



Spring Newsletter

2025



Welcome to the latest edition of our Newsletter. We hope you find it useful and informative. Please let us know if you have any ideas for future contents.

Office opening hours

Our office continues to be open from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm Monday to Friday.

Staff are available on the phones from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm Monday to Thursday and from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm on Fridays.

Tenants can come to the office and meet with staff between 1.00 pm and 5.00 pm but will need a pre-booked appointment.

As usual, any emergency repairs can be reported outside of these hours through our out-of-hours service on (0151 343 2762). If you have any questions regarding this information please let us know.

Annual Rent Review

You will have all received your rent increase letter now. So thought we would share some important information for those who claim help towards their rent payments.

Keep your rent increase letter somewhere safe, you will need it in April. If your housing costs are paid for by

Universal Credit:

Universal Credit will; send you a to-do in April called 'Confirm your housing costs'.

Use the information in this letter to complete the to do before the due date to avoid problems with your payments. You must only use the 'Confirm your housing costs' to-do to report these changes.

Do **not** contact Universal Credit to report them any other way.

Direct Debits:

If you pay your rent by direct debit they will be changed by us and you will receive confirmation of your new direct debit amount.

Standing Orders:

If you pay your rent by standing order you must change this amount with your bank. If you are unsure as to what this new amount should be then please contact Andrea on 01900 602906.

Housing Benefit:

If your rent is paid by Housing Benefit then we will inform them of the new rent amount however it is always better if you contact them direct yourself to confirm your new rent amount.


If you have any queries in relation to any of the above or your rent increase, please contact Andrea on 01900 602906.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

You should also consider whether you are eligible for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to help with rent or housing costs. You can apply for this through Cumberland Council.

Support from WHA

If you are struggling with your finances please contact us and we will assess whether there is any other help or support available to you.



Community events

Ant-Social Behaviour (ASB)

As part of Anti-Social Behaviour Week of Action (18-24 November) partners from the local focus hubs in Cumberland worked together to speak to residents and identify any problems.

As a result of work carried out by local officers and the high visibility patrols from Op Enhance, Cumbria has seen a reduction in ASB by 17.2% from April 2024 compared to the same time period in 2023.

During the week of action, Allerdale Neighbourhood Policing Team supported partner agencies through the local focus hub, in reaching out to residents in Westfield to provide advice and support regarding ASB and other issues residents were experiencing.



York Christmas markets

On 30th November 2024, 41 tenants and residents enjoyed yet another Christmas market trip. We enjoyed several games of bingo on the bus which was almost a clean sweep for Mr & Mrs Ackerley. Feedback from the people who attended said although York was beautiful, it was very busy and suggested we should perhaps looking at running the Christmas market trip during the week rather than a Saturday. Let us know your thoughts.



Kids Christmas Party

We held our annual kids Christmas party on Tuesday 17th December. We were very disappointed that out of the 24 booked places only 7 turned up. We know the weather was bad that day but we're interested to hearing your feedback on this and are open to ideas of how we can make a better success this year to prevent this happening again.



Community events

Christmas bingo

16 tenants and residents enjoyed our Annual Christmas Jumper Day at The Minto Centre on 12th December 2024. There was prize bingo, mince pies, cakes and a raffle. We are delighted to share that we raised £106.65 in support of our chosen charity, Autism Support Allerdale and Copeland. Our Chosen Charities are decided by our Residents Group each year.

The event was very well attended and feedback from the people who came said they would like us to do more bingo days on a regular basis. If this is something you would like to see more of, or you are interested in helping organising events like this, please let Susan know on 01900 602906.



Residents Group

We are looking to re-launch the residents group in April 2025. The role of the residents group is to help us organise social events and look at estate matters on behalf of other residents.

At the launch meeting in April the group will be pulling together our Calander of events for 2025 so that everyone can see what events and trips we have planned for the year ahead.

If you would be interested in joining the group or have any suggestions for future events please let us know ASAP on 01900 602906.

Customer Panel

Westfield's Customer Engagement Strategy states, 'we want to put our customers right at the heart of all the decisions we make about how we manage our homes and services now and into the future.'

Our Customer Panel is one of the ways through which we can do this. The Panel is a representative group of tenants who meet regularly with staff. It monitors, evaluates, scrutinises and influences our performance, priorities and service provision, and also considers any funding applications to support community projects and activities, making a real difference to the service provided to tenants. It plays a key role in ensuring we meet tenant's needs and expectations.

The Panel provides a forum for tenants to put forward ideas and influence decisions about how the Association manages and maintains its homes and delivers its services. By working closely with Board, the Panel will have a direct influence which will help to identify priorities from a customer perspective and help decide how money is spent on homes and services.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please get in touch on 01900 602906 or email enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk



Time for celebrations

This year marks 75 years of Westfield Housing Association.

I'm sure you will agree we have seen many changes during those years!

We wanted to mark this anniversary with a celebration, so thought we would ask for some suggestions from our tenants as to what they would like us to do to mark the occasion. Please contact us on 01900 602906 with your ideas.





My Home Contents Insurance

Westfield Housing Association does not insure your furniture, belongings or personal possessions. However we are able to offer all our tenants the chance to insure their home contents and belongings in an easy and affordable way. Westfield Housing Association has joined forces with Thistle insurance to bring you the My Home Contents Insurance Scheme.

As your landlord we cover the buildings insurance for your home but you're responsible, under the terms of your tenancy, for insuring your contents.

Home contents insurance isn't compulsory, but it's a good idea to consider what a policy would cover you for. Home contents insurance can help protect your possessions from risks like fire, theft, water damage, and many more household risks, giving you peace of mind.

What does contents insurance cover?

Furniture, Carpets, Curtains, Clothes, Bedding, Electrical items, Pictures, Ornaments.

It's now easier for you to get covered with the My Home online platform. You can purchase your home contents policy online when paying monthly via direct debit.

For more details or to get started, you have a few options:

Call Thistle Tenant Risks:
0345 450 7288

Visit the website: www.thistlemyhome.co.uk to learn more or request a call back here www.thistlemyhome.co.uk/call-back.

Buy Online: Visit www.thistlemyhome.co.uk to purchase your policy and set up monthly direct debit payments for added convenience.

Access to your property

As part of our repairs and maintenance service we have a legal responsibility to carry out regular checks and services to ensure that your home is safe, these include:

Gas service & solid fuel appliances, smoke and CO alarms, electrical safety & asbestos checks. We are also working on a 5 year rolling programme to ensure every one of our homes has a legal updated Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) in place.

In order for us to carry out these legal requirements **you must allow us access to your home.**

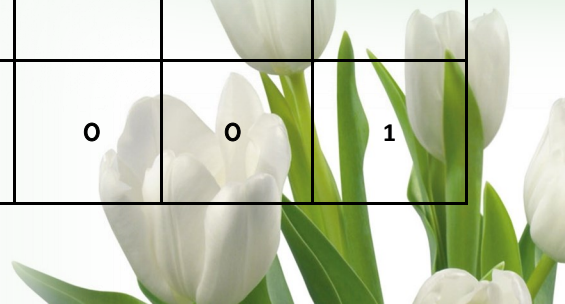
Gas Servicing is extremely important, not only does it keep the appliances in good order, but more importantly it keeps our tenants and their families/visitors safe.

Please ensure you allow access for Gas servicing – you will receive a letter with a date and AM / PM appointment.

If for some reason you cannot make the appointment, you MUST contact AFM Gas Services on 01900 871396 to re-arrange.

In the last 3 months of 2024, our gas servicing contractor, AFM, have reported;

Failed appointments for gas servicing Quarter 3 1st October 2024 — 31st December 2024			
	October	November	December
Minimum hours of wasted engineer time equated to	21	18	14
Financial loss to our contractors who still require payment!	£1083.60	£928.80	£722.40
Total recharged to tenants	£59.34	0	£118.68
Notice of seeking possession warnings/ solicitors' letters issued	0	0	1
Notices Seeking Possession/ commenced legal action	0	0	1



Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)

Warm Homes Wave 3 – 2025-2028

We're thrilled to announce that we have been provisionally allocated an additional £436,000.00 from the Government's Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund for Wave 3.

With Westfield matching this funding, we will be able to improve the energy efficiency of around 86 homes over the next three years through this initiative, bringing all of our properties up to an EPC rating of C or above.

This investment will help us:

- Deliver warmer, energy-efficient homes
- Combat fuel poverty
- Reduce carbon emissions

This funding builds on the progress we have made over the last two years through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 where we carried out energy efficiency work to 69 of our properties. We will be contacting the tenants who will be receiving this work in the coming weeks.

Damp, mould & condensation

If you are experiencing damp, mould or condensation in your home, it is important you let us know as soon as possible. You can read more in our damp, mould and condensation policy which has been published on our website. www.westfieldha.org.uk

To report a damp, mould or condensation issue in your home, contact us by phone, website, email or by visiting our office. Please give as much detail as possible and upload any photographs, if you are able to do so.

Once we have received your report our Technical Services Officer will visit you to inspect the problem and assess what needs to be done. Our response timescales are set out in our damp, mould and condensation policy.

We have also adopted some areas of good practice from other providers shared at a Damp & Mould Conference staff attended in December. Some examples are:-

1. Our Contractor will clean, treat and seal all reports of black mould – 3 step treatment.
2. Following up with tenants in a timely manner with progress.
3. Being persistent for access for both inspections and works – letters, texts, asking for photos prior to visits etc. to prioritise.
4. Taking into account vulnerabilities e.g. elderly and households where there are children under 14 to be given higher priority as the health risks are increased.
5. Window and door replacements with trickle vents, a high % of our properties do not have any trickle vents in and these can improve ventilation in a home considerably.

Tenant profiling information

Tenants often change their mobile numbers and email addresses or make changes to their household members that we don't know about.

This can include a change to the medical/disability needs of a family member, which is crucial in ensuring we provide the correct services to that household.

It is very important that we have the most recent up to date information about our tenants, to help us make contact when we need to, like gaining access for Gas safety, responsive repairs or planned maintenance, arranging your annual tenancy visits or in an unforeseen emergency.

Please help us know our tenants and make every contact count by taking the time to complete the enclosed Tenant profiling information form if you have had any changes to your household details.

You can drop the completed form in the office during office opening hours, shown on the front page of this newsletter or post it back to us.

You could also let us know about any changes to you household by using your tenants portal or emailing enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk.

If you would prefer to speak to your housing officer about your change of circumstances over the phone please contact us on 01900 602906.

Development

Phase two

We have now started building Phase two of the Development Programme. This will provide two bungalows on the derelict garage site behind Garth Road and another five bungalows on the area of overgrown land behind Garth Road and Ghyll Road. The work began in March 2025 and is due to be completed in September 2025.

This year, we are purchasing some new homes from Washington Homes in Gilcrux and Wigton, which will be complete in Autumn 2025, and we are continuing to purchase homes on the Westfield estate.

In future years we are purchasing six new homes from Story Homes in Seaton. However, these are not due to be completed until 2027 and 2028.

Going forward, we are hoping to purchase and develop two other areas of land to provide much needed affordable homes. As these schemes are several years away, we will keep you up to date with this in future newsletters.

Making a complaint

Do you know how to make a complaint?

Everyone deserves a safe and secure home.

If you have an issue with your home or Westfield Housing Association as a landlord there are ways to make things right.

You can complain to us in whichever way is easiest for you; electronically by filling out our complaints <https://www.westfieldha.org.uk/page/make-a-complaint>, via email, by telephone, in person, in writing, by text or via your tenant portal.

If you are not happy with our response you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any stage.

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Phone: 0300 111 3000. Phonelines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

The Housing Ombudsman Service strongly encourage customers contact them via email or their online complaint form.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding children

Everyone has a responsibility to protect others from harm.

Some children can be at risk of neglect, emotional harm, physical abuse and sexual abuse in any environment, including with close family members as well as strangers.

If you are concerned that a child or young person is at risk of immediate harm you should contact the police urgently on 999.

If you are a member of the public with a concern about a child, please contact the Cumberland Safeguarding Hub on 0333 240 1727.

Safeguarding adults

If you are being abused or neglected it is important to tell someone. If you suspect that someone else is being abused or neglected it is important that you do not ignore it, you must report it.

If you think that person is in immediate danger you can seek advice by contacting the Police on 999. If you feel there is no immediate danger, please use the 101 number.

To report an adult safeguarding concern you can:

- Complete an online enquiry form at www.cumberlandcouncil.gov.uk
- Contact adult social care on 0300 373 3732
- Adult social care out of hours telephone 01228 526690

If you need further advice please contact us on 01900 602906.

If you have difficulty reading this newsletter and would like this information in another format, please contact Julie on 01900 602906