pm

- **Thursday**
Elmbridge Centre
Elmbridge Parade - 9am-12 noon

Johnny Whiteley Centre
North Road – 10am-2pm alternate
Wednesdays and Thursdays

Hull Minster Welcome Cafe
11am-12.30pm

- **Friday**
Hull Mosque and Islamic Centre
Berkeley Street – After Friday Prayer

Jame Masjid & Madrasah
Pearson Park Mosque – After Friday Prayer

You can also drop into the Family Hubs listed below where you can get advice from members of the council's Neighbourhoods and Housing staff:

- **Fenchurch Family Hub**
(Tuesday 10am to 12 noon)
- **Priory Family Hub**
(every fortnight, Tuesday mornings)
- **Wheeler Family Hub**
(every fortnight, Thursday mornings)
- **Acorns Family Hub**
(Thursdays, 10am-12 noon)

If you have any queries or comments, please email tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk

Happy 20th birthday



It seems hard to imagine a time when we didn't have an active, vibrant, Tenants' Forum at the heart of our housing service, and now in 2024 we are marking its 20th anniversary.

"As someone who grew up in social housing myself, and who understands personally how important it is, it gives me both reassurance and great pride that, through having our diligent, active and robust Tenants' Forum in place, and with whom the council have developed a strong, constructive and informed working relationship, the voices of our tenants are at the centre of what we do." **Matt Jukes, Chief Executive, Hull City Council.**

The Forum has had a successful journey since its first meeting with numerous achievements which have made a real difference to the homes and services the council offers to Hull's tenants. Below are just a few of its successes.



Following tenants' concerns about how the emergency services gain access to multi-storey living blocks, local police, fire, and ambulance service now have key fobs so providing instant entry.



When the laundry services at many flats were under review, it was the Forum which came up with the solution to keep them operational.



Volunteering with the Forum and its TARAs is a great way of making new friends as well as coming together to get things done.



There are now more than 100 community champions who care passionately about their local environment.



The tenants' garden competition has improved in leaps and bounds with a record number of entries year on year and a riot of colour across our communities.

"I attended the first Tenants' Forum meeting I'm sure some of those present were sceptical of where this would lead. Since then we've made huge strides"
**Paul Reynolds, Vice Chair
Hull Tenants' Forum**

Voice of Tenants

You said...

You asked about changing the rules about keeping dogs in flats.

We did...

We surveyed tenants and leaseholders living in high-rise and low-rise flats. 888 people responded. Thank you.

Once your responses were analysed a decision was made to keep the current policy, which is not allowing dogs in flats where the block is more than three storeys high, the exception being if the dog is a dedicated assistance animal.

VAPING AND E-CIGARETTES THE FACTS



NICOTINE VAPES CAN HELP ADULT SMOKERS TO STOP SMOKING.

SMOKING CAUSES DISEASE AND EARLY DEATH.

Vaping is much less harmful than smoking as you don't inhale the **toxic tar** and **carbon monoxide** you get from tobacco smoke.



BUT VAPES ARE NOT HARMLESS.

Short-term effects can include **coughing, headaches, dizziness,** and **sore throats.** Long-term effects are as yet unknown.



MOST CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T VAPE OR SMOKE. DON'T SMOKE? DON'T START TO VAPE.



Developed by Smokefree Sheffield in collaboration with Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)

talktofrank.com
vapeaware.uk

Spotlight on Hopewell Road and District TARA



Our newest TARA is around Hopewell Road in east Hull. The driving forces behind setting it up are Robert and Diane Banthorpe.

Like many of their neighbours, they were sick of anti-social behaviour, such as nuisance motorbikes, criminal damage, and intimidation in the area. The neighbourhood was looking neglected too with overgrown hedges and bushes as well as damaged footways.

Robert and Diane decided to see if there was any interest in setting up a TARA as a positive solution to redress the community's problems. Robert said: "We had a really good response and already we are seeing changes. People are more confident and there's a real community spirit developing."

The TARA has a busy schedule planned for this year. There are money raising events to fund their activities, such as litter picks, coffee-socials and an online presence with a website and social media will be coming onstream soon.

Anybody interested in getting involved with the TARA can do so by telephone on 01482 612 010 or alternatively email hopewellanddistricttara@yahoo.com

Damp and mould

Most homes are affected by condensation one way or another, especially in the colder, wetter winter months. Sometimes the problem is due to another reason, such as a leaking pipe or a particular type of property that is more prone to damp than others.

Whatever the reason, if you find damp and mould in your home, report it to us as soon as possible so we can find out why it is there and resolve it.

Tips on dealing with damp and mould.

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you

cannot see it. This is condensation.

Below are a few tips on minimising condensation:

- opening a window whenever possible
- put lids on pans when cooking
- don't leave kettles boiling
- don't dry washing on radiators – if you do, open windows for ventilation
- don't block radiators with furniture – try and leave at least a two-inch gap
- don't overfill wardrobes and cupboards – leave room for air to circulate



- keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed when in use

If you have concerns about damp and mould, contact Hull City Council by visiting www.hull.gov.uk and search Council Housing. You can also use our online App which will be available soon. If you prefer, you can get in touch by phoning 01482 300 300.

Right to Buy

Did you know that as a council tenant you have the Right to Buy your home, subject to terms and conditions?

For more information go to the council's website:

www.hull.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants-and-leaseholders/right-buy

Tenants Forum Meetings

Date	Time	Guest Speaker / Agenda
16 Jan	10am – 12noon	Police and Crime Commissioner Jonathan Evison
20 Feb	1 – 3pm	Performance against Business Plan Performance Manager Geoff Bradley Business Insight and Quality Manager Steve Shirra
19 Mar	10am – 12noon	Guest speaker to be confirmed

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