

UNDER ONE ROOF



SHE'S A FIRESTARTER!

Whether it's our future direction or what we're doing now, Nehemiah tenants are holding us to account. "And that's just the way we like it," says Marcia Cunnison, our community partnership and engagement officer.

"It's more than just passing on your views. It's about us listening to the constructive challenge of tenant voices and enabling their meaningful contribution to our decision making."

The growing importance of tenant involvement is reflected in the expansion of Marcia's role, from customer engagement to community partnership too.

"My job has always involved supporting you and other tenants to get involved in helping us to improve services and develop solutions together. It's now shifted up a gear to be more strategic," explains Marcia.

"This overview acts as a bridge, for example, between us as a landlord and the terrific tenants on our scrutiny panel - whose insights on all things are invaluable! I'm also forging closer partnerships with organisations in our communities to offer a fuller service."

Tenant influence is central to successful policy making and performance. Now in its second year of reporting, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) in 2025 will again show how housing associations are performing. "I think the TSM is a brilliant reporting framework. It means we're all working towards the same goals," says Marcia.

Marcia describes herself as "a firestarter - figuratively speaking, of course! I like initiating and then getting

things done. Nehemiah tenants are open and smart. They recognise when you're genuinely interested in their involvement. This is what enables a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership."

When she's not busy at work, Marcia sings at her church and is a talented cake maker. At a recent charitable cake bake she helped raise over £5,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

BETTER TOGETHER

Every time you give us feedback, you're helping us to improve our housing services.

We really appreciate your input. See page 3 for more on its impact.

Able to commit a bit more time to really getting under the skin of how Nehemiah is run? Then we have more ways to get involved, supported by training. This could be joining other tenants reviewing, scrutinising and shaping what we do and how we do it.

Visit our website for how to get involved or get in touch with Marcia (see page 4 for details).

HOUSE WARMING



Homes needing a new storage heater or a new boiler are getting the warming addition of a whole new heating system.

During the year we've trialled the use of property-wide heating upgrades, rather than just replacing the individual component needed. Like at Sphinx Drive in Coventry, where we've replaced storage heaters throughout the homes, as well as fitting new insulation and front doors.

It's proved to be a more efficient and cost-effective way to carry out planned maintenance.

So if we find parts of your heating system need upgrading, we'll do the whole system – such as the boiler, pipework and radiators – at the same time.

MISSED YOU

Missed repairs appointment are a wasteful bother to you and to us.

If you feel let down by a repair visit not happening when you expected it, call the repair line to tell us on **0800 849 1400** or **03030 30 1000** from a mobile.

We'd like the chance to put things right quickly and to raise concerns at our regular meetings with our contractors, Frontier Property Services, PR Builders and Renuvo.

A small but increasing number of booked repairs fail to happen because the tenant is not at home when our contractors visit. If you cannot make an appointment, please let us know by calling the repair line. You can advise us in advance up until the evening before a morning visit or earlier the same day if it's an afternoon appointment.



PARK THE NOISE



Lifestyles can sometimes clash with our neighbours and cause problems. Top of the troublesome list for our tenants is noise and parking.

“With noise, it's about being considerate and recognising when you are continually disturbing other people,” says Matthew Warren, our tenancy service officer who works alongside our housing officers. “It's also about being tolerant about reasonable noise that is simply the sound of life going on.”

Being respectful and fair applies to parking too. Space is limited so please be prepared to park further away from your home if you need to. Antisocial parking breaks the terms of your tenancy agreement.

For example, you and your visitors can't claim sole use of a parking space unless it is designated for your property. Undesignated parking is first come, first serve. But be considerate. By taking up all the space with multiple vehicles, you'll be putting neighbourly relations into reverse.

Disabled parking is for Blue Badge holders only, and it is never acceptable to park in bays marked for emergency services.

Many issues can be sorted out easily by talking politely to your neighbour. They may not be aware of the impact they are having. A friendly conversation gives the chance to put it right and can often be more helpful than us getting involved at this stage. If the problem continues, please get in touch with your housing officer.

SHOCK ABSORBER

“Nothing shocks me!” smiles Matthew Warren, our tenancy service officer. “I’m comfortable talking to people from all walks of life. Faced with challenging situations or behaviours, having empathy and staying professional is what counts.”

Matthew’s role is to support you to feel safer by dealing with any serious or persistent antisocial behaviour (ASB), along with handling safeguarding matters to protect you and others.

He is currently covering the maternity leave of colleague, Lusefa Salamon. He has recently helped resolve problems caused

by a noisy untrained dog, and vermin in an overgrown garden.

Matthew’s unshockable character stems from his career, starting as a YMCA drug worker before working with people in prison needing accommodation on release and with ex-offenders in the community.

“Life for some people isn’t as easy as people may think,” says Matthew. “My own family background wasn’t the best. Yet I’m grateful for the insight it’s given me to help others – and for the life I have now with my wife and children.”



YOU SAID, WE DID

Our tenants are the experts in knowing what works and what could be better.

What you tell us – whether through comments, compliments or complaints – is used to help us maintain or improve our performance.

Telephone surveys with our tenants by independent researchers track how we are performing throughout the year against national Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).

The results show we are performing well – yet there are always ways to improve. We are in the ‘upper quartile’ for each measure, which means our scores are in the top 25% of housing associations.

Taking how we communicate with you as an example, the latest survey results (November 2024) show:

- **86% of you think we keep you informed about things that matter**
- **74% agree that we listen to tenant views and act**

Delving into this, we held an in-person meeting to discuss how we communicate and engage with you at all points of your tenancy. Thank you for your excellent feedback. We really enjoyed hearing from you over some festive refreshments together.

Here are some other examples of what we’ve done recently as a result of what you’ve told us.

- Introduced fortnightly meetings for staff involved in resolving complaints, or in actioning a service improvement due to a complaint, to monitor progress and apply lessons learnt.
- Used your comments from recent online tenant consultation sessions to review our new corporate strategy and to develop the policy for telephone call recording. For example, we’ve asked our legal advisors to look at the ‘right to be forgotten’ aspect in data recording and to consider a secure and practical way to take payment card details over the phone.



- Committed to improving the way we explain the rules and actions which guide how we work (our policies and procedures) so they are easier to understand.
- Analysed your responses to a survey about this tenants’ newsletter to see what changes we can make and also how we can use your ideas elsewhere. For example, you were keen to hear about community activities and events so we’re adding this as a new section on the Nehemiah website.



SCAM ALERT

Something doesn't seem right? But sounds so tempting? Don't be rushed. Take time to think and check it's not a scam.

Some people try to exploit situations at your expense, including offering to help you claim money for housing disrepair or make quick fixes to your home. Please check with us first and let us help.

Other common but easy-to-fall-for scams are:

- Fake messages, claiming to be from a friend or relative, asking for help and money to be sent.
- Fake adverts when shopping online. Never buy from unfamiliar websites before doing some checks first.
- Financial opportunities that seem too good to be true, likely are. Don't feel pressurised to act.

If you're unsure it might be a scam, we're here to help. You can also get advice from the Citizens Advice line on **0808 223 1133** or report a scam to Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040**.



SILVER SURFERS

Proving that it's never too late to learn, three residents at McCalla House in Wolverhampton have successfully completed a course in basic digital skills.

The seven weekly sessions were run at the housing scheme by digital online trainers from Gloucester Street Community Centre.



"Our IT pupils' achievement is testament to the dedicated focus they gave their learning," says Marie Craig, our scheme officer at McCalla. "It's been a real confidence boost for them."

Davina, pictured above centre, says, "I always wanted to learn how to do things for myself online, like fill in forms and find out information. The course trainers were so encouraging."

There are plans to run the course again for other keen participants in the new year.

