

SEVEN LOCKS



HOUSING




# NEWS

[www.sevenlockshousing.co.uk](http://www.sevenlockshousing.co.uk)

MARCH 2010

Issue 5

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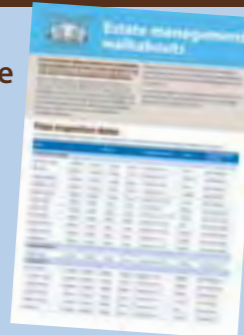


Strong Foundations, Stronger Communities...

## Estate Management

Inside this edition we have enclosed details of this year's estate management programme in a handy leaflet for you to keep.

you said  
we did



## Grounds Maintenance under the spotlight

In our winter edition of the newsletter, we asked you to tell us what you thought about the grounds maintenance service. We would like to thank everyone who responded.

The main issues raised were:

- Customers don't know whether the service delivers value for money, as no information has been provided on what should be done or how much it costs.
- Grass cuttings are not collected.

If we ask the contractors to collect the grass cuttings, it would cost double what you are currently paying.

Now the review of the service is complete, we will be:

- Displaying a summary of the grounds maintenance service specification on the notice boards in blocks of flats and sheltered schemes.
- Providing a copy of the summary in our next newsletter.
- Separating the service costs from your rent, so that you can see what you are paying. Then you will know whether you are getting value for money.

The grounds maintenance service is provided by a company called FOCSA. Appointed in April 2009, they will work with us for around five years. We have compared the cost of the service and found it is good value compared to other housing associations.

You can get involved in monitoring the grounds maintenance contract. If you are interested please contact Alison Kreamer on 01858 414542.

## Dear readers...

Thank you to everyone who took part in our Customer Profile Survey. The information you provided is crucial. It helps us to make sure that we develop our services to meet your needs, now and in the future.



Deborah Bennett

We want to make sure that you are at the heart of decisions about your homes and how we deliver services to you. Rising to this challenge, here's how some of you have been helping us develop our services and standards:

- Void Focus Group – working with us to improve the work we do to empty properties.
- Void Inspectors – inspect properties with us before they are let to make sure they meet the right standard.
- Local standards - your input is helping us develop our Repairs and Maintenance Standard and Anti-Social Behaviour Service Standard.

In February a group of customers interested in being part of our Resident Scrutiny Panel began a training course. They are developing the skills and knowledge they need to assess the quality of our services and challenge our performance.

Finally, thanks go to those who provided feedback and made content suggestions for this newsletter. We have taken your comments on board, and in keeping with our "You said, we did" promise have included our performance information and the estate management inspection timetables.

If you would like to know more or get involved please contact Tracey Silk our Customer Involvement Officer (contact details on the back page).

Deborah Bennett - Executive Director

you said  
we did

## Improving your neighbourhood

Tenants living at Brookside, Fleckney, are feeling safe and secure after fencing has enclosed the garden.

Worried tenants contacted us because local youths had been gathering in the communal gardens and causing a nuisance. This is an example of where our tenants have identified a problem and we have carried out an improvement to help.

Secure fencing and new lockable gates now surround the garden and reports of anti-social behaviour have dropped.

Tenant Lucy Upton and Scheme

Manager Elizabeth Monk (in the photograph) are delighted that security at the scheme has now been improved.



We have funding available that will help us make a difference to the area where you live. Please contact Roy Edmonds on 01858 414528 to find out more.



Sarah Conway, Chair of the Board, joins members of Home-Start South Leicestershire

## New Community Fund

Members of Home-Start South Leicestershire are saying a big thank you to Seven Locks Housing following a £5,000 donation from our Community Initiative Fund.

As part of our Community Initiative Strategy, we have promised to give a helping hand and create opportunities for groups and organisations that contribute to the fabric of local life.

Home-Start South Leicestershire run a family group, once a fortnight during term-time, in Market Harborough and in Lutterworth. The group is for parents/carers and their children aged 0-5 years. The £5,000 donation will go towards the group's running costs, including hiring the venue, staff costs and buying equipment.

Jo Johnston, Group Co-ordinator for Home-Start South Leicestershire, said: "Our group work is solely reliant on donations. We would not be able to provide the support we do for families in the area without donations like the one we have just received from Seven Locks Housing."

Sarah Conway, Chair of the Board of Seven Locks Housing, said: "As the largest housing association working in the Harborough district, we take the role we have to play in the local community very seriously and are delighted to be able to support local community groups or initiatives.

"We will be looking to support local organisations that are at the heart of the community and provide support, advice or information for local people."

If you would like to find out more information about the money available through the Community Initiative Fund and how you can apply, please contact Deborah Floody, Customer Relations Manager at Seven Locks Housing on 01858 414500.

# Keeping your home safe from Carbon Monoxide

**Every year we carry out an annual safety check of gas, solid fuel and oil burning appliances in homes.**

We have a legal duty to service these appliances to make sure they are properly maintained and you are not put at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning or a gas leak.

When gas does not burn properly excess carbon monoxide is produced. This is poisonous and can be fatal. Having an annual inspection will help you stay safe.

The safety checks are carried out by Jeakins Weir, so you will have the peace of mind of knowing a qualified engineer has checked your appliances.

Jeakins Weir will call twice to carry out the gas safety check or arrange a convenient time to come back on another day. If you are not at home they will leave a card asking you to give them a call to book an appointment.

If after seven days you have not made contact with Jeakins Weir, we will write to you with an appointment date and time.

It is very important that you keep to this appointment and allow the engineers access to your home. If you do not we may have to recharge you for the missed appointment and take legal action to gain access.

Once a safety check has been carried out the gas safety certificate is valid for 12 months. If you have any questions contact Annie McNeely on 01858 414530.

## Don't take the risk!

Appliances that are not serviced regularly could produce Carbon Monoxide. Every year around 50 people in the UK die from Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

The majority of these deaths are caused by defective or faulty domestic heating appliances in the home.

Carbon Monoxide is:

- **Colourless**  
You cannot see it
- **Odourless**  
You cannot smell it
- **Tasteless**  
You cannot taste it when you breathe in through your mouth



## Clear scrap

Don't leave old domestic appliances, bikes and other household goods in communal areas for other people to trip over – arrange for these unwanted items to be removed. If we find out you have dumped these items outside your property we will recharge you for the removal.

To arrange for scrap to be removed free of charge contact Mark Pearson on 07956 840803.



## Subletting fraud

**The Government is keen to make sure the system for letting homes is fair and does not allow people who are subletting to have tenancies of houses they don't live in.**

If you have information about illegal subletting please contact Harborough District Council's fraud hotline on **0800 068 8229**.

If any of our tenants unlawfully sublet a property, it means some families are missing out on an affordable home. You will also be in breach of your tenancy agreement and we will take appropriate steps to recover possession of the property.

If you are caught subletting you will lose your tenancy and could lose your right to social housing in the future.

# Money matters... Money matters...

## Get your money under control with Clockwise

**We are working with Clockwise Credit Union to provide bank accounts.**

If you don't have a bank account or your account does not enable you to pay your bills by Direct Debit or Standing Order, this could be for you.

The Clockwise Current Account lets you withdraw your money 24 hours a day using a cash point card.

The account costs £1 a week to run but, if you use this account to pay your rent by Direct Debit or Standing Order, Seven Locks Housing will cover this cost for the first year. If you are responsible for paying all or part of your rent to us and are interested in opening an account with Clockwise, give us a ring and we will explain how it could help you.

For more information contact Jenny Young, Tenancy Support Officer on 01858 414520.

**Let Clockwise work for you.**



### Here's how it has helped others

A tenant has her child benefit paid into a Clockwise account. The rest of her money goes into another account, which she uses for her shopping. Using Direct Debit on the Clockwise account she pays her rent, TV licence and Council Tax each week and a debt with a catalogue company once a month. Leaving the balance of her child benefit in the account allows her to save about £20 a month. By summer she'll have £120 to buy new school uniforms and have some days out. It also gives her an emergency fund should her washing machine break down.

A retired tenant decides to have his work pension paid in to his Clockwise account. He now pays his rent and his Council Tax by Direct Debit. He gets his granddaughter to look at a price comparison website and he saves money on his gas and electricity because he's now paying by Direct Debit.

## Useful advice

**The My Space, My Place booklets are proving a real success – providing useful tips and advice for young people about to start up a home of their own.**

Gillian Harris, who lives in Kibworth, contacted us to say how useful the booklets had been for her 17-year-old daughter Charlotte, who recently started to rent her first flat. Charlotte or "Lotte" found the leaflets on budgeting particularly helpful.

Mrs Harris said: "When I saw these books I thought of Lotte immediately. I'd encourage other young people or their parents to get a copy because they are full of lots of good advice for when they leave home and start up on their own. They've really helped Lotte."

The My Space, My Place booklets provide practical advice on a range of issues



Lotte with her parents Gillian and Peter Harris

including managing money, running a home and health and well-being, and are available on request.

If you would like a copy of My Space, My Place please contact us on 01858 414500.

# Changes to our Board of Management

We are delighted to welcome and introduce three new tenant members to our Board of Management and a new Chair.



**Sarah Conway (Chair of the Board)** joined our Board as an independent member in 2005. She said: "I want to make an active contribution to the community in the Harborough district, while combining my interests in housing and human resources."



**John Chamberlain** will strive for the principles of good governance.



**Stewart Harrison** is committed to continually improving the standard of affordable homes.



**Mick McLaughlin** will work to make sure Seven Locks Housing is a successful and financially sound organisation.

# How are we doing?



Those who took part in our newsletter survey told us that you want to know information about how we are performing.

In this edition we are introducing a new feature which will help you see how we are doing. Follow this table to see if we are on target.

Key to table	
	Meeting or exceeding target*
	Marginally below target*
	Significantly below target
	Performance improved against last quarter
	Performance has remained the same against last quarter*
	Performance deteriorated against last quarter

Performance in key areas	Target 2009 / 2010	Performance 30/06/09	Performance 30/09/09	Performance 31/12/09	Are we on target?	Are we getting better?
% of emergency repairs completed on time	100%	99.98%	100%	99.99%		
% of urgent repairs completed on time	98%	99.95%	99.97%	99.98%		
% of routine repairs completed on time	98%	99.97%	99.97%	99.97%		
% of repairs completed right first time	80%	94.86%	95.83%	93.30%		
% of customers satisfied with completed responsive repairs	90%	97.40%	96.50%	95.50%		
% of telephone calls returned within 24 hours	90%	69%	61%	87%		
% of letters responded to within 10 working days	95%	84.75%	91.20%	90.51%		
% of initial response times to Anti-Social Behaviour cases (10 days)	95%	100%	100%	100%		
% of Anti-Social Behaviour cases closed	90%	67%	45%	78%		
% of rent arrears	2.8%	2.43%	2.30%	2.69%		
Average days to re-let a general needs dwelling	26 Days	30 Days	33.41 Days	33.14 Days		
% of support plans reviewed (sheltered schemes)	No Target	99.76%	86.12%	92.13%		

\*Tolerance 5%

# Knights Close

Billesdon Village

## Cash to help you move

If you are over 55 and happy to consider downsizing your home and moving into smaller accommodation – we could help.

If you are a tenant of Seven Locks Housing and live in a family size property, you may qualify for a £500 incentive payment to move into one of our sheltered schemes.

If you meet the criteria, you may also receive some extra help with your removal costs. This is normally around £250.

Want to find out more? Please contact Tracey or Wendy for an informal chat on 01858 414533 or 01858 414503.

Modern, comfortable apartments are now available for rent in the picturesque village of Billesdon, following the refurbishment of Knights Close.

Each apartment has been fitted with new double glazing, a kitchen and bathroom with walk in shower.

There is a selection of bright and airy properties available.

A community lounge and sun room are available for residents to use.

The building has a secure door entry system, a 24 hour link to a care centre, a community lounge, guest bedroom, hairdressing room, laundry and lifts to all floors.

If you would like to have an informal chat about the property available or to have a look at the show flat please contact Seven Locks Housing on 01858 414534 and ask for Steve or Tracey.

These apartments are only available to people aged 60 and over.

You may also qualify for Housing Benefit to help with your rent.

## Two bedroom apartment

£64.49 per week plus £15.17 per week service and support charge.

## One bedroom apartment

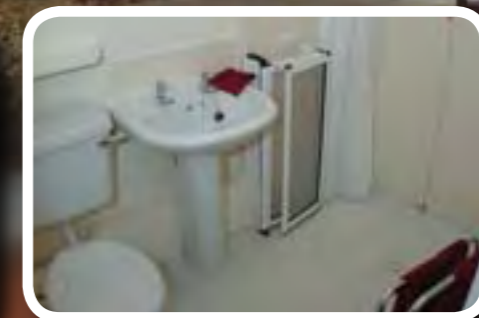
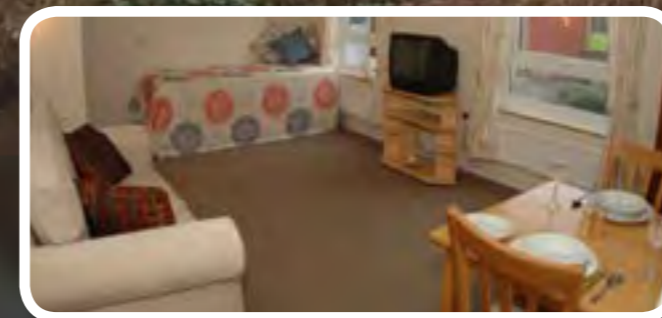
£59 per week plus £36.39 per week service and support charge (this includes heating costs).

## Studio apartment

£49.68 per week plus £34.54 per week service and support charge (this includes heating costs).

Located in the heart of the village, close to the Market Place, local facilities include:

- Doctors Surgery
- Library
- Post Office
- Newsagent
- Greengrocers
- Bus service
- Pub/restaurant



# Useful contacts

**you said**  
**we did**

## Area Housing Officers

David Turner – 01858 414517  
Ken McDonald – 01858 414518  
Iqbal Memen – 01858 414515  
Karen Harewood – 01858 414516

## Customer services

01858 414500  
email: info@sevenlockshousing.co.uk

## Customer Involvement

Tracey Silk – 01858 414519

## Repairs freephone

0800 1300 365  
No matter what time you call to report a repair, even if it is out of hours, please call the repairs freephone number.

## Tenancy Services Manager

01858 414514

## Aids and Adaptations

Howard Skip - 01858 414525  
Nick Munns – 01858 414526

## Modernisation and improvement programme

Annie McNeely – 01858 414530

## Customer Relations Manager

Deborah Floody – 01858 414540

## Address:

1A Anson House, 8 Compass Point,  
Northampton Road, Market Harborough,  
Leicestershire LE16 9HW

## Website

www.sevenlockshousing.co.uk

## Opening times

Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm

On the first Wednesday of every month staff training will take place and we will open at 9.30am

You can make an appointment or drop in to discuss housing issues at the Lutterworth Service Shop on Thursdays between 1.30 – 4.30pm.

## Cleaning service for flats

Consultation with customers living in blocks of flats told us that you would like us to introduce a cleaning service to the communal areas and communal windows.

We will be investigating this over the next few months and talking to those affected about what level of service people want and how much it will cost.

Where we already provide a cleaning service, we will put a summary of the cleaning specification on the notice board, so that you know what to expect.

**you said**  
**we did**

## COMPETITION WINNER

Congratulations to B J Howes of Palmer Drive who won a £20 gift voucher for correctly answering the competition question in the last edition.

## Equality and Diversity Statement

This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format upon request. Contact Customer Services on 01858 414 500.

આ દસ્તાવેજ વિનંતી કરવાથી બીજી ભાષાઓ, મોટા અક્ષરો  
અથવા અક્ષરો અથવા ઓડિઓ રચનામાં પણ મળી રહેશે.

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की  
छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w  
innych wersjach językowych, w wdużym druku lub w  
formacie audio.

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਖਾਸ਼ਾਮਾ ਵਿਚ, ਬੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ  
ਟੇਪ ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਖਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ.

Anson House has a hearing loop systems in reception,  
interview rooms and the Boardroom and a minicom  
service.