

The magazine for Rotherham Council tenants and leaseholders

WINTER 2025

HOME

matters



TENANTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Be Winter Wise

New houses
coming to Maltby

Forging ahead



www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing

Rotherham
Metropolitan
Borough Council



HOME *matters*

Welcome to the winter 2025 edition of Home Matters



As the year draws to a close, the festive season offers us an opportunity to pause, reflect, and reconnect.

Christmas is a time to come together as a community, share kindness, and create memories and across our neighbourhoods, you'll find local fairs, carol services, and events that bring people closer.

With the colder weather now upon us it's important we all keep warm and well this winter, as well as looking out for our elderly and more vulnerable neighbours. In this issue you'll find helpful advice on how to prevent damp and mould in your homes, as

well as all the details you need to apply for energy grants you, or someone you know, may be entitled to.

As with everything we do, this magazine is for you, our tenants. We love to hear what you think of our service and the feedback you give us – both the good and the bad, it really helps shape how we do things. With that in mind we've included a number of tenant groups you could get involved with. If you've got a view on how you'd like things done, I'd encourage you to get in touch with our friendly Tenant Engagement team – their details can be found on page 6.

On behalf of everyone in our Housing Teams I'd like to extend my heartfelt wishes for a restful holiday season and a peaceful, New Year.

Councillor Linda Beresford
Cabinet Member for Housing

GO DIGITAL WITH HOME MATTERS

Do you want to get Home Matters sent straight to your inbox? Fill in the quick form online and we'll send future editions by email instead of post.

Simply visit www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing-news or scan the QR code to fill in your details and we'll do the rest.



Happy with a printed magazine?

No need to do anything. You'll keep receiving Home Matters by post.

NEW MALTBY HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Work has started on the Council's biggest housing development outside of the town centre, as part of its ambitious housing delivery programme.

Forty-five new homes will be built across three sites in Maltby on Addison Road, Elm Tree Road and Larch Road, as part of the Council's commitment to deliver 1,000 new Council homes for Rotherham residents by summer 2027.

When complete, the developments will include specialist bungalows, apartments and two, three and four-bedroom homes.

All of the homes will be future proofed through the inclusion of air-source heat pumps for the supply of heating and hot water to help reduce energy bills for tenants, whilst contributing to the Council's commitment to reach net-zero by 2040.

Councillor Linda Beresford said: "The Council is committed to supporting residents with their housing needs and enabling them to live well.

"We're on track to deliver 1,000 new Council homes by summer 2027, with the biggest new Council homes programme since the 1970s, and as part of this we are continually adapting to the boroughs housing needs by delivering a range of properties to local people including apartments, bungalows and family homes."

The development, in partnership with GS Kelsey, will build on the Council's award-winning work on social value, with the contractor pledging to employ four local bricklayers and five local apprentices.



Rotherham Council's Chief Executive, John Edwards, Cabinet Member of Housing, Cllr Linda Beresford with representatives from Rotherham Council and GS Kelsey Construction Ltd.

COMBAT CONDENSATION AND MOULD

When we carry out everyday activities such as cooking, showering, bathing, drying clothes, washing the dishes, and even breathing we create moisture in the air.

As soon as this warm air hits a cold surface it cools down and is forced to let go of some of the moisture it carries, making the cold surface wet. This is called condensation.

Without proper heating, insulation and ventilation it provides the ideal conditions for mould spores to flourish. This mould can be damaging to the home and harmful to your health.

AWAAB'S LAW

Named in memory of two-year-old Awaab Ishak who tragically died in 2020 due to prolonged exposure to mould, Awaab's Law, marks a change in housing legislation with new legal duties for social landlords.

If Council tenants notice any signs of damp or mould in their home, such as a musty smell, black spots on walls or ceilings, or peeling paint, it's important to report it to us as soon as possible.

You can do this online by scanning the QR code or by calling our dedicated repairs line on 01709 336009.

We're here to help, and early reporting helps us keep your home safe and healthy.



HOW TO PREVENT CONDENSATION AND MOULD IN YOUR HOME

Keep a steady temperature:

Aim for a comfortable temperature throughout your home (at least 16°C) especially in winter. This helps prevent surfaces from becoming too cold, so condensation does not form.

Dry clothes properly:

Don't block radiators with wet clothes or towels. Use a clothes rack or washing line instead. If you are drying clothes indoors open a window in the room where the clothes are drying to let the moisture escape but keep the door to the room closed to stop the damp air reaching the rest of your house.

Let the fresh air in:

Open windows for short periods each day, even in winter, to let out moist air. If your windows have trickle vents (small vents above the glass in your window), keep them open too. Remember to close windows when you leave the house.

Turn on your extractor fans:

Use extractor fans in the bathroom and kitchen whenever you are cooking or showering to remove steam and moisture. Make sure they are not blocked or switched off.

Contain the moisture:

Keep internal doors closed, especially when cooking or showering, to stop moist air spreading throughout the house. Put lids on pans when boiling water to trap steam and save energy.

Give furniture some breathing space:

Leave a small gap between furniture and the walls to allow air to circulate and prevent mould growth.

NEED HELP WITH RISING ENERGY COSTS?



Residents can receive support with their energy bills again this year as the Council's Energy Crisis Support Scheme reopens for applications, offering payments of up to £250 per household.

To apply you must have no more than £150 of disposable income left each month after paying essential bills such as rent, food, and utility bills. You do not have to be claiming benefits to apply and can be of any age to receive payments.

The application process is straightforward, but you will be asked to provide some basic details about your financial situation, including a recent bank statement, an energy bill, and your estimated monthly income and expenses.



The easiest way to apply is via the Council website
www.rotherham.gov.uk/money-matters

The Council is also working with Citizens Advice and Age UK Rotherham to offer assistance and advice to those who may be eligible for Pension Credit payments. These payments could mean that some older age applicants could benefit by as much as four thousand pounds over the coming year.

Contact **Citizens Advice** Rotherham on **0808 278 7911** for general advice and support or **Age UK** Rotherham for help with Pension Credit applications by calling **01709 835214**.

In addition, the government has expanded the number of homes entitled to the automatic £150 Warm Home Discount to an estimated 27,000 Rotherham households, and of course, the majority of Rotherham pensioners will see their Winter Fuel Payments restored this year.



Further information about funding, advice and support
can be found online at **www.rotherham.gov.uk/money-matters**



HAVE YOUR SAY

PUTTING TENANTS AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

We want all of our tenants to feel valued, that their voice is heard and that services can be shaped to meet their needs. By working together with the Tenant Engagement team, you'll influence the future of housing services and Council homes.

WE'RE ON THE LOOK OUT FOR NEW TENANT SCREEN TEAM MEMBERS

Do you think we can improve how the Council communicates with tenants? Can you help us make sure messages are clear, useful and relevant?

Join the Tenant Screen Team and work with Housing teams to improve the way we communicate with tenants across Rotherham.

Catch-ups are informal and the team meets online at 5.30pm on the first Wednesday of each month – so it's easy to get involved from the comfort of your own home.

"I've met some really nice like-minded people that also want to make a difference. It's really satisfying to see a document you've had input in land on your doorstep." – Emma, Screen Team member.

Contact the Tenant Engagement Team on customerinvolvement@rotherham.gov.uk or 01709 822100 to find out more.



HELP SHAPE OUR TENANT EVENT

We're planning a fresh new tenant event for 2026 – and we want tenants to lead the way.

In previous years, we've hosted a Tenant Open Day at the New York Stadium. While it's been a great way to connect, we're rethinking the format to make it more inclusive and engaging.

A short survey will be going out to a number of tenants to gather their thoughts – from the activities you'd love to see, to when and where it should happen.

Get in touch to receive a survey, or to get involved in the planning – your views are essential.

Contact the Tenant Engagement Team on customerinvolvement@rotherham.gov.uk or 01709 822100 to find out more.

For more information on all the ways you can get involved visit
www.rotherham.gov.uk/tenant-involvement

HOUSING ALLOCATION REFORMS

Following a public consultation, Council's Cabinet agreed to make changes to who can apply to join its Housing Register, to ensure we prioritise those in genuine need and make best use of the Council's homes.

The changes, which came into force on Monday 1 December, include tougher rules to ensure larger properties are prioritised for families.

The revised policy aims to make sure homes go to those in greatest housing need, while making the best use of available housing stock.

Although the Council is on track to deliver 1,000 new Council homes by summer 2027, demand is continuing to rise. This is a result of lots of



different factors, including falling numbers of Council properties as a result of the Right to Buy national rules.

Currently there are more than 7,000 people on the Housing Register, with around 1,000 Council homes available to new tenants each year.

More information about the Council's Housing Allocation Policy can be found online at www.rotherham.gov.uk

DELIVERING PERSONALISED SUPPORT

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

At Rotherham Council, we know that life isn't one-size-fits-all. Everyone's situation is different and sometimes, those differences mean you might need a little extra support.

That is why we are introducing a new way of working that helps us deliver a personalised service to anyone who feels vulnerable or needs additional help.

Whether it is a health condition, a recent life event, a language barrier, or something else entirely, we want to make sure you feel seen, heard and supported.

You don't need to do anything right now. The next time you speak to one of our Housing colleagues or the Contact Centre, we will simply

ask – "Is there anything we should know that might help us support you better?"

If you tell us something that affects your ability to manage your tenancy, we will record it securely and sensitively.

This helps us tailor our services to you, such as:

- Offering extra time or support
- Referring you to support services
- Communicating in a way that works for you
- Prioritising some repairs or services that may have an impact on your health needs

Everything you tell us is handled with care and confidentiality. And you can update us at any time if things change.

CLOSE THE DOOR ON BOGUS CALLERS

Thinking about making a disrepair claim? Before you do, it's important to understand what you're getting into.

If you're approached by someone offering to help with a claim, be cautious, even if the person says they work for the Council. These 'Claims Farmers' often aren't who they say they are, and signing up with them could leave you facing unexpected legal costs if the claim doesn't succeed.

We always recommend reporting problems through the Council's official channels first. It's safer, quicker and helps us help you without the stress of legal action.

A Rotherham tenant recently had an unexpected visit from a man claiming to work for the Council.



He said he was checking on outstanding repairs and showed an ID card labelled "Housing Disrepair Hub – Canvasser." He told the tenant she was due a new roof and might be entitled to compensation. But the tenant had already had her roof replaced two years earlier, which raised doubts.

She said she wanted to check with the Council first. The canvasser left and a phone call to the Housing Team confirmed the man did not work on behalf of the Council. The tenant was reassured and reminded to report any repair concerns to the Council first.

Report repairs by visiting www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing or by calling our dedicated repairs line on 01709 336009 – we're here to support you.

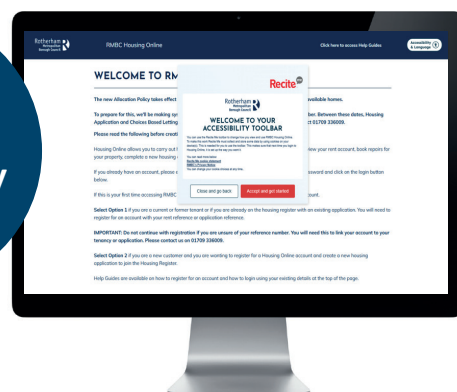
NEW ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES ON THE HOUSING ONLINE PORTAL

We've added new accessibility features to our Housing Online portal to help make your experience smoother and more supportive.

WHAT'S NEW?

- **Text-to-speech functionality:** content can now be read aloud, making it easier for customers with reading difficulties or visual impairments.
- **Translation and language support:** translate content into 100+ written languages (65+ also with audio), helping you access the services in your preferred language.
- **Customisable display settings:** adjust font sizes and styles, contrast levels and colour schemes.
- **Digital reading aids:** such as screen mask, reading ruler and focus text functionality.

Launching
the
accessibility
software



To launch the accessibility toolbar for the first time you will need to click on the '**Accessibility and Language**' button. A consent message will then appear. It is important that you read all the details and accept to be able to use the toolbar.

ROTHERHAM'S TRADITION MEETS MODERN MAGIC THIS WINTER

If you're looking for a winter day out that blends tradition with modern charm, Rotherham has two standout destinations this winter - Forge Island, the town's exciting new leisure hub and the historic Rotherham Market, a cornerstone of our community for centuries.

Forge Island is Rotherham's newest jewel – a vibrant riverside destination that's transforming the town centre.

At the heart of Forge Island is The Arc Cinema, bringing blockbuster magic back to Rotherham. With Christmas classics and family favourites, it's ideal for cosy afternoons. Add to that free parking for cinema-goers and you've got a stress-free outing.

Foodies will love Forge Island too. Independent steak and seafood restaurant Sygnature Dish offers an array of tasty dishes while stylish spots like Vetro Lounge have got you covered for hearty winter meals. The newest kid on the block, Heavenly Desserts, is already wowing locals with its decadent menu for a winter treat. Forge Island is fast becoming a destination for dining as well as entertainment.

Just a short stroll away, Rotherham Market offers a completely different experience. This historic marketplace has been the beating heart of the town since the 13th Century, and today it's a vibrant mix of indoor and outdoor stalls selling everything from fresh local produce to artisan crafts. It's the perfect spot to pick up unique gifts and seasonal treats.

The market's ongoing redevelopment means visitors can also glimpse the future of this iconic space – a modernised hub that still honours its heritage. For now, its bustling stalls offer a warm escape from the winter chill.

Forge Island and Rotherham Market together create a festive itinerary that's hard to beat. Start with a wander through the market for gifts and treats, then head to Forge Island for food and a film. So wrap up warm, bring your loved ones, and discover why Rotherham town centre is the place to be this winter.

www.rotherhamtowncentre.co.uk

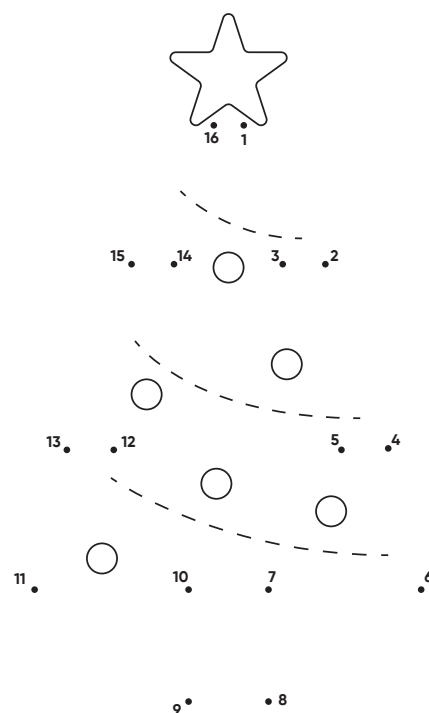


FESTIVE ACTIVITY PAGE

Let the kids get
creative with
this festive
fun activity
page.



Christmas Tree Dot-to-Dot



Santa's Workshop Wordsearch

ELVES	SANTA
REINDEER	TOYS
SLEIGH	WRAPPING
WORKSHOP	PRESENTS
NORTH POLE	LIST



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

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS TO YOUR HOME?

If you've got plans to make improvements or alterations to your home – please make sure you let us know before work begins.

We know that many people want to put their own personal stamp on their homes, however, it is important that you receive written approval to carry out any work.

This is because we want to make sure that any changes are done in a safe manner, in-line with the latest building regulations. It's a lot easier for us to guide you along this process at the start of a project.

If any changes are made without permission, and the work is not to an acceptable standard, we will have to take action to ensure that the property is made safe.

Should you wish to carry out any improvement to your home, please request a Tenant Improvement Pack via the Housing Online portal or by calling 01709 336009.

DO YOU HAVE A COMPLIMENT OR COMPLAINT ABOUT A COUNCIL SERVICE?

If you have a complaint there are a number of ways you can get in touch to tell us.



Complete a web form
www.rotherham.gov.uk/complaints



Email
complaints@rotherham.gov.uk



Text
07860 021 447



Call
01709 382121



Post
The Complaints Manager
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
(FREEPOST RTCT-XKLS-ZHAZ)
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint the team will advise you on how to escalate your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

If the matter relates to your landlord you can seek the advice of the Housing Ombudsman at any time on **0300 111 3000**.

We'd also love to hear from you if you are happy with a service or member of our team.



[email compliments@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:emailcompliments@rotherham.gov.uk) or call, text or write using the details above.

Further information can be found at www.rotherham.gov.uk/complaints

CONNECT TO OUR SERVICES

ONLINE

All of our services are available 24/7 online www.rotherham.gov.uk
For housing information visit www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing

TELEPHONE

For housing enquiries and repairs call **01709 336009**

