

STREETS AHEAD

THE MAGAZINE FOR FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING TENANTS



**OUR RENT INCREASE SUPPORT TO YOU
YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED
OUT & ABOUT IN SOUTH LYNN**

SPRING 2022

DEVELOPING HOMES AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR PEOPLE WITHIN WEST NORFOLK

Freebridge
COMMUNITY HOUSING

WELCOME TO STREETS AHEAD



**Anita Jones, Chief Executive of
Freebridge Community Housing**

**Hello and welcome to the
spring issue of Streets Ahead.**

As I write, the terrible situation in the Ukraine continues. I know that some of our customers will be personally affected by what is happening in Ukraine, with friends and family caught up in the conflict. I would like you to know that the thoughts of everyone at Freebridge are with you.

In this edition of Streets Ahead, you'll be able to read about the financial help that we're offering through our rent support plan. As you will know, we wrote to you recently to let you know about this year's rent increase, and we've been working on improving the help we can give you around paying your rent. Find out more on page 4 & 5.

At this time, there are rising prices in many areas, including in energy bills. Which is why I'm pleased that we're now able to offer Connect for Help, a free service which gives you advice, guidance, and support to stay warm and well in your home. There's more about this on page 10.

Also in this issue, I'm pleased to be able to share with you the

good news that we've handed over the keys to nine new homes in Terrington St Clement. These new family homes replace outdated properties in the village. Have a look at the new homes over on page 18.

And, you can also read our latest Tenant Panel update, and find out more about random tenancy checks – what they are and why we're carrying them out.

Looking ahead, this summer will see the Platinum Jubilee celebrations take place across the country. We'd love to know if you're doing something to celebrate – perhaps you're hosting a street party? If so, why not drop us a line at communications@freebridge.org.uk and share your pictures with us. It would be great to feature them in our next issue of Streets Ahead as a memento of this special milestone.

I hope you find the articles in this edition useful and interesting. If you have any questions or need more information about any of the topics we've covered, please do get in touch with us; our team is always here to help.

Anita



RANDOM TENANCY CHECKS

We want to provide affordable and good quality homes for people within west Norfolk and we know that there are many people within our area who need homes like these. And so, we have a responsibility to make sure that Freebridge's homes are being let to those who need and want them.

To help us to do this, we carry out random tenancy checks. Random tenancy checks are exactly what they sound like – checks we carry out at random to make sure that people are living at the right address and that homes aren't being sublet – which is a criminal offence.

You may find yourself receiving a random tenancy check during which you will have an unexpected visit from a member of our Tenancy Team. You may be asked to prove your identity to help us confirm who you are during our brief visit.

Sophie Bates, Director of Customers and Communities

explained: “The reason why we carry out random tenancy checks is to prevent tenancy fraud. Tenancy fraud happens when Freebridge's homes are not lived in by the people who have a tenancy agreement with us, or when they are being sublet to other people.

“This is unfair on people who are waiting for a property within west Norfolk. We want to provide homes for those who need them within our local communities.

“Random tenancy checks are one way in which we can make sure that Freebridge's properties are being let in the right way, for the benefit of everyone in our communities.”

If you have any concerns about any of our properties and how they are being let, please do get in touch with us.

love every drop
anglianwater

ANGLIAN WATER LITE

Could you save money on your water bill?



LITE and Extra LITE tariffs are one of the ways Anglian Water can support you if you have a low disposable income and you're struggling to pay your water bill.

Based on your individual situation you could get a discount of up to 50% on your water and sewerage charges by switching to one of these tariffs.

To find out more, and to apply, give them a call on **0800 232 1963**.

You still have
four rent free
weeks in 2022,
they are the
weeks starting
4th + 11th April &
19th + 26th December.

OUR RENT INCREASE SUPPORT FOR YOU

Earlier this year, we wrote to you to let you know about this year's rent rise.

We take a number of things into account when we set the annual rent increase, and it is never an easy decision to make.

Firstly – and like housing associations across the country – we follow the Government's rent setting policy. We also have to think about our own rising costs which this year have gone up by some way: for example the cost of carrying out routine maintenance on your homes has increased by between 10 - 15%.

At the same time, we're also investing millions in improving

the services that we offer to you – looking after and improving your homes, improving our safety standards, and building new and more homes to meet the needs of our local communities.

All of these important factors have been taken into consideration by our board who have worked together with our Tenant Panel and Customer Service Committee to decide upon the rent rise.

As you know, this year's rent rise is 4.1%. But as well as setting the rent rise, we've also been working on improving the ways that we can support

you to pay your rent. Our Chief Executive Anita Jones explained: "We know this is a challenging time for everyone which is why we are absolutely committed to providing you with financial support, advice, and guidance, however we can.

"We've come up with a rent increase support plan which will mean we can help you if you are finding it difficult to pay your rent.

"All of the Freebridge team are here to help so please do reach out to us if you need our support."

HOW CAN WE HELP?

121 reviews

If you're struggling to pay your rent, then you can speak to a member of our team on a confidential, 121 basis – in person, or on the phone – who can carry out a review and identify what support we can offer.

Tenancy Support Fund

Our Tenancy Support Fund has been set up to provide financial help to those who need it – and we've recently increased how much we can offer through the fund so we can make an even bigger difference. A member of our team can let you know what support is available and how you can access it.

Training

We'll be carrying out training to make sure our great team of frontline staff have all the information and knowledge they need to support our customers who may be in need of financial help.

Information and advice

We want to make it easier for you to get the information and

advice that you need about paying your rent and financial help and we'll be updating our communications – including our website – to provide this.

Tenancy and Independent Living workshops

We've teamed up with Your Own Place to offer Tenancy and Independent Living workshops, which includes financial management skills. If appropriate to do so, we can refer customers to join these workshops.

Survey

We'll be carrying out a money management survey to help us find out where and how we can offer support.

What you can do

If you are struggling to pay your rent, the first thing to do is get in touch with us.

Give us a call on 03332 404 444 or you can visit our website www.freebridge.org.uk or our Facebook page facebook.com/freebridge.com.



THE FREEBRIDGE TENANT PANEL

Our Customer Voice Lead Rebecca Claydon, caught up with David from the Tenant Panel to get an update on the Tenant Panel's activities for the last quarter from his perspective.

How long have you lived in a Freebridge property?

I have been in a Freebridge property for 22 years. I was living in the property when my home was transferred to Freebridge from the Council.

Have you been happy with Freebridge during this time?

I have complained over the years for certain things but overall I am really happy living here. Freebridge have done most of the things I have asked them to do.

What did you do professionally before retirement?

I had 30 years as a fitter / driver on coaches and then when I was made redundant I set up my own business as a Builder – primarily in churches and barn conversions.

Why did you choose to be a Tenant Panel Member?

Originally I have no idea why I wanted to join, but the longer I have been on the panel, the more I can see why I wanted to join. I am on the Tenant Panel to help make Freebridge a better landlord and to make life better for our customers. If we all work together – there

is nothing that cannot be overcome.

What has been your experience of being a Tenant Panel member?

My experience on the panel – I love it! We have great support from the Freebridge Team and even better they actively encourage us to fire questions and quiz them on all the topics being discussed. This really helps us get our views together as a panel to make informed decisions and observations that feed into strategic decisions.

For customers reading this article, what stands out as the main achievements for the Tenant Panel during the last quarter?

The Repairs Task & Finish Group: There have been two meetings of which I am the representative for the Tenant Panel. There are members of the Board, Leadership Team and Freebridge Repairs Team all working together to get this right for customers.

We are working on ways to improve the repairs service and work through the backlog which has occurred since Covid

restrictions began. The good thing is that these issues have been identified and solutions are being put into place.

For example, Freebridge are getting a new system to sign off jobs to ensure that there is no duplication of work. In addition the scheduling of operatives is being looked at for improvements. All of which will free up operatives time to focus on jobs that need completing.

We will see improvements over the course of this year but for now we are ascertaining the real picture of the repairs backlog and finding solutions.

Tenant Customer Charter: Like the other Tenant Panel members, I have worked very closely with this document and I feel I can speak on behalf of them when I say we feel it is a good instrument, but it is work in progress.

With performance measures associated to the commitments in the Charter, it will help us all see what we are doing well and where improvements are needed.

What would you say to customers reading the charter for the first time?

Read it more than once and if you have any questions or observations do contact Freebridge, if you don't know something please don't guess – just ask.

Moving forwards what is on the immediate horizon for the Tenant Panel?

The Repairs Task and Finish Group – working closely with Freebridge to improve processes to ensure the backlog of repairs are reduced as quickly as possible first time round to ensure that life is better for all concerned.

Tenant Customer Charter – we are now linking performance measures to the commitments.

TPAS Research Project – we will be participating in the TPAS Research to kick start the co-creation of the Customer Engagement Framework

What do you want to say to anyone thinking about getting more involved with Freebridge?

I would recommend joining the Tenant Panel to anyone who wants to give it a whirl as there is always something worth being on the panel for.

You have the opportunity to make things better not only for yourself but for everyone who is a customer at Freebridge. This is a place where you can voice your opinion and really make a difference!

David

DO YOU NEED A TRANSLATOR TO SPEAK WITH US?

Please let us know at the start of the call if you require a translator and we will arrange one. This goes for any printed material too - we want speaking with us to be easy and language should not be a barrier.

Ar jums reikia vertėjo, kad galėtumėte su mumis kalbėtis? Telefoninio pokalbio pradžioje pasakykite mums, ar jums reikia vertėjo, ir mes tuo pasirūpinsime. Tai taikoma ir bet kokiai spausdintinei medžiagai: mes norime, kad jums su mumis kalbėti būtų lengva, ir kad kalba nebūtų kliūtis.

Vai jums ir nepieciešams tulkoņtājs, lai sazinātos ar mums?

Lūdzu, zvana sākumā paziņojiet mums, ja jums nepieciešams tulkoņtājs, un mēs to nodrošināsim. Tas attiecas arī uz drukātiem materiāliem - mēs vēlamies, lai sarunāties ar mums būtu viegli, un valodai nevajadzētu būt šķērslim.

Czy do rozmowy z nami potrzebny jest tłumacz?

Prosimy o poinformowanie nas na początku rozmowy, czy potrzebują Państwo tłumacza, a my zapewnimy jego obecność. Dotyczy to również wszelkich materiałów drukowanych - chcemy, aby rozmowa z nami była łatwa, a język nie powinien stanowić bariery.

Precisa de um tradutor para falar conosco?

Por favor, informe-nos no início da chamada se precisar de um interprete e nós arranjaremos um. Isto aplica-se também a qualquer material impresso - queremos que seja fácil falar conosco e o idioma não deve ser uma barreira.

Você precisa de um tradutor para falar conosco?

Por favor, informe-nos no início da chamada se você precisar de um tradutor e nós providenciaremos um. Isto vale também para qualquer material impresso - queremos que seja fácil falar conosco e a linguagem não deve ser uma barreira.

Нужен ли вам переводчик для разговора с нами?

Пожалуйста, сообщите нам в начале разговора, если вам нужен переводчик, и мы его предоставим. Это касается и любых печатных материалов – мы хотим, чтобы разговор с нами был легким, и язык не должен быть препятствием.



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Welcome to our first questions and answers page. Thank you to everyone who responded to our call out for questions. We received eight questions overall, which we answer on this page.

We'll be asking for your questions again for a week in May – please follow our Facebook page to find out more. Alternatively, you can speak to your support advisor and ask them to email your question to us. We look forward to hearing from you in May.

Here are your questions answered:

Q: When are things going to be done about rubbish on front gardens?

A: On a monthly basis, our team visits our communal gardens to make sure that these spaces are clean, tidy, and safe. However, if you think we might have missed one of our communal garden areas, then please do let us know. All you have to do is drop us a message, any pictures, the date the pictures were taken, and an address via Facebook messenger and we'll make sure that our team looks into this.

If however, the rubbish in the front garden belongs to an individual then this is the responsibility of the customer renting the property. If you feel that the level of rubbish has become a health and safety concern, then please do get in touch with us, again via Facebook or by calling us, and our team will check this out.

Q: How many questions in total were sent in?

A: We received eight (one was asked around Freebridge's culture, which we want to give a more detailed answer to in our next issue) and look forward to hearing more of your questions in May.

Q: We need a four bed house due to our child being disabled but we have to go through the council, isn't there any way of just changing houses with you?

A: We are always happy to speak to our customers directly about your individual circumstances to identify any support we can provide. Applications for properties are made through West Norfolk Homechoice, or customers do have the option of a mutual exchange. In the first instance though, please do contact our team on 03332 404444 and we can discuss your needs.

Q: Due to the current issues with fuel, will Freebridge provide us with cheaper heating such as air source?

A: We know that rising heating costs are an issue for everyone at the moment and we want to help where we can. Which is why we have recently signed up to Connect for Help. Connect for Help is a free service for anyone who may be struggling to access affordable energy in their home. You can speak to someone who will help to identify what support is available for you, simply call 03332 404 444 and hold the line to speak to a tenancy support advisor.

Whatever type of heating we use, the fact is that costs have gone up. But, we will continue to look at all options available – including greener sources of heating and hot water – to provide the most appropriate and cost-effective types of heating for your homes.

Q: Why aren't Freebridge doing more to remove asbestos from around their properties?

A: In total, we've surveyed 95% of Freebridge homes for asbestos and we have already carried out any work where there has been an immediate risk. We're continuing to remove asbestos where there is a need to do so; find out more on page 16.

Q: How long have the Tenant Panel been members (individually)?

A: Our Tenant Panel members have all been with us for different amounts of time. To join the panel, everyone has to go through a fair and open recruitment process. Members are then appointed for three years, but they can be appointed again after three years, through the same recruitment process.

We are now in the middle of coming up with a new Tenant Engagement Framework – this is all about how we involve our customers in the work that we do. This will mean some changes to the Tenant Panel.

Because of this review taking place, we do have some members of the Tenant Panel who have been with us for longer than nine years. However, when we have the Tenant Engagement Framework in place, we'll be looking at recruiting new members who demonstrate characteristics that will support the framework, delivery of the Tenant Charter and drive to help us achieve the five-year strategy and beyond.

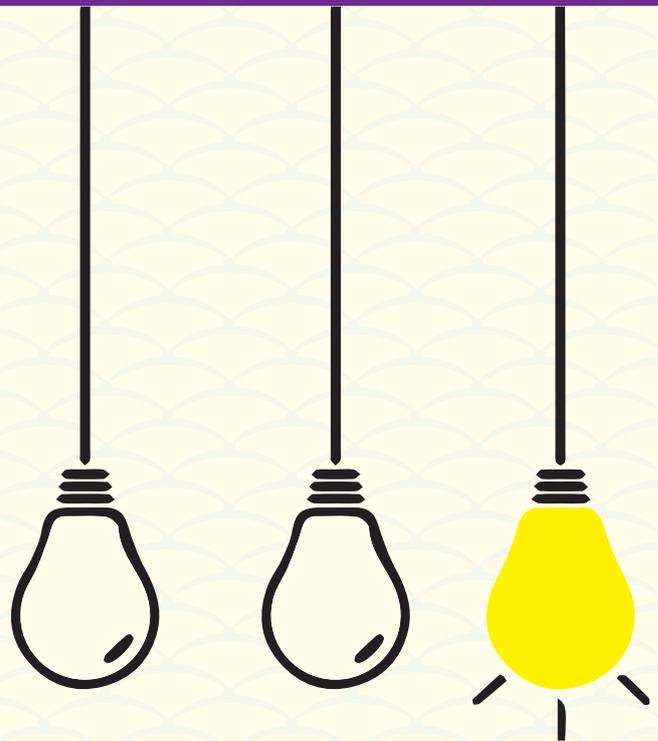
Q: Why can't Freebridge answer all relevant questions when they are asked. Emails not answered, why! Customer Service Committee why the secrecy?

A: We strive to answer all questions promptly however we do understand that we don't always get this right first time. We are currently making fundamental changes within the business which have included looking at how we respond to all forms of customer enquiries in a timely way.

With regards to our Customer Service Committee, it was established as a pilot but is certainly no secret! Along with all other forms of engagement and involvement, the Committee will be looked at in more detail when co-creating a new Tenant Engagement framework to identify how it can continue to best support the business in delivering Customer Excellence across the business. Once the TPAS Research has been concluded we will update everyone in Streets Ahead and online about the outcomes and the direction we will be moving in in terms of Tenant Engagement, including the future of the Committee.

Watch this space in the next edition of Streets Ahead as we will focus an article on the changes within Freebridge and the positive impact being made for both colleagues and customers.

ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH YOUR ENERGY BILLS?



You can now Connect for Help to stay warm and well in your home

We are pleased to be teaming up with Agility Eco who offer a free advice service - called Connect for Help - for people who may be struggling to access affordable energy in their homes. By calling us, you will be able to speak to someone who will understand exactly what support you need:

- This could be in the form of an in-depth energy advice session to help you with issues such as your bills or your meter.
- Or, you could be offered a money advice check to make sure that you're getting all the benefits you're entitled to.
- You might also find that you're referred for energy saving improvements, such as heating systems or insulation.
- Or, you could have your energy tariff checked and if you're not on the best one for you, you will be given advice to help you switch.

Our support team have recently taken part in training about the service and are now able to refer our customers to Connect for Help.

Sophie Bates, Director of Customer and Communities explained: "We know that people have real concerns about paying their energy bills at this time and so it's really important that we are able to offer this new service.

"Connect for Help allows people to get the right support, advice, and guidance that they need for free, just by making one simple call.

"If you are having trouble paying your energy bills, if you're worried in any way about keeping your home warm, then please do get in touch with us. We'll be able to refer you on to Connect for Help so you can get the support that you need."

If you'd like to speak to us about how we can help, please call us on 03332 404 444.



**CONNECT
FOR HELP**



TENANTS RESPONSIBILITY...

DID YOU KNOW?

Under the terms of your tenancy agreement you may under certain circumstances be liable for the repairs to your home.

How could such situations arise?

- If the neighbour upstairs left the bath running or if they had a burst pipe and the water caused damage to your decorations it may be your responsibility to redecorate your home.
- If you had your keys stolen you may have to pay for the cost of replacing the locks.
- If a vandal broke one of your windows you may be liable for the replacement cost of the window.

DON'T WORRY HELP IS AT HAND!

Your landlord has teamed up with the National Housing Federation and Thistle Tenant Risks to offer tenants and leaseholders the My Home Contents Insurance Scheme which, subject to policy limits and exclusion, provides cover for your home contents against such events that you may be affected by and financially responsible for, alongside cover for losses arising from perils such as Fire, Theft, Water and Storm damage.

Optional extensions are available for an additional premium, you can include, extended accidental damage, personal possessions (cover away from the home), wheelchairs, hearing aids, and cover is also available for the structure of garden sheds, garages and greenhouses.

You can pay cash fortnightly or monthly using a swipecard, you can set up a monthly direct debit, or pay annually (fortnightly and monthly premiums include a transaction charge).

Exclusions & limits apply.

A copy of the policy wording is available on request.

So if you want to find out more you can ask your landlord for an application pack or

contact My Home Contents Insurance on 0345 450 7288

or email: myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk
or visit: www.thistlemyhome.co.uk

You can even request a member of the My Home Insurance Team to call you back!



OUT & ABOUT IN SOUTH LYNN

It was great to meet so many of you during our Out and About Community Impact Week in South Lynn in March. The week saw members of the Freebridge team together with volunteers from Morrisons spend time in the community and lend a hand in different ways.

This included collecting over four tonnes of waste from fly tips and garden clearance. And, a further 68 bags of litter were collected from communal locations, street paths, and wider community facilities.

During the week, we called at 347 homes and we got to speak to over 180 of you. We were also pleased to be able to log and follow up on your repairs, and our team completed some of the outstanding repairs that you had, which as you know, is a priority for us.

Our support didn't end there. Following the week, we carried out a number of return visits, and our Placeshaping Team called on those homes where we didn't get to meet customers in person previously. We were also able to help with some of your tenancy issues and concerns, and update some the information we hold with some of you which will make it easier for us to keep connected in the future.

Sophie Bates, Director of Customers and Communities said: "The Out and About week is always a highlight for everyone at Freebridge as it gives us the chance to get out into our communities, meet our customers, and make a difference, where we can."

The next Out and About Community Impact Week is planned for the week of Monday 9th May in North Lynn. More details will be available on Facebook page (facebook.com/freebridge) nearer the time.

WHERE ELSE ARE WE HEADING IN 2022?



Freebridge along with volunteers out in South Lynn picking litter



Colleagues visiting your homes to pick up any issues you may have



Over 4 tonnes of waste was collected from fly tipping and garden clearance

North Lynn

Monday 9th May 2022

Dersingham, Snettisham & Heacham

Monday 6th June 2022

Downham Market

Monday 1st August 2022

Grimston, Gayton, Pott Row, East Winch & Pentney

Monday 5th September 2022

FAMILY FUN PAGE

To have a bit of fun and mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, we thought we would run a colouring competition for all of our younger Streets Ahead readers - the best one will feature in our next issue!

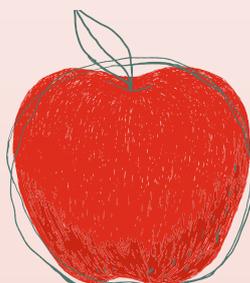
Please send us your entries to FAO Communications Team, Freebridge Community Housing, Juniper House, Austin Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1DZ or you can take a photo and email it to communications@freebridge.org.uk.



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS THROUGH FOOD!

We have many customers who come from Eastern European countries who may be familiar with Lithuanian Apple Cake, and so we wanted to share this recipe with you as we thought you may enjoy making these treats too.

If you have a go at making it, why not let us know and send us a picture? We'll feature the best ones in the next issue! Email your pictures to communications@freebridge.org.uk.



Ingredients

- 3 eggs (room temperature)
- 200 grams sugar
- 1 1/2 sticks butter (softened)
- 237 ml sour cream (or whole milk plain yogurt, not low fat)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 250 grams flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 4 apples (large, peeled and sliced into very thin slices)

Instructions

Preheat oven to 170°C.

- On medium speed, using electric mixer, blend eggs and sugar until fluffy, about 8

minutes.

- Add softened butter, yogurt and vanilla and mix well.
- Add flour and baking powder and mix well.
- Using a rubber spatula, gently fold in apple slices.
- Pour batter into buttered 8 x 8 glass baking dish. You can also use a 9" round cake pan.
- Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar, if desired.
- Bake for 50-60 minutes, until brown and toothpick inserted in middle comes out clean.
- Let cool, top with powdered sugar and cut into squares.



MAINTAINING YOUR HOMES

In our Winter edition we updated you on the work we had been doing on Home Health Checks. It's hugely important to us at Freebridge that our customers live in homes that are safe and well maintained, and therefore several months ago we started a large project to contact all customers about their homes. Over the summer our team spoke to over 4,450 households and logged another 2,331 repairs as a result.

Thank you again to everyone who has taken the time to speak with us and tell us about their concerns. We are continuing to work through the outstanding jobs as quickly as we can, whilst making a number of changes for the future – look out for more information in the next edition regarding our new Home and Community Maintenance Team which is now up and running!

In the meantime we are very pleased to let you know that in the past four months we have already completed over 1,400 outstanding repairs, in addition

to reducing wait times for those new repair jobs that we receive on a daily basis. We understand that there is still a lot of work to do, and many customers have been waiting longer than we would like. Thank you for your continued patience as we work hard to improve our repairs service for all of our customers.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IF I STILL HAVE WORK OUTSTANDING?

We have a team of operatives dedicated solely to completing outstanding and overdue repairs, with a spread throughout the north, south and central areas of west Norfolk. The operatives are working hard to complete as many jobs as quickly as they can on the first callout.

If you haven't already heard from the team, over the next few months you will receive a call to book an appointment. We are focused on clearing all outstanding repair jobs by November 2022 and appreciate your continued patience as we work to achieve this.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF YOU HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO ME YET?

Whilst we have managed to speak to over 4,000 customers over the past few months which is great, we haven't yet spoken to everyone.

We are continuing to contact those of you who we haven't already spoken to, however if you want to contact us direct then please either call us on 03332 404 444 or email us at repairs@freebridge.org.uk.

If you told us about something which might need further inspection, such as damp and mould, we will contact you to book a date to do this. This will help us to make sure the work carried out is the right work to solve the problem.

If you have any concerns about your home, the work that is needed, or how it is impacting on you or your family in the meantime then please do call us on 03332 404 444 to discuss what else we can do to help.

GUIDE TO ASBESTOS IN & AROUND YOUR HOME

Asbestos, a naturally occurring mineral, was extensively used in many building products to add strength and resistance to fire.

This was used in the construction of new, and the refurbishment of existing, buildings before being banned in 1999.

Materials containing asbestos were used in lots of products including decorative ceiling coatings, making it impossible and dangerous to remove all asbestos containing materials from a building. It is universally recommended that asbestos containing materials that are in good condition, should be left in place, and managed accordingly.

Freebridge Community Housing is committed to using trained and certified professionals to conduct asbestos surveys, and to ensure we regularly review and record the location, type and condition of any asbestos containing materials in our homes, and to ensure there is no change to its condition over time. If asbestos containing materials are found when undertaking any works, from a repair to any major works, the material will be inspected and, if necessary, will be safely removed and disposed of.

It is not always easy to identify whether a product in your home

contains asbestos, as modern materials made without asbestos are designed to look similar. It is at great risk to you if you are exposed to asbestos fibres is when containing materials are damaged or drilled, cut, sawn, scrubbed or sanded particularly when undertaking any DIY works. Our operatives are all trained to safely work with certain types of asbestos containing materials or will engage the services of an external specialist where required.

These materials can be found in many areas of your house, inside and out, from building materials to older domestic appliances. Examples include;

- Toilet cisterns and toilet seats, particularly older ones, often those that are 'black' in colour
- Some textured coating on walls and ceilings – Artex being an example
- Ceiling tiles
- Vinyl floor tiles and sheet flooring often found in kitchens, bathrooms and outbuildings
- Insulation panels and boxing for pipework or heating systems
- Flue pipes from boilers and fires

- Electric storage heaters
- Opaque panels in large glazing units and windows
- Eaves and soffits, gutters, and rainwater down pipes and,
- Outbuildings, sheds, garages and other sheet material including corrugated roofs.

Please remember under your tenancy agreement, if you wish to carry out any improvements or changes to your home, you must obtain permission from us before commencing with any works.

We are concerned with your safety and the safety of your family, and will advise if there are any reasons why the works would represent a risk and what measures or rules you (or any contractor you use) will have to follow to prevent the risk of disturbing any asbestos containing materials, and releasing any asbestos fibres.

Failure to request permission, or follow safe working practices, will make you liable for any costs resulting in us dealing with any asbestos related incident, as well as the full cost of reinstatement.

SIMPLE GUIDE TO ASBESTOS

DO treat asbestos with respect, it can be extremely hazardous if disturbed.

DO NOT panic if you think you have asbestos in your home. It's usually only a problem if disturbed.

DO NOT undertake any DIY works or alterations to any part of your home, inside or out, without seeking advice first. Remember it is in drilling, sanding, sawing, knocking down or disturbing any asbestos containing materials where there is the greatest risk of releasing asbestos fibres.

DO NOT try to remove any textured coatings (Artex) from ceilings or walls.

DO NOT remove any floor tiles or linoleum. Leave them in place and lay new floor coverings over them.

DO NOT throw any materials you suspect of containing asbestos into general rubbish. If you have permission to undertake work, and asbestos containing materials are removed, they must be professionally, and safely disposed of in line with Government regulations.



Do you have space in your home?

We all want to support those who have been forced to flee their homes because of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. If you are wondering what you can do to help and support those affected, then you could donate to the Ukraine Emergency Appeal, or if you have a spare room, you can apply to be part of the Government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

Freebridge Community Housing's Homes for Ukraine Scheme guidance:

- **Step One - Make us Aware:** If you have a spare room then you can apply to be part of the scheme, but you do need our permission.
- **Step Two - Seek Guidance:** Visit Homes for Ukraine: sponsor guidance on the Government website to gain further guidance and register your interest.
- **Step Three - Keep in Touch:** Let us know how your application is progressing. Once you have passed your accommodation check, contact us to seek approval for hosting a lodger by contacting homesforukraine@freebridge.org.uk
- **Step Four - Keep us Updated:** let us know when new members to your household arrive so we are aware of who is living in your home.

For more information, please see the latest news on our website www.freebridge.org.uk/homes-for-ukraine.html



NINE NEW HOMES IN TERRINGTON ST CLEMENT



Freebridge Community Housing has handed over the keys to nine new homes in Terrington St Clement.

The homes, which have been built on Church Bank, replace a number of outdated properties that previously stood on the site and provide additional accommodation in the popular West Norfolk village.

Miss Simper, who has recently moved into one of the new homes said: "We absolutely love our new home and could not be happier. My young daughter and I have moved from a small flat in King's Lynn and we now have an amazing home with a garden that is spacious enough for my family to visit, just in time for my daughter's third birthday!"

Andy Walder, Chair of the Board said: "These homes have replaced prefab-bungalows

that were originally constructed in a non-traditional manner and as such were only ever intended to have a very limited lifespan. These new homes are modern and comfortable with a generous amount of space."

Anita Jones, Chief Executive commented: "Providing high quality, affordable homes is at the very heart of what we do.

"One of Freebridge's key objectives for the next five years is to create homes, communities and local spaces to be proud of in west Norfolk and the development of these new homes in Terrington St Clement is a great example of this.

"We believe everyone should have a warm, safe, quality home. And we are working hard to deliver this."

Rebecca on an Out & About talking to our customers in South Lynn



CUSTOMER VOICE - LOUD & CLEAR

In the last three months we have worked alongside the Tenant Panel, Freebridge colleagues and the Board to co-create a Tenant Customer Charter which forms part of the Together with Tenants Action plan.

Pulling together the comments of over 1,000 Freebridge Customers, we were able to find out what matters to you most. **Your** feedback formed the framework of our Charter.

Our Charter is now being launched, but we are by no means finished, this is the start of our journey. We have committed to you, our colleagues and contractors the level of service we will all be working towards in delivering over the next five years. We now need to link performance measures to each commitment to ensure that all of us can track the progress that is made. Working closely with colleagues

and the Tenant Panel this will be achieved by the end of July.

We have also completed our first consultation. We had 32 responses from all of the key stakeholders offering feedback on the proposed Regulators Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM). What is really interesting, is that you all shared the same views for many of the questions. For the results, please visit our website. When the Regulator publishes the results we will share them to enable you to compare.

We have just finished a recruitment campaign for the TPAS "Re-engineering a Tenant Engagement Framework" Research. Thank you to everyone who applied to join the research groups. Unfortunately we couldn't accommodate everyone but we will keep everyone's details on file and when we have our new Engagement Framework in place we will

reach out to you to see how best you can get involved. We will update you all on the results of this soon!

Finally, we will be hosting research later in the year, which we hope you will participate in, to find out how you want your Streets Ahead magazine looking.

On behalf of Freebridge I just wanted to thank everyone who has got involved to date. I hope you can see that your involvement is slowly helping us improve our service delivery to you and other Freebridge customers.

I look forward to updating you all in the next Streets Ahead.

Rebecca Claydon

Customer Voice Lead



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A STAKE IN FREEBRIDGE: HOW TO BECOME A SHAREHOLDER

Freebridge Community Housing is inviting its tenants to become shareholders. Shareholders have the right to attend the Annual General Meeting and vote on major issues in the running of the organisation.

Shareholding is designed to increase tenants' stakeholding in their housing provider and is a way to become involved in what Freebridge does.

If you need more information about how to become a Freebridge shareholder or just want to know more contact the Governance Team on 03332 404 444 or email shareholderenquiries@freebridge.org.uk

Streets Ahead is sent to you every few months because you are a customer of Freebridge Community Housing.

We send the magazine to all our customers so we can tell you about the services we provide and the work we're doing as a registered provider of social housing.

If you no longer want to receive a paper copy of Streets Ahead delivered to you, and want to receive a digital copy

instead, just let us know, and we will arrange for you to be removed from our mailing list.

To opt out of receiving a paper copy, you can either call us on 03332 404 444, or email your name, address and preferred email address to communications@freebridge.org.uk or, you can complete the form below and send it to us at FAO Communications Team, Freebridge Community Housing, Juniper House, Austin Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1DZ

please sign in this box

Name:

Address:

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.....

Email address:

.....

HOW WE PERFORMED

October November



% of our emergency repairs that were completed within four hours
our target for this year is to achieve above 90%

93%

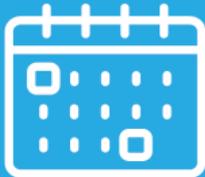
81%



% of our urgent repairs that were completed within 24 hours
our target for this year is to achieve above 90%

96%

91%



Average number of days to re-let a home once it becomes empty
our target for this year is to achieve below 20 days

51

32



% of the complaints we received that were dealt with within the time set out in our policy
our target for this year is to achieve above 100%

63%

41%



% of our tenants that were satisfied with how we have handled cases of anti-social behaviour
our target for this year is to achieve above 90%

100%

67%



The number of complaints we had received since the 1st of April 2021 at the end of each month

190

225

December

92%

94%

26

50%

50%

251

The statistics shown in the coloured bars on the left detail how we performed in the third quarter of the 2021/2022 year.

This way of displaying information about our performance was endorsed by the Tenant Panel following discussions with them, as we wanted to make the data as clear and easy to understand as possible.

We get the data from customer surveys that are conducted by telephone, or we may have emailed you to fill one in online, so if you do get a call or an email we'd really appreciate it if you could spare the time to answer these questions because it helps us know how well we're performing and where we need to improve.

As you can see our performance against Emergency and Urgent Repairs timescales remains above target, however at the same time we have seen a decrease in our performance in relation to Routine Repairs, this is not something we want to see and we're looking at ways to reverse the trend.

Our year to date average of overall re-let times stands at 26 days, which is still above our target, however, further improvement work is now planned through changes we've made in dealing with empty properties.



69% of our tenants were satisfied with the cleanliness and safety of our communal areas our target for this year is to achieve above 85%

69%

Six monthly figure performed between April - September (figures for October - March will be shown in the next issue)

HOW TO CONTACT US

VISIT or WRITE TO US at:

Juniper House, Austin Street,
King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 1DZ

We're open between:

8:45am - 5.15pm (Monday-Thursday)

8:45am - 4.45pm (Friday)

and closed on Saturdays, Sundays and
Bank Holidays.

TELEPHONE: 03332 404 444

We've been made aware that some mobile
phone providers now charge for calling
numbers beginning with 0333, if your provider
is one of these you can also contact us on 0800
1691694 - which is free from all numbers.

Out of office hours our main number diverts to
our 24 hour emergency service.

EMAIL: enquiries@freebridge.org.uk

WEBSITE: www.freebridge.org.uk

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/freebridge

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TREATING EVERYONE FAIRLY

Freebridge treat everyone fairly. We promote equality of opportunity and value the differences between our customers and everyone who works for Freebridge Community Housing. All our employees, contractors and consultants must treat colleagues and customers with politeness, tolerance, and respect, regardless of their age, colour, disability, ethnicity, sex or gender identity, marital status, nationality or national origin, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities or any other unjustifiable reasons.

We will not tolerate unfair discriminatory behaviour of any kind and we encourage the reporting of any such behaviour. We will act upon all complaints appropriately.

The views expressed in this publication are those of contributors, and not necessarily those of Freebridge Community Housing. This entire publication is under copyright, and is not to be duplicated or reproduced in any way without permission.

IF YOU NEED ANY HELP TO UNDERSTAND THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE GET IN TOUCH.

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