The magazine for Rotherham Council tenants and leaseholders

HOME matters Autumn 2018

Tenants Conference

A Day in the life  Be a Shared Lives carer  Council Housing Annual Report

www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing
Welcome to the autumn edition of Home Matters

It’s an exciting time for Rotherham. Over the summer we’ve been busy with our new housing building programme, which will help first time buyers as well as provide high quality affordable rented homes.

I’m really pleased to see these developments popping up and contributing to the transformation of our borough; strengthening communities, improving health, wellbeing and independence and at the same time delivering economic growth to help make Rotherham a thriving destination where people want to live, work and socialise.

Look out for the construction sites around the borough easily identified by the Council’s Rother Living branding and if you are interested in the homes for sale or shared ownership please register your interest at www.rotherliving.com.

It certainly feels like a new era for the Council especially as the intervention from Government has come to an end and full decision-making powers have been restored to the authority. Finally, I wanted to say a huge well done to our customers and staff who participated in achieving the regional Tpas award and although we didn’t win at the national ceremony it was an honour to be shortlisted in recognition of all the great partnership work that is happening with our tenants.

To get involved in future projects to improve local communities and shape our services to you, contact 01709 822786 or email customerinvolvement@rotherham.gov.uk

Best wishes,

Councillor Dominic Beck
Cabinet Member for Housing
Rotherham Council

Rother Living show homes launched at the Northgate development off Braithwell Road in Maltby. Part of a £29million Council investment to construct new properties at a number of sites across the borough, with a mixture of houses for sale, rent and shared ownership. Find out more at www.rotherliving.com

If you do need to speak to us urgently the following numbers are available

ONLINE
Visit us at www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing for housing advice, online payments or to report a repair to your home

Email councilhomes@rotherham.gov.uk

TELEPHONE
All of our services are available 24/7 online at www.rotherham.gov.uk but if you do need to speak to us the following numbers are available:

Housing Enquiries and Repairs: 01709 336009

Community Safety and Street Scene: 01709 336003

Council Tax and Benefits: 01709 336007

Children’s Social Services: 01709 336080

Adult Social Care (Single Point of Access): 01709 822330

DID YOU KNOW? You can also visit www.disabledgo.com to find out how accessible over 700 venues are across the borough. From wheelchair access to menus in Braille the handy online guide provides you with information to maximise independence and choice when visiting Rotherham.
In this issue, we caught up with the Council’s Furnished Homes Maintenance Team based at their Parkgate warehouse.

Some residents will already know about the team’s work which is to provide support to tenants who may need help with furnishing their homes.

The team assists new council tenants by providing quality carpets and furniture for rent, such as sofas, chests of drawers, wardrobes, tables and chairs, beds, and electrical appliances including cookers, fridge freezers and washing machines.

The service currently has 4105 furnished tenancies within the borough and the service is ever expanding.

The maintenance team consists of nine members of staff who are responsible for delivering and collecting furniture and appliances to Council tenants.

Their role involves carrying out minor repairs and maintenance along with setting up and maintaining temporary accommodation properties within the borough.

They also operate a responsive service where temporary accommodation properties need replenishing within 24 hours; officers are available to attend and ensure the property is fit for purpose to use by the Homeless Team.

Left to right: Furnished Homes and Temporary Accommodation Maintenance Officer’s: Graham Cooke, Colin Middleton, Liam Clerelhugh, Michael Ward, and then Wassim Shamshoum is at the front. Colette Brindley pictured right, is the Furnished Homes and Temporary Accommodation Maintenance Supervisor.

The team also helps and supports local agencies and charities by selling and donating furniture that is no longer required.

The job itself is physically demanding but very rewarding and the service receives lots of positive feedback from residents about the service they have received.

The team put residents at the heart of everything they do and work very well together, they have a great team spirit and work hard to ensure that residents who need a helping hand with furnishing their homes are given a service that makes their house a home.

Furnished Homes and Temporary Accommodation Maintenance Officer, Wassim Shamshoum, said: “It’s such a rewarding job, we all really enjoy meeting tenants face to face on a daily basis. Every day is a new experience and we are proud of the part we play in making tenants houses into homes.”

The Furnished Homes Scheme

For more information about the Furnished Homes Scheme visit our website at www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing

If tenants receive Housing Benefit, this may cover some or all of the furnished charge. If tenants aren’t eligible for the scheme, the team often have second-hand items that can be bought instead.
Uzma Sattar, Elizabeth Hunt, Kalpana Desai, Strategic Housing Investment Team officers – really big thank you from Homes England for delivering the new build homes programme and all of the additional home building that you have brought forward. This has massively helped us to achieve our goals.

Thanks to Fortem staff; Glynn Westgarth, Jonathon Kirk, Alison Clegg, Sam Walker, for clearing and disposing of garden rubbish, they were very friendly and polite. They deserve a medal for working under the hot conditions and cannot praise them enough.

Area Housing Officer Gillian Barnes for her advice on procedures and induction process – she was kind, efficient and had a caring manner.

The Mould Doctor for work on a porch and outbuildings – nothing was too much trouble. Thank you.

Karen Parkinson, Furnished Homes Team – is so helpful and professional and always kept us in the loop which is very important.

Compliment for the Adaptations Team for a job well done on a level access shower.

Compliance Officer Mark Brookes-Green for great co-ordination of a complicated situation needing several trades people on site. He helped us out with no notice with a major leak in an abandoned property.

Housing officer Andrea Oxley for helping with a house move.

Thank you ever so much for your ongoing support and help. The whole team have been outstanding and I cannot thank you all enough.

Compliment for the Housing Advice Team.
Community clean up days

During the summer the Council encouraged tenants to make the most of the brighter weather to get involved in community clean up days on estates across Rotherham.

Our Housing teams have helped tenants fill whole skips full of their unwanted items from homes and gardens. The types of waste that are typically skipped are garden clearances, old furniture, beds etc – all items people may struggle to get to recycling centres, and which could end up as fly tipping.

As a result estates benefit from being cleaner and tidier. The clean-up days are run in partnership with the Council contractors, Mears and Fortem as well as being supported by Ward Councillors and the local Neighbourhood Partnerships.

The ultimate aim, is that after a clean-up day ridding the area of rubbish and fly tipping, it provides residents with a clean slate so that they can take pride in their estate and take steps to keep local environments clutter free. Getting rid of estate eyesores is definitely paying off, as clearing the clutter is making Rotherham a much nicer place to live, as we are receiving many compliments from residents.

The Rotherham North Area housing panel have held five skip days over the last two months, helping tenants get rid of unwanted items. These clean-up days involved people of all ages who got involved in keeping their neighbourhoods clean, with most locations needing more than one skip. On one day alone twelve mattresses were collected. See the picture with a very full skip (Below left).

One resident said: “We were over the moon at the clean-up. As far as we are concerned it was a brilliant day and now it’s up to all of us on the estate to keep up the good work.”

Look out for other clean up days planned in your area.

Tenancy agreement reminders:

**Communal areas** – You must keep communal areas clean and free from obstructions and not use communal areas to store items or deposit rubbish.

**Gardens** – you are responsible for keeping your garden in a clean and tidy condition, including cutting the grass and hedges. Please do not deposit or allow rubbish to accumulate in your garden.

Building on this excellent work already being done by local ward councillors, individuals and groups across Rotherham, the Council has launched the ‘Love Where You Live’ campaign. To find out more go to: http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/litterpick
In this feature we shine a light on our residents who are going above and beyond to improve their local communities.

In the spotlight in this issue we caught up with Mohammed Ramzan who is a member of the Housing Involvement Panel. The panel oversees all tenant involvement to ensure that tenants have the opportunity to play an effective role in service improvement for council housing across the borough. Mo, who has lived in Rotherham all his life, explains how he got involved and how he’s made a difference...

How did you get involved?
I started to attend Rotherham Federation meetings, which is an organisation supporting local tenants groups and was really just being nosey about what was going on. I like keeping busy and keeping up-to-date and I wanted to find out more so that anything that I learnt could be passed on to family and friends to make positive changes. Another reason I got involved in volunteering was to keep my CV current as I also have part-time caring responsibilities and need to be flexible about what I do; I come from a very nurturing family and we all take our turn to support each other to care for our elderly parents.

What have you been involved in?
I’ve been involved in lots of different groups and volunteering over the last three years such as the Housing Involvement Panel, Repairs and Maintenance Re-Tender Steering Group and the Rotherham Young Tenants Group. I really enjoy finding out about what’s going on across the borough, networking with people and helping organisations and vulnerable people. I try to make sure that tenants have a voice and housing services are run in the best possible way, delivering the best deal for tenants.

What are you most proud of?
Making positive changes happen. I’m particularly proud that I’m associated with a Council that has recently won the ‘Excellence in Tenant Engagement’ award at the regional Tpas awards. It shows that the Council is doing things right to get tenants involved and I’m proud to be part of that effort to get more tenants engaged in improving their estates and their housing services.

What would you say to people thinking about getting involved?
I would say take up the opportunity. If you have issues, you can bet that other people have similar ones to you. Be the voice of your community and do something to make changes. At the same time you will also benefit. I feel that my mental health and wellbeing has been given a boost by getting out and about, meeting new people, networking and making time not just for yourself but other people too. It’s important for the Council to hear our views and make sure that any ideas we have to improve services when money is tight are brought to their attention.

To get involved in the Young Tenants group or to find out more contact Rotherhamyt@gmail.com or text 07590880365
Welcome to our Housing Annual Report for 2017/18

This report summarises the performance of the Council’s Housing Service during the last financial year, April 2017 to March 2018.

The report highlights where service areas have performed well and, more importantly, where there is room for improvement.

This condensed format gives us the opportunity to include the report as part of your Home Matters magazine to ensure all our tenants have the chance to see how well we are performing and how their rent is spent.

For the next financial year 2018/19 we have identified a number of priorities to focus on:

- Increase the number of new homes built
- Increase the provision of accommodation suitable for older people and people with disabilities
- Procure a new Repairs and Maintenance contract from 2020
- Continue to ensure all our homes are safe and compliant with regulations for fire, asbestos, gas and electricity
- Continue to develop our tenant involvement processes to help shape services
- Invest more resources into housing management
- Meet our new homelessness obligations
- Promoting a rent first culture
- Modernise and digitise services

If you have any comments about this report please get in touch with us by emailing councilhomes@rotherham.gov.uk or tweet us @HousingRMBC

Tom Bell
Assistant Director,
Housing Services

We’ve continued to work hard to improve our service and so much has been achieved over the past 12 months:

- Launched the Rother Living brand for new housing and made a commitment to spend over £50 million on building new homes
- Won the award for Excellence in Tenant Engagement at the Tpas North Region Finals
- Introduced mandatory attendance for new applicants on pre-tenancy interviews and workshops which will help to sustain tenancies
- Following the restructure of the Housing Income team, increased rent collection performance from 98.35% to 99.05%
- Reduced the waiting time for major adaptations from 20.27 weeks in August 2013 to 2.93 weeks.
- Continued to improve void turnaround times – generating over £300,000 more income per year
- Led the refurbishment of Shiloh’s new premises on Station Road, which involved our staff working alongside Mears and Fortem. Shiloh assists with early intervention for vulnerable adults and preventing homelessness.
Performance at a glance

Rotherham Council is committed to delivering excellent services to our tenants and providing houses that you are proud to call homes. Here’s a round-up of how we performed in the key areas that you said matter to you most.

### Keeping your estates safe (anti-social behaviour)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of ASB complaints reported</th>
<th>Percentage of ASB complaints resolved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>1,913</td>
<td>98.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>2,433</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>3,173</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Target: 99%*  

### Council Housing Stock

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of Council housing</th>
<th>Right to buy completed</th>
<th>New Council housing</th>
<th>Total number of properties let</th>
<th>Average re-let days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>20,685</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2098</td>
<td>37 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>20,562</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>26 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>20,393</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1551</td>
<td>22 days*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Target: 21 days*

500 new Council houses planned over the next five years

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8 | AUTUMN 2018    Discover more online www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing
Repairs and Maintenance

Number and percentage of responsive repairs completed Right First Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repairs</td>
<td>29,980</td>
<td>29,716</td>
<td>22,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>96.66%</td>
<td>93.98%</td>
<td>96.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Target</td>
<td>Better than</td>
<td>Better than</td>
<td>Better than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Target: 94%</td>
<td>Target: 94%</td>
<td>Target: 94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number and percentage of repair appointments made and kept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointments made</td>
<td>23,197</td>
<td>26,649</td>
<td>29,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>99.37%</td>
<td>99.54%</td>
<td>99.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Target</td>
<td>Better than</td>
<td>Better than</td>
<td>Better than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Target: 99%</td>
<td>Target: 99%</td>
<td>Target: 99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complaints and compliments

Number of complaints received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complaints</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>395*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only 3% escalated to stage 2

Number of complaints responded to within corporate timescales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resolved</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>2017/18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Target</td>
<td>Better than</td>
<td>Better than</td>
<td>Better than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Target: 85%</td>
<td>Target: 85%</td>
<td>Target: 85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Customer feedback is important and we will use it to make improvements.

Customer Satisfaction
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>2017/18*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>99.81%</td>
<td>99.53%</td>
<td>99.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>2017/18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Target</td>
<td>Better than</td>
<td>Better than</td>
<td>Better than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Target: 96%</td>
<td>Target: 96%</td>
<td>Target: 96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Autumn 2018 |
Making Sense of the Money

Rotherham Council has over 20,000 Council homes. In 2017/18 the income was £84.3 million.

Below is an overview of how your rent was spent during the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital charges</td>
<td>£40,395,853</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>£16,196,179</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty homes</td>
<td>£3,649,255</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate management</td>
<td>£614,027</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£84,345,609</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staffing and Service costs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estate and tenancy management</td>
<td>£3,365,991</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>£165,457</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central services</td>
<td>£7,666,820</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income management</td>
<td>£1,176,635</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant involvement</td>
<td>£651,280</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New housing and housing strategy</td>
<td>£1,041,142</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing options, allocations and homelessness</td>
<td>£4,859,198</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts, investment and compliance</td>
<td>£2,048,348</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to reserves</td>
<td>£2,515,425</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£84,345,609</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For every £1 of rent you pay

- 49p is paid out on capital repairs, new Council housing, interest on borrowing and depreciation charges
- 26p is spent on repairing the houses and getting them in a lettable condition
- 12p is spent on managing estates and tenancies including letting houses and collecting rent
- 9p is spent on central services such as management, administration and business support
- 1p is spent on tenant involvement
- 3p is transferred to reserves

Focus on Income

Most of the income comes from rent but tenants and leaseholders are also charged for services and facilities that the Council provides.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Source</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House rents</td>
<td>£77,873,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garages and ground rent</td>
<td>£765,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnished packages</td>
<td>£3,496,749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District heating</td>
<td>£706,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal facility charges</td>
<td>£502,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to buy receipts</td>
<td>£260,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaseholder contributions to services</td>
<td>£164,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aids and adaptations</td>
<td>£219,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous income</td>
<td>£358,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>£84,345,609</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Could you be a Shared Lives carer?

The Council’s Shared Lives scheme helps support people in the Borough, who have dementia, learning disabilities and sensory needs, to lead fulfilling and independent lives.

It is a service where approved Shared Lives carers open up their homes and family lives to include someone who needs extra support to live well, in day support, respite or long-term care settings.

All carers need is time, energy and commitment and you don’t have to be an expert – the most important skills are warmth, respect and patience. Carers from all backgrounds are welcomed.

How does the Shared Lives scheme support carers?

Interested individuals are assessed by the Council and it usually takes around three to six months to become an approved carer. Payment, expenses and on-going training are provided.

See how our Shared Lives carers have made a difference to people’s lives…

Scott, 27, has a learning disability and lives with long term Shared Lives Carer Karen.

Karen was originally Scott’s support worker when he attended a local day centre and offered to help when Scott’s family were finding it difficult to look after him. At first Scott stayed for one night’s respite break weekly but as time went by, it soon became apparent that it would be in Scott’s best interests if he moved in with Karen.

Scott has now lived with Karen for nine years and both could not imagine life without each other. Scott has a good quality of life, enjoying outings, holidays and treats together.

Karen had not heard of Shared Lives prior to Scott moving in but is happy that she has found a rewarding role; helping someone who needs support at the same time is living her life as she chooses to, with Scott by her side.

Joan is a Shared Lives Carer and offers respite and day support to Dave.

Dave enjoys going on different types of transport and this is something that Joan and Dave enjoy doing together. They travel regularly and in August 2016 went on a ‘rail experience’ to Wales. September 2017 saw them travel again via rail to Edinburgh. Dave’s mum often compliments the ‘match’ as it enables her to have quality time with her extended family members.

Pauline is a Shared Lives Carer and provides day support to Mary, who has dementia.

Pauline picks Mary up and brings her back to her home; they have a drink and chat about what to do for that day. Activities often include visiting places in South Yorkshire bringing back fond memories of Mary’s childhood.

Pauline and Mary also both enjoy knitting which is something they do when back at Pauline’s house. Pauline and Mary were matched on their similar interests and this has developed into a friendship for them both. Having a package of care including home care calls has meant Mary can remain living in her own home as opposed to moving into residential care.

If you are interested in becoming a Shared Lives carer, get in touch today.

Web: www.rotherham.gov.uk/sharedlives T: 01709 334948 E: sharedlives@rotherham.gov.uk
By post: Shared Lives, Riverside House, Main Street, Rotherham S60 1AE.

If you would like to refer someone to Shared Lives, please inform their allocated Social Worker who can then make a referral to the service.
Tenants Conference and Housing Hub Events

This July we held our annual Tenants Conference at the New York Stadium with a fantastic turnout of over 130 people including over 100 tenants and 30 plus stalls providing useful services and information for the participants. We had excellent feedback saying there was a real sense of partnership between the Council, Rotherham Federation, external services and tenants in the room.

The day also hosted the Rotherham Federation awards ceremony which recognises the community groups and Council and contract partner staff from Mears and Fortem, who have all gone the extra mile. The Conference was the first of a series of summer events from July to September as part of the Housing Hub to give even more opportunities for tenants to come and meet us, including: Rotherham Pride, Rosehill Park Fun Day, Thurcroft Gala, Canklow Fun Day and the Rotherham Show. See pictures from some of the events on the following pages.

To get involved in other tenant involvement activities all year round visit: www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing or ring 01709 822786.

“As a housing service our ambition is to be the best social landlord in the country. I look forward to working with you over the coming year to make this vision a reality and in doing so improve housing and neighbourhoods to create a better quality of life for all our communities.”

Tom Bell
Assistant Director for Housing,
Rotherham Council

“Welcome to our tenants; both new faces and familiar friends. I would like to encourage all our tenants to get involved in the Housing Hub events and other opportunities available throughout the year.”

Asim Munir
Tenant Involvement Co-ordinator,
Rotherham Council

“A great interactive session enabling participants to learn about the benefits of getting online.”

Helen Barker
Head of Customer Services,
Rotherham Council

“We’ve been blown away by the enthusiasm of our young tenants. We look forward to continue working with them to help shape and design our services.”

Young People as part of the Council’s Young Tenants Group

“The annual conference gives tenants a great opportunity to discover more about council housing as well ask questions about the services they receive. It’s also a chance to recognise and reward our tenants and staff who have gone the extra mile.”

Steve Ruffle
CEO Rotherham Federation

“We are capturing views from our tenants using a new voting technology to inform our Housing Strategy and gather views of our tenants.”

Sarah Watts
Strategic Housing Manager,
Rotherham Council
**Stalls**

Partners and staff were on hand to promote their services such as new housing development, better money management and repairs.

Louise Thompson from Tpas, said, “Fantastic turnout for the conference and there was a real sense of partnership in the room between all.”

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**Housing Hub Summer Events**

We recognised that not everyone is able to attend the Tenants Conference due to it being a mid-week daytime event. So we put on extra events throughout the summer giving even more opportunities for tenants to meet the teams delivering housing services face-to-face.
Rotherham Federation Awards Ceremony

The Tenants Conference also hosts the Rotherham Federation awards ceremony which rewards staff from the Council and our housing contract partners; Mears and Fortem, as well as community groups that have all gone the extra mile.

The awards were presented by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Jenny Andrews and her consort Cllr Jeanette Mallinder (see pictures below). Groups applied for 12 awards in total, demonstrating their achievements in six quality areas; involving people, communication, making a difference, governance, policies and managing finances. They were assessed by an independent panel. All the groups are run by and for volunteer community members.

**Involving People** Sponsor: Mears

- **Gold** Kimberworth Park TARA
- **Silver** Friends of Rosehill Park

**Communication** Sponsor: Fortem

- **Gold** The Lings Monday Club
- **Silver** Crafty Ladies

**Groups that are Making a Difference** Sponsor: Home Instead

- **Gold** Canklow Rainbow Kids Club
- **Silver** Greenside Residents Association

**Governance** Sponsor: Together Housing

- **Gold** Friends of Catcliffe
- **Silver** KBUG

**Policies** Sponsor: Rotherham Federation

- **Gold** Harley
- **Silver** Waverley Residents Association

**Managing Finances** Sponsor: Rotherham Federation

- **Gold** Aston TARA
- **Silver** Oaktrees TARA

**Going the extra mile**

Rotherham Federation also asked customers to nominate staff from the Council and housing repairs contractors; Fortem and Mears who deserved special recognition for going the extra mile doing their everyday jobs. The award winners chosen by customers were: Rotherham Council Housing Officers; Darren Carr and Samantha Housley; from Fortem award winners were; Alan Grice and Samuel Walker, and from Mears, it was Ian Wright and Lee Pitts. Sue Gray from Target Housing received a special award for all her work with supporting young people to get involved in having a say on council housing services.

**Pictured:** Ian Wright and Lee Pitts from Mears receiving their awards.
If you are a joint tenant and the other tenant permanently leaves the household it’s important you let us know. This is especially important if you rely on the Housing Cost element from Universal Credit to pay your rent. The DWP will not accept that you are now a single tenant and will only pay half of the housing costs leaving you with a shortfall in your rent. The only way to resolve this issue is for you, as the remaining joint tenant, to ask us to convert your joint tenancy into a sole tenancy. This change in tenancy can take a long time especially if we are unable to contact the tenant who has left. That is why it is important you let us know and begin the change in tenancy as soon as possible to avoid falling into rent arrears.

Make the changes now by emailing councilhomes@rotherham.gov.uk to get an application form or see your Area Housing Officer.

This way you can make sure that the full housing cost will be paid as part of your Universal Credit claim.

Get the right treatment, first time

The best way to get better quicker is to make sure you access the best service for your illness. Your local pharmacist can give you useful information if you’re feeling under the weather. They are highly qualified to give advice on a wide range of common health problems and the best medicines to treat them, so you don’t even have to go to your doctor for some things.

24 hour helpline, NHS 111, is available to provide advice when you are feeling ill. Advisors will also arrange out-of-hours appointments with a GP when your practice is closed. Most ailments and illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, aches and pains can be self-treated at home with a well-stocked medicines cabinet.

Make sure you protect yourself and the people you look after from being very ill from flu. Get your free flu vaccination if you are in one of these groups - aged 65 or over, aged 6 to 65 year olds who have a long-term medical condition, or you are pregnant women.

If you suffer with recurrent chest problems and infection, being well stocked with inhalers and discussing with your GP or specialist nurse whether having emergency antibiotics and steroids is appropriate (not suitable for all patients).

Health services should be accessed in the following order, when people feel ill:

- **Self-care** – look after yourself at home with a well-stocked medicine cabinet
- **Pharmacy (chemist)** – for expert advice on common illnesses and the best medicines to treat them
- **Ring NHS 111** – 24 hour helpline health enquiry and advice
- **GP Practice** – for illnesses that just won’t go away you can see a nurse or doctor at your local surgery.

Discover more online www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing AUTUMN 2018 | 15
We all know a little extra money can go a long way. Are you aged 65 or over? If so do you know that you might be able to get a benefit called Attendance Allowance?

This allowance is not means tested, anybody over 65 can apply and if you qualify, it can be used for any purpose to make life easier for you.

To make sure no one misses out, the Council has asked Age UK Rotherham to write to all our tenants aged over 65 to see if they would like to apply.

Look out for the letter. Age UK Rotherham can also offer support and advice throughout the process and there is no charge for this service.

To find out more information contact Age UK Rotherham on 01709 835214 or visit the Age UK website at www.ageuk.org.uk

Attendance Allowance benefit rate examples
There are two weekly rates, and the rate you get depends on the help you need.
You’ll get: £55.10 if you need help in the day or at night, or £82.30, if you need help both in the day and at night.
If you are currently in receipt of Attendance Allowance you may be entitled to the higher rate or be entitled to other benefits if your needs have increased.

Keeping safe and well
Free home safety check service by South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
To keep you safe and well we want to make sure that you know that there is some extra support available from South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue who can help with a free Home Safety Check for your home.
We know that in South Yorkshire more than 50 people have died in house fires since 2011, and most of these could have been prevented.
To arrange a check contact the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue on the Home Safety Check hotline on 0114 2532314 or email to book a visit.
Demand for this service is currently very high so it may be a few weeks before they can visit you.
Email: mailto:cfsadmin@syfire.gov.uk or for more information visit: www.syfire.gov.uk/safety-advice/smoke-alarms/

In the meantime, please ensure you check your smoke detector is working correctly by testing it regularly or if you need a new detector please call 01709 336009.

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT ADVISORY FORUM
When: Monday 12th November 2018, 1:00pm to 4:00pm
Where: Magna, Sheffield Road, Templeborough, Rotherham, S60 1DX
• Are you unsure about returning to employment?
• Wondering what qualifications you need?
• Need help with your CV and application forms?
We know that getting a job can be hard, which is why LEAF has been designed to give you all the guidance you need to help you effectively apply and secure employment. With over 60 exhibitor stands, LEAF could really help you.