

news spring 2021

archeshousing



spring has finally sprung!

April brings with it a new financial year, and Arches is fully geared up for an exciting and fresh 2021/22!

We're very excited to bring you our new Tenant Wellbeing and Support Service (page 2), a free, confidential service that offers you help on practically any issue, in over 150 languages.

Looking to get more involved with decisionmaking at Arches? The 2021/22 financial year brings with it a brand new roster of resident involvement events, as we've now officially adopted the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants initiative (page 3).

Our current COVID-19 guidelines

With over 50% of UK adults vaccinated against COVID-19 at the time of writing, we're finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel of lockdown.

Of course, while we're all excited to be returning to a semblance of normality, we do urge you to continue to follow all government guidelines and socialise responsibly.

We are still following COVID-19 guidelines in order to keep you, your family and our colleagues safe. This means keeping visits in households to a minimum, and when it's

unavoidable, following all the necessary social distancing rules.

Our office continues to be closed to the public for the foreseeable future. However, we will be reviewing our opening times in the coming months, and we remain cautiously optimistic that, in line with government restrictions, we will be able to safely open our office doors again later this year.

You can find our latest COVID-19 guidelines on our website at [archeshousing.org.uk/covid-19](https://www.archeshousing.org.uk/covid-19)



HERE TO HELP

We're launching a free, confidential support and wellbeing service for all our residents.

At Arches Housing, we're committed to making sure our residents get the best out of their homes. But this doesn't just mean fixing leaks and plastering over cracks - it means supporting you in every aspect of your life.

That's why we've partnered up with Life & Progress to offer a free, confidential support and wellbeing service to all our residents.

The right help at the right time
The service is available around-the-clock, 24/7, over the telephone and online.

The service aims to answer your questions quickly and will also refer you to the most appropriate source of support, including counselling, legal, financial, childcare and consumer experts.

Support includes:

- mental health and wellbeing
- family matters
- relationships
- managing debt
- workplace issues
- domestic abuse
- your rights as a consumer and much more.

Staying happy and healthy

Get immediate access to mental health support. Qualified BACP counsellors provide in-the-moment telephone counselling.

Accessing support

The service can be accessed at any time simply by calling the freephone number.

Upon speaking to a trained service representative, you'll be supported to determine the best course of action in

resolving your issue.

Whatever your situation, the service will help - and if appropriate, put you in touch with an expert who will assist you with the issues you're facing.

Open to everyone

The service uses the same translation services as the emergency services, which means you can get immediate translation into over 150 languages.

As the service is provided by an independent organisation, it's totally confidential. We won't know that you have accessed it or what for.

Freephone 0330 094 8845
www.tsws-assist.co.uk
Username: arches
Password: tenantsupport



Together with Tenants is a national initiative that focuses on strengthening the relationship between residents and housing associations.

On 01 April, Arches officially adopted the Together with Tenants charter, making the six following commitments:

Relationships

Housing associations will treat all residents with respect in all of their interactions, and relationships will be based on openness, honesty and transparency.

Communication

Residents will receive clear, accessible and timely information from their housing association on the issues that matter to them.

Voice and influence

Housing associations will seek and value the views of all residents, and will use this information to inform

decisions.

Accountability

Collectively, residents will work in partnership with their housing association to independently scrutinise and hold their housing association to account for the decisions that affect the quality of their homes and services.

Quality

Residents can expect their homes to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.

When things go wrong

Residents will have simple and accessible routes and support for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress when things go wrong.

Our consultation

We're starting off our Together with Tenants journey by consulting with our residents. This consultation will enable us to understand what these

six commitments mean for us and our residents in line with the charter. We want to know what you think we need to do to meet these commitments, what we're doing well so far, and what we need to improve on.

Our first step was to undertake a survey which you may have already completed - thank you so much for making your voice heard!

If you haven't, there'll still be plenty of opportunities to have your say as we launch our Together with Tenants Residents' Group.

The Residents' Group will oversee the work we're doing to fulfil the charter, making sure we stay on track in line with what tenants want.

Find out more about our Together with Tenants adoption at www.bit.ly/archeswithtenants

have your Say

JOIN OUR COMMUNAL CLEANING SCRUTINY GROUP AND

MAKE SURE YOUR VOICE IS HEARD

Now more than ever, we're all aware of the importance of maintaining cleanliness in our communal areas.

That's why our next scrutiny group will focus on our communal cleaning services, reviewing performance and making sure the work is up to the standards you expect.

What would I be doing?

Residents who join the communal cleaning scrutiny group will work alongside fellow Arches customers, our staff and the board to review the service, tell us what we're doing well and identify any areas for improvement.

You'll be surveying your fellow residents, carrying out

inspections of communal areas and using your ideas and recommendations to make a real difference to the cleaning service.

What would be expected of me?

All you'd need to bring is a positive attitude and an open mind - no experience of tenant involvement is necessary!

The group meets as often as it feels is necessary to fully understand and evaluate the service - usually around 4 meetings.

Due to lockdown restrictions we're carrying out all of the meetings virtually - but if you don't have access to a device with a camera and microphone, or you struggle with tech, we're on hand to support you.

I'm interested - what do I do now?

Just give us a call on 0114 228 8100 or email involvement@archeshousing.org.uk to register your interest and find out more. ☺

SUMMER IS
COMING

ARE YOU
READY?

Make sure your home and garden
are summer-ready come rain or shine

We're all ready to say goodbye to winter and the problems cold weather brings - and your mind might now be drifting towards family barbecues, lounging at the beach or simply soaking up as much sun as possible!

But warmer weather brings its own trials - especially in the UK, where our homes are often built to keep us toasty and warm during colder months.

So it's a good idea to give your home the once over before hot weather hits - and make sure any problems are dealt with before they begin.

Prevent damp and mould

Condensation isn't just a problem in winter, but year round. It forms when warm, moist air comes into contact with air or a surface that's colder.

On average each person in the household produces around 4 litres of water vapour each day - and unless this water is removed quickly, you won't just have the

inconvenience of damp, but the hazard of mould.

Follow these top tips to make sure you're doing everything you can to prevent condensation:

- **Provide adequate ventilation.** Throw open the windows and doors and let some fresh air in!
- **Control humidity.** Make sure you're running your extractor fans in your kitchen and bathroom when using water, such as running a bath or boiling the kettle, and shut the doors to these rooms when the fan is on.
- **Dry laundry outside.** Let the sun's UV rays brighten and disinfect your clothes - for free!

Give the windows and doors some love

Let the sun shine through! Give your windows and glass door panels a good go-over with a no-streak window cleaner, or a white vinegar-water solution. Make sure your doors and windows open smoothly. Use

WD-40 on the hinges of your doors and windows, and clean off any build up of grime around windows with white vinegar.

Take care of the garden

Make sure you can enjoy your home and garden properly throughout the summer! Give the lawn a bit of love to make sure it's neat and tidy, and control the weeds that are starting to creep up with a hand weeder (or even an old fork in a pinch). Check out your gutters and make sure they're leak-proof and free of leaves and debris, and then give the barbecue a once over with a grease cleaner to make sure it's safe, clean and ready to cook up some fresh burgers or kebabs!

Once you've carried out these quick fixes, you'll definitely deserve a nice cold drink in the sun! ☺



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gardens of the year 2021

Calling all green thumbs! The annual Arches garden competition has returned, and we're looking to celebrate the creative, imaginative gardens our residents have worked hard to create.

Beautiful gardens make a real difference in all our neighbourhoods - and with many green spaces closed during the last year, our gardens have become more important than ever.

With five different categories to choose from, all shapes and sizes of gardens are eligible to enter, from windowsills to communal areas.

The categories are:

People's choice - sponsored by Earth Electrical Response Ltd

This category will be open to all our residents to vote on their favourite garden from a shortlist chosen by the judges.

Most creative garden - sponsored by Garden & Property Maintenance

Have you let your imagination run wild? This category rewards creative uses of space and resources at your disposal to create something truly magical.

Best communal garden - sponsored by Oakbrook Services

Have you and your neighbours created a welcoming space to enjoy together? This category is awarded to the best shared space.

Best plants in pots - sponsored by Oakbrook Services

Not everyone has a traditional garden space - but that doesn't mean you can't enter! This category is awarded to the best container garden, whether it's a windowsill herb garden or a hanging basket in bloom.

Kids' corner - sponsored by Willis Developments

This category is open to all

residents under the age of 16, celebrating getting children into gardening. From fairy gardens to towering sunflowers, veggie plots to container gardens, we want to find the most imaginative young gardener in an Arches home!

Please ask a parent or guardian to send in photos of your garden.

Judging

Want to get involved with judging our garden competition? Got a keen eye for ambitious, creative spaces? We're looking for two residents to join our panel of judges, along with representatives from our staff team, board and grounds maintenance service provider!

Simply email involvement@archeshousing.org.uk and let us know why you'd like to be on the panel. The closing date for panel selection will be 31 May 2021.

Prizes

The panel will select a 1st, 2nd and 3rd place from each category.

- 1st place - trophy and £30 voucher
- 2nd place - certificate and £20 voucher
- 3rd place - certificate and £10 voucher

How to enter

Simply download an application form from our website and email it in to us, telling us a bit about how you created your space and including some photos of your garden.

Nominations will open on Monday 14 June and will close on Monday 12 July 2021.

Could you and your garden be our winners? Enter now or nominate a neighbour (as long as they live in an Arches home too!) at archeshousing.org.uk/current-residents/garden-competition 

our new developments

In the development world, 2020/21 ends on a really positive note, with 53 properties delivered - our highest number of new homes in many years!

We've also had a really great start to 2021/22, taking on 7 new homes for rent on the Waverley development, and a further 3 rented homes in Wickersley by the end of March.

Our in-house development of 10 bungalows for over-55s in Rotherham are also coming along nicely, with completion expected in early autumn.

Over the next few months, we're planning to take on 3 more rented homes in Wickersley, and 6 rented apartments on Waverley.

2021 represents year 4 of our growth programme, which

is the work we're doing to increase the number of Arches homes and contribute to solving the housing crisis across the Sheffield City Region.

To do this, we're continuing to push for new developments across the region - so watch this space! ☘

fond farewells



It is with mixed emotions that we announce the retirement of two longstanding members of the Arches team. Luigi Iantorno, our Reinvestment Manager, has been with us for five years, leading on implementing the Arches Home Standard via our planned works programme.



Sally Steade, our Head of Assets, said, "Luigi brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to Arches and has had great success delivering the Arches Home Standard. We thank Luigi for all his efforts during his time at Arches and wish him well in his retirement where he'll enjoy more quality time with his

growing family and hobbies!"

Customer Services Advisor Jane Southorn is leaving us after an incredible 15 years. Alicia Hancock-Edwards, Customer Services Manager, said, "Jane always has a smile for everyone - so many people over the years have commented on how Jane made anyone who came to the office feel welcome with her smile. She's a real trooper who could always be relied on, wind, rain or shine. She will be very missed."

Although we're really sad to see them go, we want to wish them a very fond farewell on their well-deserved retirements. ☘

planned works and repairs

Despite the continued lockdown we have managed to complete the following:

- bathroom replacements and shower installation in 16 properties
- timber external doors replaced with composite doors in 6 properties
- external painting and UPVC cleaning in 146 properties
- high efficient A-rated boilers replaced in 27 properties

Surveys are currently in progress in order to prioritise

the programme for the next phase of planned works. If you've received a letter regarding a survey, please ensure that you arrange access as soon as possible.

Over the last quarter we've carried out **3,074** repairs, compliance and planned works, with **1,021** of those being emergency, urgent or 28 day repairs.

Although the 'stay at home' restrictions have now ended, our operatives will continue to follow our COVID-19

guidelines, which you can find on our website.

It's really important that you make sure you're in for appointments and to grant access to our contractors. If they can't get access, your appointment will be cancelled and you'll have to wait for the next available appointment.

We thank you for your ongoing patience and understanding in these difficult times. ☘

shaping your Arches experience

under the magnifying glass

Arches residents had their say on grounds maintenance service during service scrutiny review

It's been a strange year, and many of our usual methods of communicating with our residents have been limited or prevented completely. But that didn't stop the three determined ladies who made up our grounds maintenance scrutiny group from getting stuck in, having their say on what mattered to them and their neighbourhoods, and advocating on behalf of their fellow residents.

Arches residents Sally, Lois and Laura have been virtually meeting up with the team at Arches and our grounds maintenance provider, Oakbrook Services, to give us a good grilling about the service provision and what they expected from it. The group came together after taking part in a survey that went out to all grounds maintenance service recipients last year, which was completed by 96 out of 251 residents, and initially studied findings from the survey. They followed this by going into more detail looking at their own areas.

They followed this up with Q&A sessions with our Director of Operations, John Hudson, who manages the service, and Oakbrook's Managing Director, Ben Chadwick. Once they were happy with their understanding of the service

and what they wanted us to improve, they created a list of recommendations to take to

"[I would like] more information about what is covered in the grounds maintenance service."
- customer feedback

the board.

The recommendations were:

- consult with customers if they would like grass cuttings removed from their individual schemes
- Oakbrook and Arches to take a more proactive approach in reporting/recommending additional works, such as re-planting of shrubs
- all schemes to have 19 visits per year minimum
- improve communication to tenants about the service, including a breakdown of what exactly tenants can expect from the service, accessible in different languages and formats
- over and above the grounds maintenance contract, ensure Arches support of community engagement and residents' groups at a grassroots level

Taking it to the top

The group presented these recommendations during

a virtual board meeting. All of the recommendations were then accepted by the board.

Arches Board Chair, Kay Dickinson, said, "Scrutiny plays a very important role in ensuring we're doing the best we possibly can for our residents.

"The participation of our customers is absolutely key in making sure we get to know firsthand about their experience of Arches services, and we're being properly challenged on our policies and decisions.

"We really enjoyed hearing from the scrutiny group at our board meeting. It's always inspiring to hear from residents who have given up their time for the benefit of their community, and we're really pleased that we have been able to improve things for everyone as a result of their work.

"We'd like to say a huge thank you to the group from all of us on the board."

Have your say

Recruitment has now begun for the next scrutiny group, which will cover our communal cleaning service. For more information and how to get involved, turn to page 4. ☘

Fly-tipping is a crime.

Litter and household waste can become a major problem when it isn't dealt with correctly.

Incorrectly disposed rubbish poses a risk to people and wildlife, blights the environment and costs thousands of pounds to clear up.

Not disposing of your waste correctly isn't just a breach of your tenancy agreement. It's also a criminal offence punishable by an unlimited fine or up to five years' imprisonment.

The true cost of fly-tipping

If someone decides to dump their waste instead of disposing of it properly, they might consider it job done, cash saved. But a few pounds here and there adds up for everyone.

Last year, Arches spent over £8,000 on waste removal on our estates - money that could have gone into extra services or property upgrades, which would have greatly benefited our residents.

If we hadn't had to use this money on waste removal, we could have provided:

- 1 household with a new

kitchen

- 2 households with a new bathroom
- 8 new front doors
- 16 new windows

What can I do to help?

- 1 Download the FixMyStreet app to instantly report problems with littering or fly-tipping to the council - and give us a ring if you see any fly-tipped waste on our schemes.
- 2 Take all bulky items to the tip. If you don't have your own transport, the council can collect large household waste for a small fee.
- 3 Sell or donate items you no longer need to a charity shop or via Facebook Marketplace or Gumtree.
- 4 If you buy a new bulky item like a fridge, see if the retailer will take your old one away (sometimes they'll do it for free!)
- 5 Make sure you know your local recycling procedures so waste collectors don't reject your rubbish. ♻️

new dedicated gas phonenumber

We've worked with Robert Heath Ltd., our gas service provider, to bring you a new, dedicated phone line for all gas enquiries.

You can now directly get in touch with the Robert Heath Ltd. contact centre on 0203 764 3962.

You can also phone our usual number on 0114 228 8100 and select option 2 to be redirected, or speak with our friendly customer service team by selecting option 3.

This means you can make enquiries to Robert Heath more quickly, including booking in or querying about existing repairs.

If you can smell gas, your carbon monoxide alarm goes off, or you have hit a gas pipeline (even if there is no leak evident), call the National Grid straight away on 0800 111 999. ⚡

**TIRED OF
POTHoles
FLY-TIPPING
LOOSE PAVING
DOG POOP VANDALISM
BROKEN STREET LIGHTING?**

**REPORT THEM TO
THE COUNCIL WITH**
FixMyStreet.com

another project from the lovely people at mySociety

estate inspections

Estate inspection dates have been added to our website from now until the end of July.

We carry out estate inspections, also known as walkabouts, in order to make sure your neighbourhood is clean, safe and attractive.

Estate inspections involve our Housing Officers walking around the estates where our homes are located, and identifying issues that might need to be tackled.

This includes a wide range of issues such as repairs to grounds and communal areas, or incidents of flytipping.

We are not currently inviting customers to attend walkabouts as we usually would due to coronavirus restrictions.

However, we do invite you to contact your Housing Officer directly ahead of the walkabout in your area if you have anything you'd like to discuss.

You can find out more about estate walkabouts, including the schedule of walkabouts until August and how to contact your Housing Officer at www.bit.ly/estategwalkabouts ⚡

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peoplecommunitieshomes

If you would like to discuss anything in this newsletter, or would like to contact us about anything else, you can do so at:

Tel: 0114 228 8100
Email: involvement@archeshousing.org.uk
Arches Housing Limited, 122 Burngreave Road, Burngreave, Sheffield S3 9DE

 /archeshousing  @archeshousing



If you or your client require this document in an alternative format, including Large Print, Easy Read or translation services, please email involvement@archeshousing.org.uk or call 0114 228 8100.

Arabic | عربي

إذا طلبت هذه الوثيقة باللغة العربية ، فيرجى الاتصال بالرقم 0114 228 8100.

Urdu | اردو

اگر آپ کو اردو میں یہ دستاویز درکار ہے تو براہ کرم 0114 228 8100 پر فون کریں۔

Punjabi | ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0114 228 8100 ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ.

Polish | Polski

Jeśli potrzebujesz ten dokument w języku polskim, zadzwoń pod numer 0114 228 8100.

Somali

Hadaad u baahato dukumintiga af soomaali ah fadlan wac 0114 228 8100.

French | Français

Si vous avez besoin de traduction en français, téléphoner 0114 228 8100 s'il vous plaît.

Slovak | Slovenský

Ak potrebujete preklad tohto dokumentu do slovenčiny, zavolajte na číslo 0114 228 8100.