

Trust talks

pg2 **Money Matters** £

pg4 **Choose Your Home changes**

pg8 **Win £100!**

Thank you!

Recently our Group won the **Large Social Landlord of the Year** award at the UK Housing Awards and we want to say a huge thank you to you all.

The fact that we have great tenants who pay their rent on time, tell us what we're doing right, and get involved in our work, means that we are constantly improving and performing well, which has resulted in us being successful in gaining this award!



30% off at reviiive

Our partner Reviive has stores in Telford, Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Chester, selling quality second hand household items, electricals and upcycled furniture. As a Trust tenant, you now get a huge **30% discount** when shopping in any of these stores, which also sell brand new flat pack furniture and mattresses. For store locations and opening hours visit www.reviive.co.uk



Money Matters...

Are money problems keeping you awake at night?

When debts get out of control, it's often difficult to know where to turn. Over the last 20 years, StepChange Debt Charity has given free advice on problem debt to more than 2 million people. And they are committed to helping many more.

We've teamed up with StepChange as they understand the causes and see the consequences of being in debt, but most importantly they know the way out. Their expert advice is impartial, tailored to your situation, and most importantly, free.

You can call the free Helpline and speak to an adviser on **0800 138 1111**, between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am and 4pm on a Saturday. Please quote 'The Wrekin Housing Trust' when you call, bearing in mind that all of the information you provide will be confidential.

Or you can visit www.stepchange.org and use Debt Remedy, their online advice tool. You'll receive clear practical advice and solutions based on your personal situation.



StepChange
Debt Charity

Struggling with debt isn't something to be ashamed of, and you won't be judged. The important thing is to get help quickly. Take your first step towards a debt free future today by contacting StepChange.

Or if you prefer, you can speak to our own Money Matters team on **01952 217234** or by emailing money.matters@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk, there's also lots of helpful info on our website under Money Matters.

**Look
out for our
Money Matters
flyer for hints
and tips!**

Get covered...

Could you afford to replace your personal items if the worst happened and you had a fire, flood or burglary? We can give you peace of mind that your belongings are covered with our Home Contents Insurance for as little as £1.28 per week, with no excess to pay and most items replaced as new. **For more information and a quote call Tom Gregory on 01952 217046.**

Extra help for tenants

We're now working closely with the Shropshire Housing Alliance (SHA) to make sure new and existing tenants are well equipped to look after their home and keep their tenancies with us. We want customers to be happy in their homes and we also need to make sure that our tenants look after their properties and pay their rent on time.

SHA's Tenancy Sustainment and Money Matters teams are working closely to make sure people have the tools and training they need for managing money and bills, getting access to low cost furniture, setting up bank accounts and accessing other services.



The Tenancy Sustainment Team are based at our Donnington shop with the Money Matters team and the rest of SHA's team have now moved to our Shrewsbury shop, aiming to give our tenants across all areas a better combined service.

Flats Feedback...

Lights on?

Let us know



If you notice a problem with any of the communal lights, inside or outside of the block where you live, or communal lights that are on during daylight hours, please report the problem as soon as possible on our repairs line: 01952 217217.

Some lights may be the responsibility of the local authority; please report any faults to the Trust in the first instance, so we can make sure they're passed on to the appropriate person if it's not our responsibility.



Perfect painting projects

We have a duty to keep our properties in good order, helping to keep your home in good condition, as well as protecting the stone, brick or woodwork of our buildings.

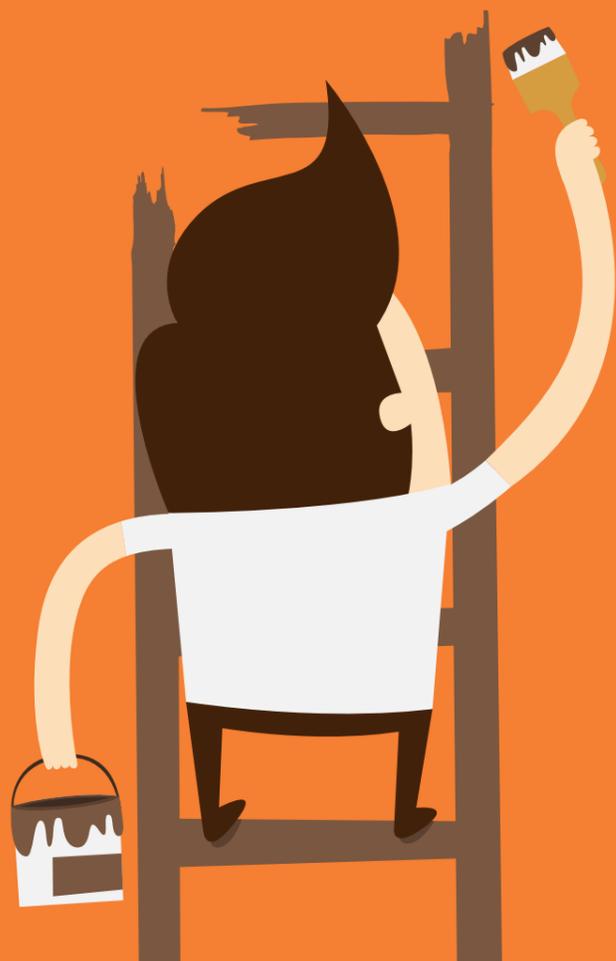
We've recently carried out three projects in Wellington, Madeley and Malinslee where communal areas were spruced up with new flooring and a lick of paint!

Novus Property Solutions, Cooper & Williams and KRM carried out the work, developing a great relationship with residents in the properties throughout the course of the projects.



One resident from Joseph Rich Avenue commented:

“ Having lived here 14 years, I've seen some of the contractors over the years not doing a good job, but these were excellent. They were all very polite, on time and made no mess or inconvenience for the residents. ”





choose your home

changing the way we let our homes

Nationally, it's the duty of local councils to maintain housing registers, provide housing advice, manage homelessness, and set the rules for allocating social housing properties in their area.

Telford & Wrekin Council formed a partnership with Housing Associations in the 1980s to make access to Social Housing easier for customers and the partnership established Chooseyourhome eight years ago, which we agreed to administer on its behalf.

Following an extensive review of this service, the Trust decided last year that we would no longer administer Chooseyourhome on behalf of T&W Council, and we have been working towards the change in service that will now take effect from 7th July 2014.

Telford & Wrekin Council will be implementing a new system to replace Chooseyourhome, whilst the Trust will be focussing more on working with the 800 tenants we let our homes to each year, making sure they have the best possible chance of keeping their tenancy successfully and continuing to deliver excellent services to our existing tenants.

If you feel your Trust accommodation is no longer meeting your needs and you want to consider a move to another Trust property, please contact the Housing Executive at your local shop.

From 7th July 2014, customers who want a home in the Telford & Wrekin area will need to log onto www.telfordhousingoptions.co.uk which will help customers find the best housing options to suit their needs, or call Telford & Wrekin Council on **01952 381925**. Every effort will be made to minimise confusion and disruption for customers wishing to move within the borough.

All customers wanting a home outside Telford & Wrekin need to contact the relevant Local Authority and register on their scheme, if they haven't already.



Love thy neighbour!

Our new Hadley shop will be reopening in the autumn! We'll let you know exactly when but in the meantime we've been catching up with some of our happy tenants in the area...

Love is in the air for two of our tenants and their happy ending has come in the form of a wedding! Mr Roche was living at Hall Gardens in Hadley when he met and fell in love with his next door neighbour Mrs Savicka. Within two months the couple had moved in together and they are now happily married! Congratulations to them both!

Another very content couple are Mr and Mrs Bridgwaters who live in one of our bungalows at Haybridge Hall. They couldn't be happier, saying:

"We were delighted to be offered a bungalow on this scheme. The bungalow itself is brilliant, everything you could wish for, perfect for our needs and on a very friendly scheme.



"We are both active members of the community here at Haybridge Hall. We are very happy indeed."

It's now five years since these fantastic bungalows were built to meet local housing need and officially opened by BBC's Shefali Oza! There is still a high demand for bungalows and older persons housing in the area, as 11% of the population are over 65, with over 80 people bidding for every bungalow we make available in the Hadley area.

Gas servicing

help us to help you!

It's vital that we get to service all of the boilers in our properties, to make sure that all our tenants are safe. Last year we managed to do that, but we do have a lot of missed appointments where people aren't in when we are due to carry out a service and so we have to visit again.

Since 1st April this year we have had over 500 occasions where we couldn't access the property – that's 20% of all visits so far. The cost of this lost time would equate to around nine properties having new windows, 11 properties having a new bathroom, seven properties having a new kitchen or 17 properties having a new boiler.

So please let us know if you can't make an appointment date or time, we're happy to rearrange and the money can be put back into improvements for your homes!

Advice from the Ambulance Service

If you're ever unfortunate enough to need to ring an ambulance when you're at home, here are a few tips to help them get to you and treat the patient sooner.

- Call back on 999 if the patient's condition changes or your location changes
- Make sure they can identify your house easily – is the house name or number clearly visible?
- If it's at night, make sure lights are on so that they can identify your house more easily
- Lock away any family pets
- If you can, write down the patient's GP details and any medication they are taking and any allergies they have
- Although it may not be easy, please try to stay calm.



Our award winning Health and Safety team want to keep you safe!

Our Health and Safety team have recently won an award for their commitment to health and safety standards!

The team carry out annual fire services, to ensure that you're safe in the colder months, and create and maintain safe communities, ensuring that security in schemes and blocks of flats is to the highest standards.

Delighted with the award, Tim Munro, Organisational Development Consultant, said: *"It's recognition of all the hard work and commitment by Trust employees in maintaining high standards of health and safety."*

Catherine Powell, H&S Graduate Trainee, added: *"It's important to us that our tenants and employees are healthy and safe at all times."*

Here are Catherine's top tips to keep your home safe throughout the year:



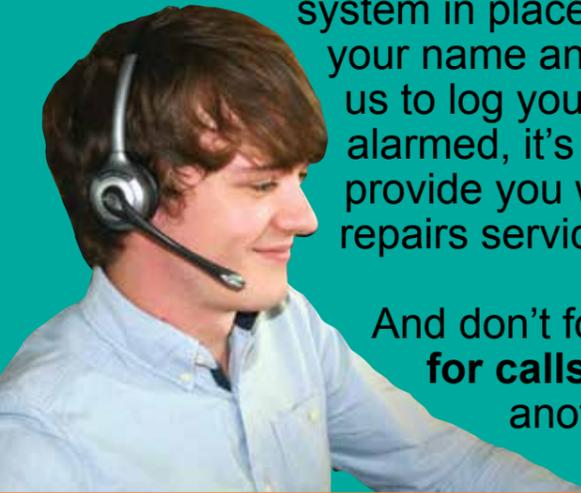
- Make sure cigarettes and candles are fully extinguished at night
- Don't overload plug sockets
- Ensure that cooking is not left unattended where possible
- Make sure your staircase is kept clear to prevent falls
- Keep portable heaters away from furniture and clothing
- Check that your smoke detectors are working on a weekly basis.

If you have any concerns about the safety or security of your building, please contact Catherine on **01952 217056**.

We've got your number!

If you've called our Contact Centre lately, you may have been surprised to hear our call handlers using your name before you had given it to them! This is because we have a new system in place which has number recognition, so when you call your name and address pop up, making it easier and quicker for us to log your repairs and deal with your queries. So don't be alarmed, it's just another way we are streamlining our services to provide you with a better one, such as introducing our same-day repairs service!

And don't forget **Mondays and Fridays** are our busiest times for calls to the Contact Centre; you may want to ring on another day if possible so we can deal with your enquiry without you having to wait.



Garage goodies offer for you!

Sign up now for one of our garages and get a week rent free! You receive free repairs and maintenance and a dedicated, friendly customer service team.

You can also rent a garage if you're not a Trust tenant, and aren't restricted to just one garage per person. Some people rent a number of garages for their businesses. If you already have one, we'll also offer you a rent free week if you sign up for another.

We've got garages available across various areas of Telford so call the team today on 01952 217106.



Satisfaction at an all-time high!

Thanks to you completing our random monthly telephone surveys, we've learnt that 95% of you are satisfied with the services you've received!

These short telephone surveys are one of the ways we measure customer satisfaction, so it's important you answer them honestly if we call. Here are some of the results from last year:

- **Repairs and maintenance overall = 95% of you were satisfied**
- **Listened to your views and acted on them = 89% of you were satisfied**
- **Being treated with fairness and respect = 95% of you were satisfied**

These results are some of the best across the country. However, we always try to improve services where you are not satisfied.

Here are the key areas we are now working to improve as a result of your feedback:

- **Getting better at making sure any follow on work happens quickly**
- **Dealing with condensation and damp issues more efficiently**
- **Communication – most of the time we get this right, but when we don't it causes problems, and we're really sorry that this sometimes happens.**

If you'd like more information on how we're performing, this year's Annual Report will be published on our website before the end of September.



Your new **Tenants' Panel** members

We have three new Panel members this year. The three new applicants have joined the three current members who stood for Panel places. All six applicants have been elected for a period of three years.

The new additions to the Tenants' Panel are Graham Braddock from St Georges, Mo Edwards from Telford and Clive Dan from High Ercall.

The new members wanted to join the Tenants' Panel as they believe they'll always serve the best interests of the tenants and keep the Trust's views, aims and objectives at heart. We're sure that they'll make excellent additions to the team!

tenants'
PANEL

Working together
for a better future

You can get involved too!

As well as being a Tenants' Panel member, don't forget you can get involved with our Tenant Auditors or Customer Assurance Panel, carrying out vital checks on our services and suggesting new and better ways of working. For more information please call 01952 217181 or email getinvolved@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk

Wrekin

RETIREMENT LIVING

You may have seen that our Supported Housing schemes have now become Wrekin Retirement Living (WRL) Schemes. You told us what was important to you and we've focussed on that!

WRL provides homes that offer safety, security and reassurance with services that give choice, flexibility and freedom. Another benefit from living in one of our Retirement Living schemes is the regular organised social activities, and the escorted trips and holidays!

There are over 30 Retirement Living schemes across Shropshire and we've been working on improving the schemes for existing residents. Stallard Court in Oakengates and Langley Fold in Dawley have recently had their tenants' lounge areas refurbished. Similar changes will soon be made across other schemes.



Live *life* to the *full*

Gwen Roberts said: *"I moved because I felt lonely and vulnerable. I now have more friends than ever before. I join in with organised social activities and holidays with my new friends. My life is now wonderful, I would recommend Retirement Living to anyone, it changed my life."*

Help us to review our website!

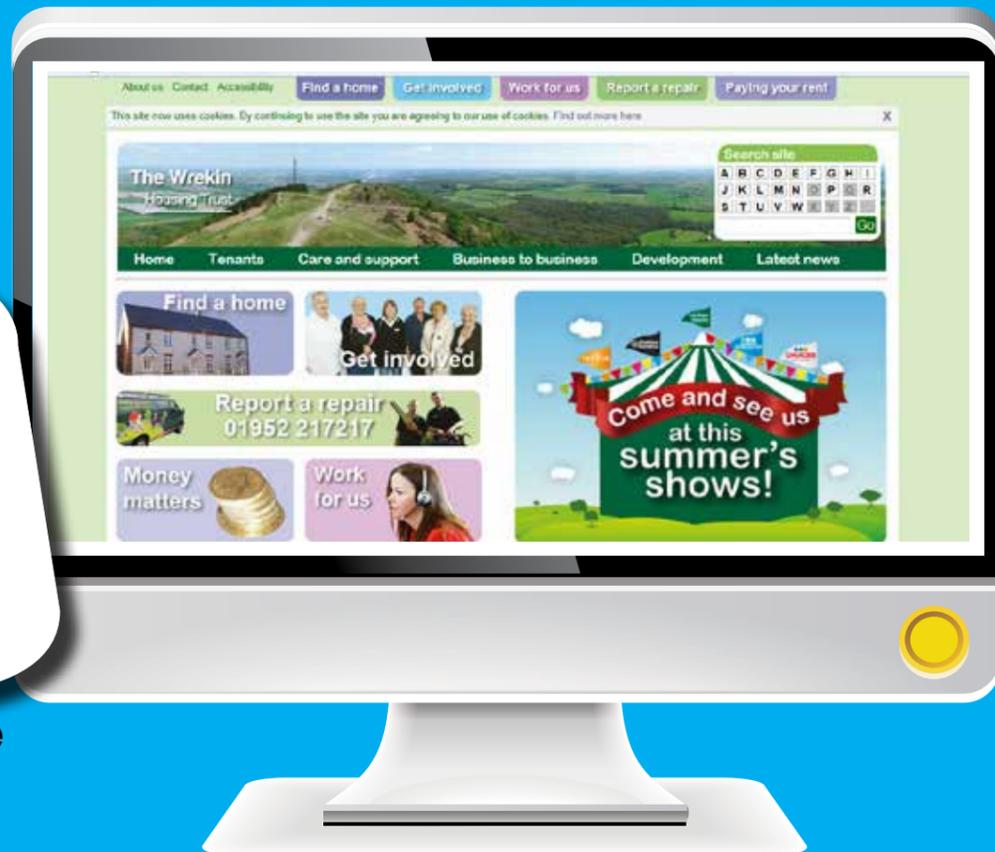
Over the next 12 months, we will be reviewing our current website and need your help!

Do you regularly visit and use our website? If so, we'd like to hear from you.

- Is there any other information you would like to see?
- Is there anything you'd like to do online that you can't at the moment?
- Is there anything else you'd like us to be aware of?

And if you haven't visited our website yet, please take a look and let us know your thoughts.

To let us know your thoughts on the website, and whether you'd like to be included in a focus group, visit www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk and complete the feedback form – you'll be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 gift voucher!



COMPETITION TIME!

This is your chance to win £100 worth of cooking or gardening equipment and have your recipe published!



We want your favourite recipes – we're looking for something original or a family favourite that's easy to cook on a budget. Spaghetti bolognese with a twist, budget banoffee pie or family size fajitas... send your recipes (including a pic) to Trust Talks Comp, The Wrekin Housing Trust, Freepost (SY1 095), Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford, TF3 4AW including your name, address, telephone number and email address for your chance to win £100 of cookery or gardening equipment.

The winner will also have their recipe made famous by being published in the Trust's 2015 Calendar!

For an extra chance to win, we're also after your top tips for cooking well on a budget – the top three will win £10 worth of shopping vouchers! *Winners will be chosen at the end of August so get cooking and send your entries in soon!*



Congratulations!

Mark Greaves from Newport was the lucky winner of our last Trust Talks competition, the wordwheel, and won a whopping £50 Sainsbury's voucher for finding a very impressive 133 words.

Mark said: *"Once again can I thank you for our £50 voucher. This year we're celebrating our 10 year wedding anniversary and our son Jack's 16th birthday. I can assure you that the money has been well spent on our planned party!!"*

