

CONNECT



INSIDE



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



TENANT
GARDENING
COMPETITION



THE BREAD AND
BUTTER THING



BEING A GOOD
NEIGHBOUR



CHRISTMAS IN
THE SCHEMES

Welcome

Welcome to our first issue of Housing Connect in 2023.

Looking back over 2022/23 we have seen a year of significant change not only within Housing Services but within the world - the easing of Covid restrictions, Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee celebrations the war in Ukraine and sadly the death of Queen Elizabeth II and a new King.

Throughout 2022/23 Housing Services have been working hard to improve our service to our tenants and leaseholders with some significant policies implemented. A new Tenancy Agreement at the start of 2022 was swiftly followed up by new policies for Anti-Social Behaviour and Housing Management and an updated Leaseholder booklet. We have welcomed the increased feedback from our tenants and leaseholders and ask that you continue to help us to develop through your feedback.

2023/24 will continue to be a period of change with a new Allocation system Darlington HomeSearch, going live in the summer and the introduction of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures by the Regulator of Social Housing (see more on page 19 for details) and I'm sure more changes will come about as the year progresses.

I look forward to the King's Coronation in May and all the celebrations within our communities throughout the year. If you have an idea for an event that could make a difference to your community, why not think about making a bid for a Community Fund grant where you could be awarded up to £1000 for your neighbourhood group, organisation or charity?

Finally I'd like to say a big "thank you" to the volunteers of our Tenants Panel for all their hard work and dedication in assisting us to provide a better service. Not only have they recently chosen the new name for our Allocation system but during 2022/23 they have been heavily involved in scrutinising the new policies and our performance and helping us to improve. We are always keen to have new members so if you would like to be involved, please contact us.



Kind Regards

Claire Gardner-Queen
Head of Housing

In this issue

2

Welcome

3

Tenant Gardening Competition

4

Energy Saving Tips

6

Damp, Mould and Condensation

8

Breathe Easy Darlington and Tenancy Sustainment

9

The Bread and Butter Thing and Tenant Satisfaction Measures

10

Being a Good Neighbour

12

You Said, We Did

13

Housing Focus

14

Emergency Repairs and Christmas Card Winner

15

Introduction to Early Years Settings

16

Games for the Brain

17

Home Contents Insurance for Tenants

18

Christmas in the Schemes

19

Allocations

Gas Servicing

21

Electrical Testing

22

Community Fund Bids

Kings Coronation Poster

24

Wordsearch

Tenant Gardening Competition

In August 2022 we asked our tenants to nominate their gardens for our 2022 Gardening Competition which was separated into 4 categories.

Best Individual Garden

The winner of our 'Best Individual Garden' category was Earl Carlson resident Ray with stunning use of space at the front of his property.

When Ray was announced as the winner fellow residents were quick to congratulate such a worthwhile winner

'Well done Ray, always a pleasure to walk past your garden'

'Oh wow, brilliant... Famous Lockwood's. Well done and thoroughly deserved for the time and effort you put into it. Always love your garden in full bloom'

Well done, we live in Lancaster Close & always admire Ray's front.



Best Community Garden

Best Communal Gardens - Residents of Roxby Court



Best Young Gardener

Our second winner was Red Hall resident Farid who bagged the title of 'Best Young Gardener'. Farid who only moved into his property in 2022 brought lots of colour to a relatively small plot and showed that you're never too young to take up gardening.



Most Sustainable Garden

The residents of Linden Court, Hurworth.



Congratulations to all the winners from ourselves in Housing!

Due to the success of last year's competition we will be running this again for 2023. So if you are a keen gardener, or even if you aren't but are interested in entering then please keep an eye out on our webpages and Facebook page for more details in the next few months.

Energy Saving Tips

Switch off standby

You can save around £65 a year by remembering to turn your appliances off standby mode. Almost all electrical appliances can be turned off at the plug without upsetting their programming.



Turn off lights

Turn off lights when you're not using them or when you leave a room. This could save you around £25 a year on your annual energy bills.



Careful with your washing

You can save around £34 a year from your energy bill by using your washing machine more carefully:

- Use your washing machine on a 30-degree cycle instead of higher temperatures
- Reduce your washing machine use by one run per week for a year.



Avoid the tumble dryer

Avoid using a tumble dryer for your clothes: dry clothes on racks inside where possible or outside in warmer weather to save £70 a year.



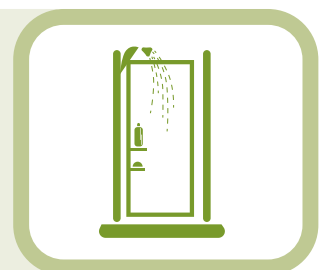
Spend less time in the shower

Keeping your shower time to just 4 minutes could save a typical household £95 a year on their energy bills.



Swap your bath for a shower

Swapping one bath a week for a 4 min shower could save you £20 a year on your annual bills.



With the recent price increases we have pulled together some useful tips to help reduce your energy use

Be savvy in the kitchen

Kettles are one of the most used appliances in the kitchen. Avoid overfilling the kettle and save yourself £13 a year on your electricity bill.



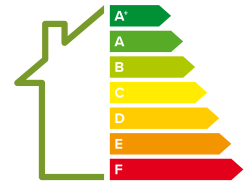
Fill your dishwasher

Only run your dishwasher when its full to reduce the amount of water you use. Reducing your dishwasher use by one run per week for a year could save you £17.



Home appliances

When choosing energy efficient appliances for your home look out for the energy rating label and consider the size of the appliance you require.



Smart meter

The quickest way to understand your home energy consumption is to see it in real time. Using a smart meter will show you your usage in power and cost.



Lighting

Lighting accounts for 11% of a typical household's electricity consumption. If you replace all the bulbs in your home with LED lights, you could reduce your carbon dioxide emissions by up to 40kg a year.



Heating

Set your heating and hot water to come on and off when you need them. Room thermostats turn the heating on until the room reaches the temperature set, then off until the temperature drops.



Damp, Mould and Condensation

As your landlord we are committed to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes. We have a responsibility to make sure your home is safe, healthy and free from things that could cause serious harm including damp and mould.

We have a legal responsibility to manage repairs and complete any work required to improve damp

issues, but we can't do it without you. It is important you report any issues to us so we can work quickly to help resolve the problems.

Our aim is to reduce the impact that damp and mould can have on you which includes distress, inconvenience and concerns about health and well-being.

There are three main causes of damp and mould within properties which are as follows:

Condensation leading to mould growth

This is by far the most common cause of damp and mould within properties, particularly within the winter months.

In your home, condensation is often seen as water on your windows and is more noticeable when the weather gets colder and the outside temperature drops.

The moisture in the air can cause mould growth on walls and ceilings as well as on furniture and your possessions. We can identify excessive moisture in the air by using a hygrometer.

Penetrating Damp

This occurs when there's a defect with the fabric of the building or services within it, allowing water to enter the property.

This could be a roof leak, disrepair to windows, door frames or a leak from a water pipe inside the property.

Penetrating damp can usually be identified by water staining, yellow/brown in colour, in a particular area where the water is entering the property.

The location of this staining is generally an indication of the source of the leak of the water.

Rising Damp

Rising damp is caused by the breakdown or deterioration of the damp proof course of the building.

Moisture then rises up the walls to a maximum height of around 1m. We are able to identify rising damp by taking damp meter readings and taking advice from a specialist damp proof company.

As with penetrating damp, it can be identified by a tide mark which can be yellowy brown or can be white and textured. This texture is caused by salts from the ground and the plaster being drawn through the wall with water.



What we will do when you make a report of damp, condensation or mould in your home

- When you report damp, condensation or mould to us we will inspect your home fully both inside and outside including brickwork, windows, doors, guttering, downpipes, drains, damp proof courses, windows, radiators, fans and visible pipework.
- Check that all internal fans are working.
- Take damp and air meter readings.
- Carry out any repairs or actions highlighted
- Refer to specialist damp contractors where necessary
- Offer advice, support and guidance to you
- Refer you if you have highlighted any health or income concerns to appropriate agencies.

If the remedial works have caused damage to your internal decoration, we will offer you a voucher to assist with redecorating, or in exceptional circumstances we will provide support and assistance to assist with redecoration.



How can I report any issues?

You can report any repairs or contact us for advice by:

- Email us at housing@darlington.gov.uk
- Send us a message via your digital tenancy
- Ring us on 01325 405333

What you can do to help reduce condensation and mould in your home

We know that not every home is the same but there are some actions that you can take to help reduce condensation in your home such as:

Ventilate the home to help stop the build-up of damp by:

- Keeping trickle vents open in window frames.
- Drying any wet windows and frames regularly.
- Opening windows, even if only slightly and on the security setting.
- Opening windows while cooking, washing, drying clothes and bathing.
- Ensuring all extractor fans are used.
- Ventilating cupboards and wardrobes by providing breather holes in false backs.
- Don't overfill cupboards and wardrobes - make sure there is enough space for air to flow.
- Leaving a gap between walls and furniture to allow the air to move.
- Don't block air vents, air bricks or trickle vents - these help to keep the air moving.

It is best, where possible, to have a constant, low background heat which helps to create warmer surfaces and reduces the chance of damp, condensation, and mould.

- Report repairs and signs of water leaks or water ingress straight away, so problems can be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Treat any signs of black mould straight away and do not let the mould growth spread.
- Reduce the presence of moisture to a minimum within the property by:
 - o Covering pans when cooking.
 - o Don't leave kettles boiling.
 - o Keeping kitchen doors closed when cooking.
 - o Using extractor fans.
 - o Keeping bathroom doors closed when bathing and open the window.
 - o Drying clothes outside if possible.
 - o Using a ventilated tumble dryer.
 - o Avoid using portable fuel-less heaters.
 - o If you are drying washing inside, do so in a closed, heated, and well-ventilated room.

Breathe Easy Darlington



Breathe Easy Darlington is a free membership group offering exercise classes, events, and social support to anyone with respiratory disease in Darlington and the local area.

The weekly classes are delivered by a physiotherapist and are currently held at the Eastbourne Sports complex in Darlington.

There is a charge of £5 per session, for the two hour weekly Breathe Easy Active Exercise Classes.

Breathe Easy Darlington was started by and is run by volunteers who have some form of lung disease(s) themselves; so they understand your needs.

We look forward to receiving your application which, when authorised, will give you access to our Private Facebook page and allow us to welcome you to the group.

More information can be found on our website and Facebook pages. www.breatheeasydarlington.org

Tenancy Sustainment

Our tenancy sustainment team offer a free confidential service with advice to support our tenants.

This can include

- Managing rent payments
- Welfare benefits
- Universal Credit and housing benefit
- Applications to help with water charges
- Discretionary housing payment applications
- Advice on budgeting and managing your money
- Saving money on bills such as gas, electricity and phone / broadband
- Bank and credit union accounts
- Loan sharks

If you have any issues regarding any of the above you can contact us via email at tenancy.sustainment@darlington.gov.uk or call us on **01325 405333**

What you must do if you cannot pay the rent

It is important that you contact the Housing Income Management Team if you are unable to pay your rent on time. We can put you in touch with our Tenancy Sustainment Officers that give free confidential advice.

The team are here to help and can be contacted on **01325 405333**.



The Bread and Butter Thing is now running in 9 different location throughout Darlington.

The schemes mission is to unleash the power of food and ignite long-lasting change in neighbourhoods across the UK.

Locations include Bowman Street, Skerne Park, Cockerton, North Road, Corporation Road, Albert Hill, Red Hall, Eastbourne and Firthmoor.

To celebrate the fantastic work that the Bread and Butter Thing is doing in Darlington the Housing Team visited hubs in the month of February to help out and speak directly to the army of volunteers who have helped TBBT grow successfully.

'In the current economic state and with prices increasing everywhere I think The TBBT is an essential asset within our communities. It offers the opportunity for people from areas to come together to support their local communities, help prevent food waste and the eases the burden of the cost of living crisis for many families.' - Housing Officer Dean Morris

To become a TBBT member for free all you need to do is to locate your local hub and text **07860 063304** with your full name, postcode and the name of the hub you will be collecting from.

www.breadandbutterthing.org



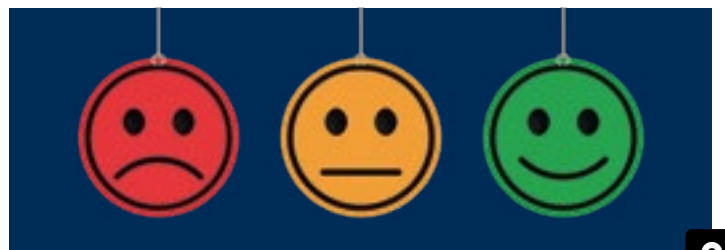
Tenant Satisfaction Measures are Coming

From April 2023 The Regulator of Social Housing is creating a new system for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services.

The tenant satisfaction measures will cover all kinds of rented social housing in England and is aimed at making ours and other landlords' performance more visible to tenants and help you hold us to account.

As part of the measures tenants will be asked a series of set questions designed to measure our performance.

In preparation for the Tenant Satisfaction Measures now is the time to ensure that all your contact details with us are up to date and keep your eyes peeled for more information. We expect to start our surveys around September so look out for more information.



Being a good neighbour

Being a good neighbour means being reasonable and tolerant of different people's views and lifestyles and considering how your own behaviour affects others around you.

Different lifestyles and one-off incidents

We are all different and you should respect that. Often people do not realise they may be disturbing others. One-off incidents can be annoying, such as a loud party, but if they are not frequent then you should try to tolerate it. If they occur on a regular basis, and the disturbance causes you a problem, it is often a matter of making your neighbour aware in a friendly manner and seeking to work out a solution together.

What you can do if your neighbour is causing problems

We recommend talking to your neighbour as soon as possible about anything they are doing that's affecting you. This is often the quickest and easiest solution.

Some tips on approaching your neighbour:

- Choose a time that's convenient for everyone
- Plan what you are going to say
- Be polite and explain the problem and how it's affecting you
- Listen to what they have to say
- Be understanding of different ways of life
- Be open to suggestions
- Come to an agreement that suits everyone.

Do not:

- Approach your neighbour if you don't feel safe
- Go around when you feel angry or very upset
- Be argumentative or use threatening behaviour.
- If you feel you cannot approach your neighbour yourself, consider whether you have a friend or relative who could act on your behalf.
- Alternatively, you could write them a friendly letter.

If you are unable to come to a resolution with your neighbour we will be at hand to resolve any issues.



What you can do to be a good neighbour

Noise is a common cause of complaints however;

- As part of everyday living, and the fact that no home is totally soundproof, we all must expect some noise from the people living around us. Common everyday living noise includes TVs and stereos, DIY, dogs barking, intruder or car alarms, slamming doors or simply walking around the property.
- Recognise that your neighbours do not want to hear noise from your home, particularly late at night, or for long periods
- Keep noise at a reasonable level at all times, for example, from the TV, stereo, radio
- Noise carries through walls, floors and doors. Laminate flooring (particularly in flats), and other hard surfaces, can amplify noise. To help reduce it, put down rugs and fit felt or rubber pads to movable furniture.
- Warn your neighbours if you are going to do anything noisy, for example, having a party or doing DIY
- Co-operate with your neighbours if they ask you to reduce noise. For example, you can position your TV or stereo away from the walls you share with your neighbours.

Parking

- Park considerately
- Recognise that you don't have the right to park outside your home. Anyone can park on a public road if they adhere to any restrictions imposed by way of signs and markings and it is not causing an obstruction
- Avoid blocking entrances, dropped kerbs, garages or pavements.

Children playing

- Be tolerant of children playing outside
- However, if you're a parent, consider how the noise of your children playing outside may affect your neighbours. Consider if there's a safer place to play such as a park or skateboard area
- If a child accidentally throws or kicks a ball into your property, you should either hand it back or allow it to be collected
- If children harass, intimidate or disturb others then complaints are justified, and parents must respond reasonably.

What if I am not satisfied?

We hope that we can work together with our residents and listen to them, but if you are unhappy with the response from the Housing team we have a complaints procedure you can follow and you can contact our Complaints Team by:

- calling the Complaints Team on **01325 406777**
- emailing: **complaints@darlington.gov.uk**
- using their online complaints form **www.darlington.gov.uk/your-council/complaints-compliments-and-comments/housing-complaints/**



01325 405333
housing@darlington.gov.uk
www.darlington.gov.uk/housing
darlingtonbc
facebook.com/DBCHousing

You Said, We Did

Branksome Hall Drive

In July 2022 the residents of Branksome Hall Drive asked Housing Services to carry out a review of the previous decision for pets being allowed in the scheme. A previous consultation with residents voted for a no pet policy.

A consultation was carried out where all residents were encouraged to place their votes, with the outcome being in favour of pets being allowed in the scheme.

Since the change in policy, Housing Services have had a number of requests and we are now working with the Scheme Manager to ensure the transitional period is a success for everyone.

Lorraine Glenning who is the Scheme Manager at Branksome Hall Drive has welcomed the change.

“The change in the pet policy has been such a positive move forward, especially with people who live alone which can help improve social interaction, reduce stress and have a positive vibe. A pet loves you unconditionally and will be your companion and will motivate you to move and mix with others and also bring people together.”

Tenant Martin has homed a Jack Russell called Lucy after the change of policy and is over the moon with his new addition.

‘Lucy is so good for my well being and has been quite the hit with fellow tenants. Everyone has loved seeing her and she brings a smile to everyones faces.’

For more information about Branksome Hall Drive or any other of our schemes visit :

www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/finding-a-home/50plus-housing/



Identifying our team

In early summer 2022, Housing Services invested in the team by purchasing a range of jackets and coats with the Darlington Borough Council logo and Housing Services on them.

This was to help the team be noticed on the estates and to support tenants to approach Housing staff knowing they work for the department.

We hope this has encouraged you to approach the team and we look forward to introducing you to members of staff over the coming months, look out on our social media pages for more information.

Remember, all staff members carry identification with them. Make sure you ask to see this before letting anyone into your home. Check out our Enforcement Officers Jo and Chris rocking the new jackets.



Linden Court Clear Up

In summer 2022 residents at Linden Court had concerns regarding the communal garden at Linden Court. Although the Garden has always been popular with tenants and many contribute to the area it had been cluttered with items that needed clearing.

In collaboration with our Street Scene team, Housing Officer Dean Morris and Scheme Manager Fran Hague set about clearing the garden and restoring it to its best with many items recycled or removed.

Linden’s garden is now ready for the spring with tenants excited about the possibilities moving forward.

The residents are also planning a summer fete for the Kings Coronation.

Housing Focus: Elizabeth Davison

Group Director of Operations

How long have you worked for Darlington Borough Council and what roles have you undertaken during that time?

I've worked for Darlington council for 25 years starting as the Assistant Director for Finance and IT at Contract services up at the depot on Haughton Road which is now a housing estate next to the college. Since then, my role has grown with more services added every few years including HR, Health and safety, Systems and processing, Strategy and performance, communications, and equalities. In 2021 I was appointed as Group Director of Operations and this is when Housing came under my remit along with Legal, procurement, revenues and benefits, customer services, democracy, and registrars.

What do you enjoy the most about your role?

The diversity and never knowing what the day will bring, I could be discussing a new housing development in the morning, chairing the North East Director of Resources meeting over lunch and attending an emergency responders training session in the afternoon, there is never a dull moment and most importantly I work with a fantastic team of people which makes coming to work each day a pleasure.

What does your job entail?

First and foremost, I am the Council's Chief finance Officer and am responsible for the proper administration of the council's financial affairs, I want to make sure we provide value for money and regarding housing this means ensuring we use every pound of rents received to improve our/your homes. Whilst my role covers several areas, mostly back office and behind the scenes, it has been a great learning experience with the addition of housing as this has enabled me to look outward and understand all the complexities of being a landlord as well as getting to know the Housing team who are passionate about continually improving Darlington's housing stock and making thriving communities for all our residents. It is particularly rewarding to see new council homes being built especially as they are in such high demand, and I am proud of our window and door replacement programmes which will help with resident's energy use.



Emergency Repairs

The emergency repairs service deals with the most urgent repairs. These are repairs that have the potential to put people's lives and property at serious risk and include:

- Burst Pipes
- Boilers - no heating or hot water between November and April and no other form of heating
- Cylinders, tanks, or WC cistern leaking badly
- Frozen pipes
- No cold water
- No power
- Smoke alarms not working
- Cooker control out of order or dangerous wiring. (Please check the fuse first)

- Make safe dangerous structures
- Loose tiles on roof

If the repair is deemed an emergency the team will usually carry out a temporary repair within 24 hours to make the situation safe and will carry out a permanent repair as soon as possible afterwards.

You must also stay at home if you report an emergency repair if it is safe to do so until the contractor arrives.

Please only use the emergency repair service for genuine cases. Any non-emergency repairs may be rechargeable to you.

The repairs handbook is available online for more information: www.darlington.gov.uk/media/16662/hra0011-repairs.pdf

Christmas Card Winner

In January Customer Engagement Co-ordinator Matthew visited our Christmas Card Competition winner Ashleigh to present her with the first prize of an iPad.

Ashleigh's design perfectly captured the 'Christmas at Home' brief with a festive scene that is familiar to so many.

Look out for more competitions and prizes in the next few months.



Introduction to Early Years Settings (Level 1 Award)

Work with children up to the age of 5 years old, gaining basic knowledge of childcare in early years environments such as playgroups and nurseries.

Learn about the value of play, the roles & responsibilities of carers and volunteers, the importance of developing links in the local community, plus lots more!



This free 12 week course with Learning & Skills Darlington starts on:
Tuesday 18th April 2023, 12.30pm - 2.30pm at The Coleridge Centre

For more information and to apply please visit our website:
www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills

CALL: 01325 405601 • **CALL/TEXT/WHATSAPP:** 07932 869325 • **EMAIL:** l&s@darlington.gov.uk

Learning & Skills



Learning and Skills



DarlingtonL_5



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TEES VALLEY
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

TEES VALLEY MAYOR



HM Government

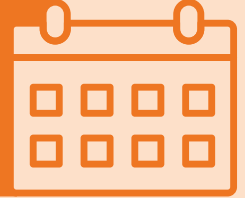
Games for the Brain

Rosemary Court are delivering Games for the Brain sessions to enable people living with dementia to remain physically active and enjoy activities they previously accessed in a way that is suitable for them. Activities may include indoor bowls and dominoes.

Rosemary Court
Blackton Grove
Darlington
DL1 4UB



Every Wednesday
on weekly basis
(starting on
2nd November 2022)



2pm - 4pm



For more information,
please call **Karen Gilbey**
07956 995249



No booking required!



Home Contents Insurance for Tenants

Now more than ever it is vital to take out insurance for your homes to cover your possessions against fire, theft and other risks, such as accidental damage.

We have arranged with Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Ltd a home contents insurance scheme to give you financial protection should these types of events happen.

With Royal & Sun Alliance there are 2 levels of cover for you to choose from Simple and Simple +. Below is a breakdown of these levels of cover.

Simple

- Your home contents and personal items including bicycles and computer equipment are insured when in your home.
- They are covered against loss or damage caused by specific events such as theft, fire and flood, but accidental loss in the home is not covered.
- Also insured are lost or stolen keys, freezer contents, your legal liability to the public as occupier of the home or personally, and the cost of alternative accommodation.
- Improvements you have made to your home such as fitted kitchens, bathrooms, wardrobes, laminate flooring patio doors etc (but not conservatories)
- Accidental breakage cover is automatically provided under Simple cover for mirrors, ceramic hobs in free standing cookers or glass which form part of the furniture in your home. However this does not cover accidental damage for all your home contents.

Simple+

- Simple + includes full Accidental Damage cover for the contents in your home, so for example repair or replacement if you accidentally broke a vase or damaged your TV.

For more information or to apply for home insurance visit www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/your-home/your-property/insurance-cover/



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NEW PAYMENT CARD APP...
ALLOWS YOU TO PAY ANYTIME,
ANYWHERE

Available for Apple, Android and Windows smartphones
Download for FREE from the Apple App Store, Google Play or Windows Phone Store
NB - You need to select Payment Card as your method of payment in order to use the Payment Card App.

Home Contents Insurance Application Form

Read, complete and sign the application form and post it to RSA, URIS Group, Quay Point, Lakeside Boulevard, Doncaster, DN4 5PL. Or, having viewed the application form, telephone 0345 6718172 and apply over the phone.



Christmas in the Schemes

December 2022 saw an array of Christmas celebrations across the town.

This was showcased perfectly within our sheltered housing, good neighbour and extra care schemes.

From Christmas meals and parties to special appearances from the Christmas Elf and Mrs Clause it was a time to get together after a couple of years of Christmases with muted celebrations due to Covid.

Over the period the Darlington Borough Council Facebook Page was full of pictures of festive activities.

Darlington Borough Council are proud to offer safe and vibrant accommodation for over 55's.

Our schemes have a keen focus on community living with a warm welcoming feel all year round. The varied activities help maintain a healthy and independent life.



Allocations

We're looking to adopt a new, more flexible system for the allocation of council housing.

Housing Services are committed to building sustainable communities, with the ambition to build safe communities of mixed tenures, where people are proud to call their home.

Due to increasing demand, the existing Tees Valley-wide system no longer meets the borough's needs and a report to Cabinet in March 2023 recommended the approval of a new allocations policy and system to be introduced later this year.

The council's Tenants Panel has given its overwhelming support to the new policy which features some key changes, including updates to the 'local connections' section and banding to ensure those in most need are given higher priority.

In March 2023 a tenants panel took place to name the new system with Darlington HomeSearch being chosen as the new name for the allocations systems.

All current waiting list applicants will be contacted in the coming weeks to tell them what they need to do to apply for the new system. Keep your eyes peeled on our website and facebook pages in the coming weeks for our exciting changes.

For more information regarding our allocations policy visit www.darlington.gov.uk in the coming weeks.



Gas Servicing

You may have noticed that we have contacted you earlier than usual to confirm an appointment for your gas service to be carried out.

We are changing the process in the way we deliver our gas servicing as we move to complete more services during the summer months, leaving more appointments available in the winter months for emergency repairs.

Despite this change gas safety checks remain a priority for us as this is a legal requirement, so if you have received a letter to remind you that your service is due don't hesitate in getting in touch.

What to do in a gas Emergency?

If you smell gas you must:

- Get fresh air immediately, open all doors and windows to ventilate the area.
- Turn off the gas emergency control valve if you can
- Extinguish all naked flames, like candles, wax melts and do not smoke

- Do not operate electrical switches (turning lights on and off for example)

You must contact the National Gas Emergency helpline on **0800 111 999**. They will attend free of charge to investigate.

Contact our repair team after they have attended on **01325 405333** and we will attend to complete a survey or carry out further works.

Do you have a Carbon monoxide Alarm?

We need to fit Carbon Monoxide Alarms to all of our properties to make sure we are keeping you safe in your home.

If you have a gas boiler but do not have a carbon monoxide alarm you can contact us to get one installed in your home.

Please email housingfiresafety@darlington.gov.uk or call **01325 405333**.



Electrical Testing

As your landlord we have the responsibility to check that our properties electrical installation meets the regulatory requirements.

As with Gas Servicing we will ensure that the testing will be arranged for a time that is convenient to you. The appointment will take around 2 hours to complete.

If you receive a letter reminding you that your Periodic Electrical test is due please contact our Housing Planners team on **01325 406676** to book your appointment.

If you receive your electrical safety check between now and the 31st August you will automatically be entered into a free prize draw with the opportunity to win a £50 love to shop voucher.

Have you recently tested your smoke alarm?

As a tenant you should test your smoke alarm regularly to make sure they are working.

To do this there will be a test push button on the alarm which you need to press until you hear a high pitched alarm sound.

If you are concerned your smoke alarms are not working or require a repair please email **housingfiresafety@darlington.gov.uk** or call **01325 405333** to report any issues.



Community Fund Bids

Do you have a good idea and want to make a difference to where you live?

Our Community Engagement Fund has been set up by us to help you do just that!

We want to support community projects in areas where Housing Services own properties. The community fund offers a financial contribution to support tenant led activities and projects that make a difference to the community and helps to promote social, environmental, and economic wellbeing.

Funding is available up to £1000 or £500 for special public events like the Kings Coronation in May - check out the next page

Eligibility criteria

Applications need to be from:

- residents or leaseholders, as part of a group or individual
- voluntary groups
- resident led community group.

All applications need to benefit and make a difference to the lives of Darlington Council tenants, their families, and the wider community where we own properties.



Applications must be able to demonstrate how it aims to help achieve the following outcomes in the local community:

- A safe and caring community where residents know and support their neighbours
- The diverse needs within the community are supported
- More people active and involved in community events
- A place designed to thrive
- More people caring for the environment
- Enough support for people when needed
- More people healthy and independent
- Children have the best start in life
- More businesses and more jobs
- Support the formation and activities of resident groups and tenant panels
- Build capacity within the community so more residents can be effectively involved

How to Apply?

Visit for more information: <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/customer-engagement/housing-services-community-fund/>

Please print and email a copy to customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk

Or Post to:

Customer Engagement
Housing Services
Darlington Borough Council
Town Hall
Darlington
DL1 5QT

Do you have an idea to
bring your community together for the

Kings Coronation?



The Housing Community Funding are looking to fund projects and street parties with successful applicants receiving up to £500.

If you are intrested visit www.darlington.gov.uk/housing
or email customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk.

Applications to be received by Friday 7th April



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Areas of Darlington

K	B	R	A	N	K	S	O	M	E	K	K	E	R
R	D	L	E	I	F	G	N	I	L	E	I	A	F
L	F	I	R	T	H	M	O	O	R	T	D	L	S
D	M	E	L	N	F	H	G	L	E	O	S	E	A
L	R	G	I	W	N	K	T	K	O	N	I	P	A
E	I	O	A	C	R	E	D	G	T	D	P	E	L
I	S	K	E	R	N	E	P	A	R	K	E	A	E
F	S	E	D	G	E	F	I	E	L	D	I	S	D
N	E	I	R	E	D	H	A	L	L	E	T	E	C
I	H	C	C	O	C	K	E	R	T	O	N	G	R
H	A	U	G	H	T	O	N	L	I	G	L	S	N
W	N	G	S	A	F	L	G	E	E	R	O	D	T
E	L	A	S	C	E	L	L	E	S	A	E	L	H
R	W	E	C	M	I	F	G	A	D	R	K	N	R

- LINGFIELD
- RED HALL
- SKERNE PARK
- BRANKSOME
- COCKERTON
- HAUGHTON
- WHINFIELD
- FIRTHMOOR
- LASCELLES

To be in with a chance of a £75 Love2Shop voucher simply fill in the wordsearch and return to Housing Tenancy Management, Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington DL15QT

Entry Form

Name

Address

.....

Postcode

Telephone number



Annual Report
2021/2022



Annual Report for 2022/23 will be available on our website this summer.