



Housing Services e-newsletter November 2019

Welcome to the Housing Services e-newsletter

A clear rent account can improve your credit score

Anyone who pays their bills on time should be able to build up a good credit history so we've partnered with [The Rental Exchange](#) to enable tenants who keep a clear rent account to build their credit score.

Your credit score is a reflection of how well you pay your bills and shows potential lenders how financially trustworthy you are. A higher credit score means you can access better tariffs and rates for things that require a credit check like mobile phone contracts, online shopping, credit cards, bank accounts and loans.

In the past only homeowners could build their credit score through regular mortgage payments, but thanks to the Rental Exchange council tenants can now benefit too. So by keeping your rent account clear you can build a positive credit history which will help when applying for goods or services and accessing

mainstream credit.

You will receive a letter with details about the Rental Exchange and how it can benefit you, but if you have any questions please [email](#) or call the Housing Income Team on **01962 848 205**.

Fire Safety

Keeping you safe is our top priority, and recently we have been looking at our approach to fire safety in housing.

This is a huge topic that touches many areas of our work from the way we design and build new homes, how we carry out repairs and maintenance, and the safety information we provide to tenants and leaseholders.

It is important that tenants are involved in helping us look at these different areas so various focus groups have been set up. They will examine different elements including how we learn from fires, the provision of fire alarms, mobility scooter storage and our fire safety information and advice.

Members of TACT (Tenants and Council Together) are involved in the review and have attended special events in London looking at the rights and responsibilities of tenants.

As well as inviting tenants to actively get involved in the review groups, we also conducted a survey on fire safety. Thank you to everyone who responded and told us what makes you feel safe and how you like to receive information. Next, we plan to hold focus groups and talk to residents in more detail about the results of the survey. If you'd like to be involved please [email](#) the Tenant Involvement Team or call 0800 716 987.

Finally, we plan to bring everything we have learnt into a housing-wide Fire Safety Strategy ready to respond to recommendations that come out of the Grenfell Inquiry.

We will also produce a special document in partnership with residents that sets out our approach to providing fire safety information.

Find out more about the Fire Safety Project at the TACT AGM on Wednesday 13 November when Gillian Knight, the Head of Housing (Interim) will be provide an update.

New affordable homes

With increasing demand for council housing we're working hard to develop more affordable homes in Winchester. 2019 has been a busy year that has seen tenants move into new homes at Victoria Court, Mitford Road and Bailey Close.

And even more tenants are set to celebrate Christmas in a brand new home, thanks to the recent completion of 13 [affordable properties](#) at three sites in Knowle. Five, new two and three-bed houses at Dean Copse Cottages provide energy efficient council homes designed for 21st century living. A further six new one-bed flats at Knowle Halt Lodge will be ready to welcome tenants in early December. Finally, at Totsome Cottages two new [shared-ownership](#) properties have enabled their owners to get onto the housing ladder thanks to the part buy, part rent scheme.

And 2020 is set to be equally busy as work is underway to develop even more new [affordable housing](#) across the district including 77 new homes at The Valley in Stanmore, 7 new homes at Rowlings Road in Weeke and 2 new homes at Dolphin Hill in Twyford.

Spare Change for Lasting Change

The cold, wintry weather makes this time of year especially tough for anyone experiencing homelessness. But did you know that this Christmas you can help make a difference to rough sleepers by donating to our [Spare Change for Lasting Change](#) campaign?

Every penny donated is used by two local charities: Winchester Churches Nightshelter and Trinity Winchester, to support rough sleepers to rebuild their lives. So rather than handing money to street beggars please pop your spare change into the red house-shaped donation boxes which can be found in many shops, pubs and businesses across Winchester. You can find out more on our [website](#)

If you are concerned about someone sleeping rough you can contact [StreetLink](#) or call 0300 500 0914. StreetLink will find the individual and connect them with local services to offer help and support.

If you have not read the latest Tenant Voice, including the Annual Report for 2018/19. Please click [here for the lastest edition of Tenant Voice](#).

Contact email: tenantvoice@winchester.gov.uk or call 0800 716 987.

Access our services at the touch of a button

You can now pay your rent, request a repair and update your details. Simply click on the my Council House logo) link on the home page of our website. This is a quick and 24/7 service to use.



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