

Housing news for  
tenants & leaseholders



NORTHAMPTON  
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

# voice

ISSUE 16: SPRING 2020

## #Northants Together

Also...

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# Welcome

I hope you and your loved ones are keeping well during these difficult times.



Dear resident,

I want to let you know what NPH is doing to maintain services under unprecedented circumstances. The entire team has pulled together to adapt to the rapidly changing situation and I am incredibly proud of everything they are doing to overcome the daily challenges they are faced with. Colleagues have been working around the clock to contact residents with known vulnerabilities to check on their welfare and put the required support in place.

The safety and wellbeing of residents and colleagues is our first priority and we are closely following Government guidelines to minimise risks. We are also working with local authorities and partners to deliver the best possible level of support for the Northampton community.

In the following pages, you will find out how services are affected by the coronavirus outbreak, what you can do to help and how you can access support. As you will appreciate, this is a continually changing situation and it is possible that things may change between the time of writing and this newsletter dropping through your door. For the latest news, advice and guidance please head to our website and social media channels, details of which you can find below.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your ongoing patience and co-operation. We are doing everything we can to support our residents throughout this uncertain time.

Take care and be safe.

With my very best wishes,

**Mike Kay, NPH chief executive**



NORTHAMPTON  
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

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NPH Connect



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[www.nph.org.uk](http://www.nph.org.uk)

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NPH Voice Issue 16 Spring 2020

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## Large print?

If you would like a version of this magazine in large print, or another language, please call **0300 330 7003**



Reader Friendly



# Notice board

## Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do

### Stay at home

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.



## We're here for you

If you are self-isolating and have no support in place, we are here to help.

**Call us on 0300 330 7003.**

## Beware of scams

Unfortunately, criminals are using the current situation as an opportunity to operate scams. Don't get caught out. The following tips might help you spot when something isn't right.

It could be a scam if:

- it seems too good to be true – for example, a holiday that's much cheaper than you'd expect;
- someone you don't know contacts you unexpectedly;
- you suspect you're not dealing with a real company – for example, if there's no postal address;
- you've been asked to transfer money quickly;
- you've been asked to pay in an unusual way – for example, by iTunes vouchers or through a transfer service like MoneyGram or Western Union;
- you've been asked to give away personal information like passwords or PINs; or
- you haven't had written confirmation of what's been agreed.

The fire service has recently changed the self-referral form for home fire safety checks. They have limited resources at the moment and want to make sure that they are prioritising appointments for those who need them most. If you need a fire safety check, you can head to <https://bit.ly/2Vc2huH> to complete the form.



Keeping active helps both mental and physical wellbeing and many people are missing their usual fitness routine. Sport England has put together some great ideas for keeping active in the home. [www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout](http://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout)

# NEED TO TALK?

This is a worrying time and we all need to look after our mental health. Talking to somebody about your worries can really help. These are just some of the organisations that can help.



Northampton Mind is working closely with the local NHS trust to keep their crisis cafes open safely.

**Where:** The Coffee Shop (6-7 Regent Square, NN1 2NQ)

**When:** Monday – 5 – 10pm  
Tuesday – 5 – 10pm  
Saturday – 2 – 10pm

They are also offering telephone sessions, just call 01604 634310. Find out more at <https://www.northamptonmind.org.uk/>

The Silver line offers telephone friendship to anyone over 55 and is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The friendly team can:

- offer information, friendship and advice;
- link callers to local groups and services;
- offer regular friendship calls; and
- protect and support older people who are suffering abuse or neglect.



If you are 11 – 25 and need support, the incredible team at the Lowdown are there for you. The Lowdown can help with counselling, emotional support, sexual health and support for the LGBT+ community. Head to <http://thelowdown.info/>, call 01604 622223 or visit their crisis café at Café Track (Northampton Market Square) every Monday from 4 – 8, which can also be accessed online.

# Your services

We are closely monitoring all services in line with Government guidelines to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep staff and residents safe. We will only visit your home in an emergency situation and we will ask you a number of questions before we visit to make sure that we take the right precautions.

We've made sure that our staff are working at home if they can. This means that essential workers can work at a safe distance to others and continue to support vulnerable residents.

Keep reading to find out more about how your services are affected. Please also remember that information was correct at the time of writing, but things can quickly change. Up to date information will be posted online at:

 [www.nph.org.uk](http://www.nph.org.uk)

 **NPH Connect**

 **@NPH\_news**

## Contact centre

We are still operating a full telephone service on **0300 330 7003**. Please call between 9am and 5pm unless your call is an emergency.

The One Stop Shop is currently closed, all enquires can be dealt with by our telephone contact centre.



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## Repairs

We are operating an emergency only repairs service. An emergency is work that:

- removes immediate danger to people;
- avoids serious damage to your home; or
- is needed to make the property secure.

If an emergency arises, please call **0300 330 7003**.



## GAS SERVICING



The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has stated that all landlords must still carry out these safety inspections even when we are in lockdown. We would like to reassure you that we can help to make this as safe and stress-free as possible.

We can offer the following:

- A timed appointment in the morning or afternoon;
- A call before we visit;
- The trades person will keep a safe distance from anyone in your home;
- NPH Gas Safe Registered Engineer will be wearing full PPE (gloves and mask);
- If you are shielding, you can be in a separate room whilst the boiler is checked;

- We will not ask you to sign anything;
- The engineer will be in the property for approximately 15 minutes for essential checks only, again to minimise risk;
- We will check your flue is safe, there are no gas leaks and your home is gas safe;
- Radiators won't be checked so that work is contained to where the boiler is located.

Please let us help you to remain safe. If you are self-isolating due to coronavirus symptoms, just let us know and we can book your appointment for 7 – 14 days in the future, which is in line with Government guidance.

## Your rent

If your income has been affected by the coronavirus outbreak, we do understand the financial pressure you may be dealing with. If you think you will struggle to keep up with rent payments, we want to reassure you that we are here to help. We will work with you to agree a flexible plan that is specific to your individual circumstances. Our priority is to keep you in your home.

We urge you to get in touch as soon as possible to discuss your situation. We have team members who are specially trained to support you with financial issues. You can contact us on **0300 330 7003** or email **rentincome@nph.org.uk**

If your income has not been affected, please continue to make payments as usual. While we are all advised to stay at home, it could be the right time to start paying by direct debit. You can set this up online, just head to **www.nph.org.uk** and Your NPH. Alternatively, you can call us on **0300 330 7003**.



## Housing register

Our applications team is working hard to assess housing applications and they have a process in place to make sure that emergency applications are identified.

Please do not send us any of your documents at this time, the team will be in touch with you with a range of options for providing supporting evidence.

Applicants may be waiting slightly longer than usual to be able to bid for a property, we apologise for this and can assure you that we are doing our best to keep any delays to a minimum.



## NEIGHBOURHOODS

We are dealing with flytipping and anti-social behaviour, which you can report online at **www.nph.org.uk** or by calling **0300 330 7003**.

Fire safety in blocks is a priority, especially with most residents staying at home. Please note that we take a zero-tolerance approach to items left in communal areas. Any items found, will be removed without notice. This really is necessary to keep your blocks safe.

Regardless of the type of home you live in, you should remember the following:

- Check your smoke alarms regularly (once a week is recommended);
- Make a family escape plan in case of a fire and practice it;
- Do not overload electrical sockets;

- Dispose of cigarettes in an ashtray;
- Keep matches and lighters away from children;
- Don't leave cooking or candles unattended; and
- Shut all doors and windows when leaving the home.



## Welfare and support



There has been a real team effort to contact residents with a known vulnerability since social distancing guidelines have been in force. We have been checking that people isolating alone have access to essential food and medicine. Colleagues from all service areas have been involved in making phone calls, shopping for our in-house food bank, picking up prescriptions and delivering food parcels to those in most need.

We have not been able to contact every resident, so please do contact us on **0300 330 7003** if you are unable to leave the house and have nobody to help you with essential supplies.

Our support team is maintaining contact with residents who receive regular support from us. We are also making sure that lifeline checks continue.

# THE BIG INTERVIEW



Meet **Paul Tucker**,  
NPH Sustainability Manager.

## Tell us about your job

Environmental sustainability is about making sure what we do now doesn't leave a world where opportunities and natural resources are reduced for future generations. I work to make sure that NPH considers the environment in everything we do. I am working on a sustainability strategy for NPH, which will set out how we do this.

I've used a model called 'One Planet Living' to write the strategy. It involves things like the way we use energy and water; but also looks at using local and sustainable materials for repairs and construction. This also supports local culture, community, and economy.

## What is NPH already doing?

We work together to make sure our homes are sustainable, energy efficient and as cheap as possible to run. We know that a lot of people in Northampton struggle with fuel poverty, which means they can't afford to keep their homes warm.

A planned investment programme is well underway, which includes work to improve insulation. If we haven't been in your neighbourhood yet, we are coming!

I'm also really interested in how we can use renewable energy sources such as solar panels for new and existing homes.

*“ I have a great opportunity to make a big impact across Northampton. ”*

## What do you love about your job?

I have an opportunity to make a big impact across Northampton, which is really important to me.

It's something I'm passionate about. My job means I can get the message out to our tenants, make sure we're building sustainable housing and help to improve the sustainability of the town as a whole.

## What do you do in your spare time?

I love music. I play the drums, bass guitar and guitar. I'm in two bands, which keeps me busy with gigging and rehearsals – we play gigs across the county pretty much every other weekend. We might even get paid occasionally!

## Get involved!

We want to make sure we're focussing on the right things and we haven't missed anything. We would love to hear what you think. You can read more about the strategy on our Facebook page 'NPH Connect' and give us feedback.

If taking care of our planet is something you care about, get in touch. We are looking for residents to get regularly involved and help us make a difference.

# Paul's water and energy saving tips



## Save in the kitchen

- Use a bowl to wash up, rather than a running tap and save around £25 a year on energy bills, and you'll save water too.
- Wait until you have a full load before using your washing machine or dishwasher. It's much more efficient. If you have 'eco' settings, use them and you'll save water, energy and money.
- Keeping hydrated is important, but did you know it's better to fill up a jug and keep it chilled in the fridge instead of running the tap each time you want a drink? This will mean you don't have to leave the tap running for the water to run cold before you fill your glass.

## Save in the bathroom

- Spend one minute less in the shower each day and a family of four could save £75 a year on energy and water bills.
- A running tap wastes more than 6 litres of water every minute, so turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, shaving, or washing your face.

## Save around the house

- Turn your lights off when you're not using them. If you switch a light off for just a few seconds, you will save more energy than it takes for the light to start up again, regardless of the type of light.
- Turning your appliances off standby mode can save you £30 a year and remember to unplug laptops and mobile phones once they're fully charged.
- If you turn your thermostat down by one degree, you can save around 10% on your energy bill. But it's important to make sure your home is warm enough during cold weather, as cold homes can damage your health.

## Save in the garden

- Using a watering can in the garden is more efficient than using a hose pipe. If you need to use a hose pipe, adding a trigger gun will reduce waste.
- It rains a lot in this country! Collect the raindrops from your garden in a water butt. Water butts can collect up to 5,000 litres a year. You can then use this water in your garden, use it to clean your car and wash your windows.

## Northants Warm Homes Fund

We're currently working with local partner organisations on an exciting project to help residents get a brand-new gas central heating system installed at no cost to them. Anyone who has never had this type of heating can apply.

We don't have a large number of residents in this situation due to decent homes works we have already carried out. There were however a few homes we were unable to access for different reasons so now we have another opportunity to help those residents.

We've identified households that we think are eligible for the scheme and we contacting them directly. If you think you may have been missed and you have never had a central heating system, please call Jonathan Dove on **01604 837407** or email [jdove@nph.org.uk](mailto:jdove@nph.org.uk) and we can assess your eligibility.



# Happy to Help update

Happy to Help is NPH's social enterprise for the Northampton community, funded by charitable grants and donations from contractors.

## Responding to the coronavirus outbreak

Happy to Help has funded Fruitful Abundance to source supplies for food parcels that were delivered to NPH's vulnerable residents, various foodbanks and the local night shelter. You can find out more about the work of Fruitful Abundance at [www.fruitfulabundance.org/](http://www.fruitfulabundance.org/)

## The Paint Shop

Happy to Help has teamed up with Community Repaint to open the Paint Shop in Park Square, Kingsheath. The community shop will sell paint to the community for as little as £1 or £2 per litre.

The shop will not only help residents spruce up their homes, it will have a positive impact on the environment as much of the paint would have otherwise gone to landfill. This often saves suppliers money as they don't have to pay disposal costs and we can make sure the paint goes to good use.

## We think this is a result!

The paint shop will be open for business on Wednesdays and Fridays, from 10am – 2pm. Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus outbreak, The Paint Shop is currently closed. Look out for updates as they happen:

**Facebook – NPH Connect**

**Twitter – @NPH\_news**

**Website – [www.nph.org.uk](http://www.nph.org.uk)**

We are looking for volunteers to help run the shop. If you're interested, please contact Claire on [ckenyon@nph.org.uk](mailto:ckenyon@nph.org.uk) or 07808 682279.

## Community grants

Happy to Help continues to help community groups across Northampton. Since our last edition, we have provided:

- Food and refreshments costs for local community group ZimWomen.
- A sewing machine for the Northamptonshire Somali Women and Girls group, to help them learn new skills and mend clothes instead of throwing them away.
- Funding to help Growing Together Northampton pay for an entertainer and food to help FISH (Fun and Food in the School Holidays) support local families during school holidays.
- Funding to top up the money already raised by Free2Talk's Youth Group for a trip to a local trampoline park. The trip has been postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak, but it's something for the group to look forward when they can all be together again!

## Tell us what you think of NPH Voice

**WIN  
£50  
of supermarket  
vouchers**

There are lots of ways to get involved with NPH - one of them is the Scrutiny Panel.

This is a group of residents that takes an in-depth look at some of the things that NPH does.

The Scrutiny Panel has recently decided to look at NPH Voice but they can't do it without you. They need to know what you think of this newsletter, your content ideas and what else we can do to improve it.

The Panel has designed a survey that is quick and easy to complete. Head to our new resident involvement Facebook page NPH Connect to get involved. **Complete this by 31st May to be in with a chance of winning one of ten £50 supermarket vouchers.**

Your views will be reviewed by the group. Even though they can't meet in person right now, they will be staying in touch virtually! Once the panel has made recommendations, we'll make sure you get the feedback here and on Facebook.

### Scrutiny Panel

John Bingham, Chris Webb, Chris Flatley, Mary McVeigh, Marian Hindson, Sarah Balkham, Brian Stimson – supported by Anna.



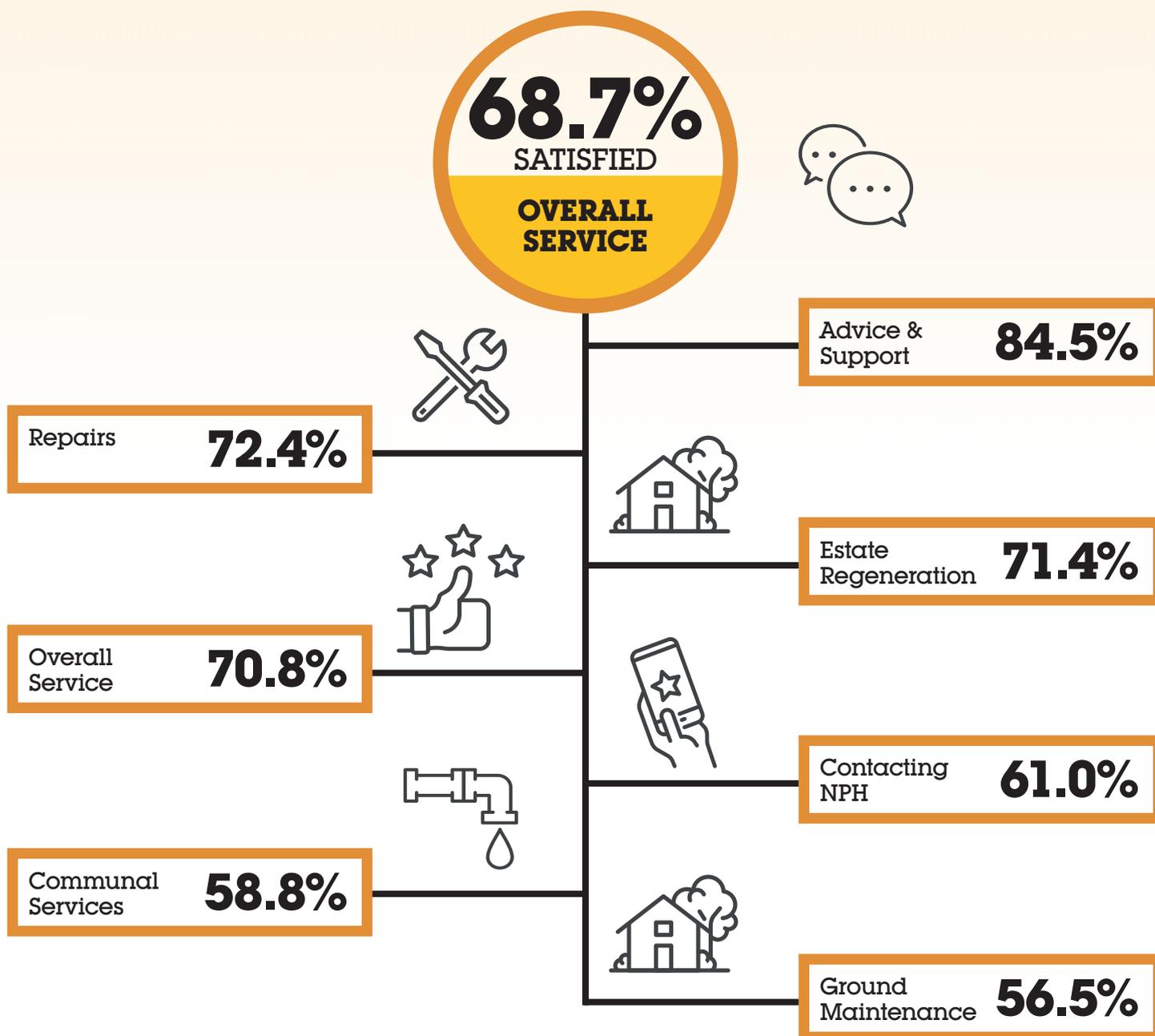
# NPH Tenant Survey



During September and October 2019, we carried out a survey to find out what you think of NPH services and what we can do to improve. Tenants could choose to respond by post, over the phone, by email or online.

Thank you to everyone who completed a survey. Every response helps us to understand how we are doing and we had 2,697 responses in total.

The following customer satisfaction index (CSI) results are based on responses from customers who had received a core service from NPH in the six months prior to completing the survey.



Priority areas for general improvement activity focused on:

- Grounds maintenance and communal services
- The way your contact with NPH is handled/the outcome of your contact
- Fly-tipping
- East Region
- NPH listens to your views and acts upon them

# Keep

# safe

## and be kind to yourself

This is a worrying time for everyone, and it can be difficult to stay positive when we are isolated from friends, family and activities that we love.

We've put together a few suggestions for keeping physically and emotionally well. We hope they help.



### 1. Try and keep a routine.

Sticking to a routine can help make life feel more normal. Try to wake up at the same time each day and make sure you're getting enough sleep.

### 2. Get some sunlight and fresh air.

Make the most of the Government approved daily walk, run or cycle if you can. If you can't leave your home and don't have a garden, even sitting by an open window can help with feelings of stress.



### 3. Exercise.

Any form of exercise, no matter how light, will help your mind and body. There are workouts for any ability online, have a search and see if you can find something you like.



### 4. Stay connected.

Current restrictions have made lots of us get to grips with the video call! This could be a great time to catch up with someone you haven't seen for a while or check in on someone you know is alone right now.



### 5. TV and film.

Always good for escapism and never a better excuse to binge-watch a new series! For something different, find Northampton Filmhouse on Facebook. They have links to films and are hosting discussions to bring people together.



### 6. Spring clean.

Try making the space you are isolating in feel fresh and tidy.

### 7. Take a break from news.

With 24-hour news and social media on your phone, it's easy to become overwhelmed. Try to limit your news intake and try to distract yourself with a good book, puzzle or anything else to keep your mind occupied.



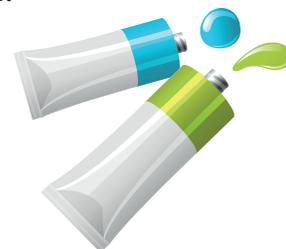
### 8. Listen to the radio or a podcast.

Radio is a great way to stay connected to the outside world and there is a fantastic range of free podcasts out there to suit any interest.



### 9. Get creative.

Getting into something creative can be a great way to relieve stress. If you don't have a creative hobby, you could try a mindfulness colouring book or take a free online drawing class.



### 10. Learn a new skill.

Websites such as FutureLearn, OpenLearn and Jobskilla have free online courses you could try. You can even download free apps to help you learn a new language.



ENTRIES  
NOW  
OPEN

# NPH's Garden Competition 2020

Back for its fourth year, we'd love to hear from our budding gardeners and all those that love their plants and flowers. With everyone spending more time at home, this could be the perfect tonic. You don't need to have an outdoor garden, there will be a prize for the best container garden to make sure that indoor displays are celebrated too!

Register for this year now:

 Register online at [www.nph.org.uk/garden-competition](http://www.nph.org.uk/garden-competition);

 Call NPH's Customer Engagement Team on **01604 837836**;

 Or write to us at NPH's Garden Competition, Northampton Partnership Homes, Westbridge Depot, 9-13 St James Mill Road, Northampton, NN5 5JW

You can also share a picture of your garden by email to [voiceditor@nph.org.uk](mailto:voiceditor@nph.org.uk) or by WhatsApp on 07342 070887.

Categories for each garden will be chosen closer to the time, based on the types of gardens entered.

We are unable to commit to a judging day with circumstances as they are, but we will keep in touch with all entrants throughout the process.

**The competition is open to all NPH tenants, leaseholders and household members.**

**Deadline for entries is Friday 12th June. There will be a prize for all winners as well as a token gift for everyone who enters.**

**Full terms and conditions can be found at [www.nph.org.uk/garden-competition](http://www.nph.org.uk/garden-competition)**



# Thank you

The team at Northampton Morrisons are making regular donations so that we can keep the NPH food bank stocked and support our vulnerable residents. We are so grateful.



Revolution Zero has provided some lovely fresh produce to add to our food parcels, which make such a difference to the wellbeing of those receiving them.

 NORTHAMPTON PARTNERSHIP HOMES [www.nph.org.uk](http://www.nph.org.uk)

**THANK YOU  
NHS STAFF  
& KEY WORKERS**

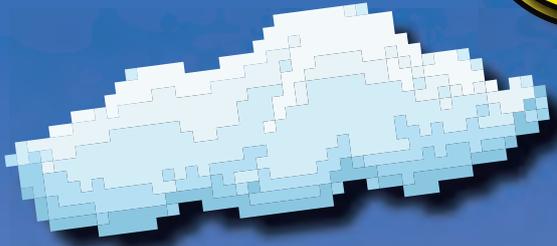
STAY HOME SAVE LIVES

And finally, from NPH staff working from home – we are sending a huge thank you to our colleagues still out there delivering front-line services to residents.



Tel: 0300 330 7003 Email: [voiceditor@nph.org.uk](mailto:voiceditor@nph.org.uk)

**GET  
ONLINE**



Let's report  
a repair!



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**If you don't have  
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