



**Black Country  
Housing Group**

## **Resident Broadcast December 2022**

*Season's Greetings*

to all BCHG residents who are celebrating!

Our office will be closed during the festive holidays between 24 December – 2nd January 2023, reopening on Tuesday 3rd January 2023.

However, if you have an emergency repair during any period that we are closed, you can still contact our out of hours service on 0300 555 0302.

We know that many are finding it difficult to cope with the cost of living right now, and BCHG are here to help and support you. This newsletter contains many helpful resources that we hope will be useful to you. We are also keen for you to be aware of what is happening with new requirements being introduced and about the services we offer. We hope you enjoy the read!



# Tenant Satisfaction Measures



The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced measures to see how good landlords are doing at looking after their homes and providing services. The measures also give residents detail about the performance of their landlord. Black Country Housing Group are currently preparing for the introduction of those measures.

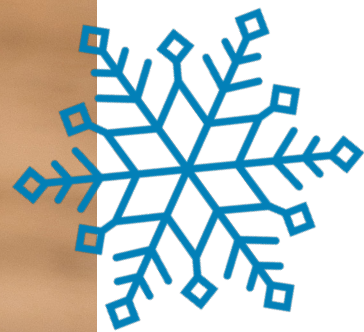
There are 12 questions asked about the resident experience and 10 questions where the landlord must send back information from data they hold.

The measures are based on five themes agreed by residents nationally in response to the Grenfell Fire and included in the Social Housing White Paper – ‘To keep properties in good repair, maintain the safety of buildings, handle tenants’ complaints effectively, engage with tenants helpfully and with respect, and take a responsible role in managing their neighbourhood’.

For further detail see:

[https://www.bchg.co.uk/media/1850/tsm\\_housing\\_regulator.pdf](https://www.bchg.co.uk/media/1850/tsm_housing_regulator.pdf)

Please do take the opportunity to complete our surveys, currently done over the phone through IFF Housing Research. You will only be asked one time in the year to complete this type of survey. The Regulator is keen to see the results, it is an important part of hearing your voice, and so together, we can learn and make improvements.





# Damp and Mould



We want all your homes to be great places to live, and especially to be dry, warm and healthy.

We take damp and mould seriously and would ask anyone with a damp and mould issue to get in touch immediately. This has been a big focus for us over many years and we have implemented a Policy which outlines the actions we will take to tackle this:

<https://www.bchg.co.uk/media/1842/damp-mould-and-condensation-policy-to-mar-2025.pdf>

It may include repairs, but may also include detailed guidance, support from the visiting technical staff or specialist diagnostic and treatment companies, and use of drying equipment where required. You can report any issues via our Customer Portal <https://myhome.bchg.co.uk/> or call our repairs line on **0300 555 0302**.

We're likely to see more damp and condensation this winter, with many people struggling to heat their homes. We've got a range of support and advice for customers who are struggling with the cost of living as well as a range of free energy advice, which you can read below. We also have some useful tips on how to manage condensation:

[https://www.bchg.co.uk/media/1725/pca\\_condensation\\_leaflet\\_2013.pdf](https://www.bchg.co.uk/media/1725/pca_condensation_leaflet_2013.pdf)

# Service Standards



Service standards are there to ensure we're all working to the best!

Our new service standards were co-created with the Customer Service Improvement Panel that consists of 4 highly involved residents. They told us that they wanted service standards that were values based and achieved openness, honesty, respect, care, and partnership working. They also told us that the new tenant satisfaction measures, mentioned above, should be used to measure our performance. Our staff have also been involved to shape the values and behaviours.

As part of working together to create them, we are interested in hearing from you about the new service standards. By clicking the link below, you can see what is being proposed and you can leave your feedback:

[www.bchg.co.uk/my-home-neighbourhood/resident-scrutiny-voice-panel/values-based-service-standards/](http://www.bchg.co.uk/my-home-neighbourhood/resident-scrutiny-voice-panel/values-based-service-standards/)

We will take on board your views before these are finalised and launched in March 2023.



# Resident Voice Scrutiny Panel (RSVP)

The Resident Scrutiny Voice Panel (RSVP) consists of 7 residents



Kai Jackson, Chair



Dave Saddler



Archie Gibson



Ann Bayliss



Carlene Wynter



Mike Barratt



Nikki Crook

The Panel carry out service reviews on things that matter to all residents and make recommendations to BCHG Executive Team and Board of Management.

There last service review took a deep dive on service charges, 8 recommendations were made and accepted. You can read the full report here:

[https://www.bchg.co.uk/media/1847/service-charge-service-review-report-board-version\\_.pdf](https://www.bchg.co.uk/media/1847/service-charge-service-review-report-board-version_.pdf)

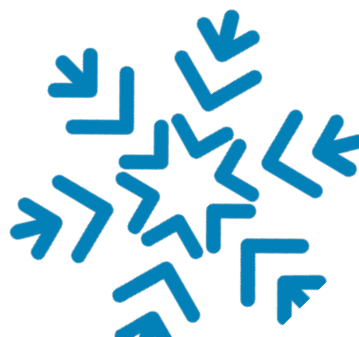
Some of the recommendations included:

- Residents have a say in the procurement of contracts
- Plain English communication of what is included in the service charge
- Consistent inspection sheet is used by staff
- Roles and responsibilities are clear on who deals with questions about service charges

Some recommendations are implemented, and others are being worked on.

RSVP have now scoped their third review on Health & Safety, which aims to test competency and the independent experts used, and cost spent on keeping residents safe. The Panel alongside the surveys and activities we carry out are an important part of actively listening, learning and improving our service delivery.

There are a range of ways you can get involved, if you are interested in volunteering, please contact Ramesh Malhan, Head of Customer Voice, email: [Ramesh.Malhan@bchg.co.uk](mailto:Ramesh.Malhan@bchg.co.uk)







# Focus Groups

In October an online Focus Group meeting, attended by 9 residents and 4 colleagues, discussed the impact of the cost of living/climate change.

The groups were highly interactive and told us:

- You would like more information about support available
- Your preference for planned works that create more energy efficiency.
- You would like us to explore the timers on lighting and seek more efficient ways
- You would like to see sustainable green initiatives such as 'grow your own' and grey water.

What we did:

- Through a survey, responded by 200 tenants, you told us to prioritise the replacement of windows and doors above bathroom and kitchens. We are currently developing plans how we would implement this.
- We have placed information to support you on our website
- We have targeted support to those who need it most
- Conducted an annual communal survey to learn what we can improve.



# Board to Tenant Feedback

Keep us in the communication loop! We want to be clear on how hearing your voice impacts decisions made by BCHG Board of Management. Find the latest Board to Tenant Feedback: <https://www.bchg.co.uk/media/1844/board-to-tenant-feedback-nov22.pdf>

Did you know you can feedback and star rate us using BCHG Chat - <https://www.bchg.co.uk/complaints/bchg-chat/>, it keeps us in the loop too!





# Cost of Living

Our BCHG website has useful resources to help you manage the increase in the cost of living with hints on things you can do to save here and there. You can find this by following this link: <https://www.bchg.co.uk/my-home-neighbourhood/cost-of-living-support/>

You can also find local support from the links below:

## **Sandwell Council**

<https://view.publitas.com/renaissance-creative/23394-sandwell-cost-of-living-booklet/page/1>

## **Dudley Council**

<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/cost-of-living/>

## **Walsall Council**

[https://go.walsall.gov.uk/benefits?fbclid=IwAR3Yf3zKRQ043yz4dzBP8gcw3T\\_ORqtFfgTrQjGI7VJ-9clJd7FshWRhvwL4](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/benefits?fbclid=IwAR3Yf3zKRQ043yz4dzBP8gcw3T_ORqtFfgTrQjGI7VJ-9clJd7FshWRhvwL4)

## **City of Wolverhampton Council**

<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/community/cost-of-living-support?fbclid=IwAR1KKGU05Qm-Wielq-dyfNTWXvCCTYhsYja25qdSF5KIJcJy-JjrdcsujrG8>

## **Birmingham City Council**

[https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50274/cost\\_of\\_living\\_support?fbclid=IwAR0CrP44\\_Dx-Z26QyBcvDIocnsKc2XxupSB\\_WhleS-iFg-uhDoraR-r2Hyk](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50274/cost_of_living_support?fbclid=IwAR0CrP44_Dx-Z26QyBcvDIocnsKc2XxupSB_WhleS-iFg-uhDoraR-r2Hyk)

The holidays can often be a time where people fall victim of scams, so it is important to stay vigilant of illegal money lending companies. Find out more information here:

<https://www.stoploansharks.co.uk/>.

If there is anything else you are struggling with, please contact your Customer Relation Manager:

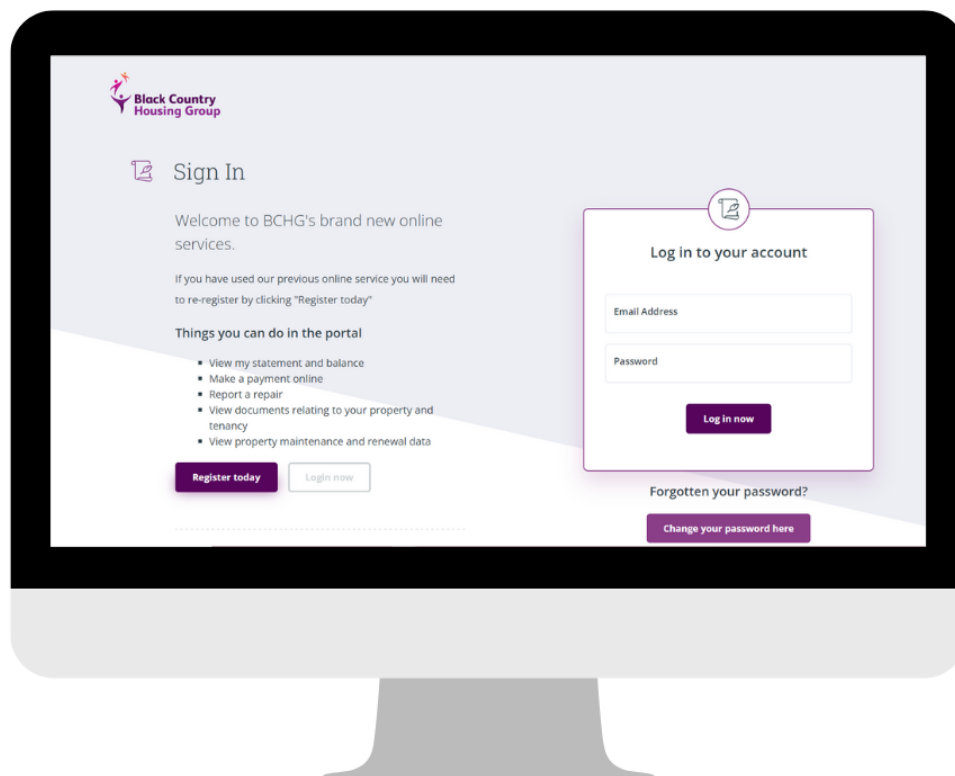
<https://www.bchg.co.uk/my-home-neighbourhood/my-customer-relations-manager-crm/>



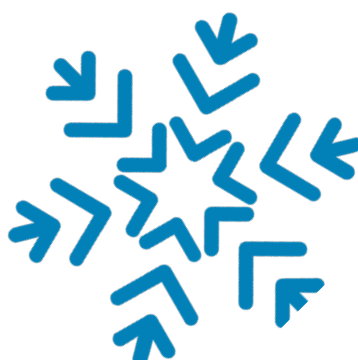


# Know More

Do you know we carry out Fire Risk Assessments on communal areas? You will find this information on your notice board or through your Customer Portal account. If you have not yet joined, you can do so by clicking this link: <https://myhome.bchg.co.uk/>



A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is used to document how people will be evacuated when they have difficulty responding to a fire alarm or escaping from a building, in the event of an emergency. If you're worried about this, did you know that West Midlands Fire Service provide a free Safe and Well visit that can give you a peace of mind. You can contact the service through this link: <https://www.wmfs.net/our-services/safe-and-well/> or for free call 08003895525. You can also speak to your Customer Relation Manager.



# Domestic Abuse

BCHG has joined the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA) as a member to improve its response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of a framework of good practice. A customer Domestic Abuse Policy has already been put into place. The Policy outlines the different types of domestic abuse and the steps BCHG will take to reduce domestic abuse cases in any of our living accommodation properties. You can read the Policy here:

<https://www.bchg.co.uk/media/1833/domestic-abuse-policy-to-june-2025.pdf>

As an organisation, we do not tolerate any acts of domestic abuse and are committed to safeguarding both our customers and colleagues. All colleagues across BCHG will be receiving domestic abuse awareness training to ensure we can support you, should you need this.

To show our commitment of raising awareness of domestic abuse, we took part of the of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence between 25 November and 10 December on social media, where we shared some astonishing facts about domestic violence and resources where you could find help. Follow us on social media on any of our social platforms listed at the end of the Broadcast to find out more.

You can report domestic abuse to your CRM, which will be handled with confidentiality.

If you are in any immediate danger, please call 999.

Find further support on our website:

<https://www.bchg.co.uk/my-home-neighbourhood/domestic-abuse/>





# New Developments

Our development programme continues to perform strongly and we have 90 properties currently on site.

The 15 homes at Meredith Street, Cradley Heath were handed over on the 9th November. The 33 properties at St Peters Road, Netherton will come across to us after Christmas. You may also have seen the larger scheme of 42 flats at the newly named Siviter Court (on the main Blackheath Island by the Coronation Club) is also progressing well although this scheme will not be ready until November 2023.

We are also looking to acquire a further 14 units at Goodrich Mews in Lower Gornal after Christmas and start on site on schemes at Payne Street (opposite Blackheath Sainsbury's) and on the old Sea Scout Building on Birmingham Road. Finally, BCHG approval is being sought from BCHG Board in November to develop 4 houses at Earl Street, West Bromwich and 13 properties at Darkhouse Lane Coseley which in total are a further 40 much needed affordable homes for the Black Country. All of these aim to start on site by March 2023.

This is an amazing achievement in very difficult market conditions and means we will be both meeting our commitments to Homes England and maximising our grant funding opportunities in the year.

However, most importantly we are meeting housing needs during difficult times helping those who most need it.



**Meredith Street, Cradley Heath**

**Regis Lodge, Blackheath**





## Contact us:

**Customer Portal:** <https://myhome.bchg.co.uk/>

**BCHG Chat:** <https://www.bchg.co.uk/complaints/bchg-chat/>

**Website:** <https://www.bchg.co.uk/contact-us/>

## Follow us on social media:

**Facebook:** BCHGLtd

**Twitter:** @BCHousingGroup

**Instagram:** @blackcountryhousinggroup

If you have a complaint, please do speak to us.

You can also get support from the Housing Ombudsman Service can be contacted for advice and assistance on 0300 111 3000, 9.15am-5.15pm: Monday to Friday.

Address: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ

Website: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us/>

