

# house proud

April 2023

The magazine for St Leger Homes tenants



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ACCREDITED  
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LANDLORD

# A message from the Chief Executive

Welcome to the April 2023 issue of HouseProud.

In this issue, on page eight you have the chance to give us your thoughts about our Customer Charter. This charter is our commitment to you about the things you can expect us to do as your landlord. It's just one of the ways we are listening and learning from what you tell us, so I hope you will get involved and give us your feedback.

On page 11 you can read about the improvements we have been making to our repairs service. We know that carrying out repairs in an efficient and effective way is something that is very important to you, and rightly so. With this in mind, we do believe that the changes we are making will result in a better service for you.

Finally, our Tenants' Choice Awards return to celebrate the amazing work members of our communities do day in, day out to support their neighbours and other local residents. We have announced the categories for this year's event, so do have a look and send your nominations in to us, you can read how on page four.

I hope you enjoy this issue of HouseProud.

*Dave*

**Dave Richmond,**  
**Chief Executive**



## Help available for carers

Do you support someone who cannot manage without you? If the answer is yes, then you are a unpaid carer. You could be caring for someone by helping them in the house, shopping for them, paying bills or maybe by giving emotional support. This could be because they have an illness, disability, mental health condition or substance misuse issues.

If you're living in Doncaster and are an unpaid carer for a loved one, relative or neighbour then Doncaster Carers Wellbeing Service are here to help. Being a carer can be physically and emotionally demanding, but

they can support you in your caring role with a range of information, guidance and advice – including on subjects such as claimable benefits or answering any other questions you may have. You can contact Doncaster Carers Wellbeing Service, by calling them on **01302 986900** or by emailing **DoncasterCarers.WellbeingService@makingspace.co.uk**

If you are juggling paid work with caring for someone, then you can access Employers for Carers website which is full of information and support on health and wellbeing, carers'

rights, and guides to help you manage working and caring. You can find this by visiting <https://carersdigital.org/> and entering the free unique access code: DGTL1849.

Carers do an amazing job, so if you are a carer who needs support then please do reach out for help. If you are considering a career in caring for others there is information at **[www.doncaster.gov.uk/proudtocare](http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/proudtocare)** and the Proud to Care team are always on hand to help – contact them on **01302 737908** or email **[proudtocare@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:proudtocare@doncaster.gov.uk)**



## Did you know?

Between April-Oct 2022 we improved **173** homes in Cantley and Mexborough with new roofs, fascias, gutters and footpath renewals.



Cover image: Caption TBS



# Please be respectful to our staff

**Customers' needs are at the heart of everything that we do at St Leger Homes, and our staff members are here to help and support people with any issues that they may be facing.**

When we meet tenants face-to-face or talk with them on the phone, the vast majority of the time people are calm and reasonable – even when they are telling us about a problem that they are having. However, there have been some instances where people have unfortunately been abusive or threatening to members of staff.



We would like to politely remind everyone this sort of behaviour is completely unacceptable and we will always take action when it happens.

Thank you very much for your co-operation with this matter.

## Did you know?

Between April-Jul '22 we kept over **98%** of the appointments we made with customers.



### **Tenants' and Residents' Involvement Panel (TRIP) Chair, Betty Clayton, brings us the latest news on what the group have been working on.**

I can't believe a quarter of the year has gone already, time just seems to fly by – and the older you get the quicker it flies!

To keep you up-to-date, we at TRIP are working like beavers to improve the life of tenants in any way we can by looking at and consulting with St Leger Homes on many issues. We have a number of reviews in the pipeline and are finishing some that were started last year, but we are a little behind schedule due to the long Christmas holiday.

The overhaul of the repairs service is moving along at a great pace and we can already see improvement. This will be advantageous to all tenants

as we will no longer be subject to waiting a month or more for some repairs (known as Scheduled Repairs) to be dealt with.

We have added new TRIP members who have been trained to our Appeals Panel, which will make things a little easier with more to share the load.

We wish Alison Alcock all the best in her new role within the Customer Involvement Team, and are delighted she will still be supporting TRIP – she has been a much valued and loyal member of staff who for four years has been a fantastic critical friend to TRIP and attended every meeting.

She has steered us in many ways regarding the complex workings of the organisation without fear or favour, for which we are eternally grateful. I know I speak on behalf of all TRIP members when saying we all appreciate her expertise and impartiality.

Having met the new Engagement and Communications Service Manager, Asim Munir, I know we will be able to continue our work with the utmost confidence in his acceptance of what we strive to achieve on behalf of all tenants.

Until next time, take care.

Betty



**Tenants Take Over**

# Tenants' Choice Awards 2023

**It is that time again when we all get together to celebrate you, our amazing tenants, and the work that you do to help and look after other residents living in our communities.**

We are proud to continue the tradition of our Tenants' Choice Awards, which will be taking place this autumn in a completely new format and style as part of our new Tenants' Celebration Event - further details on this will follow soon!

We have refreshed the awards with some new and exciting categories which have been voted on by you to ensure that we are not missing any deserving tenants or groups out.

**Here are the categories – make your nominations count and get involved!**

## Person Categories:

### Good Neighbour

Someone who, with no fuss or expectation of reward, will go out of their way to help a neighbour, giving support above and beyond what might be expected – such as helping with shopping, sorting out difficult situations or just being a caring person.

### Young Person of the Year (aged 25 or under)

A young tenant in Doncaster who is energetic, passionate and has made a difference for their community.

### Community Warrior

Someone who supports tenants and residents through the cost of living crisis and champions the needs of the community to improve people's quality of life. This could be providing warm spaces, foodbanks, low cost food supply or giving support and advice.

## Group Categories:

### Heart of the Community

This is awarded to community groups (including Tenants' and Residents' Associations) that work to improve their area by making estate improvements, providing services to the community or running their local community centre.

### Cleaner Communities

Celebrating and saying thank you to groups who work to support a cleaner and tidier community, looking after our green spaces and make them something to be proud of.

### Community Wellbeing Project

A group that works at a grass roots local level to provide tenants and residents with a space to promote physical, emotional or social wellbeing.

To nominate a person or group for an award, visit our website **[www.stlegerhomes.co.uk](http://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk)** where you will find details about how to do this on the front page. Our Customer Involvement Team can also provide support with completing your nomination form, you can speak to them by calling **01302 862743** or emailing **[customerinvolvement@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:customerinvolvement@stlegerhomes.co.uk)**

**All nominations must be received by Wednesday 26th July so there is no time to waste, get in touch and nominate the local heroes in your community today!**

## Did you know?

Between April-Jul '22 we completed over **94%** of the jobs we attended on the first visit.



# Tpas accreditation achieved!

**We are proud to have become one of a small number of social housing organisations in the country to be accredited by national tenant engagement experts Tpas!**

We received accreditation for the work we are doing to give tenants an important role in the decision-making process with the services we provide, and ensuring that tenants' voices and opinions are heard at all times.

Tpas work to promote, support and champion tenant involvement and empowerment in social housing across England. They highlighted a number of areas of good practice at St Leger Homes, including our strategies to promote equality and diversity, improving communications with tenants, and also our new and unique Tenant Voice Strategy.

*"We are delighted to achieve the Tpas Landlord Accreditation, which is the culmination of a lot of hard work to ensure we are*

*always listening to our tenants, their views and experiences"* said Dave Wilkinson, Chair of St Leger Homes

*"This accreditation is also a testament to those hard-working and dedicated tenant volunteers who are involved with us on a daily basis to help us develop and improve our services. Whilst it's great to know we currently meet the high standards of Tpas, we know there is always more we can do and we will continue to*

*work to improve the experience we offer our tenants. It is also positive to hear Tpas welcome our transparent approach to dealing with complaints, sharing information with tenants on key issues wherever possible and also having a wide variety of ways that tenants can contact us."*

We look forward to building on this achievement as we continue to improve the services we provide for you.



## Tenants have their say with our One Voice Forum

We are pleased to say that our One Voice Forum, which is made up of tenant representatives, met recently to officially agree their Terms of Reference – and they are now raring to get involved in how we deliver our services!

Tenant volunteer representatives Betty, John and Steve talked about how we can make further improvements to the services we deliver, and it was great to hear what they had to say as their views really matter to us.

The Forum consists of three Tenant Board members, representatives from local Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TARAs), as well as other involved tenants. The forum is one way that tenants can feed directly into our decision-making processes and it is playing a key role in helping us monitor and improve satisfaction in the services we deliver.

We would love to hear more of your voices, so if you are

interested in joining and want to have a say in how we deliver our services in the future then give us a call on **01302 862743** or email **customerinvolvement@stlegerhomes.co.uk**

### Did you know?

Between Apr '22-Jan '23 we completed over **20,000** emergency repairs.





# Benefits boost for older tenants

**With the cost of living crisis continuing to cause problems for households, our Tenancy Sustainability Team are making a difference by offering much-needed support to tenants who find themselves struggling.**

One way the team have been helping is by working with tenants and residents to check their entitlement to Pension Credit.

Pension Credit is a benefit that gives extra money to help with living costs, and it is available to anyone who is over the State Pension age and on a low income. It can also help with housing costs such as ground rent or service charges, and people can claim Pension Credit even if they have other income, savings or own their own home.

Anyone claiming Pension Credit is also entitled to other support, including help with NHS dental treatment and glasses, and a

free TV Licence if they are 75 years or older.

So far, our Tenancy Sustainability Team have helped 22 people to successfully claim this benefit, which works out to a total of £118,040 of extra income for them – that is an average of £5,365 per person! The team are currently waiting on the results of a further six Pension Credit applications, so soon even more people could be in a better financial position thanks to the support the team are providing.

If you have access to the internet you can use the government website to see for yourself if you are eligible for Pension Credit – just go to [www.gov.uk/pension-credit](https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit).



## Cost of living support

**With many of us still finding it hard to make ends meet due to the increased cost of living that everyone is facing, we want to remind you of the support that is available to help you get through it all.**

Our Tenancy Sustainability Team are here to help if you are finding it hard to pay your rent or are struggling to manage your money and debts. They can provide support tailored specifically to you and your own personal circumstances, so if you need help you can speak to the team by calling **01302 862050**, or you can email them at **HOTS@stlegerhomes.co.uk**

If you have internet access, the website [www.yourlifedoncaster.co.uk](https://www.yourlifedoncaster.co.uk) has a dedicated cost of living support section which is a hub for information and advice that can help if you are finding things difficult.

Our website [www.stlegerhomes.co.uk](https://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk) also has lots of advice on fuel and energy bills, household budgeting, links to partner organisations who can provide specialised support for different issues, and much more.

To find all of this just go to our website and click on the 'Get Support' button on the right of the menu bar – here you will

also find a 'Benefits' section where you can access a benefits calculator that will tell you exactly which benefits you are entitled to claim.

Help is available, so if you need support then please do get in touch.

### Did you know?

In 2022 we used the Accessible Housing Register to match **146** people to adapted homes that meet their needs.



# Are you claiming all you're entitled to?

**With the cost of living crisis causing higher energy bills and food prices for everyone, now is the ideal time to find out if there are any benefits you may be entitled to that you are not already claiming.**

Many of us believe that if we are working then we are not entitled to any benefits or additional income support, however, the fact is that many working households are eligible for financial help to top up their income through Universal Credit. This includes up to 85% childcare costs or help through the Tax-Free Childcare scheme.

If you have internet access then it is easy to find out if you are missing out on any benefits – and you never know, you may get a nice surprise!

All you have to do is fill in the Benefits Calculator on our website by opening your web browser and typing in **stleger.entitledto.co.uk** – it's anonymous, quick, easy and free! You can also find the Benefits Calculator by going to **www.stlegerhomes.co.uk**, clicking 'Get Support', then selecting 'Benefits' and you will see the link there.

You will need to input details about your household, income, savings, rent or mortgage costs and the calculator will work out what you may be entitled to, as well as telling you how and where to claim. It is important to claim any eligible benefits as soon as possible as they may mean you are eligible for additional cost of living payments in the future.

Don't delay, complete a check today and ensure you are claiming all your entitlements.



## Cost of living hub opens in Mexborough

**In March 2023, a new cost of living hub launched in Mexborough to offer support to anyone in the community who feels that they need a little extra help to get through these challenging times.**

The hub is based at Mexborough Library and is open on the last Monday of every month from 1:30pm to 3:30pm. It is a safe and supportive space where you can come for help and advice

from a number of local organisations including St Leger Homes, Citizens Advice, Credit Unions, the Department for Work and Pensions, Crisis, and Doncaster Council's Stronger Communities team.

We understand that for many of us it's not always easy to talk about money or ask for assistance, but support is available so please do come and have a chat to see how we can help you.

If you can't attend the hub you can speak to us by calling **01302 862862** or visit **www.stlegerhomes.co.uk** and see the advice we have on our 'Get Support' page.

### Did you know?

In 2022 we helped **239** tenants complete a mutual exchange move to a home more suitable to their needs.



# Help review our Customer Charter

The Customer Charter is our commitment to you about the things you can expect from us as your landlord. It is developed in consultation with tenants, so it is built around the things that matter most to you about our services!

It is currently made up of four promises:

## Did you know?

In 2022 we allocated **1273** homes to people on the housing register.



### Customer Standards

#### Friendly and Polite Staff



- All staff and contractors are: helpful, respectful, polite, friendly and professional
- We will treat you as an individual with respect and dignity

#### Easy to do business with



- We will always aim to deal with your enquiries quickly and effectively by knowledgeable staff
- We will be easy to contact, using your own preferred method (phone, email, letter, social media etc.)

#### Safe and Secure



- We will make sure you feel safe in your home / neighbourhood / community

#### Keeping Promises



- We will always offer you an appointment that is most convenient to you within the times we deliver our services
- We will keep our promises and do what we say we will
- We will do our best to get it right the first time, every time

Our current Customer Charter was written in 2021, so we are now at the stage where we are looking to review and update it. We have asked our Get Involved Group and Tenant and Resident Improvement Panel for their thoughts, but we want to know what you think too – are the four promises above still important to you? Is anything missing?

Send us your comments and suggestions by going to [www.stlegerhomes.co.uk](http://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk) and clicking the 'Contact Us' button in the top right corner, or email [info@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:info@stlegerhomes.co.uk) putting 'Customer Charter' as the subject.

## Do more online with My Access

**The My Access section on our website is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can be used to see important tenancy information, such as details about your rent account. You can also use it to make rent payment at a time and place that is convenient for you.**

As well as this, My Access allows you to contact our Repairs and Maintenance Team if you have

an issue in your home that you need us to look at – without the need to hang around waiting on the telephone!

If you haven't already registered, just go to [www.stlegerhomes.co.uk](http://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk) and click on the My Access button at the top of the page. We will soon also be adding the ability to report repairs so don't miss out, register now and get 24/7 access to our services!



# Tenancy Satisfaction Measures

**From April 2023, the Government is bringing in 22 new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to assess how well social housing landlords in England are performing in a number of key service areas. For us, these will replace the STAR survey we usually do each year.**

The main themes the TSMs will focus on are:

- Keeping properties in a good state of repair.
- Maintaining the safety of buildings.
- Engaging with customers in a helpful and respectful way.
- Managing neighbourhoods in a responsible way.
- Handling complaints effectively.

For 12 of the new measures we will ask a representative sample of tenants survey questions about how satisfied they are with some of our services. We will provide internal management information to the Regulator of Social Housing for the remaining 10 TSMs.

We will use an external provider to carry out the phone surveys between May and September

this year – if we call you we would be grateful if you can give us your feedback.

Along with every other social housing landlord, we will have to report our TSMs to the Regulator of Social Housing each year and make the results available to you. This will give you the opportunity to hold us to account if we aren't meeting your needs. The idea is

that this will help improve social housing across the country – which is something we all want!

We will publish the feedback we receive and details on how well we have performed against all 22 TSMs on our website [www.stlegerhomes.co.uk](http://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk), and in a future edition of HouseProud – so keep an eye out for news about this early next year.



## Did you know?

During Feb 2023 we carried out almost **1,800** gas service checks to keep households safe.



## Gas and electrical safety checks

**We are now contacting customers to arrange appointments for your annual gas and five year electrical safety checks.**

These checks help to keep you and your family safe by making sure that the gas appliances and electrical wiring in your home stay in good working order. If your appliances aren't properly maintained it could lead to very serious

problems such as fire and carbon monoxide poisoning, so it really is essential that you let us in to your home to carry out these important safety checks.

If you would like to speak to the Gas Team you can contact them by calling **01302 862862** (Option 1), or by email at [tenantrepairs@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:tenantrepairs@stlegerhomes.co.uk).

# Tips to prevent condensation

**Condensation is something that happens in all homes when moisture in the air hits a cold surface, such as a window or wall, where it then turns into water droplets.**

It can be particularly common when the weather gets colder but, even though we are now no longer in the coldest months of the year, it is still important to take some sensible precautions to avoid the build-up of condensation when doing things such as cooking, bathing, and washing and drying clothes in the home.

## Did you know?

Between April-October 2022 we installed External Wall Insulation to **107** homes in Balby and Intake, making them warmer and more comfortable.



The easiest and most effective way to prevent problems is to simply open a window when you are doing any of these activities, as this will give the moisture in the air chance to escape.



Using a lid to cover pans when you are cooking will help too as this stops steam from rising out of the pan and going into the air.



Closing the door when you are cooking or using the bath or shower is a good way to stop any steam that has been generated from travelling out into other rooms in your home and causing problems there.



If you have an extractor fan fitted, use it when cooking or bathing to help remove steam from the room. Leave it on for 5-10 minutes after you have finished to clear away the remaining moisture, but make sure to turn it off after this.



Drying clothes and other washing outside the house where possible means the moisture that comes off them will not be trapped inside your home.



All homes will have air vents and it is really important that you do not block any of these up as they are designed to allow the proper circulation of air, which will help to prevent damp and mould issues from occurring.



Opening some of your windows two or three times each day is another way that you can get some air flow and improve ventilation in your home, allowing moisture to escape.



Wipe off any condensation that builds up on your windows or walls straight away. This will help to prevent any more serious problems from developing.

**By following this simple advice you will be able to reduce or prevent condensation in your home, which will make more serious problems such as damp and mould less likely to occur.**

# Building a better repairs service

## Did you know?

Between Apr '22-Jan '23 we completed almost **63,000** responsive repairs.



**We have made some changes to our repairs service by merging our scheduled repairs team – who handle non-essential repairs – with our main responsive repairs team. This new way of working will provide a better service for you, and the change follows consultation and feedback from customers.**

Here are the improvements we're making:

- You will get an appointment when you first contact us to report a non-essential repair.
- You will receive a confirmation text about the repair and a reminder before it is carried out.
- We will ring you before we come to carry out the repair to let you know we are on our way.
- We will aim to carry out the repair on the first visit where possible.

- We will send a survey afterwards so you can tell us what you thought about the service.

To help deliver these improvements we have been focussing on emergency, urgent and non-urgent repairs for now and have put non-essential repairs on hold for a short time – but we will be re-starting them again soon. If your non-essential repair is on hold we will contact you as soon as it has been re-booked, which we aim to do as soon as possible.

Damp and mould repairs are unaffected and will still be completed as normal, as will scheduled repair work being carried out by our contractor Wates.

Thank you for your support and understanding whilst we make these changes, we think this will result in a much improved repairs service for you.

## Keep yourself safe from fire

**Serious house fires are devastating and can quickly put the lives of you and your loved ones in danger, as well as causing a huge amount of damage. The good news is there are lots of simple things you can do around the home to massively reduce your chance of suffering a fire.**

Here are ten top tips to help keep you safe:

- Test your smoke alarms regularly by holding down the 'test' button until it beeps. If your smoke alarms don't work, contact our Technical Support Service on **01302 862862**.
- Take extra care in the kitchen and never leave cooking unattended.
- Never use a chip pan or any other pan filled with hot oil.
- Smoking and candle fires are a leading cause of fatal house fires. Avoid using candles and tea-lights in the home.
- If you do smoke, make sure cigarettes are put out properly and disposed of carefully.
- Don't let children play with matches or lighters.

- Don't overload plug sockets (most can only take a maximum of 13 amps).
- Don't charge items like mobile phones, tablets or e-cigs overnight or longer than the recommended charging time.
- Keep clothes well away from heaters and open fires
- Plan an escape route and make sure everybody in the house knows how to get out in the event of a fire.



For more information visit [www.syfire.gov.uk/safety-advice/](http://www.syfire.gov.uk/safety-advice/)

## Did you know?

Between April-October 2022 we carried out **1128** Fire Risk Assessments to keep tenants safe.





# Supporting our tenants

**If you are finding it a struggle to manage your money, or are worried about paying back what you have had to borrow just to afford the essentials, why not speak to our Tenancy Support Team?**

We can offer you help, support and advice about lots of things, including:

- Checking entitlement to benefits and helping you make a claim
- Helping to claim grants from charities
- Dealing with debts, such as water charges
- Finding a home more suited to your needs
- Making sure you're not paying too much for essentials like broadband

The help that our Tenancy Support Team provides makes a massive difference to the customers they work with. Recently, we helped one tenant receive almost £40,000 in backdated and extra benefits!

**We really can help you – here's some figures to show you the difference we have made for tenants between April 2021 and March 2022:**

- Supported over 900 customers
- Helped customers claim over £750k in additional benefits and support
- 98% customers were still able to pay their rent and maintain their tenancies six months after their support had ended; and 97% were still doing this after one year

**Between April 2022 and November 2022:**

- 764 people received support from us
- We helped 625 people claim a total of £935,603 in extra benefits – that's almost one million pounds!

- Despite the difficult problems they were facing, 97% of the customers we supported were still in their tenancies six months after their support ended

We also work closely with lots of organisations, including Doncaster Citizens Advice Bureau who can provide specialist help; and Community First Credit Union who can help you access savings, banking and affordable credit.

If you think our Tenancy Support Team could help you, or you just want to check that all your finances are OK, visit our website for more information at [www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/TST](http://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/TST)

## Mental health and wellbeing support available

We all try to keep ourselves fit and healthy, but health is about much more than just our physical condition – it's important to look after our mental health too. That's why we have launched our new Mental Health Navigator team.

Our Mental Health Navigators provide a free service to offer support and advice to tenants having problems with anxiety, low mood, stress, difficulty sleeping and other issues affecting their mental health and wellbeing. They can help people create their own personalised plan to take the first steps towards addressing the issues they are experiencing. This support is available to people who aren't currently receiving support from any other mental health services.

For information on how to refer yourself for support, please visit our website at [www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/MHN](http://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/MHN)

## Did you know?

You can get involved in how we deliver our services by joining our One Voice Forum. No qualifications needed – just bring your opinions.



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