

Newsletter - Vol. 1



FEBRUARY 2022

Welcome to the relaunched magazine from Radcliffe Housing Society.

We are delighted to be able to share the latest news from RHS

Like many people and organisations across the UK and beyond, Radcliffe Housing Society has faced challenges over the last 2 years. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the sectors' need to holistically review the need to refine and improve services, to ensure all landlords reach residents who face significant hardship or developed increased vulnerabilities. To counter some of this, our staff made hundreds of calls and visits during the pandemic, to determine what support was required by our residents.

Importantly, being customer centric is at the heart of what we do. Our Leadership Team and our Board also review all feedback and crucially, any complaints received. Of course, mistakes can be made, but it's my job to ensure, we learn from them and to mitigate any future concerns.

The majority of our staff are new and I am incredibly proud of them. We are continuing to listen to our residents views which in turn, allows us to take these views to really shape of our services. We have developed a Residents Scrutiny Panel and we continue to share the good and ask where we can improve.

Whilst we continue to demonstrate a high performing service, we are mindful we can enhance our services further. Whether it's around improving our Digital offer or reviewing our independent living service, we remain committed to helping and supporting you.

We also aim to deliver approx £1.3m of investment into your homes and our assets over the next five years. With Net Zero initiatives and decarbonisation a huge challenge for the sector, we will pro-actively search for renewable resources, improved procurement and sustainable and affordable solutions for your home. Within the next financial year, we are also aiming to deliver two new build schemes; our first set of new homes - for decades.

Overall, we continue to perform well for a small landlord of 400 homes, but we acknowledge we can improve further. Our staff have outlined much of this throughout this newsletter.

Thank you for your time, and I do hope you find this magazine useful.

Jermaine Sterling
Director of Operations





Radcliffe Housing Society staff:

Daren Donoghue - Chief Executive Officer

Angelique Johnson - Finance & Resource Director

Jermaine Sterling - Operations Director

Jennifer Lyston - Independent Living Officer

Sally Pierce - Finance Assistant

Robert Gibbs - Strategic Asset Manager

Jo Williams - Housing Income Officer

Jacqui Geer - Customer Services Officer

Max Watson - Repairs & Compliance Officer

Fran Owen - Corporate Services Officer

Kate Fox - Tenancy Services Officer





Becoming Net Zero

The Government have announced that to meet their legal objective to achieve Net Zero, all homes in England must be an EPC rating C by 2030.

With less and less time to achieve, we all have a direct responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint. This is whether it's reviewing your own LED lighting, having smart heating solutions or increasing your recycling opportunities.

We acknowledge we have work to do to increase energy efficiencies with our homes. This will also mean within a few short years, we will no longer be installing gas boilers and will reduce gas emissions across all our stock within 10 years.

Some of our individual homes may require upwards of £20-£30k worth of works each, which could include different types of insulation or retrofitting new heating solutions.

To support our plan, we will be conducting surveys over the next 12 months into homes, to support our objectives, to tackle fuel poverty and to ensure heating solutions are affordable for you.

Here are 7 quick steps to support us to become Net Zero

We all have a collective responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint. We will continue to share how you can help us do this. Whether it's replacing components within your home to meet higher energy efficiency standards or supporting you with fuel or utility bill advice, we can help.

1.

Insulate your home

It is likely that your home is part of our planned asset management works to further insulate your home, which could be floor, cavity wall or ceiling.

2.

Use less water

It takes energy and resources to process and deliver water to our homes. What's more, it's also quite energy-intensive to heat it once it's there. So, by using less, you can help the environment and lower your carbon footprint. Try turning off the taps when brushing your teeth, having short showers rather than baths, and only boiling the water you need.

3.

Dont use single-use plastics

Not only do they pollute our waterways and oceans, but they also require energy to produce and recycle. You can stop using things like disposable coffee cups and cutlery to reduce your company's carbon footprint.

4.

Use Smart heating systems

Smart heating controls are available for all types of heating system, including electric storage heaters. Some systems include automation features, which can help by working out exactly when to turn the heating on and off.

5.

Draught-proofing

Your home may be losing heat through gaps around the windows and doors, between floorboards or up your chimney. Draught-proofing these areas is a cost-effective way to save energy and reduce your household's carbon emissions. It's easy to do and, in many cases, doesn't require a professional

6.

Low energy lighting

If you replace all the bulbs in your home with LED lights, you could reduce your carbon dioxide emissions by up to 65kg a year. This is equivalent to the carbon dioxide emitted by driving your car around 220 miles

7.

Reduce waste and recycle

One way of reducing emissions from products at home is to reduce the amount you consume. You should also try to re-use wherever possible and recycle when you no longer need something

Income and Welfare Support



Jo Williams
Housing Income Officer

Simply put, I am here to help you...

My role is to help residents sustain their tenancies by providing guidance & support in claiming Housing Benefit / Universal Credit amongst other benefits.

I will also complete home visits to vulnerable residents where necessary and I can make referrals to Support Agencies, to increase your income and to reduce your outgoings.

I'm keen on hosting rent surgeries for some of our Independent living schemes, so let me know if this would help you and your neighbours.

If you're ever feeling burdened by and debt or you feel your rent account is at risk, we can agree repayment plans, if residents fall into arrears with their rent.

The Government have launched a £500m package of support for vulnerable households over winter

£500m of support is available to help those most in need as we enter the final stages of COVID-19 pandemic recovery, with money available to councils since October 2021.

All residents need to do, is to contact your local Council to see if you're eligible.



Other support available...

Foodbank Vouchers

If a resident is facing financial difficulties and struggling to buy food, did you know we can offer Foodbank vouchers?

Foodbanks are designed to provide short term emergency support with food, during a crisis. They aim to relieve immediate pressure by providing food, but they also offer additional support, so people don't need to use the foodbank on a regular basis.

Once a resident has been referred, a volunteer at the Foodbank will then call to find out how many adults and children live in the household, along with their ages, so the food parcel supports their needs.

They will ask if the resident can collect the shopping or whether delivery is required. They will also check if there are any special dietary requirements and what the main cause of the crisis is, along with finding out whether Covid has been a contributing factor.

Warm Home Discount

Residents could get £140 off their electricity bill for winter 2021 to 2022 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme

The money is a one-off discount on their electricity bill, between October and March. Residents may also be able to get the discount on their gas bill instead if their supplier provides them with both gas and electricity.

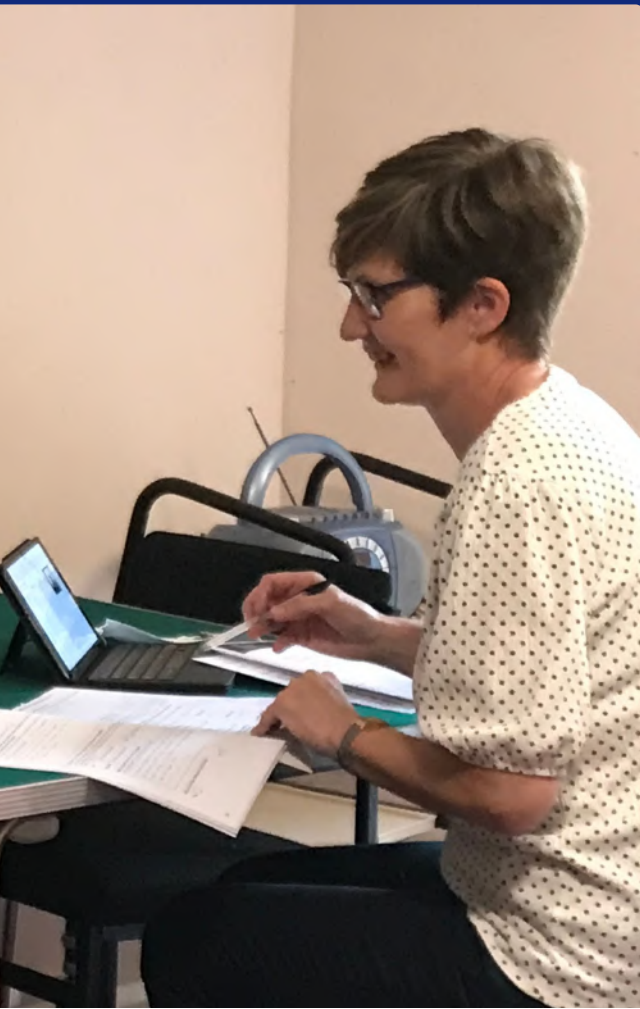
To apply, residents will need to contact their supplier to find out if they qualify or call the Warm Home Discount helpline on 0800 731 0214.

Contact us!

Home visits are available to residents who are suffering financial hardship and need help with debts.

Once an Income & Expenditure form has been completed by the resident a referral can then be made for the most appropriate advice to suit their needs, please call 01732 459144 and select option 2 if you feel this would benefit you.

if you need any advice or support, please either give us your details over the phone on 01732 459144 and select option 2 or email rents@radcliffehs.org



Worried about someone in your community?

There may be occasions where you notice something about a neighbour or someone in your community that causes you concern. It may be that you hear shouting or arguing coming from a neighbouring property, have concerns about a child, or worries about an elderly or vulnerable person.

You may not know who to voice your concerns to, or feel reluctant to “get involved” through fear of repercussions or other anxieties.

Here at Radcliffe Housing Society, we want to support our tenants and those within our communities by working together to keep people safe.

Through multi agency working and safeguarding referrals using information provided by you, we can achieve this.



Women's Aid – advice and support
www.womensaid.org.uk
08082000247

Mankind Initiative – advice and support for male victims
<http://new.mankind.org.uk/>
01823334244

Karma Nirvana – helpline for victims of forced marriage and honour-based abuse
www.karmanirvana.org.uk
08005999247

National Centre for Domestic Violence
www.ncdv.org.uk
08009702070

Childline
www.childline.org.uk
0800 1111

Domestic abuse, and abuse of children and adults is a crime. Always phone 999 in an emergency. In a non-emergency you can make a report to police by calling 101.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse isn't acts of physical violence alone, and doesn't only occur within the home, or between people who are in a relationship. It can also include abusive and controlling behaviour, harassment, emotional abuse and financial control. Domestic abuse occurs in all cultures and can affect people of all races, ethnicities, genders, ages, religions and backgrounds. Perhaps you have heard shouting or altercations within someone's home, noticed that a neighbour has become withdrawn or seems fearful, or even seen injuries.

Child Safeguarding

Unfortunately there have been many heart breaking cases of child abuse covered in the media recently. This can lead to positive change within communities as awareness is increased and people may be more likely to notice behaviours that seem unusual or concerning. Again, child abuse is not only physical abuse. It can also be a result of an unsuitable home environment, emotional abuse, and the child's needs not being met.

Adult Safeguarding

Adults may be more likely to suffer abuse if they are vulnerable through age, health or disability. This kind of abuse may be more difficult to spot as they may be confined to the home, unable to raise the alarm or communicate with other people.

They may suffer physical, emotional or financial abuse from family members or strangers who have targeted them due to their vulnerability. Perhaps you've noticed an vulnerable member of your community has had unknown people staying with them and you fear they are being exploited?



Kate Fox
Tenancy Services Officer

"Please look out for one another and tell someone if you have concerns.

You can contact me by email kate@radcliffehs.org or by phone 07799661862. If you want to pass me information anonymously, you can withhold your number when calling.

I am happy to discuss any concerns you have, no matter how small, and I can make safeguarding referrals where required, offer you advice and support and liaise with other agencies directly.

If you are personally affected by any of the issues, there are support services available to help you"

We're finally building new homes!

We are delighted to support the Mayors objective of addressing the urgent need to provide homes for those most vulnerable.

We are absolutely determined to build new affordable homes for those most in need. Planning permission has been granted to us and we are aiming to start works in March 2022.

Purcell Close

We will aim to build five new apartments, on our existing car park land at Purcell Close. This existing land currently has use of garages.

A new three storey building providing five flats, with accommodation in the roof space, will be built after the existing garages have been demolished.

Five brand new homes of 4x One bed and 1x Two bed apartments.

We will also regenerate the land with new access points, new cycle and refuse storage facilities.

These homes will be made available for families in need from the Croydon Housing register

Howard Road

This new development is being built on our existing car park land, at Howard Road, Penge.

Six new 4x One bed and 2x Two bed apartments.

A new three storey building will be built, comprising of six new affordable residential flats with an undercroft car park and new associated cycle storage and refuse storage.

As part of the planning conditions, we will install new windows in the existing block to counter initial concerns raised about any 'loss of light'.

These homes will be made available for families in need from the Bromley Housing register





Shown are:

**Howard Road, SE20 (top)
Six Homes**

**Purcell Close, CR8 (left)
Five Homes**

Both schemes are expected
to be completed by March
2023



Planned Works with the future in mind.

We continue to invest heavily in our homes to ensure we continue to provide safe, warm and energy efficient homes.

In the last 12 months, we have invested £400k towards component upgrades within our homes including new bathrooms, heating systems, kitchens, extractor fans.

This year, we have also invested in external decorations, communal door entry systems, VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) and landscaping amongst other items.

This is in addition to our wide scale review of all our properties which need additional investment to ensure we meet our objective of EPC rating C by 2030.

We will also continue to use newer technology to survey our homes, which also includes the use of Drones to inspect buildings at height.



Radcliffe Housing Society has a vision of “Creating sustainable communities, where people want to live”. Our homes are by far our most valuable assets, generating most of our income, from rents and service charges, and consuming most of our spending, through management, maintenance and investments.

For our residents, the quality of their home will be one of the most important things in their lives and few things will impact on them, as much as the way we provide and look after those homes. It is fundamental to the success of our business that we manage our asset base to keep the business healthy and to satisfy the needs and expectations of our tenants now and in the future.

In addition, we have a new grounds maintenance and communal cleaning contractor, JustAsk.

We appreciate your patience whilst we adopt new standards and to allow for time for JustAsk



In Summer 2021, we implemented a new messaging service, so if you contact us for a repair, once an order has been raised, you will be notified by text message.

Please contact us to update your contact details.



Got an idea so we enhance your Communal Area?

We recognise our customers truly value the homes they live in and their neighbourhoods.

Would a bike store be good for your scheme, or would a Computer in your communal lounge, help to encourage digital inclusion?

We have funding available...

If you have an idea to enhance your communal area or to improve community wellbeing, please contact us at
housing@radcliffehs.org

Gas & Electrical safety checks

To ensure your safety at all times, we must carry out a gas safety check annually if you have a gas supply.

For electrical safety inspections, these are generally carried out every five years

If you're contacted about compliance inspections from any of our staff, please ensure you provide us access so we can ensure your safety. Any queries, please contact us at compliance@radcliffehs.org

5 ways to be considered for a move into another home

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DID YOU KNOW - In the last 12 months, we have had 20 lettings, which is the highest amount for years!



1. Waiting List

We currently have a WAITING LIST of over 50 non-RHS vying for our homes. We will always prioritise our residents first but where we struggle to let a property, we will review our waiting list to determine if we have a suitable applicant.

Many other small Housing Associations do the same and there is no harm in you making a direct approach to them to find out if you're eligible



2. Apply to the Council

Applying to your LOCAL COUNCIL HOUSING REGISTER provides the best opportunity for a move, this is despite high demand locally and pressures on the local Councils to find suitable and affordable homes. Most operate as Choice Based Lettings (CBL) schemes and you should apply direct to your Local Council.

4. Transfer List

Joining our TRANSFER LIST could also see you moving home. Although, due to our stock size and agreements with the Local Councils, we have limited opportunities to move our own residents. We offer priority basis for a move. So, contact us to see if you're eligible to join our Transfer List.

3. Mutual Exchange

Radcliffe Housing tenants with a clear rent account can register with Homeswapper for free. Homeswapper is the UK's largest community of social tenants looking to swap homes. More than 65,000 homes have been successfully swapped using this service and many tenants find a match within 24 hours. If you're looking to move for more space, a smaller home, or to relocate to be closer to work, friends or family this could be for you! By using this service you can complete a mutual exchange (a direct homeswap between two social housing tenants) or even a multi swap.



5. Seaside & Country Homes

If you wish to move out of London and into coastal areas, you may be eligible to join the SEASIDE & COUNTRY HOMES register. This is open to all our residents where at least one member of your home is over the age of 55





Contact us

By Email:

enquiries@radcliffehs.org
housing@radcliffehs.org
repairs@radcliffehs.org
rents@radcliffehs.org

By TEXT

Send a text message to: 07497 301 013
To contact your income support officer:
text RENTS
To get latest account balance: text BAL
To report a repair: text REPAIR



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Telephone: 01732 459144