

# UNDER ONE ROOF



## BAKE A DIFFERENCE

**Every cuppa and cake slice mattered at the Macmillan Coffee Mornings run or supported by our tenants.**

The Coffee Mornings held at our retirement living schemes certainly put the fun in fundraising, with games, music and laughter.

The icing on the cake at our Black Country schemes was a visit from Kassie and Lesley who are cancer engagement specialists at Macmillan and the NHS in the area.

They chatted to tenants about cancer awareness and the value of taking up screening opportunities, especially for breast, bowel, or prostate cancer.

Armed with information and demonstration kits, they were happy to explain, reassure and answer questions.

Macmillan Cancer Support helps people living with cancer. Right now, that's more than 3 million people in the UK and rising. On average someone is diagnosed with cancer every 90 seconds.

Coffee Mornings help the charity fund its Macmillan nurses, answer calls to its support line, and give emotional and financial support. It also helps it to improve learning and services.

Research shows the rates of some cancers vary by ethnicity. "Cultural barriers, and low awareness about what cancer is, can often lead to late diagnosis and poorer survival rates," explains Kassie.

"We want people of every ethnic group and background to get the information, diagnosis and treatment they need, so that everyone can have the best possible outcomes."

For more information about cancer visit the website [healthwavehub.com](http://healthwavehub.com)

## TABOO BREAKER

**Talking openly about cancer helps breakdown fear and barriers. Could you be a Community Cancer Champion?**

Three online training sessions, designed with Cancer Research, will give you the knowledge and confidence to have conversations in your community about cancer prevention, myth busting and early diagnosis.

To find out more, contact Marcia Cunnison (see back page) or email [Kassandra.styche@nhs.net](mailto:Kassandra.styche@nhs.net)



# DAMP AWAY

It can happen in any home, especially well insulated ones. A build-up of moisture or steam can cause condensation (droplets of water) when the moist air touches a cold surface such as a window.

It isn't necessarily a concern if it can be wiped away and clears up quickly. But if mould sets in, we won't let you live with the problem. If you report damp or mould to us – or we find it on a visit – action will be taken to get rid of it.

Firstly, we will remove the mould from walls and ceilings. We'll then identify what's causing the damp and put a plan in place to stop it returning. This might involve repairs or specialist advice.

Daily activities can create moisture trapped in our homes. But small things can help.



Reduce the amount of moisture by, for example, keeping lids on pans when cooking and drying clothes outside where possible. Wipe down surfaces where moisture settles and wring out the cloth over a sink.

Ventilate, so moist air leaves the home by opening windows and using the extractor fan when you're cooking or having a wash. Warmer homes are less likely to be damp. So try to keep your home reasonably heated.

We want to tackle this issue together. So please call us or visit our website for more advice.

# SETTLING IN



## Having to leave your home country is never easy.

Since arriving from Ukraine earlier this year, Inna and her husband Heorhii are adjusting to their new way of life at Henry Court retirement scheme in Dudley with their little dog, Balta.

"They really appreciate the warm welcome and kindness of their neighbours," says their daughter Valeriia. "To overcome the language barrier, they are trying hard to learn English."

Inna is a dedicated student of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at Dudley College.

"At an end-of-year college banquet for learners, everyone was invited to come in national costume. I was proud to represent Ukraine," says Inna, who wore the traditional Ukrainian 'vinok' flower crown and 'vyshyvanka' embroidered shirt.



# LOCAL REPAIRS

## A new local contractor has been appointed to carry out your home repairs and maintenance.

We've written to let you know and held tenants' meetings to introduce them.

Frontier Property Services is covering homes in Birmingham, Coventry and Sandwell, while PR Builders is working across Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

Using your feedback we decided to switch to using these two smaller and locally-based repairs contractors, who are already tried and tested by us.

There is also a new call centre – but reporting repairs remains easy and the phone number is the same as before: **0800 849 1400** from a landline or **03030 30 1000** from a mobile.

The only real change you should notice is a better service. We are tracking success by measuring key indicators like how many jobs get fixed first time and how satisfied you are with the work.

To help them help you, please give access for your repairs appointment, or promptly rearrange it if you know you won't be there to let them in.



# YOU SAID, WE DID

**Your views help us to improve. We're running a short telephone survey of 400 tenants, chosen at random by independent researchers.**

The survey's first 'wave' was done in July, with further ones this November and in March 2024.

The survey questions check your satisfaction with our services, in line with the new national Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). These aim to make it easier for you to see how we are performing and compare us to other landlords.



For example, the first wave results showed a slight fall in overall satisfaction to 78% (down from 80%), along with a dip in satisfaction for repairs (from 79% last year to 75%). Overall satisfaction at our retirement housing schemes remains high.

We follow up any immediate concerns with you. We're also acting on the first results including improving how we communicate with you.

Here's some other things we've done recently, thanks to your feedback.

- Installed new bathrooms in Perry Barr and Handsworth, prompting several tenants to say how much they like their suitability and style.
- Replaced garden fencing at Sphinx Drive in Coventry, praised by one resident for its workmanship and looks.
- Supplied new sets of dominoes for tenants to use at Henry Court in Dudley.



- Started hosting a dementia carers support and social group at Charles Pearson Court in Smethwick, attended by residents and people from the local community who say "it's very important to me" and "makes a huge difference".

## MEET A TENANT

**Marjorie Jones moved to McCalla House in Wolverhampton four years ago to be nearer her daughter.**

**It was a big lifestyle change.**

I moved from a village in Cheshire, an area where I'd lived since my childhood in Liverpool. But after losing my husband I was excited to move. Not even Covid restrictions and my cancer diagnosis could dampen my spirit.

**Having bailiffs at your door is traumatic.** I experienced it after my husband couldn't work.

We got caught in a scam where the rent we paid was pocketed by someone. Luckily the council found us somewhere to live. I contacted all our creditors and offered what I could pay. I'm on the other side now; debt free and able to live comfortably.

**I'm proud of my helpful neighbour award,** nominated by other tenants. I like to help out. One neighbour's electricity had gone off so I lent a hand by reporting it while my friend cooked tea for her. We made a poor situation into a great evening!

**Being helpful is part of my Christian values.**

I worked at Tesco's head office from school and then at a model train factory. I returned to Tesco's after having my son and daughter, this time in a store. They gave me a 'Here to help' top to wear. I also enjoyed being a girl guide leader.

**Knowing your skills are still active and valued feels good.**

A group of us were involved in the appointment of the scheme manager here, Aliyah. It took me back to interviewing in my working life. Aliyah is a great asset. She's supported us to arrange social events, like the fun 'The King and I' film night we had with popcorn and ice cream.

**Gracie is my pet bird,** a small parrot called a kakariki. Her name means 'God's blessing', which is how I felt getting her after the loss of my beloved dog Bella.

**Discrimination takes many forms.** In the past I was called names, and even beaten up, by other children because I had asthma. My deaf



brother experienced prejudice too. What makes people react so badly? Perhaps it's fear. Regardless of differences, I just get on with people. When I was growing up, an Indian-Ugandan family moved next door, expelled from their country by the dictator Idi Amin. We were invited round for tea and got on like a house on fire. You can have many a good time over a cuppa.

# ENOUGH NOW

**Excessive noise, risky parking, prostitution, threatening behaviour... these are some of the cases of antisocial behaviour (ASB) which together we've sorted out recently.**

ASB makes people unhappy in their home and shatters community spirit. We do not expect to get involved in minor disagreements. But if you're unable to straighten things out by talking politely to your neighbour, or the issue is more serious, we'll get involved to help you.

Between April and June this year 69% of ASB cases were handled within target response times. This fell short of our target of 90%. One case took longer to deal with as the person responsible for parking inconsiderately was in hospital and couldn't easily be reached.

There were 13 cases in total, of which 10 (76%) were successfully resolved. The target is 95%. The three cases which remain open involve waiting for a court date to evict the tenant for serious nuisance, and neighbour disputes which require specific support from the council and police.



We follow a clear policy and procedure to tackle ASB. These are soon to be reviewed so they can be improved and updated if needed. If you'd like to help with this, please get in touch with Marcia Cunnison (see below).

# FIXING IT

**We always try to give you the best service we can. Yet we know sometimes things go wrong. Please talk to us so we can try to put it right.**

We have a straightforward policy which sets out how we deal with complaints.

This was recently updated thanks to the help of our tenants and guidance from the independent Housing Ombudsman.

A few changes to the wording were made to:

- defining a complaint
- explaining when our response timescales start
- listing what details are included in our response letters
- saying when the Housing Ombudsman can be involved
- describing how we monitor and learn from complaints

# RIGHT AT HOME

**Would you or someone you know age 55+ like a new place and change of scene?**

We've availability now in our bright retirement housing schemes across the West Midlands.

Here you can live independently in your own home, with the reassurance of support and opportunities for socialising. Get in touch for details.



# SEND UPDATE

**Have you signed and returned your updated tenancy agreement?**

Most tenants have, but if it's slipped your mind, please send it back to us now using the pre-paid envelope. If you have any questions, please ask.

All tenancy agreements have been reviewed to make sure they are fully up to date and as helpful as possible.

As a result, we've made small updates, mainly to add property boundary information and changes in data protection law. These updates do not alter your rights. If you moved in after 6 February 2023, you will already have signed the latest tenancy agreement.



**Please let our customer engagement officer Marcia Cunnison know if you have any comments about this newsletter or would like more details on any topic covered.**  
**Call: 0121 358 8031 or 07739 705048**  
**Email: [marcia.cunnison@nehemiah.co.uk](mailto:marcia.cunnison@nehemiah.co.uk)**  
**Write: Nehemiah Housing Association, 1-3 Beacon Court, Birmingham Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6NN**  
**Web: [www.nehemiah.co.uk](http://www.nehemiah.co.uk)**  
**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NehemiahHousingAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/NehemiahHousingAssociation)**