

Sheltered tenants



NEWSLETTER

Smiles all round!

As our photos show, there were lots of reasons to be cheerful in 2022 as sheltered housing residents enjoyed a wide range of fun events and activities!



Queen's Canopy tree planting



Busy Boards at Matilda Place



Sunflower competition



Vintage tea party



Weaving workshops



Summer BBQ



Queen's Jubilee celebrations



60s tea party

Keep active, keep smiling!

Here's a taster of what's in store for 2023:

Wellbeing Activities Programme

Includes weaving workshops, chair exercise sessions, singing groups and local history talks.

King's Coronation 6 May

We'll be celebrating the Coronation in sheltered housing, and you can find out how the Winchester district will be marking the event at

www.winchester.gov.uk/coronation

Tell us your ideas to celebrate the Coronation (see back cover)

The Big Help Out 8 May

A special day to promote volunteering and create a lasting legacy from the Coronation weekend. Want to roll up your sleeves and help a local group or charity? Just visit www.thebighelpout.org.uk

To find out more about upcoming events or submit your suggestions for activities please talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer, email shelteredhousing@winchester.gov.uk or call 01962 855 335.

Spot the birds inside this magazine and you could win £25! See page 5



Rent rise

In April your rent will increase. You should have received a letter outlining your new rent amount and, if relevant your new service charges. If you haven't received your letter please talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer, and if you're worried about affording an increased rent level, we are here to help (see below).

Tenancy Sustainment Team here for you



Our Tenancy Sustainment Team offers free, friendly advice and support to help you maintain your tenancy. The team is on hand to:

- Provide confidential, expert money and debt advice
- Help you claim benefits and apply for financial aid (see page 4 for more details about benefits you may be entitled to)
- Support you to look after your home
- Organise extra support if you need help to maintain your mental and physical well being

If you – or someone you know – would benefit from their help and advice please contact our Tenancy Sustainment Team:

Visit <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/tenancy-sustainment-service>

Email TenancySustainment@winchester.gov.uk

Telephone **01962 814 918**

Cost of Living Support

The Government will launch a new package of cost of living support payments this spring. If you're eligible, you'll automatically receive the money straight into your bank account. The payments will be made as follows:

£301 First Cost of Living Payment – during Spring 2023

£150 Disability Payment – during Summer 2023

£300 Second Cost of Living Payment – during Autumn 2023

£300 Pensioner Payment – during Winter 2023/4

£299 Third Cost of Living Payment – during Spring 2024

The amount of each payment is slightly different so that the Department for Work and Pensions and HMRC can keep track that you have been paid the right payment at the correct time.

Struggling with money worries?

We know that an increase in rent, coupled with the cost of living crisis, will impact many people. If you're struggling with money worries there is support and advice available to help you during this challenging time; from checking you're receiving all the benefits you're entitled to, where to access food parcels and tips on how to cut your energy bills.



Somewhere to keep warm

If rising energy bills are forcing you to make tough decisions on whether to spend on heating or eating, remember you are welcome to use the resident lounge in your scheme as a place to keep warm (and of course to socialise with your neighbours – check out the range of fun activities on offer on page 1).

In addition, Warm Spaces are popping up all over Winchester, designed to offer anyone needing warmth, community and food with a warm and friendly space to share with others. For details visit www.warmwelcome.uk or speak to your Sheltered Housing Officer.



Save energy save money

For lots of useful information, support and advice to help lower your bills and manage the cost of living crisis visit www.winchester.gov.uk/Home-Energy or talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer.



Struggling to afford food?

Food and fuel vouchers

If you are in recognised emergency need or if you're experiencing difficulty in accessing alternative support you may be eligible for a referral to receive an emergency payment voucher or card.

Crisis food provision

This spring we will be running a Pop-up Pantry offering council tenants the chance to access food provided by the charity Fareshare.

If you are in urgent need of food and would like more details about either of these initiatives please talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer or email shelteredhousing@winchester.gov.uk



Benefits

are you entitled to receive extra money?

Millions of pounds of benefits go unclaimed every year so it's worth checking if you are entitled to any extra payments. It's easy to check your eligibility online at www.entitledto.co.uk or talk to our Tenancy Sustainment Team (see page 2).

You may be entitled to Pension Credit

Claiming Pension Credit can top up your income and unlock other entitlements such as support with your health and housing costs along with a free TV Licence if you're over 75. It's designed to help with daily living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. To check your eligibility visit www.gov.uk/pension-credit or call **0800 99 1234**.

Benefits are increasing from 1 April 2023

Did you know that most welfare benefits will be uprated by 10.1% from this April, including:

- Housing Benefit
- Income Related ESA
- Income Support and Income Based-JSA
- Tax Credits
- Universal Credit (including UC Work Allowances and Housing Costs Contributions)
- State Pension and Pension Credit
- Disability benefits
- Carer's Allowance
- The Benefit Cap (which is a limit on the total amount of benefits for working age people)

Universal Credit

The government have been busy 'migrating' claims for legacy benefits onto Universal Credit and this is expected to be completed for most people by March 2025. If you still receive Tax Credits or Income Related ESA you will be contacted by the DWP to let you know these benefits will be ending and inviting you to claim Universal Credit instead. You will get transitional protection payments to make sure you are not worse off on Universal Credit than on your old benefits.

If you receive income-related employment and support allowance (ESA) you will be moved onto Universal Credit a bit later – by 2028. However if you have a change in your circumstances which affects your claim you will naturally migrate and move over to Universal Credit automatically (but this means you will miss out on the transitional protection payments).



is available 24/7. Plus, you'll be part of a real community with lots of opportunities to meet neighbours and join in social events and activities in the communal lounge. Find out more at www.winchester.gov.uk/extra-care or talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer. We may even be able to help you with moving costs and preparations.

Extra Care

If you're over 55, struggling with daily activities in your current home but want to remain living independently, a move into one of our Extra Care schemes could be the answer.

You'll have your own flat with your own front door, but with the reassurance of knowing support

Adaptions to help you to live safely

If you need to adjust your home to make it safer and enable you to live independently, you can apply for an adaptation.



The work will depend on your individual needs and the suitability of the property, but could range from a major job like installing a level access shower, to fitting smaller items like grab rails. It's all about making your home more accessible, giving you greater independence and hopefully a better quality of life.

Complex adaptations and equipment must be referred by an Occupational Therapist, but our

Fast Track scheme means we can approve smaller works costing less than £500 without the need for an Occupational Therapy assessment, such as:

- grab rails
- raising or lowering cupboards, work surfaces or wash hand basins
- lever taps
- additional electrical sockets
- intercoms
- easy to operate switches and handles

To find out more please visit www.winchester.gov.uk/tenants-adaptations talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer or call or **01962 840 222**. To discuss your eligibility for larger adaptation works contact Hampshire County Council Occupational Therapy on **0300 555 1378**.

Birdwatching

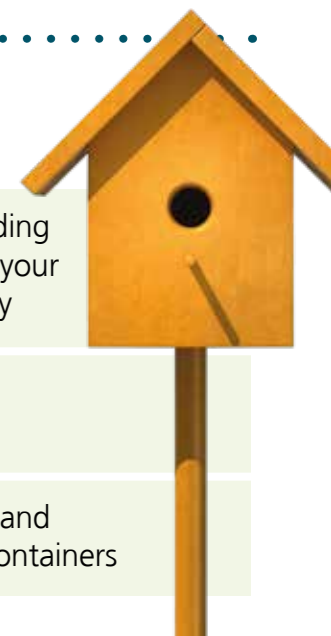


With spring around the corner our communal garden areas will soon be buzzing with people, birds and other wildlife enjoying the sunshine together.

If you want to put up bird boxes, baths and feeders to attract birds and wildlife to the gardens please follow the tips opposite to avoid encouraging rats or other unwanted vermin:

Top tips!

- 1 Ensure there aren't any hiding places for rats by keeping your home and garden area tidy
- 2 Keep your rubbish stored securely in bins
- 3 Clean up bird food debris and keep bird food stored in containers



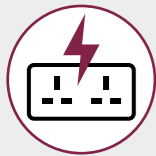
Spot the birds and win £25!

Spot 5 birds hiding inside this newsletter and you could win a £25 shopping voucher. Email the names of the 5 birds along with your contact details to tenantvoice@winchester.gov.uk or hand the answers to your Sheltered Housing Officer. Closing date is 28 April 2023. T&C apply www.winchester.gov.uk/improvingservices

Be fire aware

We all know fire can be deadly but there are lots of ways to protect yourself and your property from fire simply by being aware of potential risks at home.

Follow these tips below to keep safe and reduce any risk of fire destroying your life



Don't overload electric sockets



Never leave the cooker unattended while cooking



Be careful not to light candles on unsafe surfaces or near fabric or papers



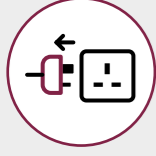
Don't smoke in bed



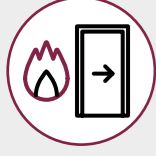
Never leave electrical devices on charge overnight or when you are out



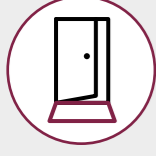
Avoid charging items on soft furnishings like beds or sofas that could catch alight if the device overheats



Always unplug electrical devices when fully charged



Ensure fire doors are always kept closed and communal areas are kept free of clutter or rubbish



Don't tamper with or modify your front door

Checking you are safe

We carry out regular fire, electric and gas safety inspections to keep you safe and will write to you before the inspectors visit your scheme. Please make sure you're at home at the specified time to allow access.

Remember to let the Sheltered Housing team know:

- If you go into hospital
- When you come home from hospital
- Any change that affects your ability to leave your flat in an emergency

If you have any concerns about fire safety in your home or scheme please let us know:

- Visit www.winchester.gov.uk/fire-concern
- Phone Housing on **01962 848 400**
- Email housing@winchester.gov.uk
- Talk to a tenant representative from TACT – call the Tenant Involvement Team on Freephone **0800 716 987**

Request a free Safe & Well visit

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service offer free visits to help identify potential fire risks, check smoke alarms and offer tailored safety advice. To find out if you're eligible speak to your Sheltered Housing Officer or visit <https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/safety/home-safe-home/safe-and-well/>



For more information about fire safety visit www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/fire-safety

New automatic doors

We are working to ensure all our sheltered housing schemes have automatic communal entrance doors to make it easier and safer for you to get in and out, whilst also improving security. Installations at those schemes which currently don't have automatic doors will commence this spring, starting at Godson House. We will be in touch with residents at each scheme due to receive new doors with more details as and when the works are expected to take place.

Stairlifts

Over the past few years across the UK there have been a number of serious accidents and even deaths involving people falling from or getting trapped in stairlifts. Due to the potential dangers they pose, and also because the equipment can restrict access on stairs during an emergency situation such as a fire, we have been reviewing our policy on the installation of stairlifts, primarily in communal areas, and how we look at requests for stairlifts in individual homes.

The welfare of our residents, visitors and members of the public is paramount to us. As communal stairlifts present wider health and safety implications that must be considered in our Health & Safety and Fire Risk assessment process we have made the difficult decision to no longer install stairlifts in communal areas. We are conducting a review of existing stairlifts in communal areas and a programme of removal is being considered based on an individual basis.

We know this will be a real concern to some residents who currently rely on the stairlifts to access their homes. We will work closely with these individuals and liaise with their family, friends and carers to discuss their circumstances and how we can help in advance of any stair lifts being removed.

If you have any questions about stairlifts please talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer.



What is the Digital Switchover and how it will affect you?

If you haven't heard about the digital switchover, it is the replacement of the old copper telephone network to full fibre broadband. This means all landline telephones will be replaced with a broadband telephone system by 2025.

As a result, the current analogue emergency alarm equipment in our sheltered and Extra Care housing schemes needs to be upgraded so it will continue working after this date.

We have carried out a full survey of the equipment and are currently exploring options to ensure the system is in full working order when the switchover happens and there is no disruption to services. Some residents are currently trialling new digital equipment to help us decide on the best options going forward.



Meet the Team

Look out for posters going up in your scheme with photos of your local Sheltered Housing Officer and details of how to contact them.



• We want
• your feedback...
• on all aspects of the
• Sheltered Housing service
• to help us shape services
• moving forward. If you have
• a comment or
• suggestion please
• contact your
• Sheltered Housing
• Officer or get in
• touch using the
• details below.



Never miss the latest housing news

Request a copy of our bi-monthly Sheltered Housing newsletter direct to your email inbox and help save paper, whilst ensuring you're the first to read the latest housing news. A few printed copies will be available to read in each scheme's communal lounge.

Sign up your email address at www.winchester.gov.uk/tenant-news

Get in touch

Phone: **01962 855 335** Email: shelteredhousing@winchester.gov.uk

Web: winchester.gov.uk/housing/older-persons-services/sheltered-and-extra-care-housing

 WinchesterTenants  @WinchesterCity



Tell us your ideas on how we can celebrate the King's Coronation this May



Name

Address

Contact number

Suggestion

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Please cut out this form and hand it to your Sheltered Housing Officer or post it to through the letterbox of the scheme office before 28 April 2023.