



WESTFIELD CRAIC

2021

Welcome to our latest newsletter. We hope you find it useful and informative. We welcome feedback on any of the content as well as any suggestions for future content.

Covid update

Resumption of normal repairs service

Following a decision in February to restrict the repairs service to emergency repairs and health and safety works only, we are happy to have now resumed the normal repairs service from Wednesday 14th April.

Thankyou for your patience during this restricted period.

Health and Safety related works

All health and safety works such as gas servicing's, fire safety checks and electrical safety tests are continuing as normal. Please allow access for these important safety checks. If you do have any concerns giving the contractor's access to carry out these checks, please contact us to discuss.

Office

The office in the Minto Centre will continue to remain closed to the public for the time being. We will review the closure in late May/early June. Staff are continuing to work mainly remotely, we are all available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

For all enquiries, pay your rent or report a repair, please ring **01900602906**. For Out of Hours emergencies please call **0151 343 2762**.

If the current office closure, or any other changes to the service are causing a problem for you, please contact us to discuss this. We would also like to hear from you if you think some things changed because of Covid, work better.

Your welfare

If you are struggling with any aspect of managing the current situation and need any help or advice, please let us know. There is a vast range of support available and depending on your issue we will either be able to assist you directly or put you in touch with the appropriate support group or agency. If you would prefer to contact a support group/agency directly useful contact numbers include:

Financial Help Allerdale Citizens Advice:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk or call 01900 604735.

West Cumbria Community Money Advice:

www.wccma.co.uk

Community Food Projects:

Moorclose Community Centre -Needham Drive, Workington, CA14 3SE Contact: Facebook 'Moorclose Community Centre'

The North Lakes Foodbank:

Can be contacted on 07502311452 operates across Allerdale at the following locations and times:

Maryport - St Mary's Church, Netherhall Corner, CA15 6LL - Tues/Thurs 12pm - 2pm and Fri 4pm - 6pm.

Cockermouth - Lorton Street Methodist Church, CA13 9RH - Tues/Wed/Thurs 10am- 12pm

Workington - Bridge Centre, Central Square, CA14 3BG - Mon/Wed/Fri 12pm - 2pm

Wigton - Cornerstone Methodist Church, 50 High

Covid update continued

Lettings

We are continuing to let properties and to deal with housing enquiries and applications to move home.

Footsteps Nursery

The nursery is open. In order to run as safely as possible the number of children able to attend is slightly reduced and classrooms are operating on a bubble basis.

To contact the nursery please call 01900 8720111

Gas Servicing

As many tenants will be aware we are currently using a new company, Sure Maintenance, to carry out the annual gas servicing and safety tests. This arrangement followed on from checks on a sample of appliances previously serviced that highlighted a potential problem with the performance of some of the gas fires in our homes.

The engagement of Sure is a temporary arrangement and we are currently tendering a new gas servicing contract. Sure will continue to carry out the servicing's due in April, May and June (these servicing's are carried out before the due date and should be completed during April and the first part of May).

Following the tender process, a permanent contractor should be appointed, and should start work during May for servicing's due from July onwards.

Further updates will be given on our website and in the next newsletter.



Gas Fires

Progress on checks of gas fires

Following the potential performance issues identified with gas fires. Sure Maintenance carried out checks of all gas fires across our housing stock. These checks have taken longer than anticipated but at the end of April have been completed for all but four properties. Follow up works have now started to deal with gas fires found to be in poor condition. Dependent on what has been agreed with each tenant these works are either:

- ◆ A replacement electric fire (choice of fire provided)
- ◆ Removal of the gas fire and making good of the fireplace (where a new electric fire was not wanted)



In some cases the gas fires have been found to be in reasonable condition but to require some repair works. These works have been instructed and should be completed during June. Again we have experienced some delays in actioning these works and apologise for this. If this is causing problems for you, please contact us.

Where fires are being removed we have not offered replacement gas fires for the following reasons:

- ◆ Requirements to be placed on housing associations and others to reduce carbon emissions/de-carbonise. Over the next few years there will be a general phasing out of gas appliances. Our current business plan includes the objective of improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions.
- ◆ The higher health and safety risks presented by gas fires compared to electric
- ◆ The higher maintenance requirements of gas fires.

To improve energy efficiency we aim to implement improvements in the longer term that will reduce the costs of heating your home and ensure that a sufficient and affordable level of warmth can be achieved in every home. The Planned Maintenance programme for 2021/22 includes works to improve the energy efficiency of a small number of our least energy efficient homes. As we develop our plans further this programme should increase significantly in size over the coming years.

If you have any views or queries on this matter please contact us on 01900 602906 .

Your Safety

As part of our repairs and maintenance service we carry out regular checks and services to ensure that your home is safe. These include:

- ◆ Servicing and testing gas and other heating systems annually. This testing includes checking that smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are in good working order
- ◆ Checking electrical safety. We are doing 180 checks this year and working towards checking electrical safety in every home every 5 years.
- ◆ Maintaining an asbestos register and checking asbestos risks, as necessary
- ◆ Carrying out fire safety checks of all communal areas including weekly checks of alarms and any potential fire risks, and an annual fire risk assessment carried out by a suitably qualified Fire Officer

Where these checks identify any safety issues, these should be attended too quickly.

In order to carry out these checks and tests it is important that we are able to access your home. We ask that you always provide access as requested so that these important checks are not missed.

If you have any concerns about the above checks and works and/or the safety of your home, please let us know. Your safety is our number one priority.



Community Survey

Alongside providing good and affordable homes one of our main aims is to provide a service that supports the local community and those living in it. We want to ensure that local neighbourhoods are good places to live and that residents are able to live happily and successfully.

To help us better understand how we can meet your needs and those of the wider community we are running a survey during May. This survey will ask questions about your experience of your home and neighbourhood, the things you like and don't like, and any difficulties that you currently face. The information provided will help us to decide what we need to do better, and what services are required.

We have commissioned a company called Acuity to carry out the survey on our behalf. The survey will start on 10th May 2021 and will be conducted by telephone, the call should take no more than 10 minutes.

We are planning to survey 150 tenants who will be selected by Acuity in order to gain responses from a representative sample that covers all ages and household types, as well as tenants living in different locations.

If you are called by Acuity we would be very grateful if you would take part and complete the survey. If you are keen to be involved, and to make sure that you are surveyed, please contact us so that we can advise Acuity to include you.

All the information provided will be confidential. We will be publishing the results (all anonymised), in the summer.

If you have any questions about the survey, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Later in year we will also be contacting all tenants in order to update and improve the information that we hold. Further information on this survey will be provided in due course

If you or someone you know have difficulty reading this newsletter and would like this information in large print, on CD or in Braille then please contact

Julie on (01900) 602906

Westfield Estate issues

Ground Maintenance

Due to the lockdown restrictions we stopped our grounds maintenance work.

We are pleased to say that we have now resumed service and any issues that have been reported over the lockdown will be addressed .

If there is any issues you feel we need to know about please let us know on 01900 602906.

Fly tipping

We have had several reports of fly tipping on the Westfield estate, in particular on the land behind Windsor Road.

We have arranged for removal of this on several occasions over the past few months but tipping has continued. This is becoming a serious issues for the estate and a substantial cost to the association.

At our request the contractors are erecting a fence to stop access to 'would be fly tippers' in this area and we are to monitor this area with CCTV. Anyone caught fly tipping will be reported to the police and Allerdale Borough Council.

If we receive evidence that any of our tenants are responsible for this unacceptable behaviour we will deal with it as a serious breach of tenancy and tenants could face tenancy enforcement.

If you have any information regarding who is responsible for fly tipping please let us know on 01900602906.

Estate Walkabout

We will soon be resuming our Westfield estate walkabout. The next walkabout is scheduled for 25th May 2021. There is no better opportunity than a walkabout for our tenants to work in partnership with us to see what is going on around the estate and identify any areas for improvement.

If you would like to be involved please let Susan know on 01900 602906
enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk

Dog Mess

We have had concerns raised from our contractors that Dog mess is increasingly becoming a problem in the community. The Association understand that tenants find a great deal of comfort from having a pet in their home, especially during this last 12 months where people have been isolated and unable to have face to face contact with people.

For this reason we allow our tenants that do not have a shared entrance to their homes to keep pets. However, we have been made aware that during lock down some tenants in flats with shared entrances have also been keeping dogs in their properties.

Whilst we understand that this does not apply to everyone. We have no option but to remind everyone that not only is this behavior is unacceptable and very unpleasant it can also be dangerous for children.

Unfortunately we have had to send letters out several times since the start of lockdown asking people to pick up after their dogs when out and about, but sadly this continues to be a problem. The Association asks that if you have any information of who is responsible for this behavior that you contact us on 01900 602906.

Reporting Dog Mess

Did you know, it takes less than a minute to register to be able to submit and track the progress of your enquiries and reports on-line using "myAllerdale" on-line reporting. Go to <http://www.allerdale.gov.uk/forms/report-dog-mess.aspx> to register.

Garden competition

Due to the success of the last garden competition we have decided we will make this an annual occurrence.

So get your green fingers working you could be this years winner of the £50

B&Q voucher.

Good Luck everyone



Customer engagement

Local Offer

The Local offer is a commitment to delivering certain services and tasks that we believe to be important to you, to an agreed standard. It was developed on feedback received from the tenant's survey in 2019 and from our understanding of what is important through our day to day contact with you. We aim to have more formal discussions with our tenants over time.

Two examples of the offer are:

Neighbourhood & Community

This is our offer to help foster strong and thriving communities. We want the neighbourhood to be a great place to live.

We said we would do an estate walkabout twice a year to help us to maintain high standards on the estate, identify and deal with resident's concerns and help improve the neighbourhood.

We said we will remove any fly tipping within two working days of it being reported.

We will seek to identify offenders and take appropriate action and we will work with partners to reduce occurrences.

The walkabout in March 2020 was postponed due to Covid 19. However, we managed to complete one in August 2020 which was a great success. We had residents, town counsellors and board members that took part. From that walkabout we highlighted several issues to outside agencies including fly tipping and an increased amount of dog muck around the estate. These were reported and dealt with within the timescale outlined in our offer of 2 working days.

We are now currently part of a focus group with Allerdale Borough council working in partnership addressing the increased volume of Fly tipping in the community.

If you have any ideas of how we can address these issues please let us know, we are very open to discussion with our tenants please contact us .



Working with and for tenants and residents

These are our promises to listen to, and work with, tenants & residents, making sure that we understand and act on peoples views and needs including dealing with complaints quickly and effectively, and learning from complaints received.

We said we will acknowledge all first stage complaints within 3 working days and aim to resolve 95% to the customers satisfaction within 20 working days.

Where a complaint is not resolved at the first stage and escalated to stage 2 we aim to acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days and aim to resolve 95% to the customers satisfaction within 20 working days.

In quarter 3 (October to December 2020) we received 2 complaints

1. Complaint about Housing Services
2. Complaint about Maintenance Services

The feedback from the tenants on our handling of the complaints was that the complaints were resolved satisfactorily but not within the timescale required in the policy. We have reminded staff of the timescales to be achieved. Including talking to the complainant and agreeing a revised timescale for responding if there is a genuine reason the policy timescale cannot be achieved.

The Housing Ombudsman has recently issued a new Complaints Handling Code. We have assessed ourselves against this code and the results of this assessment are shown on our website (www.westfieldha.org.uk). If there is anything you wish to discuss relating to this assessment, or with regard to complaints generally, please contact us.

Planned Maintenance and Painting Program



Due to Covid and the postponement of planned works, we have a lot of planned maintenance work to catch up on from our 2020/2021 improvement scheme.

- ◆ 45 bathrooms
- ◆ 17 kitchens

We want to assure you that we haven't forgotten about you and we will be starting work again very soon.

If you are scheduled to have improvements done on the 2021/2022 list you will receive a letter very soon.

Thankyou for you patience during this very difficult period.

External Painting Programme 2021

We will soon be starting our external painting programme for 2021.

We have identified 118 properties on this years programme these include:

- 43 on Windsor Road
- 19 On Ashmore Gardens
- 18 on Garth Road
- 8 on Goodman Road
- 4 Nilsson Drive
- 8 on Sarsfield Road
- 18 Westfield Drive



Play, indoors or outdoors is never trivial; it is serious and deeply meaningful. It needs to be cherished and encouraged by both parents and professionals; for in his/her choice of play a child reveals his future to Nature. (Froebel in Lilley 1967).



Footsteps Nursery is now 17 years old. Providing Early years childcare and education for children 3 months to 4 years and has received three consecutive outstanding Ofsted inspections and employs a highly qualified staff team.

Their child centred approach to early years education clearly reflects the principles of Fredrick Froebel, who was the godfather of Kindergartens. It is their commitment to this and other principles that make them a Froebelian nursery and as such the perfect place to up-hold the guidance issued to early years centers in the wake of a global pandemic that has rocked the world.

The COVID 19 pandemic has impacted on almost every area of our life; for children returning to nursery following lockdown outdoor play has enabled them the time and space to adjust. When children work outdoors there are no pre-determined limitations. Children are allowed the time and space to develop their own ideas, follow their own story line and act out their own experiences as they try to make sense of these unprecedented times within the safe environment provided by the nursery.

If your child is age 3 months to 4 years and you would like them to attend Footsteps Nursery and experience these unique, wonderful activities, please contact:

Tel: 01900 872011 **email:**

enquiries@footstepsnurseryworkington.com for further information on costs.

If your child is two years old you may be eligible for a free childcare place, to check if you are eligible go to www.cumbria.gov.uk/childcare or telephone 03457 125737.

Footsteps Nursery also offers Funded early years places for 3&4 year-old children, depending on eligibility children can access 15 or 30 hours per week. Children who are eligible for 30 hours have the option to access 30 hours flexibly across 50 weeks rather than the 38-week traditional school term time option.

If you are a Tenant of Westfield Housing Association you could be eligible for a 50% reduction in the cost of your childcare.