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Winchester
City Council



Your housing newsletter - May 2025

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NEW HOMES STANDARDS INTRODUCED: WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

Last year, the [Regulator for Social Housing \(RSH\)](#) introduced new ways of monitoring the performance of social landlords. These are called the consumer standards.

These standards aim to make sure that all social landlords manage and monitor their homes in the same way, and they apply to the council, as we are a social landlord.

We referred ourselves to the regulator so we could begin working with them, as we wanted to meet the new standards as quickly as possible.

The regulator has reviewed the information we hold about our homes and has issued a C3 judgement.

We have since written directly to all our tenants with all the information, but please do get in touch with us if you have any questions or concerns. We are here to help.

- By phone: **01962 848 197**
- Email: housingtenancy@winchester.gov.uk

You can also find all the information, including helpful FAQs on our website- www.winchester.gov.uk/Housing-Regulator

DO YOU NEED HELP WITH THE COST OF LIVING?

The cost of living continues to rise, but if you are struggling to make ends meet, there are things you can do and places to go for support.

CHECK YOUR BENEFITS

Many benefits go unclaimed as households are not aware of what they are entitled to or because the process to claim them can be very complex. You might be entitled to claim or increase your benefits if you are:

- On a low or no income
- Sick or disabled- including mental health struggles
- Over state pension age with a low income
- A carer
- Looking after children

Help is available to check what benefits you might be able to claim for- including help with rent, council tax or to pay your bills. You could use this online checker [Benefits Calculator - entitledto - independent | accurate | reliable](#) or contact Citizens Advice on [0808 278 7861](#) for advice. It is always worth checking what additional help might be available to you.

GET HELP WITH YOUR ENERGY BILLS

If you are behind with your energy bills you might be able to get a grant to help pay off your debt either from your energy company or a charitable trust. All main energy providers offer financial assistance to struggling customers and it is worth contacting yours as a first port of call.

Alternatively, Charis is a charitable trust which manages funds on behalf of some energy firms to provide help with bills and to buy items such as white goods to struggling families. Applications can be made online [Help for](#)

Individuals: Charis Grants' schemes

If you are a council tenant and you're finding it hard to keep up with payments on your pre-payment gas or electric meter, we may also be able to help. Call us on **01962 848 400**.

GET HELP WITH ESSENTIAL COSTS

Water providers offer reduced or capped costs to help households on benefits or low income. Locally, Southern Water and Portsmouth Water both have an essentials tariff to reduce water bills by up to 45%. You can call them on **0800 027 0800** or complete their online Financial Assistance Form at www.southernwater.co.uk/difficulty-paying-your-bill to see whether they can help reduce your bills.

Free Support with Digital Tasks!



Are you having trouble with your digital device? Or perhaps you're looking for

some help completing everyday tasks online? If so, our digital champions can help!

We run regular digital drop-in sessions at King Harold Court and our City Offices in Winchester, Greens Close, Bishops Waltham as well as Makins Court in Alresford, where you can come along, bring your device and talk through troublesome tech tasks with our friendly champions.

Iris, an Alresford resident, attended a recent session so she could better understand how to manage the apps on her phone:

“I came with two specific problems that I was having, and both have been rectified just by the session, so it’s been so productive and so, so helpful.”

Dates for the next few sessions are:

- **City Offices**, Winchester, every first Thursday 6 February 12.30 - 2.30pm
- **Makins Court** Alresford, every first Friday 7 February 10am - 12pm
- **King Harold Court**, Winchester, every second Tuesday 11 February 10am - 12pm
- **Greens Close**, Bishops Waltham, every fourth Wednesday 26 February 10.00 – 12.00

For more information about the digital drop in session, [visit our website](#).

If you’ve got a more complex problem, we can also put you in touch with our charity partner AbilityNet, who can provide you with further free digital support:

[A digital world accessible to all | AbilityNet](#)

WIN A FOOD HAMPER!

We are running a prize draw to win a food hamper. To enter, email your name and address to tenantvoice@winchester.gov.uk for your chance to win.

The closing date to get your entry is 30 June [T&Cs apply](#)

Good luck!

GET HELP AT OUR COMMUNITY HUBS

If you've got a housing issue, are worried about the cost of living, or have any other concerns, and you'd find it helpful to talk things through, why not come along to one of our Community Hubs?

The hubs are a place for you to grab a free cuppa and have an informal chat with our friendly Tenant Partnership and Housing Officers about your concerns, and the kinds of support available to you.

We currently run three hubs which take place monthly in Winchester, Alresford and Wickham. Here are the details of the next few sessions:

- **[*St Gregory's Church](#)** Alresford every third Wednesday of the month
10:00 – 12:00
- **[Wickham Community Centre](#)**, every first Monday 2.30pm - 4.30pm
- **[Unit 12](#)**, Community Pantry, Winnall, every third Thursday 10.30am-12.30pm

*The Alresford venue has changed to St Gregory's Church

These hubs are open to everyone - pop in for a chat about any housing-related enquiry, ask questions, or just see what's going on in your community.

If you'd like to learn more about any of the activities we are running for tenants, or get involved in shaping services near you, please keep an eye on our [webpage](#), or get in touch:

tenantpartnership@winchester.gov.uk
0800 716 987.

We'd love to hear from you!

WE'RE LISTENING



Tenant Partnership Team Update: Workshops, Hubs & how to get Involved

We've had a busy start to the year in the Tenant Partnership Team! Here's a quick look at what's been happening and what's coming up:

Housing Improvement Workshops: Your Voice in Action

In March, we held **four Housing Improvement Workshops** in Stanmore, bringing tenants, shared owners and leaseholders together to share their views and shape the future of housing services. **Over 20 residents took part**, with many attending multiple sessions. These workshops focused on **Transparency, Repairs, Tenancies and Estate Improvements**, and your feedback is already helping to influence how we work.

Want to see the impact? You can find **session plans, key actions and outcomes**, and future topics on our [Housing Improvement Workshops](#) webpage.

Next round coming soon!

We'll be running the next series of workshops in **June**, with sessions planned for **Winnall and Highcliffe**. These workshops are open to all council tenants, shared owners and leaseholders who want to help shape better housing services.

Book your place now via our online [booking form](#) or contact us by email: tenantpartnership@winchester.gov.uk



Meet the TACT Board – Representing and Advocating for Tenants

The recently formed **Tenant and Council Together (TACT)** Board plays a crucial role in shaping housing policy and ensuring tenants' voices are heard. The TACT Board brings together tenants, shared owners, senior officers and councillors to work collaboratively, advising on policies, service improvements, and key housing decisions.

Their insight and expertise help ensure that council housing services meet the needs of all residents. The Board is comprised of four tenant/shared-owner members, two independent members, the Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing,

and is Chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

More details about the groups and to read more about the TACT board can be found [here](#)

ASB ASSESSMENT - THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all residents, staff, and stakeholders who took part in our recent **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)** assessment. Your valuable input is helping us shape the way we manage ASB, neighbour nuisance, and hate crime, ensuring our response remains effective and responsive to our resident's needs.

The Tenancy Services Team is currently working with Resolve, a specialist independent organisation in tackling ASB, to review and strengthen the ASB service we provide to our residents. This review is focused on operational service delivery, ensuring our approach is effective, efficient, and aligned with national best practices.

Reporting ASB: How to get in touch

If you experience or witness ASB from a council tenant, there are several ways to report it to the Tenancy Services Team:

- Online: Email us at housingtenancy@winchester.gov.uk with details of the incident.
- By Phone: Call us at **01962 848 197** to speak directly with an officer who will triage your concern.
- In Person: Visit our City Office in Colebrook Street to discuss your

concerns during opening hours 10am-3pm

Your reports allow us to take the necessary steps to resolve issues promptly and support those affected



Energy Saving Homes update - Government funding

Winchester City Council has been awarded £3.4M to improve the energy ratings of its council homes following a successful bid for funding to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

With support from the newly announced funding, we aim to bring improvements to 672 homes over the next three years by making use of energy-saving technology such as air source heat pumps, solar panels and solar batteries, as well as building fabric improvements such as cavity wall and loft insulation.

[Find out more](#)

YOUR HOME

Dealing with damp & mould

Warmer weather is on the horizon but, while things still a little chilly, we wanted to point you towards [some guidance to our website](#) that can help keep your home free from the risks of damp and mould. Here you'll find some helpful

pointers and a short video explaining how to spot and deal with any issues. Preventing and treating damp and mould is one of our priorities and if you have any concerns about your home, don't hesitate to contact us by emailing housing@winchester.gov.uk or by calling us on **01962 848 400**.

How to raise a fire safety concern

If you have any concerns about fire safety, we are here to help you.

- Report it through [My Council Services](#) – you don't need an account you can report concerns using the 'guest option' at the bottom left of the pop up window
- Call 01962 848 400 or email: housing@winchester.gov.uk.
- If you'd prefer to discuss your concern with a TACT (Tenants and Council Together – the council's formal consultation group) tenant representative. Call the Tenant Involvement Team on Freephone 0800 716 987.

Health and safety visits

Occasionally, we are required to access your property to carry out essential works and checks. We will always write to you in advance of these visits with reasonable notice of the intended date. Please try to accommodate these visits by allowing access to your property. We are committed to ensuring all our properties are safe.

REMEMBER- Always ask to see the ID of anyone wishing to access your property. when they attend. Please be cautious if you have not been contacted in advance of a visit- and if you are in any doubt, please call us on 01962 848 400.

Smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors

Every home should have smoke detectors and properties with gas appliances should have a CO detector. These are for your safety.

Please test these regularly and if these are not working, report it to our repairs team. Please also let us know if you do not have smoke detectors or if you have gas appliances and don't have a CO detector. We can arrange for these to be fitted for you



CHANGES TO OUR COMPLAINTS POLICY

Please be advised that we recently updated our Housing Complaints Policy- [WCC Housing Complaint Policy](#)

All stage 2 complaints will now be responded to within 20 working days. This is in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code, which became mandatory from 1 April 2024

This change to the policy will provide more time for thorough investigation of Stage 2 complaints to be investigated, responded to and resolved, and will provide a better level of customer service.

[Further information on how to raise a complaint](#)

Conveniently access your tenant services with **My Winchester Tenancy**



Did you know that you can quickly and easily make rent payments, check your account balance and much more using My Winchester Tenancy?

My Winchester Tenancy is our online portal designed to let you access tenant services in a way that is convenient for you, no emails or phone calls needed. Other services you can access at the click of a button include requesting non-urgent repairs, checking repair appointments and more

You can access the service at any time by simply going to the [website](#) and

logging in.

It's easy to sign up too – just head over to [My Winchester Tenancy](#) and make sure you have your Tenancy Reference Number and National Insurance Number to hand.

MAY Half Term Football



May Half Term Football (Tuesday 27 – Friday 30 May)

Winchester City Council in partnership with ActiveMe 360 are providing football coaching at Stanmore, Colden Common, Winchester City Centre and Whiteley for just £1 per session! Each day will be packed with fun games and matches, with a chance to make new friends and learn new skills.

If you would like further information or to book, please visit bookings.activeme360.co.uk/list and search 'Winchester'



Winchester & Whiteley Park Yoga

Park yoga connects people to the natural outdoors and helps to improve our physical and mental wellbeing. **Our free weekly yoga** takes place at the Garrison Ground (the field next to Winchester Sport & Leisure Park) every Sunday morning (9:30-10:30am) from May 4 to September 14 for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

All sessions are led by a qualified instructor – no need to book, just bring a mat, towel or blanket and a drink of water. For more information please visit [Park Yoga Winchester](#)

If you have any comments on this newsletter or any suggestions on what you

would like to hear about please contact us by [email](#)



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