

SEVEN LOCKS



HOUSING




NEWS

www.sevenlockshousing.co.uk

JULY 2010

Issue 6

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Strong Foundations, Stronger Communities...

Dear readers...

During the last 12 months, more than 80% of you have completed our customer profiling questionnaire. Thank you for taking the time to do this. I'd like to tell you how we are using this information to shape our services:



Deborah Bennett

- **Financial inclusion** – on learning that some of our customers did not have a bank account, we have worked with Clockwise, the local credit union, to provide an account. Tenants can now pay their rent and other bills by Direct Debit, accessing cheaper payment options.
- **Adaptations to help people with mobility issues** – following the recent review of the service we will now contact the households who identified a need, giving them information about the service.
- **Neighbourhood Environmental Works Programme** – some of you have told us

about areas that need improving and we are talking to you about the improvements you would like to see.

- **Customer involvement** – we have invited customers who expressed an interest in joining working parties and focus groups to get involved in improving existing and developing new services.
- **Communicating with you** – if you told us that you have a specific communication need we will communicate with you in that way.

Recently you will have received another survey. This is a STATUS survey - registered providers of social housing are required to complete these every three years.

Your anonymous responses will be sent to the government body that monitors our performance.

Completing these surveys helps us to direct the services we provide to where they matter to you the most.

I hope this explanation is helpful and encourages you to provide this completely confidential, anonymous information. Thank you for your help.

Deborah Bennett – Executive Director

Positive partnerships

Seven Locks Housing is proud to launch a joint venture with the local police – a new base in Fleckney.

Residents of Brookside Gardens, our sheltered scheme in Fleckney, told us that anti-social behaviour (ASB) problems in the area were making them feel insecure in their own homes.

Working in partnership with the local police and the Parish Council we have worked together to convert the empty warden accommodation at the scheme in to a police office.

Now instead of lying empty, the space gives Leicestershire Constabulary a presence in the village.

So what difference has it made? Not only do the residents of Brookside feel safe and secure in their homes, the police have also told us that anti-social behaviour in the community has been reduced.

This is another example of where we have listened to our tenants and working with our partners have provided a practical solution.



WPC Chrissie Bemand joins residents at Brookside Gardens.

Delivering our promises

Work is ahead of schedule and nearly complete on our major improvement programme to homes.

Just 26 months in to the programme of work we are pleased to have made significant progress on the promises made to tenants at transfer.

So far we have achieved:

We promised	We've delivered
1,300 new bathrooms	1,440 new bathrooms
1,300 new, front and back doors	1,385 new front and back doors
1,600 new kitchens	1,352 new kitchens
900 upgraded central heating systems	908 upgraded central heating systems

In addition we have:

- Fitted 408 walk in showers.
- Cleared the inherited backlog of aids and adaptations.
- Spent £105,000 on environmental improvements.
- Updated communal TV aerials, ready for digital switchover.

We are delighted that we have been able to improve so many homes, ahead of our original schedule. Improvements are still being carried



Tenant Frances Gray shows her new kitchen to Seven Locks' Property Surveyor Tim Grimley.

out with work underway to deliver – cavity wall and roof insulation, re-roofing, other external works and environmental improvements.

However, credit has to go to our customers and we would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of our tenants who live in homes that have been part of the modernisation programme. We know that work of this nature can be very disruptive.

To celebrate our achievements so far we will be organising a number of children's tea parties and events at our sheltered housing schemes throughout the summer.

Money matters

Remember, if you don't have access to a bank account that lets you save money by paying by Direct Debit, then we could arrange this for you.

We will also pay the associated costs of running this account for the first year.

All you have to do to qualify for this account is agree to pay your rent or the part of the rent that you are responsible for by Direct Debit.

Interested? Talk to your Housing Officer or Contact Customer Services on 01858 414500 to find out more.



Tenants get Wii-fit in Wii-tirement

Sheltered housing tenants have got Wii-fit this summer – keeping them active in Wii-tirement.

Seven Locks Housing, in partnership with Harborough Council's Active Together, has purchased a Wii console and equipment.



Naseby Square tenants get Wii-fit 10-pin bowling.

Following a successful taster session at Naseby Square, where tenants tried their hand at 10-pin bowling, dancing, tennis and boxing, we are now looking to roll out Wii-tirement sessions at more of our sheltered schemes.

Greta Shillcock, 69, who attended the session, said: "You don't need to be fit to have a go and it's surprising how much fun it is."

After showing a hidden talent at 10-pin bowling, Dorothy Grover added: "I've seen my grandchildren playing on the Wii, but I never dreamt I'd have a go too. It's much more fun than watching the TV."

Most of the games and activities on the Wii can be enjoyed from a standing or sitting position, so everyone can have a go.

From her mobility scooter, Joan Scotchbrooke enjoyed the 10-pin bowling and dancing and said: "It's so easy and so much fun."

Community landlord

Providing affordable and well managed homes makes a big contribution to the quality of life in the communities where you live.

However, we want to do more than this. We want to develop and support initiatives and partnerships that benefit your neighbourhood and the wider community.

We want our customers to be proud of the homes and proud of the contribution their landlord makes to the community.

There are lots of ways in which we are doing this already. Here are just some examples:

- Refurbishing Naseby Hall Community Centre.
- Working with the Clockwise Credit Union to give you access to ethical financial services.
- Making a contribution to the Sure Start centre.
- Working with local schools to sponsor the Respect Handbook. Providing a local base for policing.
- Offering apprenticeships through our modernisation programme.
- Making a contribution to the Harborough Cinema.
- Supporting the 'Active Together' Wii sessions for our older customers.

Some other ideas include sponsoring strips for a local football team, a Seven Locks' young people carnival float, providing work experience and funding community events.

We would like to hear some of your ideas. Visit our website www.sevenlockshousing.co.uk where you can find out more about our community activities and add your comments.

Get a qualification and help us to improve?

Making a positive difference to the way we work and the services we deliver is the goal of customer involvement.

We are introducing a new group for involved customers - the Resident Scrutiny Panel.

Members of this group will work alongside our Customer Panel and our Management Board. They will examine our services, how we perform and whether funds are being invested wisely.

If the Resident Scrutiny Panel feels we could be doing things better, they will report back to Seven Locks Housing's Management Board.

We have arranged a training course for tenants interested in joining the panel. The free training will be delivered locally on 18 and 19 August, transport will be provided

If you complete the course you will receive a Management Endorsed Award from the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). We will then support you as you begin to work with us to improve our services.

Training places are limited. So, if you are interested, please contact Tracey Silk, Customer Involvement Officer to find out more and complete an application form.

Please take the time to do so – your involvement really does make a difference.

Colin Basse and John Piggott are two local residents who have got involved, here's what they have to say.

"My interest in the scrutiny panel was sparked by attending a course on inspections. I now want to get involved in our very own scrutiny panel."

Colin Basse

"I'm really looking forward to working with other tenants and Seven Locks Housing to maintain and improve standards."

John Piggott



HELP DESIGN OUR ANNUAL REPORT

In October we will be publishing an annual report and we want the help of our younger customers to design the cover.

The annual report will tell you how we are performing. We will also highlight our journey to excellence – where we started, what we've achieved and what we hope to do in the future.

Customers will be consulted on the information to include inside. However, we would like one of our younger customers to design the front cover.

The picture will need to reflect that we want to provide excellent services to homes and communities where people are happy and proud to live. It will be about who we are and where we are going.

Reading this newsletter and previous editions could give you some ideas. All back issues are on our website at www.sevenlockshousing.co.uk

So, if you or a member of your family is a budding artist we want you to get creative and send us your ideas.

To enter the competition you must:

- Live in one of our properties
- Be under 18-years-old
- Draw your picture on white A4 paper
- Send us your design and a few words explaining why you think it tells our story.

The winners will see their artwork professionally produced and will receive a £50 gift voucher.

Please send your entry to Deborah Floody, Customer Relations Manager, at the address on the back page by Monday 23 August 2010.

Remember to include your name, address and contact details.



Improved support for sheltered tenants

We have introduced new support plans to help our older tenants to live independently in their home for as long as possible.

These new plans are designed to better meet the needs of tenants and the requirements of Supporting People (the government programme that funds housing-related support services to help people live independently).

We tested the new support plans with a number of tenants before they were officially introduced.

Leonard French, of Brookfield Gardens, took part in the pilot scheme. He said: "I filled in the form with my scheme manager and it did take some time to get all of the information right.

"It's much more in depth than the old form. However, I feel I'll get a lot more out of it. So, it's well worth taking the time to fill it in."

If you or someone you know are over 60 and would like to find out more about our sheltered housing schemes, please contact customer services on 01858 414500.

If you live in one of our homes and want to move into sheltered housing get in touch, we could even help with the removal costs.

Grounds maintenance under the spotlight

In our March newsletter we promised to publish a summary of the Grounds Maintenance Service we provide.



This tells you exactly what standard to expect when this work is carried out. If you have any problems with this service, please contact your Sheltered Housing Manager, Area Housing Officer or Customer Services on 01858 414500.

Grass Cutting

- Season starts mid March and finishes end of October.
- Grass is cut every two weeks (depending on weather and ground conditions).
- Edges around walls and fences and obstacles such as lamp columns etc are sprayed with a herbicide twice a year.

*Grass cuttings are **not** collected, but are swept or blown onto grass areas where they have collected on footpaths and hard surfaces.*

Planted Areas

- Shrub borders are maintained every two weeks during the grass cutting season and any shrub growth over windows, pathways, seats, lights etc. is pruned back.
- Weeds are removed every two weeks during the grass cutting season.
- In the winter shrubs are pruned back once and all debris raked out.

Hedge Cutting

- Hedges are cut twice a year, once in July and once between November and February.

Hedge cutting is not done earlier in the year to avoid disturbing bird nests.

Litter Collection (including leaves)

- Litter is collected every two weeks during the grass cutting season and once a month during the winter.
- Fallen leaves are removed once a month from paths and hard surfaces but are only removed from other areas where they have drifted or collected in a heap.

Tree Work

Tree work is not part of planned grounds maintenance.

If there is a problem with a tree please contact us on: 01858 414500 or info@sevenlockshousing.co.uk



How are we doing? you said we did

This table tells you how we are performing

KEY TO TABLE			
	Meeting or exceeding target *		Performance improved against last quarter
	Marginally below target *		Performance has remained the same against last quarter *
	Significantly below target		Performance deteriorated against last quarter

Performance in key areas	Year end 2008/09 March	Target 2009/2010	Performance @ 30/6/09	Performance @ 30/9/09	Performance @ 31/12/09	Performance @ 31/3/10	Are we on target?	Are we getting better?
% of repairs completed right first time	New Indicator	80%	94.86%	95.83%	93.30%	92.00%		
% of customers satisfied with completed responsive repairs	New Indicator	90%	97.4%	96.5%	95.5%	95.30%		
% of telephone calls returned within 24 hours	New Indicator	90%	69%	61%	87%	89.52%		
% of letters responded to within 10 working days		95%	84.75%	91.20%	90.51%	89.08%		
% of initial response times to Anti Social Behaviour cases (10 days)	New Indicator	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
% of rent arrears		2.8%	2.43%	2.30%	2.69%	1.98%		
Average days to re-let a general needs dwelling		26 days	30 days	33.41 days	33.14 days	29.46 days		
% of support plans reviewed (sheltered schemes)		No target	92.81%	86.12%	92.13%	93.30%		

* Tolerance 5%

New gas servicing arrangements

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, but it is your responsibility to allow us access to your home to do this.

Following a recent review of the way we deliver this service we have made some changes.

In the future you will receive a letter from us giving you notice that a service to a gas appliance in your home is due.

Jeakins Weir will then contact you to make an appointment for the service to be carried out.

If you do not contact Jeakins Weir to make alternative arrangements they will call at your home to carry out the service. If you are not home they will leave a calling card asking you to

contact them. If you fail to contact them, they will call again leaving a second calling card.

If Jeakins Weir have left two calling cards and still has not been able to gain access we will write to you, giving you 10 days' notice of a new appointment date.

This letter will also tell you that if this appointment is missed you will be charged for this visit.

Failing to carry out this gas safety check would leave your home at risk. We cannot allow this and would take legal action to obtain an injunction to get access to your home to carry out this important service. If this becomes necessary you will also be charged the cost of this legal action.

Help us to keep your home safe.



Useful contacts



Area Housing Officers

David Turner – 01858 414517
Ken McDonald – 01858 414518
Suzy Piazza – 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.

Don't be a noisy neighbour

As summer heats up more of you will be spending time in your gardens – so think of your neighbours before you turn up the volume.

Playing your music very loud may be enjoyable to you, but it shatters the peace and tranquillity for others. Loud music can be noise pollution and is a form of anti-social behaviour.

Everyone has a right to the quiet enjoyment of their home. So, remember to keep noise levels under control and to play your music at a sensible volume so you can enjoy the summer without upsetting your neighbours.



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 છાપેલા
અથવા અક્ષરો અથવા ઓડિયો 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, ਬੌਂਡੇ 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.