

# HOME NEWS

Spring 2016

Written in partnership by  
customers and staff of  
North Devon Homes



- **Summer Fayre date**  
Page 4
- **Anchorwood Bank**  
Page 5
- **Get ready for Universal Credit**  
Page 12
- **8 ways to spring clean your finances**  
Page 13

# contents

<b>Governance</b>	3
<b>Communications</b>	4 - 5
<b>Supported Housing</b>	6 - 7
<b>Planned Maintenance</b>	8 - 9
<b>Response Repairs</b>	10 - 11
<b>Income Team</b>	12 - 13
<b>Customer Involvement</b>	14 - 15
<b>Community Involvement</b>	16 - 17
<b>Regeneration</b>	18 - 19
<b>Customer Care Team</b>	20
<b>Complaints &amp; Compliments</b>	21
<b>Neighbourhoods</b>	22
<b>Notice Board</b>	23
<b>Competitions</b>	24

Front cover image: Members of North Devon Homes' Bridging the Gap youth project enjoy a Born to Skate session.

# Welcome to the spring edition of Home News!

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family well. We have had a fairly mild winter compared to some recently and whilst it has been very wet, we are thankful for a generally warmer winter that has reduced both winter fuel bills and the number of weather related incidents for us all. I am pleased that this has meant less disruption for our customers with fewer weather related emergency repairs.

In contrast, the housing sector has been much stormier with many government policy announcements since the budget, and the election in 2015, that will have far reaching implications for social housing tenants, people claiming benefit and those in housing need. The Government has introduced policies to reduce rent, reduce grants for affordable homes and is looking to extend the Right to Buy in a bid to promote greater homeownership. Some of these changes are good news for customers in the short term but they do not tackle the long term issue of housing supply and the number of homes we need for our communities, neighbourhoods and families.

We have been working hard to respond to these changes and find innovative ways to tackle the significant issues in North Devon. The rent reforms that the government has prescribed will cost the business £4 million over four years, meaning there will be less money to maintain or build new homes locally. Welfare reform, the changes to in work and out of work benefits and the introduction of Universal Credit in North Devon are also having a significant impact on many of the families and households we work with. We have reviewed our business, investment and service delivery plans in detail to accommodate these issues. Converting to a charity last year has enabled us to achieve savings. We are planning a range of other efficiency measures whilst striving to maintain a high level of customer service and continued investment in badly needed new homes.

We are proud to remain your local, independent community landlord and continue to focus on looking after the interests of our customers and the local community. I hope you find some of the stories inside this edition of Home News interesting and useful.

Have a happy Easter from everyone at North Devon Homes.

**Martyn Gimber**  
Chief Executive

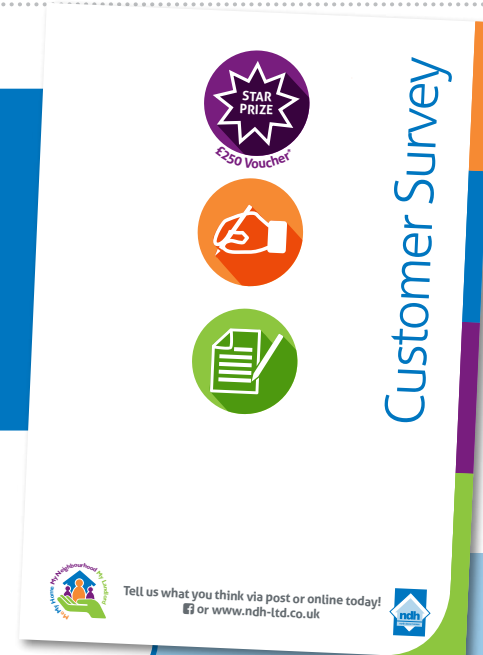


## Your opinion counts

In November, we sent out a survey to all our customers. We did this to help inform us on what you think about your home, the area in which you live, and the services that we provide. We understand that listening to our customers' views and opinions about North Devon Homes helps us to improve our service offer to you.

## Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey (600 customers in total) and for all your kind words of thanks to the North Devon Homes team and staff members.



## The results

The responses to the key questions in the survey are displayed throughout this edition of Home News. Please look for this symbol:



The results show that North Devon Homes is a top performing organisation in terms of customer satisfaction, sitting in the top 25% of similar Housing Associations based in Southern England.

You told us that the following services provided

by North Devon Homes are important to you:

- Repairs and maintenance
- High level of customer service / care
- Providing quality homes
- Carrying out regular checks to ensure your safety e.g. gas, electrics, smoke alarms, and asbestos

We will continue to develop our service offer in these areas.

## What's next?

We have looked at all the feedback, and have followed up where a specific action was required, for example, a request for repairs.

Next, we will be exploring, in more detail, those areas where you told us we could improve, and using your feedback to shape the service we deliver, for example, developing our new website.

We will provide a further update on what actions we have taken following the customer survey in the next edition of Home News.

**We are always happy to help and to receive feedback, so if you are experiencing any issues or have any suggestions on how we can improve the services that we deliver, please contact our Customer Care Team on 01271 312500.**



## New window display

North Devon Homes' town centre office has a smart new window display which shows properties that are available to rent. Our town centre office is located behind Green Lanes at 116-118 Boutport Street in Barnstaple. You can also see the properties available to rent by viewing the weekly Devon Home Choice newsletter at [www.northdevon.gov.uk/housing/apply-for-social-rented-housing](http://www.northdevon.gov.uk/housing/apply-for-social-rented-housing).



## Grounds Maintenance Schedule

Springtime is now upon us heralding the start of peak growing season. Our grounds maintenance covers a number of services to communal areas including grass and hedge cutting, shrub maintenance and weed control.

- **Grass cutting** – communal grass areas are cut 12 times per calendar year. Grass cutting takes place every 3 weeks between March and October. This may vary according to weather and ground conditions.
- **Hedge cutting** – communal hedges are cut twice a year. One cut is made in January/February with the second cut in September. A cut may be made outside these times if a hedge is overgrowing and obscuring a public highway or path.
- **Shrubs** – communal shrub areas are cut and maintained 4 times throughout the year.
- The grounds maintenance service also covers the inspection and maintenance of play areas and weed control in specific paved areas and footpaths.

If there is anything you would like to know about the grounds maintenance where you live please contact the Customer Care Team on 01271 312500.

## Summer Fayre - Save the Date!

We are delighted to announce that our annual customer Summer Fayre will be held on Wednesday 27th July at Barnstaple Rugby Club from 11-3pm. We would love to see you and your family there!

Plans are well underway with lots to keep you and your children entertained - face painting, crazy golf, a petting farm with miniature ponies, donkeys and goats, learn to walk a tightrope and ride a unicycle workshops, zorb racing, a disco dome, an inflatable obstacle course, crafts, bouncy castle, competitions and lots of stalls.

The event is free for all our customers and your entry card will include vouchers for food and activities making this a really great day out.

Your personal invitation will be posted to you in June, we would love you to come along, join in the fun and make this our best Summer Fayre yet! If you have any ideas or suggestions for this year's Fayre please contact Rowan Summers on 01271 312500 or email [rowan.summers@ndh-ltd.co.uk](mailto:rowan.summers@ndh-ltd.co.uk).



# Anchorwood Bank

North Devon Homes has been a key driving force in the move to regenerate the former Leaderflush and Shapland site in Barnstaple. This is an example of us taking a more innovative approach to tackle the significant housing issues in North Devon. We will be working with our local partners Pearce Homes to deliver this landmark regeneration project which will have a long lasting positive impact on the area, creating a significant number of jobs and opportunities for local people. Any profits we make will be used for the benefit of our current and future customers, which will enable us to continue funding the provision of new, affordable homes for people who need them.

Anchorwood Bank will be an exceptional place to live in a stunning waterfront location with open views along the Tarka estuary. The development will offer many of the benefits of urban living whilst its riverside location gives easy access to the beautiful North Devon coast and countryside.

Homes will be close to local amenities including a new quality retail and food area and a supermarket. In addition, the site offers ease of access to both the town centre and local transport links. A selection of onsite restaurants will provide choice and variety for those wishing to eat out.

For those wishing to pursue an active, outdoors lifestyle the development will benefit from direct access to the Tarka Trail, a nature reserve and the new riverside walk. The leisure centre, Tarka Tennis Centre and local beaches are all also within



Proposed housing development edged red

easy reach.

A variety of homes will be available ranging from 1 bedroom apartments to large 5 bedroom houses.

In total 172 new homes will be built on site comprising 135 market sales properties and 37 affordable properties.

The housing and site plan has been designed with a strong social aspect in mind. Piazzas and a Central Park will include lots of seating and greenery making them restful, relaxing and sociable places to spend time in.

Works to raise the

ground level of the site will begin in April 2016 followed by building works planned to start in November 2016.



Architect's impressions for new build homes

## Away day

The team of Support Advisors and other close colleagues enjoyed a productive working day at Portmore Golf Park in early November. The theme of the day was how we meet the challenges of the new funding structure from government, and how we can work smarter to ensure we achieve value for money. The day ended with a number of actions for Bill Allen, our new Independent Living Services Manager to work on, and was closed with the message of "Anything's Possible!"

## Common Rooms

Last year our common rooms at Medard House, Magdalene Lawn, The Candar, Lamaton Park and Mariners Close were refurbished and refreshed, and we hope you have been enjoying the new furniture and decorations. The common rooms are a wonderful facility available to everyone living in our sheltered accommodation and we would love to see them being used even more! The Support Advisors are a great source of information on what is happening, and are very willing to work with residents to promote the common rooms for any other activities that you may want to happen.

The Support Advisors can help with things like Hire Agreements and ensuring that the rooms are used appropriately, and that any use benefits the residents.



## Plans for the future

The nature of support work is changing, and our Support Advisors have embraced the change wholeheartedly. For example, on our sheltered schemes, we have identified a number of tasks that were being done by our Neighbourhood Officers or others, but could more easily be completed by Support Advisors on site. Working in ways which benefit our customers, and achieve value for money are our key drivers as we adapt to the new funding regime. If you have any concerns or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Support team.





**97%**

customer satisfaction with support service



**1,123**

Total Alarm Customers



**281**

Total Support Customers

## Medard House Breakfast Club

The Support Advisors at Medard House hold a Breakfast Club every Friday. This is a very popular social event where attendees can enjoy a full English breakfast for a very reasonable price with unlimited tea and coffee. Places are limited so please contact the Support Advisors at Medard House beforehand if you would like to attend.



Could you or someone you know benefit from a community alarm, or support to live at home independently?

Call us on 0800 083 7553  
or visit our website  
[www.devonhomelink.com](http://www.devonhomelink.com)  
to enquire or arrange a free demo.



## Home Support

Alarms and so much more...



# Septic Tanks

Septic tank systems are an effective, economical way of treating domestic effluent.

They consist of two main components; an underground tank into which the raw sewage is fed and a drainage field where waste water is released.

The tank works by separating the solids from the liquids and bacteria in the waste water helps to break down the contaminants. The drainage field consists of a series of pipes (soakaway) which allows the liquid to drain into the surrounding soil.

Septic tanks will only operate properly if regularly desludged. You will know that the tank needs emptying too late if sludge levels are high, the drainage field floods, the drains back up or if it smells. If you notice any of these things please call us on 01271 312500.

Here are some do's and don'ts if you have a septic tank system

- ✓ Put all waste water from your home in the system
- ✓ Act immediately if you notice a blockage or any sign of pollution
- ✓ Ensure all covers are secured but can be removed when necessary
- ✓ Use bleach and disinfectants sparingly as they kill the bacteria that digest the waste
- ✗ NEVER dispose of nappies, sanitary items, plastic or large solids as they will cause blockages
- ✗ Do not use your sink as a rubbish bin - use a compost bin
- ✗ Do not block air vents
- ✗ Never enter a septic tank – the natural treatment process produces a toxic gas.



## Stair lifts, hoists and lifting equipment

Do you have a stair lift, hoist or any type of lifting equipment fitted in your home? If you do, we need to ensure that regular checks are made to ensure it is safe and suitable for use. Please let us know on 01271 312500.



80

Electrics



125

Gas Boilers



133

External Decorations



12

Kitchens



15

Bathrooms



78

Doors



Units completed to date 2015-16



## If your Carbon Monoxide alarm sounds:

- Open all doors and windows to ventilate the area
- Turn off all gas appliances and extinguish solid fuel fires
- Leave the property and call North Devon Homes on 01271 312500 or 0800 917 0619
- If you feel unwell seek immediate medical advice

**DO NOT use your appliance until it has been checked by a gas professional.**



## Access Issues

If you receive a letter or message from us, or an approved contractor working for North Devon Homes, please respond to it.

If an appointment has been made for you, please ensure you are home on the allocated day. If the appointment is inconvenient please contact us to rearrange as soon as possible. Details of who to contact to confirm or rearrange will always be contained within the letter.

A huge amount of time and money is wasted each year trying to access homes and chasing those who have missed appointments. Please help us to work more efficiently by responding to communications and keeping appointments.



## Help us look after your home

We require a home improvement survey (previously called stock condition surveys) to be carried out periodically to ensure that we hold correct information about your home. We use this information to plan improvement works to maintain your home and keep it in good condition.

Please help us to look after your home by confirming and keeping home improvement survey appointments when they are booked. If your home requires a survey you will receive a letter from us. It is of benefit to you that this survey takes place as we will not be able to include your home in any improvement works until it has been carried out. The survey should take no longer than 20 minutes during which time our surveyor will check all components including kitchens, bathrooms and external doors.



**87%**

customers satisfied with the overall quality of their home  
*(average for similar Housing Associations 81%)*

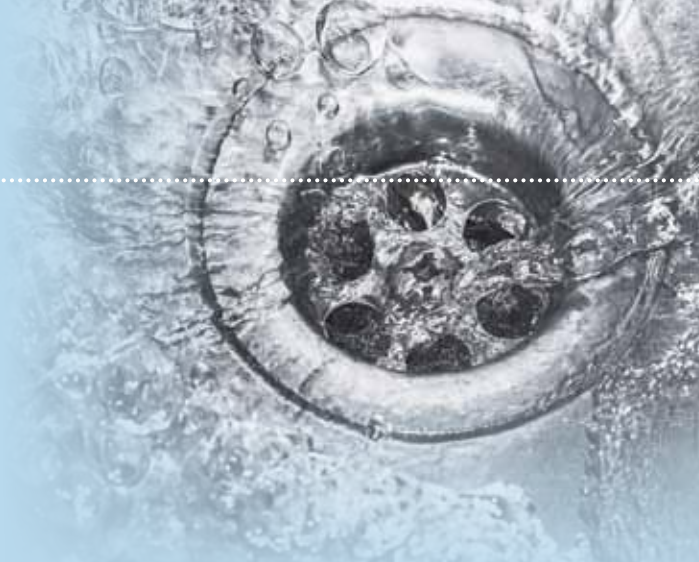
## Drains

We are receiving reports of increasing numbers of cases where the drains to a property are blocked. The majority of these are due to the waste that is being put down the drain. Please make sure that you are careful about what you put down your drains and take regular action to clear any deposits that may have formed as follows:

1. Use drain screens to keep hair, soap scum and solids from making their way into the drain.
2. Never pour grease down the drain. You can clean greasy pots and pans with a paper towel before washing in hot water in the sink.

3. Never put chemicals such as paint or paint thinners down a drain.
4. Once a week pour boiling hot water down your drains
5. Do not flush sanitary products or wet wipes down the toilet

**We will be recharging customers the cost of the call out to unblock drains where it is obvious that the rules above have not been followed.**



## Energy and water saving support for residents

We want to support customers to reduce bills and so have worked with other landlords to develop **EnergySW**, an energy tariff that could be cheaper for you. In addition, with 361 Energy CIC, we have been offering residents advice and support on how to reduce their energy and water bills. A recent client was referred with around £3000 water debt. A home visit with South West Water established that there had been a water leak and a water leak grant was issued. The

Advisor also helped the client apply to the South West Water Restart programme to pay off the remaining debt on the account, bringing down monthly costs to within the family's affordability.

The advisor also provided energy advice and established the family was on an incorrect tariff. They were helped to change from a prepayment meter to a credit meter and also replaced the E7 tariff with a standard tariff. The

advisor then went on to move the family to a cheaper dual fuel fixed term tariff with **EnergySW**. The family also received a number of energy saving items such as LED bulbs and power down plugs and the Advisor installed an energy meter as a visual reminder.

Savings from water: £3000  
Energy switching: £200/ annum  
Energy saving through other measures: £300  
**Total: £3500**

**You can get more information, a quote or switch by ringing EnergySW's free phone line, or on the internet.**



0800 4086716 (pay monthly) • 0800 4086720 (pre-payment)  
www.energysw.co.uk

You can request an energy champion appointment by contacting Paul Rogers on paul@361energy.org or calling 01271 863625 (voicemail).



## Tumble dryer safety

Warnings of the risk posed by faulty tumble dryers have been made after a number of house fires which have been blamed on faulty machines made by Hotpoint, Creda and Indesit.

Owners of these tumble dryers are advised to:

- Check online whether their model is affected at [www.safety.hotpoint.eu](http://www.safety.hotpoint.eu) or [www.safety.indesit.eu](http://www.safety.indesit.eu)
- Customers can also call 0800 151 0905
- Continue to use the appliance but until updated follow the original instructions for using the appliance.
- Do not leave the appliance unattended during operation.
- Check and clean the lint filter after every cycle.
- Ensure proper venting as directed in the original operating manual



2,521

total repairs completed  
October - December



95.7%

of jobs completed on time  
October - December

## Home 2 Home New Faces

Home 2 Home have two new members of staff. Firstly the new Home 2 Home Manager is Carlene Piercy. Carlene has previous experience of managing a workforce and contractors. Her main priorities are looking at making the service more efficient and also expanding the service that our in house repairs team can provide.

Carlene says "I'm really excited to be working for such a well respected social housing provider. I'm looking forward to the challenges of managing a busy department as well as leading Home2Home through a period of change, ensuring our customers receive the highest standards of workmanship in their homes".

Carlene has appointed Peter Thomas to the role of works scheduler. Peter will be contacting our customers to arrange appointments for our Home 2 Home Operatives, to ensure they can complete repairs on time.

All our customers can support us in this by keeping appointments or rearranging prior to the appointment date if inconvenient.



86%

customers satisfied with the way North Devon Homes deals with repairs and maintenance  
(average for similar Housing Associations 77%)

## Changes to Housing Benefit

The rules about housing benefit are changing:

- From April 2016, if you ask the Council to backdate your claim, and you can show that there was a good cause for you not claiming earlier, they will now only be able to backdate for a maximum of 1 month.
- The family premium will be withdrawn for new housing benefit claimants from May 2016. This is an amount of your earnings that is allowed before housing benefit starts to be reduced for working families with children

It is now more important than ever that you make a timely claim for Housing Benefit, keep them updated about any change in your circumstances and that you do not allow your claim to lapse. If the Council writes to you about your housing benefit claim you should respond straight away.

## Getting ready for Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a new benefit that is gradually replacing means-tested benefits and tax credits for working age people. It's quite different from the other benefits that you might be familiar with, so if you think you might be moving onto universal credit it pays to be prepared:

- Make sure you are on top of your finances whilst you are in work. Take a look at our useful tips in the '8 ways to spring clean your Finances' article. Make sure you are paying your rent in advance so that your rent account is in good shape when you make your claim.
- Contact us for help right at the beginning of your Universal Credit claim. We can help make sure that you have all the correct information about your housing costs and help you access any other benefits and grants you might be entitled to.
- Your claim will be made online.
- The waiting time between making your claim and receiving your first payment will be between 38 and 45 days.

- You will receive a single monthly payment.
- Your housing costs will be paid direct to you, so you will need to make arrangements to pay your rent to us.
- If you think you might be entitled to tax credits then claim now and make sure you keep your claim live. Tax Credits are more generous than Universal Credits and your entitlement will be protected.

**The Income Team is here to support you. Call us on 01271 312500**





# 8 ways to spring clean your finances

Spring is a great time to get your finances into shape.

- Make a note of all your spending over a month and hold onto your grocery bills to see where your money is going. This is a great way of working out where savings can be made.
- If you have a smartphone you could download a budgeting app such as [www.spendometer.co.uk](http://www.spendometer.co.uk) to help keep track of your spending.
- Set a budget. The Money Advice Service has a great online tool for budgeting [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner)
- Look for ways to reduce your spending and increase your income. There are big savings to be made by shopping around for insurance, energy and mobile phones
- Go green! Lots of good quality furniture, clothes and household items are offered free of charge at [www.groups.freecycle.org](http://www.groups.freecycle.org)
- Get into the habit of saving a little every week or month so that you have a little extra to take the worry out of the school summer holidays or Christmas. Your bank or local credit union offer savings accounts.
- The National Debt Helpline (0808 808 400) and the Citizens Advice Bureau (0344 4111 444) offer help and advice that's absolutely free
- Check that you are getting all the benefits and grants you are entitled to at [www.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.entitledto.co.uk)



## £20,000

extra in grants and benefits gained by customers, helped by Kirsty Boys, our Welfare Support Officer, in the last 4 months



## 1,107

requests for assistance with benefit entitlement dealt with by James Shambrook, our Benefits Co-ordinator, over the last 9 months



eviction for rent arrears in the last 9 months



## 92%

customers satisfied that their rent provides value for money (average for similar Housing Associations 78%)



## Changing faces on your Customer Forum

Richard Setter has retired from the Customer Forum. Richard first got involved with North Devon Homes in 2006 when he was

invited to a repairs and maintenance improvement group meeting after completing a satisfaction survey. A month later he went on to join the Forum. Since then, Richard has been involved in too many things to list but here are some of his key achievements from the last 10 years:

- Carrying out hundreds of inspections on cleaning, grounds maintenance, repairs and planned maintenance works and void properties

- Training new inspectors
- Developing the design of new homes in Forches and Pill Gardens
- Selecting bathrooms, doors, heating, kitchens, doors and windows for NDH to use in customer's homes
- Assisting customers through Tenant2Tenant
- Neighbourhood improvements including the play area refurbishment at Oakford Villas
- Contractor selection

We would like to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to Richard for all his help and hard work over the last 10 years and the difference he has made for all our customers. Richard will continue in his role as Customer Board member.

## Changes to the Customer Involvement Team

Tracey Williams has recently joined the Community Involvement Team as a part time Customer Involvement Officer. Tracey is job sharing with Clare Paddon who has recently returned from maternity leave. Tracey has been a Neighbourhood Officer for North Devon Homes for 16 years and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the role. Clare has worked in the role for 10 years and also has a great deal of knowledge and experience. Together they make a great team offering numerous skills. Clare will be available Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and Tracey will be available Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Clare and Tracey look forward to working with all customers. If you are interested in getting involved or have any suggestions about how we can work with you and your community please contact Clare and Tracey on 01271 313384.



Clare Paddon



Tracey Williams

## Customer Volunteers are an important part of Team NDH

Our Customer Forum and Scrutiny Panel gathered together for a pre-Christmas social evening utilising the staff room at NDH.

We value the time our customer volunteers give in helping to shape the services we offer. Our customer volunteers work in partnership with us representing views on your communities and our services from a customer perspective to ensure value for money and customer satisfaction.

Customer volunteers bring an enormous asset to our business through their time, skills and energy and are very much part of Team NDH, as such we provide

them with the training and tools they need to carry out their role.

Customer volunteering can be at many levels with commitments tailored to the time customers have to spare through a variety of formal and informal opportunities. Some of these opportunities may be within your own community, in our office environment or from the comfort of your own sofa.

Currently customer volunteers are involved in ready to let property inspections, grass cutting and communal area cleaning inspections, how we communicate with you mystery shopping, Tenant 2 Tenant support service, reviewing performance and customer feedback, and

improvements to all of our services.

If you would like to know more please do get in touch with us, you can chat with our staff or even customers who already volunteer. All we are looking for is your time, everyone brings value. Simply call Frances 01271 312527 or Tracey and Clare 01271 313384.



## Everybody needs good neighbours

Congratulations to Janet Taylor who has been awarded a Good Neighbour Award. Janet was nominated by her Support Advisors and residents for her amazing contribution to community events at Medard. Janet runs the social club and works tirelessly organising trips, cooking breakfast at breakfast club, organising coffee mornings, regular jumble sales and table top sales. The



Good Neighbour Award was presented to Janet by Dawn Ash, Chair of the Customer Forum.

**If you would like to nominate your neighbour for an award, please write to Dawn Ash, Customer Forum Chair at our head office address**



# 75%

customers satisfied that North Devon Homes listens to your views and acts upon them  
(average for similar Housing Associations 66%)



## Born to Skate

During February half term 18 young people from the Bridging the Gap project had a 2 hour roller skating session. The session was run by a local skating company called "Born to Skate" who volunteered their time to help teach all the young people how to skate. The 2 hour session was filled with lots of laughter and enthusiasm. All the young people really embraced the challenge of learning to skate and the crew at Born to Skate were amazing! Because of how successful this session was we are hoping to try and do this once a month! What a great end to February half term this was!



## Whiddon Valley Christmas Lunch

Carol Lewis our Community Support Worker has, for a few years, organised a Christmas lunch event at the Forches Community Centre. This year 20 people came along for a three course meal and prize raffle draw. Carol and her sterling volunteers provide, soup, a full turkey roast dinner and pudding. Raffle prizes are donated by partner agencies, NDH staff and community members.

Carol is an avid supporter of cooking on a budget and was able to produce this fabulous meal for only £3.00 a head. If you would like



to share Carol's tips and hints for cooking fresh food on a budget why not come along to one of our cooking classes? Just call Frances, Tracey or Clare on 01271 312527 or 01271 313384.





# Senior Members

In December we awarded 8 of our young people the position of Senior Member for our project. These young people have worked hard over a long period of time to meet the set criteria for this status. They have proven themselves to be fantastic peer mentors for other project members and have continually demonstrated their dedication and commitment to the Bridging the Gap project. Our Senior Members have their own named hooded sweatshirts displaying their status and giving the younger members something to strive for. This position comes with great responsibility which our Senior Members are living up to with pride.



## NewGen

4 young people have set up a project under the supervision of Leigh Gadsdon where they visit Alban House care home in Ilfracombe and perform songs for the residents. This is a voluntary project in the young people's own time one Saturday per month.



## Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap has lots of new exciting activities in mind for 2016 which we are looking forward to sharing with the community!



## Shared Ownership Getting on the property ladder



North Devon Homes is committed to providing shared ownership homes to the North Devon area, shown through our past and future development programmes.

Shared ownership schemes (known as part buy / part rent) offer purchasers the opportunity to buy a percentage share (40-75%) of the property, and pay a discounted rent on the remaining share. North Devon Homes also offers the option for shared owners to acquire further shares (known as "staircasing") of their home, up to 100%, where owners will own their home outright.

During the last 12 months North Devon Homes has provided a mix of 2 and 3 bedroom shared ownership houses :

- 18 homes on Forches Estate Phase 2
- 9 homes on Woodville Estate
- 3 homes at Sandringham Gardens

A further 2 bedroom house

is due to be completed on the Sandringham Gardens development in summer 2016 together with longer term shared ownership plans on the Anchorwood Bank development in the centre of Barnstaple.

Miss Beer, one of our shared ownership customers, kindly gave us her thoughts on her newly built shared ownership home.

"This terrace of five houses with foxglove coloured doors felt very cosy. The design was aesthetically pleasing, light and airy inside, yet perfectly practical and in a convenient location with regards to my place of work. The link road is accessible for commuting to work and for my self-employed illustration business. I could see the potential with the garden and to top it all the house had solar panels, was fully insulated and eco-friendly. The shed, washing line, water butt and composting bin were all part of the package. It is also far better than anything I had looked at



"perfectly practical and in a convenient location"

previously, simply because, as it was shared ownership, the whole property was actually in a higher price bracket."

For further information, or to register your interest, please contact a member of the Development & Regeneration Team on 01271 313382.

**You will also need to register with Help to Buy South West at [www.helptobuysw.org.uk](http://www.helptobuysw.org.uk)**

## National House Building Council Award Winner

The National House Building Council Pride in the Job Awards recognises site managers who achieve the highest standards in house-building. The award represents success for the site manager, their team and associated trades, but most importantly high quality homes. We are delighted to announce that Richard Young, Site Manager for the North Devon Homes Woodville development, was one of the winners for the south west region.

## Woodville

9 shared ownership properties were completed in December 2015, all of which have now been fully allocated. This was followed by completion of the next section of 9 affordable rented properties which were handed over at the end of February 2016. There are now only 2 properties left to complete to finish the development works on the Woodville site.



## Lee Road, Lynton

Construction works have now been completed, providing 2 commercial units and 4 affordable rented flats, which have a local occupancy tie to the Lynton area.



## Coastguard Cottages

In February 2016 NDH acquired two 2 bedroom houses forming part of the Coastguard Cottages development in Woolacombe. The new affordable rented homes both have a 5 year local connection tie to the Woolacombe and Morethoe area.



## Sandringham Gardens

Completion of the first 2 shared ownership properties on the Sandringham Gardens development was completed in March 2016. A further 2 bedroom shared ownership house and 3, 1 bedroom affordable rented houses, are currently under construction and are anticipated for completion in summer 2016.

## Gorwell

Planning permission is now in place for the Goodleigh Road and Crow View developments on the Gorwell estate. Legal and tendering processes are underway with a view to starting on site in May 2016. The two sites will provide a mix of affordable rented houses and flats.



## The Customer Care Team

### What do we do?

The Customer Care Team consists of 11 advisors who have a wealth of knowledge in all front line housing related queries. This means you can call them to report repairs, make a rent payment, check your rent balance, request permission to make changes to your tenancy or home, report anti social behaviour and various other housing related queries.

Beyond the Customer Care Team our Neighbourhoods Team deals with tenancy issues, Mutual Exchanges and work closely with residents

in our communities. They also manage the process when people decide to move home.

The Asset Management teams comprise all our contractors and surveyors who will visit customers' homes to deal with repairs and planned works and ensure our homes are safe for customers to live in.

Each department works very closely with the other teams to ensure customers' queries are resolved in an efficient and effective way.

## Garages to Let

These garages are currently available with no waiting list:

George Nympton  
Chulmleigh • Wrafton  
Ilfracombe

We hold a waiting list for our other sites and our rental charges range from £7-£15 per week dependant on whether you are a tenant of North Devon Homes and where the garages are.

Please contact the Customer Care Team on 01271 312500 for more information.



## Trying to call...

We know it can be frustrating if you can't get through!

This graph shows the average variation in volume for calls received.



 275

response repairs telephone surveys completed against a target of 180 (Between October & December)

 92%

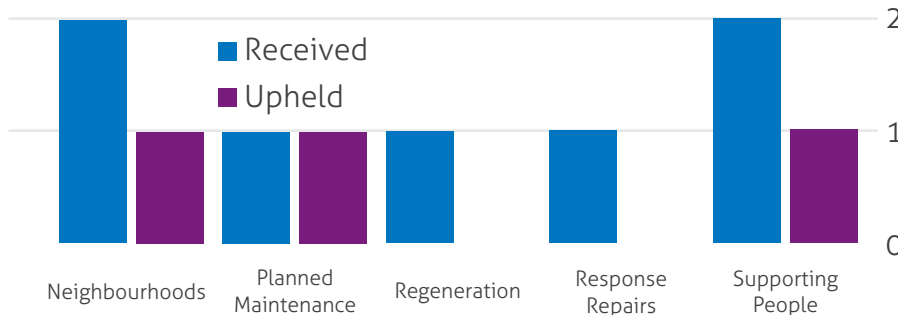
of letters received responded to within 10 working days (Between October & December)

 82

low level ASB cases handled since being trained in July 2015

# Complaints & Compliments

Oct - Dec 2015



14

Compliments

7

Complaints



Service Improvements from complaints: 4

## Your Feedback Improves Services

We have identified the following learning from the complaints received in the period from October to December:

- We are continuing to provide damp and condensation training for our surveyors and operatives to help with the diagnosis of issues.
- We will introduce a customer satisfaction sign off sheet

where extensive works are taking place over a period of days, to ensure customers are happy before the contractor leaves at the end of each day.

- Where there seems to be a misunderstanding in perception of completed works and customers continue to contact us about the same issue, we

will arrange a home visit to ensure that everything has been completed.

- We recognise that it is often easy to work on assumptions, rather than facts. This can lead us to be inconsistent in our approach to service delivery. We will work with customers to ensure our approach is consistent.

## Join Co-cars today!

Co-cars operate a car club from North Devon Homes' offices in Whiddon Valley with a brand new car just waiting for you to take it out for a spin. Plus there's an additional car in a specially-reserved parking bay at the Civic Centre.

A car club is a great way to enjoy all the benefits of having your own car without dealing with the hassle of maintenance and insurance and if you drive less than 6-8,000 miles annually, then a car club could save you up to £3,500 a year!

Simply book online or via your smartphone.

Cars are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Hiring a Co-cars vehicle in Barnstaple costs from £3.75 per hour, 15p a mile. Car clubs are all about

flexibility and freedom, costing you money only when you use the car, not when it's sitting on your drive.

Normally individual or household membership of Co-cars costs £25 each year, but we are offering a free year's membership to the first 25 people who apply using promotion code NDH (offer ends 31st May 2016).

The car club is operated by Co-cars, which has vehicles throughout the south west, including Exeter, Topsham, Taunton, Dorchester, Weymouth, Blandford Forum and Salisbury. Cars will shortly appear at new locations in Plymouth, Newton Abbot, Truro and Falmouth. As a member of the club you can book any car within the south west network.

**Join Co-cars as an individual, household or business at [www.co-cars.co.uk](http://www.co-cars.co.uk), call 0345 345 2544 or email [drive@co-cars.co.uk](mailto:drive@co-cars.co.uk).**



## Woodville 'Love Where You Live' Litter Pick

In December, North Devon Homes staff were involved in the last of a series of community litter pick events covering the Woodville area of Barnstaple.

Local councillors and staff from North Devon Council joined forces with North Devon Homes and McDonald's to tidy up the local area. The 'Love Where You Live' campaign aims to raise awareness of the damage and cost of dropping litter.



## Do you want to downsize?

Are you living in a home too big for your needs?

Concerned about expensive heating bills and managing your home?

### Have you considered downsizing?

If you are living in a property that you think is too large for your needs, having problems managing your larger home, or maybe you are affected by housing benefit reductions due to spare bedrooms, downsizing may be a simple solution.

Moving to a smaller home can help in many ways:

- Reduce expenditure on utilities
- Reduced living costs – e.g. heating your home
- No reduction in housing benefit due to spare bedroom
- If you are concerned how downsizing could affect your tenancy type please contact us.

North Devon Homes is acquiring 3 new build, 1 bedroom houses on the Sandringham Gardens development in Barnstaple, providing an opportunity to assist

those wishing to downsize. These properties are currently under construction and on target for practical completion in summer 2016. These energy efficient properties include unallocated off road parking and enclosed rear gardens.

If you are interested in downsizing or the new homes at Sandringham Gardens please contact the Development & Regeneration

Team on 01271 312 528.

Floor plan and photo of 1 bedroom houses at Sandringham Gardens



# 90%

customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live  
(average for similar Housing Associations 84%)

## Medard House Social Club High Tea



Medard House Social Club held a High Tea event in February. There were lots of delicious homemade cakes and pastries. The event raised over £300 for Care for Kids North Devon, a local charity which provides support to families with children who have been diagnosed with a life threatening illness.



## Competition winners

Mason Taylor won our 'Guess how many presents' competition.

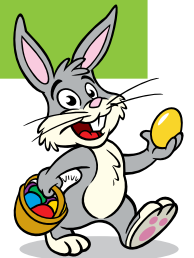
Mia Calcutt and Mason Taylor won our colouring competition.

Congratulations!



## Team NDH raises £1,500 for Devon Air Ambulance

In December we held a variety of fundraising activities and raised £1500 for Devon Air Ambulance. Members of staff from North Devon Homes are pictured presenting the cheque to Tracy Owen from Devon Air Ambulance.



## NDH Staff Support Foodbank Appeal



In December staff from North Devon Homes made a collection of food and household items to donate to the Northern Devon Foodbank's Christmas appeal. Neighbourhood Officer Lisa Lee and Neighbourhood Administrator Kylie Rogerson are pictured delivering the items to volunteers at the Northern Devon Foodbank. If you would like to find out more about the food bank please visit [www.northerndevon.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.northerndevon.foodbank.org.uk).

# Kids Wordsearch Competition

C A F J S O Y W Z Z I A K  
 N H N E A P U D D L E C I  
 S B I C D K L W N D P H E  
 D L T C R Y O A A D L O T  
 J O G I K T U N S G I C Z  
 O S E I P U P W D H U O B  
 R S Q Q U L V C A H D L U  
 R O S P R I N G F K D A T  
 C M K D P P T Y F E L T T  
 I L R E U B H J O S A E E  
 P E E G G L B L D I M R R  
 E A N A B H T W I P B E F  
 K S E A N U S W L Q V C L  
 Q T D T P I N M P U R R Y  
 W E L L Y I N N J Z M C N  
 J R I M E C U G Y S G R W  
 T K E D E E A P O Y S O F  
 O V R E X B L A A J I O A

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| SPRING   | BUNNY     | DAFFODIL  |
| TULIP    | SPLASH    | EGG       |
| CLEANING | WELLY     | PUDDLE    |
| LAMB     | CHOCOLATE | BUTTERFLY |
| EASTER   | CHICK     | BLOSSOM   |

### How to enter:

Fill out the form and send it to the address below by 06/05/16 for a chance to win a £15 cinema voucher.

Name .....

Age .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

Age groups are as follows:

7 and under

8 - 12 years

Please tick this box if you do not

wish your child to be named

## How Many?

**How many Easter Bunnies (not including this one) can you find throughout this newsletter?**



**How to enter:** Fill out the form and send it to the address below by 06/05/16 for a chance to win a £20 voucher.

No. of Easter Bunnies: .....

Please tick this box if you do not wish to be named

Name .....

Age .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

**For a chance to win, send all entries to:**

Rowan Summers, North Devon Homes, Westacott Road, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 8TA by 06/05/16