

# UNDER ONE ROOF

## MAKEOVER GIFT

Many cinemas and coffee shops are now open, but home decor specialists Made.com have helped a group of our retired residents who can't make it out so easily by donating a special makeover of a lounge at their housing scheme.

The brand partnered with Birmingham-based stylist Allison Sadler to bring the home movie experience to residents, by transforming a communal TV room at Charles Pearson Court in Smethwick.

The inspiring interiors were given the finishing touch with Curzon Cinema's home cinema membership.

Working virtually with us to organise the transformation, including samples and measurements, Allison used her hands-on design skills to create a 'happy place' scheme in just two days to suit our residents' comfort and needs.

The project is part of Made.com's community support initiatives, transforming spaces to encourage people to come together after a year of disconnect.

Lorraine Martin, our scheme manager at Charles Pearson Court, said: "This fantastic room is now all set to emerge as a hub of activity! Residents who've already used it say how much they like it. At a time when everyone has faced challenges, we really appreciate all those involved in donating their time and products to benefit residents."



## GRAN DESIGNS

The new-look room was styled by designer Allison Sadler whose late grandmother Mrs Theresa Powell lived at Charles Pearson Court for many years.

"We celebrated her 90th birthday party in this room," remembers Allison. "So it has a lovely emotional connection and holds lots of happy memories for me and my family."





# BETTER SAFE

**Safeguarding means protecting your right to live in safety; free from abuse, harm or neglect.**

It covers all ages: children, young people or adults. It's all about protecting an individual's health, wellbeing and human rights.

Working together with other agencies, we aim to recognise the risks of harm and stop it happening.

For example, we've recently helped a tenant at risk of self-neglect to arrange a suitable care package. In another case, a tenant has received psychological support to deal with hoarding. Other examples include support to tackle financial or physical abuse.

If you're worried about a fellow Nehemiah resident, you can tell us in confidence so your friend or neighbour receives the help they need. We will investigate your concerns in line with our own safeguarding policy.

There may be times when you yourself needs support. You can contact us for advice, and we'll talk to you about your situation and how best to help.

Speak to any of our staff or get in touch with our housing service manager and safeguarding lead, Pamela Farquharson. If you think someone is in immediate danger, you should always dial 999.



# KICKSTART SCHEME

**Know a young person eager to gain skills and experience that could launch them into a great career?**

We have a fantastic paid-trainee position with our supported housing team, available now. Suitable for a 16-24 year-old claiming universal credit, it is part of the national Kickstart Housing Partnership to help young people.

You have to apply through Jobcentre Plus, so talk to your work coach for details.

Kickstart provides six-month, paid placements to gain valuable work experience, as well as training and support to boost skills.



# ARE YOU COVERED?

**No one expects to have a fire, flood or burglary. But these things can happen, and it can be a huge blow.**

As your landlord we are not responsible for replacing your damaged or stolen belongings. Sadly, some tenants only realise this to their cost after misfortune has struck.

We strongly advise that you take out your own home contents insurance so if the worst ever happens, you are covered.

We've teamed up with My Home to make it easy for you to arrange affordable home contents insurance, especially for tenants.

Its standard cover protects your belongings from theft, water damage, fire and many more household risks. It covers replacement locks if your keys are lost or stolen, and accidental damage to your TV and more.

Call **0345 450 7288** or visit [www.thistlemyhome.co.uk](http://www.thistlemyhome.co.uk) for details.

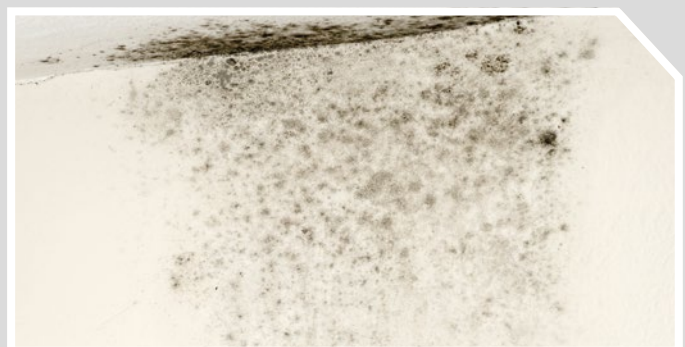
# DAMP AWAY

**Finding black dots on the walls? Noticing damp patches on the ceiling?**

Too much moisture trapped in your home can turn to water on cool surfaces like walls and windows – and mould can soon form.

It can happen in any home, especially well-insulated ones. It is not usually caused by a building fault. But it needs sorting out – and we're keen to help.

Some disreputable companies might approach you. But if you have concerns, speak to us first. We'll come out and assess the problem to work with you to fix it.



# CASH NEWS

**Please be aware of two benefit changes this Autumn by the government, in case they affect you.**

**Post Office card accounts for DWP benefit payments will close** in November. (These special accounts are different to other current or saving accounts by the Post Office.)

If you receive benefits this way, you will still be paid. But you will need an alternative account to collect your money.

The DWP has written to you if it affects you. If you have not responded, DWP will write to you again explaining how to receive future payments.

Your options are to use an existing account you have with

a bank, building society or credit union, or to open a new account with one of these. There are some good 'fee-free' basic bank accounts which could help.

If you are unable to make these banking arrangements, DWP has a restricted 'Payment Exception Service' for limited cash withdrawals.

Your housing officer can help if you have further queries.

**Universal credit's extra payment boost is ending.**

In response to the pandemic, a temporary increase to universal credit payments was introduced. Many charities and housing bodies asked the government to make the increase permanent.

However, the scheme is still due to end on 6 October.

The exact date the extra money will stop being paid will vary depending on the day you usually receive universal credit.

We understand this could cause hardship for some people.

Please speak to us if you have worries. Free and independent money advice is available from debt support specialists at Birmingham Settlement.



## YOU SAID, WE DID

**Listening to you helps us to improve our services. So we're keen for you to tell us if there is something you think we could provide or do differently.**

Sometimes there will be things we can't do, perhaps due to cost or differing wishes. But we will always try to respond to your suggestions and let you know if we can't do as you would like.

Here are some examples of what we've done recently as a result of what you've said at tenant meetings or in other conversations.

- Added a list of ways to pay your rent onto all letters we send you about your rent, making it easier for you to choose the most convenient way
- Pruned trees at the rear of homes on Prole Street, Wolverhampton to let in more natural light
- Removed fly-tipped rubbish from Hurstbourne Crescent and Laburnum Street in Wolverhampton and from Sycamore Court in Dudley



- Introduced the option to pay your rent by text\* through Allpay

\*To pay your rent by text, you need your mobile phone, Allpay payment card and a debit card.

Go to [www.allpayments.net/textpay](http://www.allpayments.net/textpay) to register for the service. You can then pay by texting a simple code and the amount to a special number each time you want to make a payment.

## BITE BACK

**If you've borrowed money from a loan shark you haven't broken the law; they have.**

A loan shark might seem like a friend when they offer you a cash loan. But often they do not give you any paperwork and don't tell you when you'll finish paying.

They may take your bank card as security and increase the amount you owe even when you are making regular payments. They might even threaten or use violence to get money from you.

"You are not alone. You can feel like you are sinking in debt but there is a way out, no matter how bad it seems," says our housing service manager, Pamela Farquharson.

To help make sense of what is happening and get advice, please call the Illegal Money Lending Team on **0300 555 2222**.



**DON'T GET BITTEN BY A LOAN SHARK**

We can help you  
(in the strictest confidence)  
Tel: 0300 555 2222  
Text us on: 07860022116  
Email us:  
[reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk](mailto:reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk)  
#StopLoanSharks  
Website: [stoploansharks.co.uk](http://stoploansharks.co.uk)

**STOP LOAN SHARKS**



# CELEBRATIONS

**There have been triple celebrations for our chief executive Llewellyn Graham.**

First he became the proud recipient of the Governor-General of Jamaica's 2021 Diaspora Achievement Award for Excellence. The accolade was in recognition of Llewellyn's 35 years of service to underserved communities in the UK.

Llewellyn also marked his 60th birthday. Staff surprised him with some office celebrations for his special day, while others joined by video link.

The hat-trick was Nehemiah's latest rating by the Regulator of Social Housing. Its judgement was an upgrade to return us to the top rating for governance. This reflects the collective efforts of our board members and staff to be a strong, well-run housing association, delivering the very best customer service to you.

# HOME CHECKS



**Help us to help you! Your home should feel modern and cosy. If it doesn't, then it might need an improvement, like a new bathroom, an electrical upgrade, or a more efficient heating system.**

Visits to check on your property's condition and energy performance give us the information we need to plan and budget for improvements. Please give us access to your home for these checks, which involve surveys for stock condition reports and energy performance certificates (EPCs).

We will always write or telephone in advance of our visits and carry ID for you to check. Joshua Grizzle and Alex Anderson (pictured above) are the project officers from our Property Services team.

It's all part of our commitment to maintain the quality of your home - and also part of the nation's wider journey to 'net-zero-carbon'!



# BLOOMING ON

**It feels bittersweet when a work colleague moves on after flourishing during their time with us.**

Our customer engagement officer Lakeisha Sewell has used her experience at Nehemiah to springboard into a new role with West Midlands Combined Authority. She'll be helping them with data-driven information to benefit local communities.

Many of you got to know Lakeisha over the past 18 months, whether in tenant meetings over Zoom, on the phone in wellbeing calls, or even in person!

"I've enjoyed getting to know Nehemiah's many wonderful tenants," she says. "Please do continue to get involved! Your contribution is so valuable."

Look out for news of who will step into Lakeisha's shoes as our new customer engagement officer.

