



Spring Newsletter

2026!

Your Community . Your Home . Your Voice

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter

Longer days, lighter evenings, and fresh starts are here! This spring, we're celebrating the people who make our neighbourhoods special, sharing important updates for your home, and highlighting ways you can get involved.

Office Opening Hours

Our office is now open from 9:00am until 5:00pm Monday to Thursday and 9.00am until 4.00pm on Fridays.

Tenants are welcome to come to the office and meet with staff during these hours or contact the office on 01900 602906.

Emergency repairs can be reported outside of these hours through our out-of-hours service on **0151 343 2762**.

Rent increase information

Annual Rent Review

You will have all received your rent increase letter now. So we 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 prior to the increase taking effect in April for notifying either Universal Credit or Housing Benefit of your new rent.

Universal Credit:

Universal Credit will send you a to-do task on your journal called 'Confirm your housing costs'.

Use the information in this letter to complete the task before the due date to avoid problems with your payments. Full details are in your rent increase letter sent out by us at the end of February.

Direct Debits:

If you pay your rent by direct debit these will be updated automatically by us and you will receive confirmation of your new direct debit amount.

Tenants can also access their rent increase letter via the Tenants portal.

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.

Be the winner of our Garden in Bloom this summer and receive a £50 B&Q voucher. Entries will be judged during the summer walkabout. Good Luck!!

Repairs and maintenance team

Social Housing Fund (Wave 3) Energy Efficiency Works

We have now completed improvement works to 16 properties under the SHF Wave 3 programme. These upgrades improve energy efficiency, reduce heat loss, and enhance comfort and security. Works included:

- Cavity Wall Insulation (CWI)
- New windows
- New external doors

Damp, Mould & Condensation (DMC)

Awaab's Law introduces strict new requirements for how quickly social landlords must respond to damp, mould and serious hazards. The new legal timeframes take effect from 27 October 2025, meaning landlords must:

- Investigate emergency hazards within 24 hours
- Investigate significant damp and mould within 10 working days
- Provide written findings within 3 working days
- Begin remedial work within 5 working days of identifying a hazard

These changes strengthen tenant protection and ensure faster, more proactive responses to reported issues. Please report any signs of damp, mould, or condensation as soon as they appear. Early reporting helps us act quickly and prevents issues from worsening.

Access for Repairs, Inspections & Visits

We need access to your home for repairs, safety checks, inspections, and planned works. Allowing access helps us keep your home safe, compliant, and well maintained. Missed appointments or repeated failed access attempts may result in recharge costs, especially where contractors attend but cannot gain entry. Therefore, please:

- Ensure someone over 18 is available for appointments
- Let us know early if you need to rearrange
- Keep entry routes and key areas clear for safe working

Planned Maintenance Programme

We are finalising our planned works programme for the year. Once confirmed, we will contact all affected tenants with details and timelines.

External Decorating Programme

Our external decorating programme is also being prepared. We will share the schedule as soon as it is agreed.

Home Safety – Smoke & CO Alarms

Please test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms regularly. If an alarm is not working or you have concerns, report it immediately so we can repair or replace it.

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. Phone lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

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

Development

Update

After some delays due to service installation, Westfield HA is delighted to accept handover of seven two bedroom bungalows from Thomas Armstrong (Construction) at the end of March 2026. These properties have been built on two untidy areas of land on the estate and will provide the new residents with much needed level access, energy efficient homes. Hopefully in future newsletters, we will be able to provide you with further photos showing the completed properties.

Westfield HA has also purchased new stock from Washington Homes in Wigton. Four households have already moved into some of these homes and a further three properties will be complete in April 2026. We are also purchasing a property from Washington Homes in Gilcrux in the summer.



Computer Image of our Gilcrux Property.

In addition, we are continuing to purchase properties on the Westfield estate. We have bought five properties in 2025/26 and a further three purchases are already underway for 2026/27. If you own your home and are considering moving, then please give us a call and discuss the process with us. The process is simple and stress-free, and we can work towards a completion date that suits you.

Two of our new development properties in Wigton.



Annual Clean Up Event

This year's Annual Clean Up Day will be held on Thursday 23rd July.

Last year was a great success, we filled **two 40-yard roll-on/roll-off skips, one 12-yard skip, and two large vans** with unwanted items from the estate — over **6.4 tonnes** of rubbish (excluding small electrical items).


We are confident this year will be even better!


More details will be circulated nearer the time but please remember to register any large items you require us to collect before the date. Anything not registered will not be collected.


A Great Year of Events for Our Tenants and Residents

Last year we were delighted to organise three fantastic trips for our tenants and residents. These included a family day out in Blackpool, an adults' day at Cartmel Races, and a family trip to Walby Farm Park.

We also hosted some wonderful seasonal activities including our annual Christmas Jumper Bingo Day, a children's colouring competition, and a Santa's Grotto for our younger residents. In total, 41 tenants and residents joined us across these events, making them a great success and full of fun for everyone involved.

 Planning for 2026 is already underway! We're currently putting together our next calendar of events and will share it once it's finalised.

 Have an idea for a future event or trip? We'd love to hear from you.

 Call Susan on **01900 602906**

 Email enquiries@westfieldha.org.uk

Thank you to everyone who took part — we look forward to seeing even more of you at our upcoming events!

We thought we would share the most common causes of house fires?

- **Cooking Equipment**
- **Heating Equipment**
- **Careless Smoking**
- **Electrical Equipment**
- **Candles**
- **Children Playing with Fire**
- **Inadequate Wiring**
- **Flammable Liquids**
- **Christmas Trees/Decorations**
- **Barbeques**
- **Batteries**
- **Remote Controls**
- **Build up of fluff in tumble dryers**
- **Aerosol Cans**
- **Arson**
- **Bonfires**
- **Modern methods of construction**

You will find some tips about how to prevent fires in your home on our website see the link below

<https://www.zurich.co.uk/news-and-insight/how-can-we-help-prevent-fires-in-housing>

As your landlord we cover the buildings insurance for your home but you're responsible for insuring your contents.

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.

It's now easier for you to get covered with the My Home online platform. For more details or to get started, have a look at the tenancy guide section on our website [here](#).

Keep us updated

If you change your mobile phone, your number may change too, so please remember to let us know. It's important that we have your correct contact details so we can reach you when access is needed.

We also ask that you inform us of any changes to your household members or to any disability or support needs.

Stage 3 of the Radio Tele switch (RTS) phase-out (RTS)

As the energy system modernises, it is inevitable that older technologies that are no longer sustainable will be retired, and the Radio Tele switch (RTS) service is one of these legacy systems now reaching the end of its operational life.

Since 2011, suppliers have been required to replace traditional RTS meters with modern smart meters, which offer greater reliability and functionality.

The benefits of smart meters

Replacing an outdated RTS meter with a modern smart meter brings significant benefits. Not only do they provide access to a wider range of energy tariffs and greater control over electricity usage, but they also make it significantly easier to switch suppliers, ensuring they can access the most competitive deals available in the market. Households can avoid losing access to cheaper off peak rates for heating and hot water, which may be discontinued with the phase-out of RTS meters.

Ofgem's ask

Consumers should arrange a meter replacement as soon as possible and not wait for their old meter to be switched off. The sooner the customer contacts their supplier, the less likely they will see any impact from phase out.

Having your meter changed is free of charge

Suppliers are continuing to contact affected households through letters, phone calls, emails, and in-person visits. If anyone experiences any interruption to their heating or hot water, they should contact their supplier immediately. Suppliers have confirmed they are prepared to respond rapidly.

Ofgem have provided a fact sheet that can be found on our website [here](#) or you can take a look at RTS shutdown campaign toolkit here [Radio Teleswitch Service \(RTS\) shutdown campaign toolkit | Ofgem](#)



Help shape services for families in your community

Become a Parent or Carer Champion

Share your experiences, ideas and feedback with the Family Hubs team – and help make a real difference for local families.

As a Champion, you can:

- Influence how local services are designed and delivered.
 - Make sure families' voices are heard.
 - Meet other parents and carers in your area.
 - Help create positive change in your community.
- Interested? Email parentandcarerchampions@cumberland.gov.uk and chat to one of the Family Hubs team.

How much time will it take?

We know family life is busy! Meetings are every 6 weeks, and you can join online or in person. If you can't make one, that's absolutely fine.

Who can be a Parent and Carer Champion? Anyone who is:

- A parent, carer or guardian of a child or young person.
- Living in Cumberland.
- Keen to improve local family services.
- No experience needed, just your voice and ideas!

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM)

We are pleased to report strong progress with the TSM surveys, with over 200 completed by the end of March 2026. We would like to thank all tenants who took the time to participate. Tenant engagement is vital to the success of the association and ensures that residents' voices help shape the services we provide. We look forward to sharing the positive outcomes highlighted by the feedback, while also learning from areas where improvements can be made. The full results will be published in our Annual Report in September.

Mutual Exchange – An Option to Consider

With the changes landlords are facing as a result of the Renters' Rights Bill, we are seeing an increase in applications from households who are finding themselves in difficult situations, often due to private landlords selling their properties. As a result, demand for social housing continues to grow, which can mean longer waiting times for available homes.

In light of this, we wanted to remind tenants that a mutual exchange can be a helpful option if you are looking for a home that better suits your needs.

A mutual exchange is when two or more social housing tenants agree to swap homes. Once you have held your tenancy for a minimum of 12 months, you may be able to exchange your home with another tenant provided both parties hold a secure or assured tenancy.

If you know someone who may be interested in swapping homes with you, whether they are also a Westfield Housing tenant or a tenant of another social landlord, you may be able to apply for a mutual exchange. The Association welcomes applications and will consider them in line with tenancy requirements.

If you would like to learn more about the process, please get in touch with our team who will be happy to help or find more information on our website in the find a home area or click on this link to take you there!
<https://www.westfieldha.org.uk/page/mutual-exchanges>

Change to our front line services

Many of you will have already met Nichola, our newest member of the Housing team. Nichola joined us in October 2025 as our Customer Services/Admin Assistant and has made a huge impact on the tenants who have met her on the front desk with her warm and welcoming smile. Here's what Nichola said about her first 6 months with the team.

"I am delighted to join the Westfield Housing Association team.

Although I have not worked in housing previously, I have numerous years' experience as an administration assistant, speaking to the public daily.

I am enjoying my new role and getting to know you all when you ring or call into the office with queries.

I am looking forward to developing my skills in the housing sector and supporting the team in providing a responsive, friendly service. My aim is to ensure everyone who contacts us feels listened to and supported.

Thank you to everyone who has already made me feel so welcome—I'm excited to continue learning and contributing to the great work the Association does."

Nichola 😊



Difficulty Reading this Newsletter

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