

# HULL

## HOUSING NEWS



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

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## New council homes milestone



The building of the 500th home is underway as part of a development of the small sites housing programme, with work currently under way at ten different sites across the city.

The council has now completed a total of 472 new build council homes across the city since 2015 and has plans to create a further 469 new homes by 2025. Work has started on the 500th home and it will be completed this summer.

The first of these new

bungalows will be completed soon and tenants are already lined up to move in following the adoption of the council's new Local Lettings Policy, which is applied to all new builds across the city.

Nic Harne Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods and Housing, said: "Since 2015, we have successfully been developing new council homes across the city to provide our tenants with high quality, well insulated modern new homes to live in.

"Building almost 500 new council homes since 2015 is a great achievement and is evidence of the council's commitment to transform

housing in the city, providing more choice of high quality modern new homes for our residents.

"We are dedicated to continuing with our very ambitious investment and development programme, and along with our work to bring long term empty homes back into use we will deliver more than 1,000 council homes by 2025".

**Hull City Council  
has about 23,500  
council homes**

Hull City Council Housing is on Facebook. 'Like' our page and discover more information



## Chat with the Chair

Hello everyone!

With the end of lockdown on the cards let's hope we can all get back to some sort of normality in the not too distant future. With all the sacrifices so many of us have made over the last year it will be great to start meeting our friends and hugging our family again and I for one am looking forward to it (and fishing)!

Since the last newsletter, my fellow volunteers and I have continued to work remotely with the Housing Service by meeting with officers and other agencies in Hull, and nationally, to make positive changes for tenants.

We have also had an informal 'Natter Session' with a group of volunteers to chat about anything and everything. This was really good as it gave us a chance to socialise a little bit and it was nice to see and speak to other people even if it was on a computer screen! If this is something you would like to join in with get in touch with the Tenant Participation Team (TP Team).

It's lovely to see all the spring flowers and cherry blossom blooming across the streets and gardens of Hull and with summer and hopefully the sun, just around the corner I want to remind you that the TP Team are holding their



annual HCC Tenant's gardening competition again this year. If you are green fingered and have a colourful flower garden or have created a bee-utiful ECO garden, why not enter? The closing date for entries in the 4 June 2021.

If you have any spare time and would like to volunteer with the Housing Service please get in touch

**Nev Allison**

Chair of the Tenants' Forum

## Lockdown learnings

**Liz Carlton a council tenant for the last 20 years has spent the last year rediscovering her love of photography. Liz originally took up photography years ago as a recovering alcoholic but lost interest in more recent years.**

Liz also suffered a mini stroke and has since had to learn to use things all over again. Having traded in her old equipment she bought herself a new camera.

Liz says: 'I'm always on the lookout for something to take a photo of. Many take a bag out with them when they go out, I just take my camera bag everywhere I go. I've had to relearn everything, even from how to pick up and hold and handle a camera.

"I love the freedom of outside and living so close to Noddle Hill nature reserve is great. I really love taking images of nature, sunrises and sunsets.

"I rekindled my love of photography since the first lockdown and it's really helped my mental health. I'd encourage others to do something like me, when we open our eyes and look around us there is so much beauty locally".

If you have taken up a new hobby or learned new skills during lockdown and you'd like to inspire others please get in touch. We hope to share some of your stories in future issues. Email [tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk) or call them on 01482 612 010



# Your questions answered

In the last issue Nic Harne, Assistant Director for Neighbourhood and Housing answered just some of the questions he'd recently been asked and as promised in this issue he answers a few more.

## Question from Gatwick House TARA:

Can the Allocations Policy be looked at? No sooner than one problem tenant leaves, they are replaced by someone equally as bad.

**Answer:** We use a range of responses to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour. One is to use our policies to ensure that we identify as early as possible if a new tenant is likely to struggle to sustain their tenancy and we conduct a number of background checks as part of the process. Our Allocations Policy does allow us to exclude people for serious nuisance behaviour. Our tenancy agreement includes conditions about behaviour and we do take enforcement action where we have strong evidence that issues are occurring. You can help by keeping a record of nuisance behaviour and reporting it, so that evidence is available in the future.

We always welcome feedback on our policies and other things you think we may be able to improve. The Customer Feedback scheme is not just for complaints, it's for suggestions too. So please always tell us what you think.

## Question from Charterhouse Community and Residents Association:

What is the council prepared to do to combat vermin issues that are a problem in some areas?

**Answer:** We completely understand that issues such as this really affect your quality of life. You can arrange pest treatments through the council's website at [hull.gov.uk](http://hull.gov.uk) Some may involve an officer visiting and are free (e.g. indoor rat baiting), others involve giving you professional advice about how you can deal with it without an officer needing to visit (e.g. ants). We are already reviewing our



internal arrangements with colleagues elsewhere in the council, such as streetscene to give us more flexibility to target resources where a problem has been identified and treat it at the source of the problem – for example if an area has been repeatedly affected by littering and this has attracted vermin.

## Question from Charterhouse Community and Residents Association:

Is the council looking at ways to provide more social housing for rent?

**Answer:** The council does lots of work to promote a range of ways to access housing and improve neighbourhoods. Hull residents want and need a variety of ways to secure a home, depending on their life circumstances: some may want to own a property and for others it's renting. We try and achieve a mix in different areas by working with both planners and developers. We recently scooped a major award for Social Value because we worked with others in a particular area to ensure a good mix of new homes as well as improvements to existing properties and helping to create lots of local jobs in the process. We know there is plenty of demand for renting our homes and so we continue to have an ambitious approach to supply: we bucked the national trend by over-achieving our new build targets in our last 'normal' year!

**Did you know?**

Over 85% of bids for properties are made online

# COVID 19 FRAUD AND SCAM

**SCAM  
ALERT!**



**Please be aware of new scams in these COVID 19 times. Scammers often use texts and e mails and take advantage of situations and people who may be caught off guard.**

You may be aware of many reported in the local media or

seen on Facebook in recent months. Such scams are often designed to trick people into handing over their credit or debit card details in order to secure things including deliveries or the promise of something that they really want.

One such recent scam has been for supposed Coronavirus vaccination appointments.

A person receives a text saying that they need to book a vaccination appointment via a link, which takes them to a fake NHS form asking for their bank details to prove their identity.

There are concerns that those residents most in need of the vaccine may be most vulnerable to such manipulation. Please share this information with friends, family members and neighbours.

If you are ever in doubt contact the relevant organisation directly and do not use any of the details sent to you within the email or message as these may well also be part of the scam.

## Keeping you safe

**In the last issue we talked about lots of changes planned to legislation on social housing, outlined in something described as a White Paper.**

This one is called 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents'. It has seven themes, and one of those is building safety which includes all sorts, ranging from consideration of which properties should have a smoke alarm and/or carbon monoxide alarm, to how tenants can raise concerns if they think something is not right.

In particular, it points to other legislation that will put people's

rights and protections into law. These include the Building Safety Bill launched July 2020 and the Fire Safety Bill introduced last September. These bills aim to improve building and fire safety so that people will be, and will feel safer in their homes.

Once the bills have gone through Parliament they will become legislation (known as an Act) which we all have to follow to make sure buildings are safe. It seems likely that this will happen in the early summer.

The Building Safety Bill affects buildings which are over 18 meters or 6 storeys high. It means that residents and leaseholders will soon have access to more safety information about their building and issues which affect them.

Here in Hull we believe that housing is about much more than bricks and mortar and we already work in partnership with our residents. It's really important when it comes to building and fire safety as we all have a role to play in making sure residents live in a safe environment. For example council staff carry out regular inspections of buildings to identify and put right any problems relating to safety, but we also need residents to ensure they keep landings and communal areas free of rubbish or their own personal items such as bikes and pot plants, and to report any problems when they spot them. By continuing to work together we are already making our buildings much safer and more enjoyable places to live.

# Your rent explained

**This time every year your rent statement arrives. The level of rent we charge you is calculated by a government formula.**

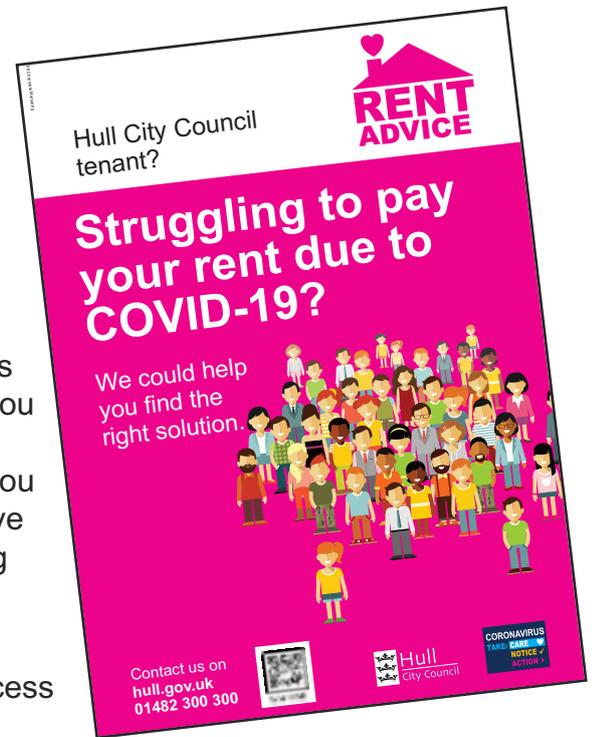
It starts from base information about property values and the number of bedrooms. But when it changes each year, it also takes into account general costs of living, like how much your groceries cost in the supermarket. Rent is also regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing, so there are checks in place to ensure we don't charge you too much. This year the rent has gone up by 1.5%, in line with this formula.

However, if you are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, the amount you receive gets adjusted to take account of the rent rise.

If you are still struggling to pay, don't bury your head in the sand! Talk to us about it. There are a range of things we can do,

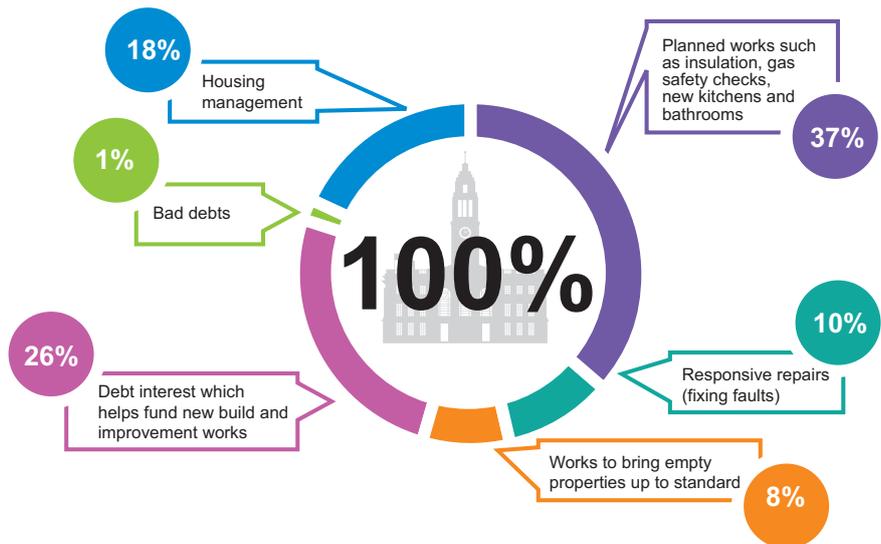
from setting up alternative payment arrangements to referring you to our partners for advice. They can help you identify whether you are accessing all the benefits you could be entitled to, and give you some tips on managing your money.

For help visit [hull.gov.uk](http://hull.gov.uk)  
If you don't have online access call 01482 300 300.



## How your rent is spent

Here's how the council spend the rent received from our tenants:



## Let's get gardening

### You've still got time to enter this year's Annual Tenants' Garden Competition.

With spring now in full swing we know many of you have enjoyed the opportunity over the last year to spend more time than ever in the garden and so why not enter the competition. There are several different categories ranging from individual garden to eco garden and you can enter by completing the entry form on the council website [www.hull.gov.uk](http://www.hull.gov.uk) or emailing

[tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk) to ask for an entry form. Don't worry if you don't have online access as you can call 01482 612 010 to request an entry form. Please note the closing date for entries is 4 June 2021.

**Did you know?**  
Over 5,000 people bid for a council house every year

# Valued feedback



You may not know but Hull City Council operates a Customer Feedback scheme that relies on you and other residents telling us how we are doing. Details of the scheme can be found on the council website:

[www.hull.gov.uk/council-anddemocracy/consultation-andfeedback/customer-feedback-and-complaints](http://www.hull.gov.uk/council-anddemocracy/consultation-andfeedback/customer-feedback-and-complaints)

The Neighbourhoods and Housing team read and assess every piece of feedback. All complaints, comments and compliments are reviewed and seen as an opportunity to understand our residents' and their experiences and potentially further improve the services we provide. We respond directly to every person who makes a complaint and, whilst we accept we cannot always give everyone

what they want, we do try to explain why a situation has occurred and why we have taken particular actions.

Although we receive plenty of compliments and some comments, currently the majority of feedback we receive is about where something has gone wrong. Your feedback tells us a great deal about the services we are providing and where we need to concentrate efforts to improve. Between April 2020 until the end of January 2021 Neighbourhoods and Housing as a whole received 592 complaints.

The majority of these were about our repairs service. But when you consider that even in the challenging year we've had due to COVID-19 we still delivered over 90,000 repair

jobs. The number of complaints is less than one per cent and shows there is huge amount of good work going on. Customer satisfaction with repairs remains high at over 90%.

From the feedback we have received for the repairs service we know we have work to do concerning the standard of work carried out, minimising delays and improving communications. In a nut shell we need to get better at telling you what you can and can't expect, ensure all work undertaken is completed to a high standard and that it is completed on time.

Please check out the web page and send us your feedback; the good, the bad and the ugly. Only by telling us can we understand the real picture and continue to try and improve things further.

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## The EU Settlement Scheme

**Following the UK's exit from the European Union, the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) was introduced. All EEA and EU nationals living in the UK before 31 December 2020 must apply to continue living and working in the UK by 30 June 2021.**

There are some exceptions, more information available here <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>.

You can apply to the scheme via the above link

for free. If the application is successful you will receive a settled or pre-settled status.

Neighbourhoods and Housing staff have been contacting customers to raise awareness of the scheme and to explain how to apply. If you require support please contact us on 01482 300 300.

If you have already applied to the scheme, please email us now at [Universal.Credit@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:Universal.Credit@hullcc.gov.uk) to let us know your status along with your 'share code' so we can verify this. You can access this information on the web address:

<https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status>.

**If you require immigration advice please call Citizens Advice on 0800 144 8848**



# Chance to win £100 of high street shopping vouchers by telling us your views on Hull Housing News

We are interested to find out your views so we'd really like you to take a moment to complete the questions below and send your replies back to us.

All completed replies will be entered into a prize draw for a chance to win £100 in high street shopping vouchers.

The closing date is 14/05/21 at 12 noon.

Please cut out this questionnaire, pop it in an envelope and post it to us for free:

Freepost RSJC-KKBE-ABXZ, Media and Marketing, Hull City Council, PO BOX 15, Hull HU1 2AB

## Q1) How often do you read Hull Housing News?

- Always read it
- Sometimes read it
- Rarely read it
- Never read it

## Q2) Thinking about the content would you like to see more of this kind of content, less or about the same in future editions?

- News/ updates  
 more  less  about the same
- Advice and information  
 more  less  about the same
- Features/ stories  
 more  less  about the same
- History/ look back  
 more  less  about the same
- Future plans/ look ahead  
 more  less  about the same
- Competitions  
 more  less  about the same
- Ways to get involved  
 more  less  about the same
- Details of feedback and resulting changes  
 more  less  about the same
- Interesting facts/ figures  
 more  less  about the same
- Tips and ideas  
 more  less  about the same

## Q3) How much do you agree with the following statements about Hull Housing News? Please tick one box on each row.

Options:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree
It is relevant to me	<input type="checkbox"/>				
It is interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>				
It is useful/ informative	<input type="checkbox"/>				
It is easy to read	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I like the fact it is printed	<input type="checkbox"/>				
If it were online I'd access it	<input type="checkbox"/>				
If it could be emailed to me I'd prefer it	<input type="checkbox"/>				

## Q4) Are you happy to be contacted about Hull Housing News in the future?

- Yes
- No

Please provide your details below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_



# Census – better late than never

**Census day was Sunday 21 March and if you've not completed it you still have time.**

Not only is it the law that every household completes one, but in doing so you will help to ensure that Hull gets the funding it needs from government. If you do not

complete it you could also be fined up to £1,000.

It's really easy to do and should only take you around ten minutes to complete. If you did not receive a letter or you have misplaced it, you can do it online at [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk)

Local support centres can also help if you are not confident

online, don't have a computer or need other help or a different format.

Call free today 0800 141 2021 before it's too late, or a census field officer calls at your house because you've not completed it.



## See the Person campaign

**Hull was one of the first local authorities to sign up to this campaign which aims to deliver a high impact campaign that challenges the way that people think and tackles the stigma that is sometimes associated with social housing tenants.**

Hull City Council is proud to be involved. The Chief Executive Matt Jukes grew up in a council house and has spoken fondly to residents of his memories at events in the past. In Hull we also managed to get the Hull Daily Mail to sign up and support the campaign.

For many decades now we've become a house buying country and people can sometimes look down on those who don't own their own home. In

European countries there has been no stigma to living in a rented home and attitudes here are now also starting to change partly because of things like the campaign.

As a council through our housing regeneration work we are continuing to build council houses and giving more people the chance of a quality home and neighbourhood.

If you're proud of your home, neighbourhood and being a council tenant and have a story to tell that will help to banish any such negativity then we'd like to hear from you.

**Email [tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk) or call them on 01482 612 010**



## Tenant Forum Meetings

Due to COVID 19 unfortunately our meetings and other working groups which involve people meeting in close proximity to each other remain suspended.

We continue to look at alternative ways, such as online and activities where we can ensure social distancing to help effective tenant participation in the housing service.

As we explore new ways of communicating with you, we'd like to know your preferred method.

**What's best for you – email, Twitter, Facebook, letter?**

Let us know your thoughts:

Email: [tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk)

Twitter: @HCCTPT

Facebook: Hull City Council Housing

Letter: Tenant Participation Team, Warehouse 9, Guildhall Road, Hull HU1 1HJ

This document can be made available in other formats (large print, audio, digital copy) and different languages. Call (01482) 300 300.

