

Your News

www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk

Spring 2023

Tenant Satisfaction Measures and what they mean for you.

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Your Money: Cost of living payments 2023-2024 Pages 4 & 5

Meet our grounds maintenance and gardening team as Spring starts to arrive! Pages 10 & 11

Your
HOUSING GROUP

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 0345 345 0272

Creating more places for people to thrive and be recognised as a sector leading landlord

Our new Chair

Introducing our new Chair, Mike Gaskell, who joins us on 1 April 2023

Mike Gaskell joins us with extensive experience of both the housing sector and senior leadership roles and he brings much valued skills and knowledge to our organisation.

Mike is a qualified solicitor and chaired the Board of Trafford Housing Trust from 2005 - a role he describes as “just about the best thing I have ever done” – and more recently, was Chair of the Leeds & Yorkshire Housing Association as well as a Board member at Weaver Vale Housing Trust and at Wakefield and District Housing.

Mike succeeds current Chair Richard Groome, who is retiring following the completion of two full terms of office.

“**He brings much valued skills and knowledge to our organisation.**”



Regarding your recent rent review

It has been brought to our attention that **there was an error** in some of the letters that we sent out regarding your upcoming rent changes. This doesn't affect everyone.

If you are affected, however, the second paragraph in the covering letter you received starts,

*"This year, the country has seen high levels of inflation with September CPI being 10.1%, so the Government announced that **from April 2024....**"*

This should read **"from April 2023."**

We would like to sincerely apologise for any confusion this may have caused. To reiterate, all rent review letters sent out recently reflect changes that will take place as of April this year, 2023, and the legal notice included with the covering letter, which states the date of your increase is correct, so the review letter is valid.

If you have any questions or concerns about this or any part of the information that you received, please don't hesitate to call us on **0345 345 0272** or you can send us a message at **yourhousinggroup.com/contact-us**.

Visit **www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk/customers/rent-and-service-charges** for more help and information.



Your money

Energy Bills Support Service Alternative Fund

The government has recently launched the **next stage** of its Energy Bills Support Service.

A further **900,000 homes will benefit from £400 towards their energy bills** due to being ineligible last time because of how their energy is supplied.



You may be eligible to apply if your main home is:

- a residential park home
- on a boat on a permanent residential mooring
- on a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site
- **part of a heat network without an electricity meter**
- **in social or private rented accommodation** which has a business energy connection or a communal electricity supply
- **off the mains electricity or gas grid**
- **in a care home or assisted living facility** and you pay for some or all of your care (directly or through loss of pension or other benefits)
- in a **separate domestic home** within a non-domestic property *(such as a farmhouse or a flat above a shop).*

This could be you!

Many of our residents in retirement living schemes, for example, did not get the monthly payment many of us did from last October totalling £400. This was automatically credited to most people's energy bills.

This is available now, but you have to apply!

You can check **eligibility criteria** and **submit an application** by heading to www.gov.uk/apply-energy-bill-support-if-not-automatic or by calling **0808 175 3287**.

**DEADLINE IS
WEDNESDAY
31 MAY 2023**

Cost of living payments, 2023-2024

The government has announced when further **Cost of Living Payments** will be made **between Spring 2023 and Spring 2024**. These payments are:

UK Government		Help for Households
£301	Spring 2023	for people on an eligible low income benefit
£150	Summer 2023	for people on an eligible disability benefit
£300	Autumn 2023	for people on an eligible low income benefit
£300	Winter 2023 & 2024	for pensioner households
£299	Spring 2024	for people on an eligible low income benefit

Most people should have received their 2022 Cost of Living Payment.

If you were eligible, you'll be paid automatically in the same way you usually get your benefit or tax credits.

This includes if you're found to be eligible for a **Cost of Living Payment** or a **Disability Cost of Living Payment** at a later date.

www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment

Your Money Matters

Supporting you through the cost of living crisis

 www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk/customers/money-advice/

Our Money Advice Team is always on hand on 0345 345 0272.

Tell us what you think about your customer newsletter - email engage@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

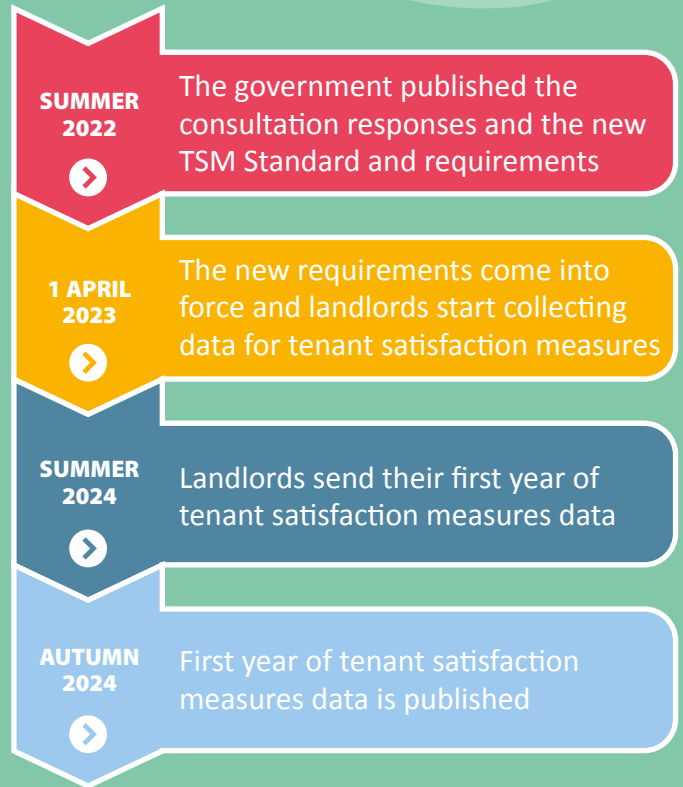


Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and what they mean for you

From **1 April 2023**, the Regulator for Social Housing will start collecting information on your satisfaction with us, your landlord. This will be measured via **22 newly agreed Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)**.

These stemmed from **The Charter for Social Housing Residents social housing white paper** in 2020, which set out ways to improve things for everyone living in social housing, and are intended to make landlords' performances, like us, more transparent to you as tenants, and help you hold us to account.

The TSMs will be collected through surveys and data and will cover **five** main themes:



Repairs

Building Safety

Neighbourhoods

Complaints

Customer Engagement



What are the TSMs?

Overall satisfaction

1. Overall satisfaction with the service provided

Keeping properties in good repair

2. Satisfaction with repairs
3. Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair
4. Satisfaction that the home is well-maintained
5. Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
6. Repairs completed within target timescale

Maintaining building safety

7. Satisfaction that the home is safe

Safety checks

8. Gas safety checks
9. Fire safety checks
10. Asbestos safety checks
11. Water safety checks
12. Lift safety checks

Respectful and helpful engagement

13. Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
14. Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them
15. Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect

Effective handling of complaints

16. Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints
17. Complaints relative to the size of the landlord
18. Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales

Responsible neighbourhood management






19. Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well-maintained
20. Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
21. Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling antisocial behaviour
22. Antisocial behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord



Our service standards

We are updating our service standards. These are our offer to you and how you work with us in return.

Our core services will be covered, including:

-  Repairs and maintenance service
-  Allocations and lettings
-  Antisocial behaviour
-  Customer complaints
-  Tenancy management



We also want you to be able to access the service you need, in the way you want to access it, at a time that suits you, and therefore we will:

Put you first and focus on getting things right first time

Listen to everything you say

Make every contact you make with us count by ensuring that all communications with you meet our service standards

Deliver services in the right way, tailored to your needs

Empower you to talk to us... and share your thoughts with us in meaningful ways

You can read more on our website. Search '**Service Standards**' at www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk/

When we do speak to you or hear from you, we want to make sure we do what's **right for you** and you receive the **best possible customer service.**

This includes:

- When you call us, **we will offer you the option to receive a call back** if this is more convenient for you
- If the person who you need to speak to is not immediately available, **they will call you back within two working days**
- We will provide a **digital service** for those of you that prefer to access our services this way, and we will **provide support to customers in order to access this**
- **We will treat you fairly** and ensure that any information you give us is only used in compliance with the relevant data protection legislation
- **We will provide a translator, signer, or information in another format such as audio, large print or braille as required**
- We will communicate with you in your **chosen language**
- When you contact us by **email**, we will respond by email if appropriate, **within two working days**
- When you write to us by **letter**, we will respond **within 10 working days**
- If you contact us via **social media**, we will respond **within two working days**, if appropriate

Need a translation?

需要翻译文本？

Czy potrzebują Państwo tłumaczenia?

تحتاج إلى ترجمة؟

ترجمہ کی ضرورت ہے؟

Braille and audio versions also available

Call Your Response on 0345 345 0272

Grounds Maintenance & Gardens

Meet the team



Melannie Hobbis

Regional Manager (South)

Melannie.hobbis@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

I manage the team as well as managing the grounds maintenance contractor Tivoli and the cleaning and window cleaning contractor, North South Facilities.

I am passionate about delivering value for money for our residents, and enjoy looking at ways we can improve our communal grounds and cleaning areas.

They work in the Warrington, Crewe, Staffordshire Moorlands, Chester, Buxton and Macclesfield areas.

I have worked at Your Housing Group for five years.



Kirsty Woo

Regional Manager (North)

Kirsty.woo@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

I manage the contractors Pinnacle, Idverde, Cleaning Fm and Hi-spec for the cleaning and window cleaning, and grounds maintenance contractors, Glendale and Greenfingers.

I enjoy meeting our residents and working together to listen to ways we can improve our sites.

They work in Merseyside, Manchester, Lancashire and Yorkshire.

I have worked at Your Housing Group for four years.



Rich Barley

fix360 Ground Contracts Manager

Rich.Barley@fix360.co.uk

I manage our in-house grounds maintenance team at fix360, looking after the grounds of 160 sites across Merseyside, Cheshire and Lancashire.

I'm always looking at ways we can improve the way we work both for you as our customers, and for the environment.

I have been at Your Housing Group for three years.



Frankie Ho

Tree Surveyor

Trees@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

I look after all the trees Your Housing Group owns and has responsibility for, alongside our contractors, Moorlands Treescapes, Glendale, Greenfingers and Tivoli.

I enjoy working outdoors and ensuring our tree stock is safe and healthy.

I have been at Your Housing Group for one year.

Greenfingers



What we do

Your cleaning Service

Communal areas to be cleaned

- ✓ Entrances, exits, doors, door glass, door mats, internal/external light covers
- ✓ Floors, landings, hallways and external areas to entrances
- ✓ Stairs (including underneath staircases where applicable) handrails, balustrades, banisters
- ✓ Walls, woodwork, ceilings, light fittings, sockets, door frames, skirting boards, ledges, switches and panels
- ✓ Bin stores
- ✓ Internal windows
- ✓ Intake rooms, store rooms, plant rooms, tank rooms
- ✓ Kitchen areas
- ✓ Toilet areas



Your window cleaning service

This service includes

Glass cleaning to external windows and associated furniture via the 'Reach and Wash' system

After cleaning, all windows should be

- ✓ Clean and streak-free
- ✓ Free of loose dust
- ✓ Free of debris, stains and cobwebs

Requests to cover more visits will incur an additional charge which will be agreed with you on an individual basis.

If you have any comments, compliments or queries, there are a number of ways to contact us

- yourhousinggroup.co.uk
- general@yourhousinggroup.co.uk
- [@yourhousing](https://www.facebook.com/yourhousing)
- [yourhousinggroup](https://www.instagram.com/yourhousinggroup)
- [@Your_Housing](https://twitter.com/Your_Housing)
- 0345 345 0272

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Grounds maintenance Annual programme



	WINTER		SPRING			SUMMER			AUTUMN			WINTER
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
GRASS CUTTING (MARCH - OCTOBER)			1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1		
LEAF CLEARANCE	1	1									1	1
GRASS EDGING			1									
LITTER CLEARANCE	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
PLANTING AREA MAINTENANCE	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
HERBICIDE APPLICATION TO HARDSTANDING AND BEDS			1	1	1	1	1	1				
HEDGE MAINTENANCE							1			1		
SHRUB PRUNING							1			1		
ROSE PRUNING			1									
BIRCHWOOD HEDGE CUTTING						1	1	1	1			

Visits are subject to weather conditions, staffing & equipment availability

If you have any comments, compliments or queries, there are a number of ways to contact us:

- yourhousinggroup.co.uk
- general@yourhousinggroup.co.uk
- [@yourhousing](https://www.facebook.com/yourhousing)
- [yourhousinggroup](https://www.instagram.com/yourhousinggroup)
- [@Your_Housing](https://twitter.com/Your_Housing)
- 0345 345 0272

Creating more places for people to thrive and be recognised as a sector leading landlord



Glendale



Helping the Hedgehogs

We've teamed up with Birchwood Hedgehog Society in Warrington to provide six new homes for our spiky friends.

Across the country, hedgehogs are in decline and the growth of urban populations is an issue. However, where there are still hedgehogs living nearby, providing them with a warm, dark and safe space to live is vital. Without this local action, the future is bleak for these creatures.



"I love doing anything that helps the environment and in particular, animals. I regularly work with one of our contractors, Tivoli, to find new ways to help local wildlife and improve bio-diversity."

- Mel Hobbis
Regional Manager (South)



A huge thank you to  **tivoli** too who funded these fabulous habitats for the hedgehogs in Birchwood.

Daisy Haye's Fresh New Look

Thanks to our residents' vision at Daisy Haye in Leek, the retirement living village now has grounds and gardens everyone can enjoy!

Working alongside us and contractor, Tivoli, major improvements have been made and the results really speak for themselves.

Mrs Knight, Daisy Haye resident, said,

"The grassy area outside the Bistro looks very nice and is a real improvement and the boardwalk is much improved by the scattering of stones."

Mr Annabelle agreed,

"The gardening work has been a great success. Mel and the team have done a fantastic job."



! You told us that not all contractors were delivering the same level of service.

✓ We have gone through another procurement process to ensure the contractors we use are consistent. This has helped to see customer satisfaction **increase by 12%**.

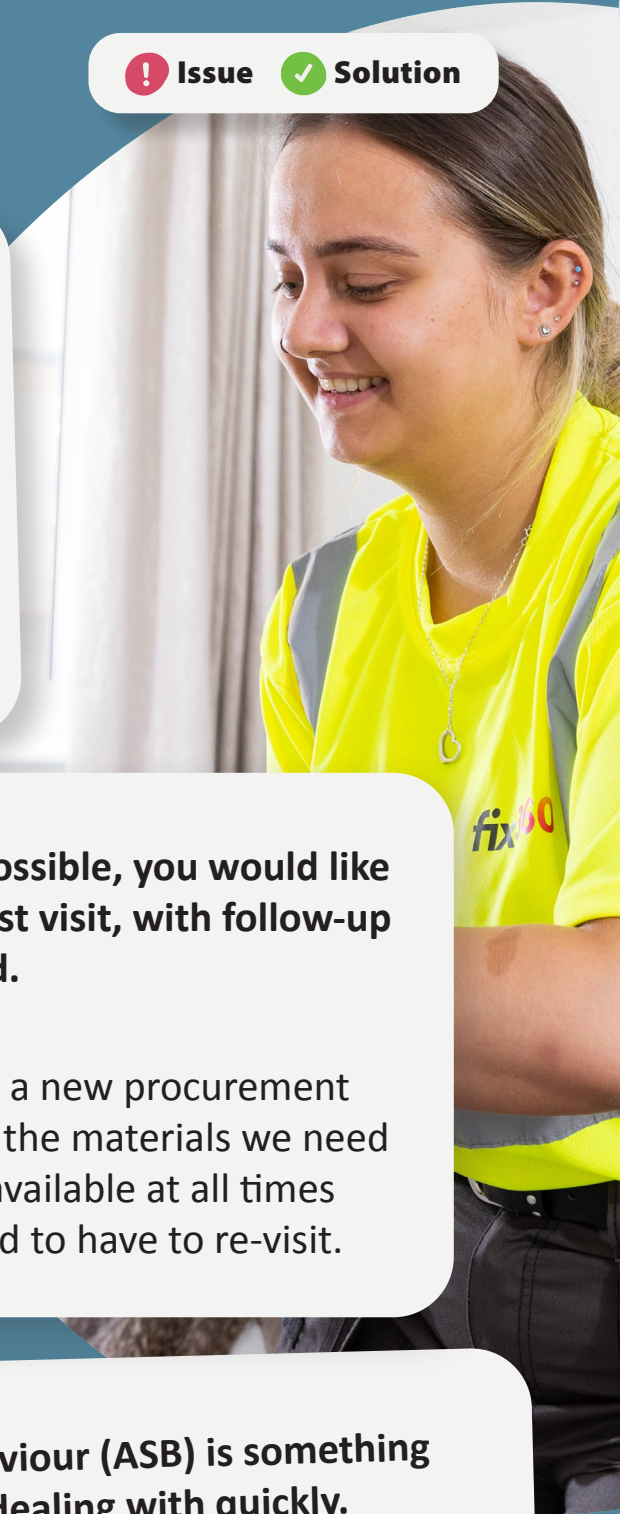


! You said that where possible, you would like repairs fixed on the first visit, with follow-up appointments reduced.

✓ We have gone through a new procurement process to ensure that the materials we need to fix your homes are available at all times which reduces the need to have to re-visit.

! Antisocial behaviour (ASB) is something that you want dealing with quickly.

✓ Our ASB policy and process has been reviewed and your satisfaction with the speed which we manage your issue has increased by 24% year on year.



Our wonderful World War Two veteran, Joe Donohue, turned 104 years old earlier this year!

Joe lives at Ryfields Retirement Village in Warrington and spent the day celebrating with his friends and family in the village's Bistro, saying:

"It's lovely living here at Ryfields. Everyone is so wonderful."

Joe is one of the oldest living veterans of WW2 serving in the Royal Artillery and as one of the 'Desert Rats' at the battle of El Alamein in North Africa.

He was part of the second wave that landed on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944 (D-Day) and he was also part of Operation Market Garden in Holland, which was later made into the film 'A Bridge Too Far', starring Sean Connery and Michael Caine.

Joe is blessed with the love and support of his family; four children (three boys and a girl), eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, who often visit him at Ryfields.

His two youngest grandchildren Oscar, who's nine and three-year old Marty visit regularly and with an incredible 101-year age gap between Joe and Marty, the family often wonder whether the age gap could be ***"among the greatest ever recorded in this country for a grandparent/grandchild"***.



Scheme Manager, Danielle McCann, speaks on behalf of us all, saying, *"Everyone from Your Housing Group wishes Joe a huge Happy Birthday."*

The young people who live at our Chester foyer have been gifted a wonderful poem and mural on the wall of their home.

Former Your Housing Group colleague, Gary Smith, who now writes poems, has had one of his pieces painted onto the walls of the shared living space at Bridge Foyer, with the aim of helping them to

“thrive in the future whatever their current circumstances.”

Gary added, “I hope that current residents, and those to come, will identify with the words and recognise that life is a journey.”

Gary, who is from Chester, worked for us for 13 years up until 2018, and has kindly shared this poem, *Snapped*, which is taken from his book, *‘Could Try Harder – The Thoughts of Gary Smith’*.

He wrote the book to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Support, which is also the charity that we currently support here at YHG.




Gary says his poems were inspired by young people from Bridge Foyer, so it felt natural when Operations Manager, Sharon Leadbetter, asked him if he'd like to share it on the walls of Bridge.

Sharon said

“Thank you to Gary and Graham, who illustrated the mural, for offering their words, talents and time to create this wonderful artwork in Bridge Foyer.”

It is inspirational, and I believe that residents now, and in the future, will benefit from it.”



All four foyers are accredited by  as being **Operationally and Strategically Strong.**

Do you want to make your voice heard on behalf of all our customers?



We're currently looking for **Customer Connect Panel** and **Customer Scrutiny Panel** members so if you're interested in making a difference, we would love to hear from you.

Customer Connect Panel (CCP)

A role on the CCP means ensuring the customer voice is being heard loud and clear, both within our neighbourhoods and about the services we offer and how we offer them.

Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP)

The CSP work with us to carry out reviews of different services we offer. This is an invaluable role that helps to ensure we continually improve. An example of how the CSP has worked with us recently includes recommendations made to us for grounds maintenance, which we are now starting to build into our service.

Roles are available for both panels and open to all our tenants and leaseholders.

What's in it for me?

You will:

- Acquire new skills and experience
- Enjoy social interaction with other customers and become part of a team
- Be able to meet mainly online from the comfort of your home
- Get expenses and lunch if we meet in person



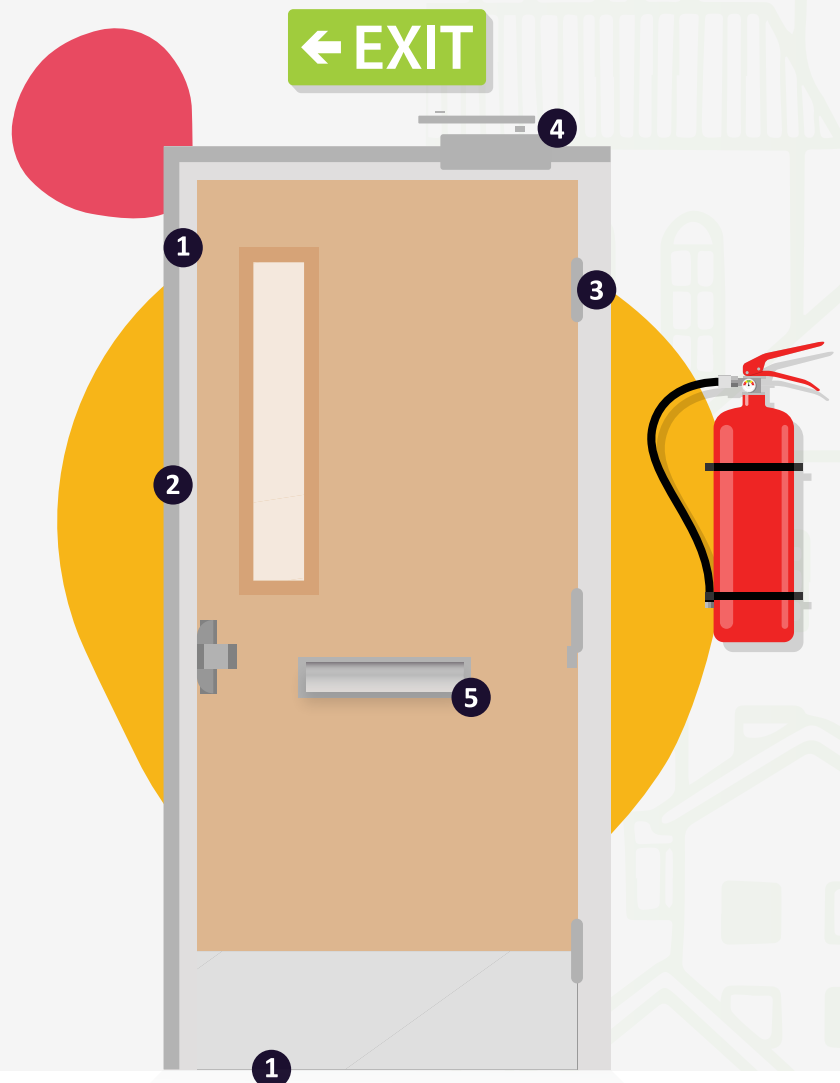
To find out more, please get in touch with **Chris Quigg, Customer Scrutiny Manager** at yourvoice@yourhousinggroup.co.uk

Fire doors are vital in keeping you safe

In a fire, if used correctly, they stop fires from spreading through a building, giving people time to escape and the Fire and Rescue Service time to attend. **Lifesaving.**

What should a fire door look like?

- 1 Gaps around the top and sides of the door should be **less than 4mm** when the door is closed. The gap under the door should be **8-10mm**
- 2 Seals (special seals triggered by heat to prevent fire spread) around the door or frame should be intact with **no sign of damage**
- 3 Hinges should be **firmly fixed (three or more of them)**, with no missing or broken screws
- 4 The door closer should close the door firmly onto the latch without sticking on the floor or the frame.
- 5 Check the letter box is intact and closes fully.



Fire safety top tips



Matches

Store matches and lighters in a safe place, out of the reach of children.



Communal

Don't leave any items in communal areas of the building, as this can cause delays and accidents in the event of a fire evacuation.



Appliances

Don't leave appliances running when you're in bed or nobody is home. Don't dry laundry on electric heaters or obstruct the immersion heater in airing cupboards.



Cooking

Don't leave cooking unattended. Swap stove top chip pans for electric ones if you can.



Doors

Don't wedge fire doors open and never disconnect or remove a closing device.

Report any damage to us immediately.



Smoke alarms

Test your smoke alarms every week and do not cover or remove them.



Balconies

Don't have barbecues or smoke on balconies, and don't store flammable items such as gas canisters, paint, or fairy lights on them.



Candles

Don't leave candles in an unattended room. Make sure they're fully extinguished before you leave home or go to bed.



Flammable

Don't store anything flammable such as petrol or gas bottles, in your home.



Belongings

A clutter free home can help stop fire spreading. Always know the escape route out of your home and keep it clear.

Keep your door keys in a handy place.



Electrical

Don't overload sockets or rely on too many extension leads. Unplug unused items and switch off sockets when not in use.



Smoking

Do not smoke in bed and always ensure that cigarettes are put out fully.

**YOUR
HOME
HUB**

Don't queue on the phone, book & change a repair.

Anytime, anywhere.

Don't just take our word for it ...

Scan me



"It's so much easier than you think! It's much faster than phoning and you get your appointment day and time slot confirmed straight away."

- Debbie, Customer

**YOUR
HOME
HUB**

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It's convenient!

