

# YOUR VOICE

Issue 28 | Spring 2024

HOUSING NEWS FOR  
TENANTS & LEASEHOLDERS



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
PARTNERSHIP HOMES



## Anti-social behaviour team receive high praise

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# Welcome

## to the Spring edition of Your Voice magazine

As always it's been a busy time since the last magazine was sent out. We're continuing to invest in your homes (see page 4) and have been busy with adaptations to help our disabled residents fully access their homes (see page 5). We are also continuing to build new homes and many of them will be finished and available to bid on this Summer (see page 15).

Our Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey has now started and lots of you have given us your views. Thanks for taking part in this research and rest assured we are listening to and acting on your feedback (see page 8).

We can see from our performance measures that we fix emergency repairs really quickly but you've told us that we need to repair other types of repairs faster so we have plans in place to improve this service. We know we also need to get better at keeping you updated about



your repair requests based on your feedback. See page 10 for our plans to improve this.

Your Voice has met with some really fantastic residents in this issue who have told us their story (see page 6) and how they are helping their community with groups and volunteering (see pages 13 and 16). We hope to include many more of your stories going forward.

Enjoy reading this edition of Your Voice.

Regards,

**Steve Feast**  
**Chief Executive**



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
PARTNERSHIP HOMES**

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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

## VISIT YOUR COMMUNITY BUS

The NPH Community Bus regularly visits our communities giving residents the chance to chat with us in person. You can report an issue, a concern or ask for our help on the bus.

Our friendly onboard staff can help you access online services where you can:

- Request a repair
- Apply for a mutual exchange
- Report ASB behaviour
- Pay your rent
- Apply for a garage
- Volunteer



There is no need to book an appointment, just pop along and see us. The full timetable of our regular stops is available on our website here:

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

You can check our Facebook or X feeds for the latest updates.



## LET US KNOW

0300 330 7003

[YourVoice@nph.org.uk](mailto:YourVoice@nph.org.uk)



## LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE

At NPH we are dedicated to maintaining cleaner, safer community spaces. We want all our residents to love where they live and we want to hear your ideas on how to improve your neighbourhood's communal areas.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Some of the areas we manage are proving a challenge to keep tidy and we need your help. We're looking for NPH residents who have ideas on how to improve community spaces. Perhaps there's a problem space that we don't know about or maybe you need support to tackle littering in the area. Get in touch and let us know.

## Visit your next Engagement Café

The next Engagement Café will be on the 23rd July from 12pm until 2pm.

Venue to be confirmed nearer the time.

Come along to chat to NPH staff about housing support, rent income, repairs, planned improvement works and more. There will also be a suggestion box where you can leave your ideas with us.

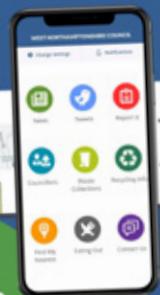
**We hope to see you there, everyone is welcome!**



## REPORT RECYCLE CONNECT



Download our free app



## FEATURE IN THIS MAGAZINE

If you have a story to tell or some community news to share we'd love to hear from you! Email us at [voiceditor@nph.org.uk](mailto:voiceditor@nph.org.uk)

# Investing in your neighbourhoods

We are working hard to improve NPH managed homes.

Here's a snapshot showing the improvements made last year in NPH homes as part of planned investment programmes:



104

new bathrooms



150

electrical rewires



508

new fascias



110

new heating systems



71

new kitchens



274

lofts insulated



200

new porches



518

window refits



501

new front doors

This snapshot shows a few of the improvements made last year in NPH homes by the Adaptations team based on tenants' clinical needs:



41

stair lifts



25

access ramps



15

accessible kitchens



20

accessible bathrooms



250

grab rails

## A case study

# New wet room helps disabled residents

Our Adaptations team have recently helped a couple living with mobility issues by creating a new wet room in their home. The couple, based in St James, were struggling to get in and out of their bathtub because of their declining health. The new wet room reduces their risk of injury and makes life much more comfortable for them.

Our adaptations team are committed to helping disabled residents to live independently in their homes and the team can recommend that adaptations are made to enable this.

We spoke with our tenants (who wanted to remain anonymous), they told us how the adaptation has improved their lives. Our tenant said: "My partner was frightened to use the bath, there were no grab-rails, and she didn't feel safe climbing in. I suffer with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and am finding it increasingly hard to get about."

After reporting their situation to their Housing Officer, the NPH adaptations team were contacted and arranged a visit to assess the couple's situation. Our Occupational Therapist agreed that their situation warranted a wet room with a walk-in shower and so funding for the project went ahead.

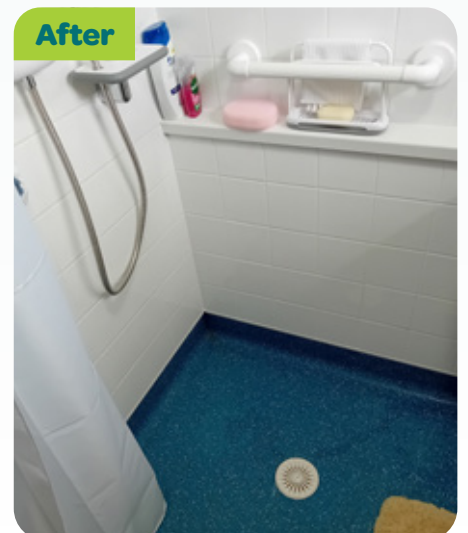
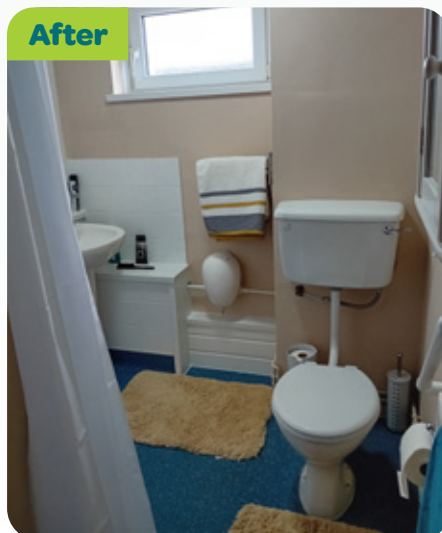
Our tenant explained that the bathroom was completely altered, which required a lot of work for the contractors. He told us that the tradespeople were very polite and kept everything tidy whilst they worked. Their new wet room has made a big difference to their day to day lives.

### Our tenant told us:

**"The new wet room looks lovely, and my partner and I no longer worry about falling or hurting ourselves. I am very pleased we had it done. The process was simple, I recommend anyone with mobility issues to think about applying for your own safety and well-being."**

Disabled NPH residents facing challenges accessing areas within their home (and who might be at risk of harm as a result) can request an assessment via their Housing Officer, via the NPH Tenants Portal or by calling the Contact Centre on **0300 330 7003**.

Applications are assessed according to clinically-proven needs and allocated on a priority basis.





# Meet the tenant...

**Your Voice recently met with a tenant to hear his story about beating addiction. He would like to remain anonymous but wanted to chat to Your Voice about our tenancy support services and give his story about turning his life around.**

## What's your background?

I grew up in London in the care system where I had a rough time and suffered awful abuse. Coming out of care was brutal because there was zero support, you're just turned out and have to try and find a place to live and you don't have the skills to do that. Life got really hard and I fell into addiction. I was a heroin addict for 25 years, at points I was homeless and a criminal – I had stretches in borstal, detention centres and prisons. Life was tough for a lot of years.

When I came out of prison for the last time in London I had nowhere else to go and came to Northampton to see a friend who was living here at that time. I haven't ever left Northampton since!



## What was your turning point?

My big turning point was about 21 years ago when someone dragged me along to a big Christian event (that I hadn't even wanted to go to!) and I had a total epiphany while there. I found my faith in God overnight and it was this that prompted me to go straight - give up crime and seek help. It was the start of my new life.

Having suffered badly in the care system I was quite suspicious about seeking help for my heroin addiction, but I asked around and ended up at S2S (Substance to Solution) who helped me start my recovery. I was homeless at the time, and they found me a bed that same day. After that they got me a place in a support house, and I was there about 9 months - in that time I had to prove I was getting clean. It was a challenging place to live but it was the first step to getting me into my own home so I knew I had to hang in there. It was always my hope to get my own place when I could.

When it came time to leave the support housing, I was introduced to Andrea who became my NPH Housing Support Officer. Andrea helped me to get a house in Spring Boroughs and carried on supporting me. Whilst the place in Spring Boroughs was a nice house the area didn't suit me - I'd got

clean from the drugs but living in an area where lots of friends from my old life lived wasn't healthy for me and made it hard to stay clean. Plus, I'd developed some breathing problems so I couldn't easily manage the stairs anymore and I wanted to move somewhere else.

I'd always wanted to live somewhere quieter with a garden and Andrea helped me find my current home which is a bungalow in a nice quiet area. Had to bid on a few different places before I got this one, but I love it. I've been here a year now and find it peaceful, it suits me well.

My faith continues to be strong. I went to bible college for a year and got a qualification from the Christian Ministry. My faith has kept me on the straight and narrow ever since.



## How did NPH support you?

I've dealt with lots of social workers and support workers over the years but Andrea from NPH is just something else – she's been an amazing support worker and has helped me no end. I would never have got to where I am without her. She has supported me for 8 years now. The great thing about Andrea is that she knows all the services that are available to help you – she put me in touch with other services I didn't know I could use and that has really helped me.

Andrea has always said that I just need to tell her the truth and she'll help me, and she's been true to her word. I've always told her exactly what's going on (even when it is disappointing!) and have never felt judged by her. She has helped me to be accountable for staying clean and honest but also helped with some practical things like getting furniture, carpets and setting up direct debits for my bills. You don't think about practical things like paying bills when you are fighting an addiction so it's amazing to get that help and it sets you up for life really.

Andrea is a Housing Support Team Manager now at NPH, but she still stays in touch with me even though she doesn't have to!

## What's your advice to others seeking support for addiction?

Be totally honest. I know it's hard to be honest if you are struggling with addiction and things like that, but honesty really is the best policy and gets you the help you need faster.

If you are struggling with addiction you've got to decide to get help and find someone to help you stay accountable – finding a support worker you can relate to really helps with that. Use all the support available to you. These organisations like Substance to Solution aren't there to catch you out, they are there to help you so use them.

## What's next for you?

I like to keep up with my hobbies and friends but do enjoy the quiet life, I like my own company most of the time.

I continue to have a strong faith and I help young people in my church. I'm so into the church life they have even asked me to be an elder! But I am happy following my faith in my own way and just helping where I can.

I'm also trying to help some friends get clean and get them sorted out like I am now. In fact, I've just introduced one of my friends who is suffering from addiction to Andrea and hopefully she can set him on the right path too!

## Where to get help

If you know someone suffering with addiction issues here is where they can go for help:

### Substance to Solution

Spring House, 39 Billing Road, Northampton, NN1 5BA

[www.changegrowlive.org/substance-to-solution-northamptonshire](http://www.changegrowlive.org/substance-to-solution-northamptonshire)

Tel: 0808 169 8512

### Bridge Substance Misuse Programme

63c Gold Street, Northampton, NN1 1RA

Email: [migration@bridgenorthants.org.uk](mailto:migration@bridgenorthants.org.uk)

Tel: 01604 621259



Substance  
to Solution  
Northampton and Daventry



# We're listening...

## What you told us...

Some of you may have taken part in our recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey. It is now a regulatory requirement for all registered social housing providers to annually report on their performance to the Regulator for Social Housing. The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) were introduced in England by the Regulator in April 2023.

The TSMs are designed to see how well landlords are doing at keeping properties in good repair, maintaining building safety, respectful and helpful engagement, effective handling of complaints and responsible neighbourhood management.

Over the last six months, 1,000 NPH tenants have participated in a telephone survey to help us report back to the Regulator. Thank you for taking part and helping us to hear your voice on the things that are working well and the areas we can improve upon.

Our first lot of TSM results will soon be ready for publication and we'll give a full update on those in the next issue of Your Voice and on our

website. In the meantime, here are the big themes coming out of the feedback so far that you've told us we need to improve:

- 1) How long it takes us to get repairs carried out**
- 2) How we keep you updated about your requests**
- 3) How we approach complaints**

TSM feedback will continue to be measured on an ongoing basis. This will allow to check if the plans we put in place to improve your satisfaction with the service we are providing are working. You may receive a phone call from a market research company asking you to take part in this research, we would really appreciate it if you could please take part to help us improve.

More information about TSMs can be found here: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing)



# How we are doing...

As well as the TSMs, we also monitor our performance using our own corporate performance measures. You can find a link to our performance portal and see how we are doing against these measures here: [www.nph.org.uk/nph-performance](http://www.nph.org.uk/nph-performance).

Our performance last year (April 23 to March 24):



**8,375**

Emergency repairs attended



**2,087**

Urgent repairs attended



**21,181**

Non-urgent repairs attended



**98.77%**

of rent due was collected



**1,891**

fly-tips removed



**100%**

compliance with checks on gas boilers, water tanks, asbestos surveys, and fire risk assessments



**84%**

of reported fly-tipped rubbish removed in 5 working days



**78%**

of all repairs completed within target times



**90%**

of repairs completed at the first visit



**27 days**

on average to re-let a property when it became empty. *Target is 26 days*

## How we'll improve...

We know that we need to get better at carrying out repairs more quickly and at keeping you updated about your repair. Here's how we will improve these things.

### Repairs fall into three categories:

#### 1) Emergency repairs

We aim to fix emergency repairs (such as uncontrollable water leaks, insecure properties, and no power) in 1 working day

Year to date we have fixed

**99.08%**

of emergency repairs within 1 working day

#### 2) Urgent repairs

We aim to fix urgent repairs (such as broken extractor fans, leaking roofs and damp and mould inspections) in 7 working days

Year to date we have fixed

**84.37%**

of urgent repairs within 7 working days

#### 3) Non-urgent repairs

We aim to fix non-urgent repairs (such as repairs to kitchen units, plastering and fencing) in 90 working days

Year to date we have fixed

**68.46%**

of non-urgent repairs within 90 days

**We know we need to get faster at fixing your repairs, especially non-urgent repairs. We already have a plan in place to improve this:**

- We've commissioned an external review of our repairs service to help us be more efficient and improve our processes
- We've brought in additional contractors to help reduce the time tenants are waiting for repairs
- We're recruiting for more in-house repairs staff including carpenters, plumbers and electricians
- We're reviewing the productivity and standards of our existing workforce and making hard decisions if this isn't up to scratch
- We're working with tenant groups to get their feedback

We are already seeing big improvements in our non-urgent repairs service since introducing

these measures and are confident that this will continue to improve. To help keep us on track and keep those efficiencies going we are aiming to complete most non-urgent repairs within 28 working days by the end of 2024.

### Keeping you updated about your non-urgent repairs

Your feedback was also that we need to get better at keeping you updated about your non-urgent repairs. We have introduced a new system within our head office team – if your non-urgent repair has been scheduled for a future date that is more than 1 month away, we will contact you periodically about your repair to keep you updated and will move repairs forward wherever possible.

## How you can help when reporting repairs

We prioritise repairs based on how urgent they are. When you report your repair (by contacting the Customer Contact Centre or by logging the repair on the customer portal) please give us as much information as you can to allow us to judge how urgent your repair is.

It's also important that you update us if your repair gets worse. When you reported the repair, it might have been classified as non-urgent but if it gets worse while you are waiting for the repair to be carried out, please contact us again so we can check it hasn't become an urgent or emergency repair.

## How we'll improve handling complaints

You told us that how we handle complaints (both keeping you up to date and resolving issues) needs to be better.

Our complaint handling process follows the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, which sets out expected standards and timescales to respond to complaints. The Code is now statutory for all social housing providers. We have been reviewing our policy and processes and self-assessing against the Code and the policy can be viewed on our website.

**January 2024:**

**81%**

of Stage 1 complaints were responded to on time

**100%**

of Stage 2 complaints were responded to on time



We have been running refresher training for those who respond to complaints and have designated complaint handlers in the service areas with the most reported complaints. This has enabled us to improve our response times to complaints, but we know we need to continue to improve. We are looking at complaint reasons, trends and causes so that we can focus on putting things right. Our focus will be on resolving your requests for service straight away so that they don't become a complaint.

We will involve you in helping us to review our complaints policy to make sure it is clear and that the complaint process is accessible and easy to use for everyone. We will be asking those who have made a complaint about their experience. This will all feed in to raising standards and to provide a consistent approach to our complaint handling which will improve your experience if you do need to complain.




## How to make a complaint

As part of the new Housing Ombudsman Code, we need to ensure that you know how to make a complaint should you need to do so. If something goes wrong and you would like to complain you can do so on our website: [www.nph.org.uk/give-us-feedback](http://www.nph.org.uk/give-us-feedback)

# Our housing support service



Our Housing Support service is free to all NPH tenants and the team can help you with advice and practical support. The service can assist you with:

-  **Budgeting**
-  **How to claim the benefits you are entitled to**
-  **Settling you into your new home**
-  **Signposting to other specialist services and support providers**
-  **Helping you develop the skills needed to maintain your tenancy**

Our friendly Housing Support team run various free drop-in sessions regularly across Northamptonshire and all NPH tenants are welcome to attend. You don't need to make an appointment, come along for a chat. The dates and addresses of the drop-in sessions can be found on our website here:

**[www.nph.org.uk/housing-support-dropins](http://www.nph.org.uk/housing-support-dropins)**

You can come along to a drop-in session for face to face advice or email the team at **[tenancysupport.nph@nph.org.uk](mailto:tenancysupport.nph@nph.org.uk)** You can also contact the team through the Contact Centre on **0300 330 7003**

## APPLY FOR FUNDS FROM **HAPPY TO HELP**



**Happy To Help is a social enterprise subsidiary of NPH. The Happy To Help Communities Fund offers funding and support to community groups, projects and causes across Northampton.**

The fund has provided grants to a wide variety of local organisations including local resident groups, youth groups, senior citizens groups, musical groups and local food banks.

**Here are a few examples of funds granted in the last year:**

- Garden supplies, plants, bulbs and compost for a community garden
- An activity for a youth club
- Refreshments for an event at a cultural association
- Fishing supplies and transport costs for a youth fishing club

- Art materials for community art group
- Activity resources for a homework club
- Camping equipment for a scout's group

If your group and its activities have a positive impact on the lives of NPH residents, we'd love to hear from you, and you are welcome to apply for funding. Groups can apply for funding or for items to the value of up to £300.

**You can apply by completing an application form on our website here:**

**[www.nph.org.uk/happy-help-cic](http://www.nph.org.uk/happy-help-cic)**. If you'd like to chat to us before completing the form or for more information, email **[happytohelp@nph.org.uk](mailto:happytohelp@nph.org.uk)** or call **01604 527073**.

# Community art group

## NPH residents learning new skills and making friends at popular art class

**Every Thursday afternoon, you can hear the swooshing of paint brushes and sounds of laughter coming from the James Lewis Community Hub.**

Inside you will find people drawing, painting and practising different crafts under the guidance of NPH resident, Gail Butcher. Gail started running the group with her good friend Marian and their husbands Mike and Bill to share their love of arts and crafts with the wider community.

The art class is open to all abilities and beginners are encouraged to come and try it. Gail and other local artists teach a range of techniques including charcoal, watercolour, surreal acrylics with Russ Smalley, pastels with Carol Oliver and traditional oils with Michael Juhasz. Materials are provided free, thanks to funding from Happy to Help (our Community Interest Company). It was important to Gail to make the class as inclusive as possible as she is personally aware of the mental health benefits of practising art and other creative projects.

Gail said: "After a long career working mostly with people with Cerebral Palsy, I retired to help Mike recover from a stroke. A stressful time for anyone, so I returned to painting and crafting which inspired me to help others. My dear friend Marian encouraged me to start a group as she wanted to improve her own artistic skills and so it all began."

She believes the class is proving popular because it is a friendly, supportive environment. She enjoys seeing people who have never lifted a paintbrush

before, create their first piece of art. One of the class regulars has started selling their work to raise money for charity - Kay Cushings gives her finished paintings to Barnardo's in Weston Favell. So far, she has raised £1550 by auctioning the paintings online.

Another NPH resident Jenny Newport said she was encouraged to give the group a try. Gail and the class have been a lifeline for Jenny, who cares for her husband and struggles to leave the house. Jenny said: "I never dreamt I could do it [paint] but I absolutely love it.... It's so important for me to get out and socialise."

Jenny has made new friends since she started coming to the class and Gail has gifted Jenny with a portrait of her daughter Gemma, who sadly passed away 13 years ago. Jenny encourages other people to join in. She told us: "I absolutely recommend it and you don't have to do painting because we do all arts and crafts here."

The class is based at our James Lewis Court Community Hub every Thursday, between 1pm – 4pm. If you would like more information or to book your place, email Gail at [mggirl1962@gmail.com](mailto:mggirl1962@gmail.com) or join the Facebook group 'Arts & Crafts - James Lewis Court Northampton'



# Anti-social behaviour team receive high praise



NPH has recently become **the first housing provider in the UK to achieve the new Resolve Standard accreditation** since it was launched this year after a successful pilot stage.

**The Resolve organisation is a centre of excellence solely focused upon community safety and anti-social behaviour, it's a real testament to our team and the anti-social behaviour (ASB) service to have achieved this accreditation.**

**After a rigorous accreditation process which involved a workshop, portfolio of evidence and peer review Resolve said that:**

"Northamptonshire Partnership Homes offer a high quality anti-social behaviour service, recognising the importance of making communities safer and ensuring that appropriate resources are in place to support all victims of ASB. The organisation meets the Resolve Standard principles and underlying commitments."

**Achieving the Resolve Standard accreditation was the culmination of a lot of hard work by our Tenancy Compliance Team. Ryan Surridge, Tenancy Compliance Team Manager said:**

"We are proud to have met the Resolve Standard as it demonstrates the emphasis NPH put on providing a high standard ASB service for residents. Hopefully this reassures victims of ASB and provides them with the confidence to report issues to NPH whilst also highlighting the hard work put in by the Tenancy Compliance Officers and partner agencies in Northampton to tackle ASB."

NPH have a dedicated team of tenancy compliance officers who deal with anti-social behaviour to ensure you feel safe in your homes and can easily report your concerns. To find out more about how we tackle anti-social behaviour and how to report any concerns you can find more information on our website here: **[www.nph.org.uk/anti-social-behaviour](http://www.nph.org.uk/anti-social-behaviour)**

To find out more about Resolve UK you can find their website here: **[www.resolveuk.org.uk/](http://www.resolveuk.org.uk/)**



# New homes for West Northants...

**Over the past few months, we have seen lots of NPH new housing developments nearing completion and below there's an exciting planning announcement to share with you too.**

## Castle Street

Castle Street is one of our most central sites in Northampton, adjacent to Horse Market in the town centre. Progress continues on the first phase of the project which will provide a further 24 council homes to be managed by us. Completion is expected this Summer.

## New South Bridge Road

New South Bridge Road (which last year received a visit from Lee Rowley, Minister for Housing) will be comprised of 28 one and two bed roomed apartments. The development has remained on schedule despite the heavy rainfall this Winter. We'll be handing over the keys to new NPH residents this Autumn.

## New homes on disused garage sites and infill scrubland

The first wave of properties built on disused garage sites and infill scrubland have seen their first families move in this Spring. The two, three and four bed roomed council homes can be found in the heart of communities across Northampton including Dallington, Kings Heath and the town centre.

## Our next development

We've received planning approval to construct 18 new homes on the site of a former care home in Ecton Brook. Approval has been given to demolish the existing building (which has been empty since 2016) to make way for the new council homes. The planning application includes a new car park with spaces for 37 vehicles. We look forward to starting this build soon!



New homes Derwent Drive



New homes Derwent Drive



New homes New South Bridge Road



# Meet the volunteer...

**The Paint Shop, based at Kings Heath, is open to all and is a great place to find paint for DIY projects at really low prices. The Paint Shop relies on volunteers and as Sophie has recently started volunteering there she agreed to speak to Your Voice about how she's finding it...**

## Why did you start volunteering at The Paint Shop?

I stopped work about 5 years ago due to mental health issues and I wanted to start volunteering to build up my confidence again. The Paint Shop is a Happy to Help project and I wanted to support them because my little boy and I are NPH tenants! I see this as a long-term option for me and I hope to stay here volunteering for a long time.

I like what The Paint Shop is doing – it's rescuing paint that would otherwise be thrown away and then selling it on at really great prices, it's such a good idea.

## What's the best bit about volunteering at The Paint Shop?

The shop's welcoming atmosphere - it feels like a real heart of the community. Regulars often pop in for a cuppa and a chat with us volunteers and I'm looking forward to getting to know them better. Volunteering has helped me make new friends and gain some new skills, I certainly feel like my confidence is coming back.

I've volunteered at charity shops in the past, but it wasn't as good a fit as The Paint Shop. I've got an interest in craft; I've painted and upcycled my own furniture so it's something I'm interested in. I even wanted to be a painter and decorator at one point.

## What's the worst bit about volunteering at The Paint Shop?

There isn't a worst bit yet! But I would love more people to know about it and to visit so getting the word out in Your Voice is great.

## Would you recommend volunteering to others?

Absolutely! It's a great place to build up your confidence with little pressure. The regulars who come in all the time seem lovely and so are the other volunteers. I love chatting to people coming into the shop about their projects.



## More about The Paint Shop

The Paint Shop was set up by Happy to Help (a Community Interest Company created by NPH) in conjunction with Community RePaint which is a UK wide paint re-use network. The shop collects reusable leftover paint and sells it for a small amount (as little as £1/£2 a litre) - this rescues the paint from going to landfill. Any profits from paint sales are re-invested into services to support NPH tenants. Paint is donated by big paint brands but also from individuals who have leftover paint that would otherwise go to waste.

You can find The Paint Shop at 12 Park Square, Kings Heath, NN5 7LQ. For opening hours and more information you can check our website here: [www.nph.org.uk/paint-shop](http://www.nph.org.uk/paint-shop) The shop is open three days a week and sells paint, wallpaper and decorating accessories. It stocks all manner of paint including outdoor paint and chalk furniture paint.

## How to volunteer at The Paint Shop


If you would like to volunteer at The Paint Shop please check our webpage for more details at [www.nph.org.uk/paint-shop](http://www.nph.org.uk/paint-shop) or pop into the shop for a chat.

# Prize draw for carrying out your stock condition survey

**Stock Condition Surveys must be carried out to comply with the Regulator for Social Housing requirements, the Government's 'Decent Homes Standards' and Health and Safety Regulations so it's important that you arrange a survey for your home when invited to do so. Carrying out Stock Condition Surveys allows us to assess the condition of each NPH managed home and helps us plan and prioritise future improvement programmes.**

Pennington Choices and ARK Consultancy are carrying out the surveys on behalf of NPH. One of these companies will contact you directly to make an appointment to visit your home and complete the survey. You can book the survey to suit you - including at the weekend and in the evenings. During the survey the surveyor will inspect the inside of your home, your loft (if applicable) and external areas. The survey will take approximately one hour to complete.

As a thank you for allowing us into your homes to carry out the survey we ran a prize draw for surveys completed up to the end of April for £100 of shopping vouchers. We will contact the lucky winner of that prize draw and publish the name of the winner on our website. We will be running another free prize draw for £100 of shopping vouchers for all surveys completed between May and the end of August so please do book your survey when you are contacted to take part.



**Prize draw  
entry for those  
who have the  
survey done by  
the end of  
August 2024**

# What the 53-week rent year means for you...

**We charge rent every week on a Monday. Every five to six years, because of how the calendar falls, there are 53 Mondays in a year instead of the usual 52. The new financial year (from April 2024 to March 2025) is one of these years - this means 53 weeks rent will be payable rather than the usual 52.**

If you qualify for 4 rent free weeks, you'll still receive them.

If you pay by Direct Debit you don't need to do anything, we will automatically adjust your payments.

If you don't pay by Direct Debit, you will need to adjust your payments yourself to account for the extra week's rent.

## If you claim Universal Credit

You'll need to tell the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about the change to your rent. You should do this by updating the 'Confirm your Housing Costs' on your Universal Credit journal.

Universal Credit will only pay for 48 weeks so you will need to pay the difference between what your monthly rent is and what the DWP pay us. This only happens when there are 53 Mondays in a Financial year.

For example, if your rent is £90 per week, your monthly payment will be £367.50. The DWP will only pay us £360.00, and you will be required to make up the difference.

## How to set up a Direct Debit

**If you haven't yet set up a Direct Debit, it's easy to do and has a number of advantages:**

- If your rent changes, we will automatically adjust the amount for you
- You can choose to pay monthly or weekly
- If you pay monthly, you can choose what day of the month the payment will be taken

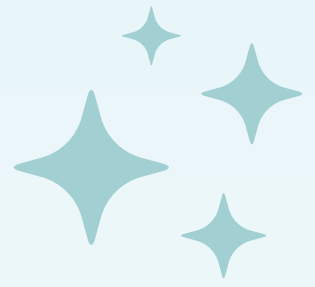
To set up a Direct Debit log into the tenant portal and set up a Direct Debit online. You will need your tenancy reference number to register, and your bank account details for the Direct Debit instruction.

You can find more details about how to pay your rent on our website here:

**[www.nph.org.uk/pay-your-rent](http://www.nph.org.uk/pay-your-rent)**



# Tidying up Northampton!



**The Great British Spring Clean is an annual event, running for two weeks every March and is the nation's biggest mass-action environmental campaign. NPH arranged two community litter picks, in partnership with Veolia, in Kings Heath and Semilong as part of the 2024 Spring Clean campaign.**

During the litter picks we were delighted to see so many local residents and local organisations joining in including: NPH staff, Veolia staff, WNC staff, Northampton Town FC Community Trust, Northamptonshire Sport, Northants Police, idverde, Church on the Heath and Kings Heath Primary Academy children and staff. At the Kings Heath litter pick, there was an incredible turnout from local residents including 100 pupils from Kings Heath Primary Academy. They worked hard together in pairs and shared the litter picking tools and really earned their Happy to Help stickers.

Kings Heath volunteers were encouraged to pop into The Paint Shop for a well-deserved cuppa and some small corporate gifts from Veolia. The collaborative nature of this event also encouraged several residents to offer their time to volunteer at the shop going forward which was fantastic.

A big thank you to everyone who got involved in this year's Spring Clean. Together we can help keep Northampton tidy!



# Your Letters

Dear Your Voice,

**What goes on in our community?** Well, I will tell you a bit. We at Lakeview are a pretty happy bunch, living in a super block with a pretty fair amount of nothing or lots to do – whatever your choice! I love gardening so get things set up on my balcony, which I love as it has a pretty good view of school children who I really love to see. I have transferred from my balcony quite a lot into the common garden on the main entrance of Lakeview and the part under the two trees on the other side. It's been a bit neglected over the last few months over Winter, but Spring is springing so it's time to get a move on. Here's a picture of the common gardens at Lakeview.

A cause close to my heart is my total dislike of litter. There is a common garden down below which tends to have rubbish thrown in it which I clean periodically although speaking nicely to some of the culprits has helped! I do tend to draw the line though when ploughing through mess on pavements and gutters – I'll leave that for the council!



We are situated close to two or three lots of public transport, which is tremendous for me as I don't drive any longer. I also go to Eastfield Park for litter picking though have done less of that recently.

Here's looking forward to another super Summer and thanks to NPH for all you do for us.

From,

*Pauline*

Lakeview - an apartment community for older people

## Would you like to feature on this page?

Email us at [voiceeditor@nph.org.uk](mailto:voiceeditor@nph.org.uk) with what's happening in your community and you could feature here!

# Treating our staff with respect

**NPH staff do their best to meet your expectations and deserve to be treated with respect. Unfortunately, our staff members sometimes experience unacceptable behaviour from a small number of tenants or those in their households.**

The Housing Ombudsman Service has issued guidance on this subject to social housing providers, and we have recently reviewed our unacceptable behaviour policy as a result. The policy sets out clearly where we consider behaviour to be unacceptable or unreasonable, as well as detailing the types of actions we may take to manage this when it does occur.

**The policy covers a wide range of behaviours that are unacceptable towards our staff members and includes:**

- Aggressive, intimidating, abusive behaviour and harassment
- Unreasonable behaviour
- Unreasonable demands
- Unreasonable persistence

As well as our policy, the West Northants Council's tenancy agreement covers in detail the type of behaviour that is deemed to be unacceptable. You can find the tenancy agreement on our website here: [www.nph.org.uk/tenancy-agreement](http://www.nph.org.uk/tenancy-agreement)

**We would ask that when dealing with our staff, contractors, agents or third parties acting on our behalf that you ensure that your household treat these parties with the respect and dignity they deserve.**

The unacceptable behaviour policy is available to view on the NPH website.