



Housing Services e-newsletter May 2023

Welcome to the Housing Services e-newsletter

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Welcome to May's housing e-newsletter. Within the newsletter find out the latest news on how housing is working towards the council priorities of Cost of Living, Greener Faster, Pride in Place and Listening Better. Read [the council plan 2020-2025](#) for more information.

Cost of Living



Win a store cupboard food hamper by entering a free prize draw supported by Tesco

We are running a prize draw with Tesco to win a food hamper. To enter email you name and address to TenantVoice@winchester.gov.uk for your chance to win. The winner will be notified by 30 June. [T&C apply](#)

With the cost of living still an ongoing concern, there is so much information out there to help you. Here are a list of useful websites to help.

- [Cost of living support and information](#)
- [Home energy advice and other household bills support](#)
- [Tenancy support services](#)

If you are in a recognised emergency need or if you're experiencing difficulty in accessing alternative support you may be eligible for a referral to receive an emergency payment in a form of a voucher or card. Referrals are made by your Housing Officer ([Income](#) or [Tenancy](#)), [Sheltered Housing Officer](#) or [Tenancy Sustainment Officer](#) so please contact them if you'd like to be considered for food or fuel vouchers.



Consider Downsizing

Are you concerned about the costs of running your home ?

If you are considering moving to a smaller home then we can help you.

What is the Wise Move scheme about?

Wise Move is for Winchester City Council tenants who would like to move to a property with fewer bedrooms than their current home.

How can Wise Move help me move home?

If you are currently under occupying your home and wish to downsize to a smaller property in line with your housing need there is a financial incentive of up to £2,500.00. If you downsize but remain under occupying after your move then you will be entitled to an incentive of up to £1,000.00.

We want to make it as smooth and easy as possible for you to find a smaller home that you are happy to move to. We can help you to do this by making it financially possible and by also offering some practical support too.

The payment is available for you to take away to spend or if you ask us, we can use it to help you to arrange things like removals, furniture and carpets.

Do I qualify for Wise Move?

Any Winchester City Council tenant who wants to move to another one of our properties or a Registered Provider / Housing Association property which has fewer bedrooms can apply. If you have rent arrears, the payment may be used to help pay off your debt. The scheme is also available to Council tenants who are mutually exchanging to a property with fewer bedrooms.

What are the benefits of moving to a smaller home?

Your housing needs may have changed and you could now have 'spare' bedrooms which you no longer need. Some of the benefits of moving to a smaller home include reduced bills e.g. council tax and utilities, increased eligibility benefit for working age tenants (under the Government's Size Criteria rules for 'spare' bedrooms), a home that's easier to manage and freeing up a larger home for a family that needs it

Whatever the reason for wanting a smaller property, we would like to help.

How do I apply for Wise Move?

You can contact us on 01962 848 197 and we can explain the scheme to

you, check that you qualify and see whether this is something you would like to take up. You can also apply [online](#) by completing the online contact form.

Pride in Place

Anti-Social Behaviour Summer Campaign 2023

Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Team launched their annual Anti-Social Behaviour Summer Campaign (engagement initiative) on 1st April 2023. This campaign is delivered in collaboration with internal services and external partners that include WCC Housing Tenancy, Hampshire and Isle Wight Constabulary, Hampshire and Isle Wight Fire and Rescue Service, Youth Outreach services, Parish Councils, Parish Community Support Officers, Education, Ward Members and Support Services.

The Anti-Social Behaviour campaign aims to undertake partnership patrols, street and block briefs, beat surgeries and walkabouts throughout the district to encourage individuals and community representatives to report their concerns via the appropriate reporting methods. As we engage with those we meet we will be encouraging discussion about all forms of anti-social behaviour such as littering, being considerate with neighbours and in open spaces. This involves reporting incidents and ways to staying safe.

Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety

Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Team have been working in partnership with the new neighbourhood policing team dedicated to policing the centre of Winchester which was recently launched, the team, consisting of two PCs and two PCSOs, with support from a Special Constable. The new team's focus will be on reducing and preventing crime in the city centre, including issues relating to business crime, night time economy and anti-social behaviour.

Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety team have been working in partnership with the Police making sure Winchester city centre is a safer environment for people who live, work and visit here. This has included utilising the tools and powers within the Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 working with wider partner organisations including Winchester BID and local youth services.

If you would like any more information about the work the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Team are carrying out, please [email](#) us.

Listening Better



Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Team have recently welcomed Amanda (Mandy) Whitlock who has joined the Team as a Neighbourhood Services Engagement Officer. Mandy's remit is to cover WCC Housing estates across the district. She will work across housing services, with external partners and engage with the local communities in various ways including Ward Walkabouts, Street Briefs, attending local events, Neighbourhood Forums or coffee mornings.

Mandy will be encouraging residents to provide feedback about service

satisfaction and will provide a platform for them to have their say around quality of life issues or to promote good neighbourhood relationships.

If you would like any more information about the work the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Team are carrying out, please [email](#) us

Tenant Involvement Inclusion and Wellbeing Projects

We're looking for council tenants who can contribute their ideas to two working groups that are delivering inclusion and wellbeing projects for people in the Winchester district. Can you help us shape the future of inclusion and wellbeing projects for the residents of Winchester district?

By getting involved, you'll have the chance to:

- Improve where you live
- Talk directly to decision makers
- Act as an advocate for those living in council housing
- Receive training and build valuable skills and experience
- Meet others with shared views and experiences

The first working group, the Social Inclusion Partnership, is all about breaking down barriers to involvement in society, allowing people to participate, contribute and feel valued, regardless of their age, ability or background.

The second working group, the Digital Inclusion Project Board, aims to improve digital inclusion – making sure nobody is left behind in a world where digital technology is increasingly important to everyday life.

Come along to one of our sessions – either in-person or online – to find out more:

- **Wednesday 7th June at 12:30pm-1:30pm, Winchester City Council Offices (in person)***
- **Thursday 8th June at 7:00pm – 8:00pm, MS Teams (online)**

Babies/ pre-schoolers are welcome, as we will be providing some age - appropriate activities. Up to £5 per person is available to cover transport/ parking costs

Register your place:

Contact our [Wellbeing and Inclusion Officer Charlotte Bailey](#) with your preferred date and method of attendance or calling 01962 848267. If you have any access requirements, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2023

Your views are really important to Winchester City Council and the survey is your chance to tell us what you think of the homes and services we provide as your landlord.

Winchester City Council is conducting the tenant satisfaction survey in 2023. This is part of the new annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) that the Regulator of Social Housing has just introduced.

Your views are really important to Winchester City Council and the survey is your chance to tell us what you think of the homes and services we provide as your landlord.

An independent company called ARP Research have been asked to carry out the survey on our behalf. The survey is completely confidential, which means that your answers will be kept separate from your identity.

A sample of approximately a third of households in our general housing and all sheltered, extra care and temporary residents will receive a paper survey

in early May 2023, with reminders (if applicable) at the beginning of June. The final returns date is Friday 16 June. In addition, where WCC hold contact details, this group will also receive invitations/reminders to an online survey via email and text message.

E-mails will come from 'Winchester Council Tenant Survey' (winchester@arpsurveys.co.uk). Text messages sent directly from ARP Research will come from 07860 017 314.

If you receive a form please either complete and return the survey in the freepost envelope enclosed with the survey form, or complete the [survey online](#) or by using the link provided.

As a thank you, the code from all completed surveys will be entered into a prize draw, where one lucky person will win an iPad and two more will receive £50 in shopping vouchers. (Winners will be contacted by 31 July 2023).

Full list of [Terms & Conditions](#) for the prize draw.

Full results will be posted on the website and headlines will be included in future newsletters and the annual report.

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, either visit the [website](#) or contact ARP Research on 0800 020 9564 or [email](#) who will be happy to answer your queries.

Greener Faster

The council is committed to becoming a carbon neutral local authority by 2024, and is aiming for the wider district to be carbon neutral by 2030.



Tree Planting

We have an extensive tree stock and this spring we are planting another 22 trees. This will ensure that we have a variety of mature, semi-mature and young trees. Trees are very important to residents and provide a crucial habitat for wildlife. They can improve poor air quality, alleviate flooding, boost our wellbeing and help the environment. Did you know a mature oak tree may host up to 423 different species of invertebrates alone.

If you have any issues with a tree in your garden, large or small, we can arrange for them to be inspected. You can call us on (01962 848 207) and any work recommended would be carried out at no cost to you.



Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2 Successful Application

Winchester City Council is delighted to announce that it has been successful in its bid for support from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.

The grant of £534,000, which will be match-funded by the council, will be used to improve the energy efficiency of the council's social housing properties which are currently rated D or below for their Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). This will include the installation of a range of performance improvement and energy saving measures. It will assist us in making our social housing warmer and more energy efficient, expanding the work we are already undertaking as part of our Retrofit Programme.

The funding is great news for our tenants. This will mean their homes will be warmer and cost less to heat which will help to cut energy bills. It will also cut carbon and tackle the climate emergency as our council housing becomes greener faster.

The SHDF monies will be used to help fund insulation upgrade works to the Council's Swedish units and for loft insulation upgrade works to the wider stock over the next two years.

For more information can be found [here](#).

Other News from Housing



Park Yoga

Our free weekly Park Yoga sessions (Winchester Park Yoga - Winchester City Council) will return to the Garrison Ground (next to Winchester Sport and Leisure Park) on Sunday mornings from 7 May until 17 September. These 9.30am-10.30am sessions are for people of all ages and abilities and they are led by a qualified instructor - just bring your mat, towel or blanket and a drink of water. There's no need to pre-register; pop along on the day to join in.



Adaptions to Help You Live Safely In Your Home Sports

If you need to adapt your home to make it safer for you to live in your home, you can apply for an adaptation. The work will depend on your individual needs and the suitability of the property, but could range from major jobs like installing a level access shower to fitting smaller items like grab rails. It's all about making your home more accessible. For more information visit the [website](#) if you know a neighbour, friend or relative who is not a council tenant they too may be able eligible of help. For more information click [here](#)



Annual Gas Servicing - Keeping you Safe

It is a legal requirement for Winchester City Council to service your gas. We have set up a simple process to make sure your annual gas safety check takes place so your home is safe.

- Contractor Correct Contract Services (CCS) will send appointment letter to you for your gas service 2 months prior to the expiry date.
- If you miss your the first appointment has been missed, CCS will proceed to arrange a second appointment you.
- If CCS's engineer is still not able to again access to your home for the gas service, job will be referred back to the council.
- The council will contact the you to arrange an appointment for the gas service.
- The council will call, send text message and send email (according to the available contact method(s) on the tenancy record) to arrange an appointment with you
- If the council is unable to arrange the appointment with you by above method(s), following letters will be sent to you:
 - Gas Letter 1 – Warning
 - Gas Letter 3 – Access Notice
 - Gas Letter 2 – Final Warning

You must allow access for the council to carry out annual servicing of gas pipe work and associated council-owned heating and/or hot water appliances. If you do not allow access, the council will be entitled to gain force entry to the property for carrying out necessary services. You will be charged for the cost of carrying out repairs and/or re-securing the property.



Shared Ownership

Winchester City Council have been selling shared ownership homes for several years now.

Shared ownership helps you get on to the property ladder whether as a first time buyer or as somebody who wants to get back into owning their own home. You'll start by buying a share of your new home and then pay affordable rent on the remaining part which is owned by us. Then, as time goes on, you can buy more shares in your home, until you own it outright. It may all sound complicated, but it's not. Winchester City Council have been helping people but their first home on a shared ownership basis for several years now and can help you get your dream home.

We'll be on hand to talk you through the buying process and ongoing responsibilities of owning a shared ownership home. Don't worry, it's all straight forward and simple to understand. Also known as 'part buy, part rent', shared ownership is backed by the government with further support from Winchester City Council.

You'll soon understand that this is a great way to become a home owner with

all the opportunities and excitement that this brings. We are looking forward to getting you on that first step!

If you'd like to talk through your housing options with us, [email](#) or call 01962 848 075.

And finally **Why not follow us on Facebook go to www.facebook.com/winchesterTenants**

If you have any feedback on this E-newsletter please [email](#) us
