

Always here for you

We understand the challenges that families are facing, as rents and other household costs continue to increase.

We want to help you with some of those challenges. In this bulletin you'll find useful tips and reminders about all the ways that we can support you.

If you are worried about money, we are here to help.

Our **confidential** money advice service could help you to reduce your household bills and is **free** to use.

We can check you are receiving the right benefits and support you to make a new claim. And if you would like to boost your employment prospects, we can help you to find and apply for jobs and prepare for interviews.

Drop-in to our Community Hubs

In our Community Hubs in Shrewsbury and Stafford we provide free support for you.

As well as getting expert advice about money, benefits and employment, you can use our computers and printers. We also offer online courses to help you gain new qualifications.

Visit our Community Hubs in Castlefields and Meole Brace in Shrewsbury, or Burton Square in Stafford.

For opening hours see www.homesplus.co.uk/community-hubs

Are you worried about a child, friend, family member or neighbour?

While it can often be hard to identify abuse or neglect, if you have any concerns, please Speak Up. Contact your local safeguarding team if you think that a friend or a neighbour could be at risk.

Find your local safeguarding team - www.homesplus.co.uk/safeguarding

KEEP WELL & WARM

If you're struggling financially or concerned about heating your home, we're here to help.

Advice and information to help you save money, heat your home and look after yourself, can be found in the Keep Well & Warm area of the Homes Plus website - www.homesplus.co.uk/keep-well-and-warm

Keep Well & Warm is your **one-stop round-up of useful advice and support.**

- **Your money** for energy saving tips. Find out about the Warm Home Discount scheme for people on a low income or pension, Cold Weather Payments, savings on broadband, the Healthy Start scheme and lots more
- **Your home** to help you keep your home warm and avoid cold weather problems like frozen pipes
- **Your wellbeing** for information about free community events and signposts to mental health support

Are you insured?

Contents insurance could cost just a few pounds a week and bring you peace of mind.

Although it's our responsibility to insure your building, this does not cover the cost of replacing your personal belongings in the event of a fire, flood, a burst pipe or other household emergency.



My Repairs

Emergency repairs

If you need an emergency repair, call us on **0800 048 8955**. You can report emergency repairs on this number, 24/7.

Emergency repairs are things that put your safety, security or health at immediate risk. For example:

- No heating or hot water
- Major damage to the structure of your home
- An uncontrollable water leak
- A dangerous electrical fault
- A gas leak – if you smell gas or fumes you must immediately call the National Gas Emergency Service on **0800 111 999** and ensure you are safe, before reporting it to us
- An unsecure front door or window causing a security issue

Non-emergency repairs

We are responsible for most, but not all repairs. Here is an easy reminder. You can also report routine repairs 24/7 on our website or by sending us a private Facebook message.

Our responsibility

- ✓ **Lighting in communal entrance or landing**
- ✓ **Window won't close or open**
- ✓ **Broken shower (if we fitted it)**
- ✓ **Leaking roof**
- ✓ **Loss of power**
- ✓ **Problem with your hot water or heating**
- ✓ **Repairing tap or kitchen unit**
- ✓ **Damaged electrical socket**
- ✓ **Replacement toilet seat**

Your responsibility

- ✓ **Condensation management**
- ✓ **Blocked sink, bath, shower or toilet**
- ✓ **Lost key**
- ✓ **New bulb for lighting inside your home or for your security lighting**
- ✓ **Cracked/smashed windows**
- ✓ **Fixtures and fittings (e.g. curtain rails)**
- ✓ **Minor cracks to plaster inside your home**
- ✓ **Replacing a blown fuse**
- ✓ **Decorating the inside of your home**

Repair timescales: what to expect

Emergency repairs - within 4 hours

Heating and hot water repairs - within 6 hours

Routine repairs taking less than one hour to complete - target to complete within 24 hours (Monday – Friday)

All other routine repairs – see our website for the latest repairs service status

How to make a complaint

We welcome your feedback as we are committed to providing an excellent service to our customers.

We know that sometimes things go wrong or the service you receive falls short of your expectations. When this happens, we want to hear from you so that we can put it right and improve our services to prevent similar problems from happening again.

You can make a complaint by contacting us in the following ways:

- Complete the online form at www.homesplus.co.uk/feedback
- Call us on **0800 048 8955**
- Email feedback@housingplusgroup.co.uk
- Send us a private message at www.facebook.com/MyHomesPlus

You can find more information about our complaints policy by visiting www.homesplus.co.uk/feedback

We are registered with the Housing Ombudsman and are committed to complying with their Complaints Handling Code.

Please be aware that you are able to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage of your complaint for further advice and assistance.

- Tel: **0300 111 3000**
- Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Leave a compliment

Your feedback helps us to understand what is important to you. To let us know when we've done something well, or thank one of our colleagues who has gone the extra mile to help you, simply complete the compliments form on our website.

We appreciate you taking the time to tell us when we are getting things right and we'll share your feedback with the individuals and teams concerned – it's always encouraging to get a 'well done'!



Fire safety in communal areas

Communal areas are the places in buildings such as apartment blocks, that other people share - like landings, entrance lobbies, corridors, meter cupboards, lifts or open walkways.

A fire in a communal area can spread between homes. It could make it more difficult for the emergency services to reach you and might prevent you from leaving the building in an emergency.

Never use communal areas or balconies to keep or store **anything** that could:

- Stop you escaping quickly
- Prevent emergency services reaching you or your neighbours
- Give off toxic smoke or gas when burning
- Explode in high temperatures
- Cause fire to spread more quickly

We carry out regular safety inspections in apartment blocks and as part of that work, we remove and recycle objects left in communal areas for your safety.

Take three steps to gas safety



Step 1

As your landlord we are responsible for carrying out annual gas safety checks. We will always let you know when we are coming to do this work. If you need to reschedule our visit for any reason, please call us on **0800 048 8955** as soon as possible.

Step 2

Look out for warning signs your gas appliances aren't working correctly - lazy yellow or orange flames instead of crisp blue ones, or black marks on or around the appliance.

Step 3

Know the six symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning: headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse and loss of consciousness.

If you smell gas, you should immediately call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.

E-bike conversion kit safety advice

E-bike conversion kits allow people to add an electric motor to their bicycle. Some are sold without a battery, which must then be purchased separately.

The London Fire Brigade warns that cheaper batteries bought online may not reach UK safety standards and are more likely to fail and catch fire. Buying batteries second hand means your battery could already be damaged. Always make sure you buy your batteries from a reputable seller and that they aren't second hand.

DIY installations can also damage the kit, increasing the chances of a fire. If you are planning to turn your bicycle into an e-bike, please get a professional to carry out the conversion.



Damp and mould

See it – report it!

If you spot signs of damp and mould in your home or have any questions or concerns, please call our customer service team, send us a private message on Facebook or complete the online form on our website.

Getting around for less

The £2 bus fare cap on many routes in England has been extended until the end of December 2024.

Check the website of your local bus company for details of the routes included in your area.



Keeping the community safe from ASB

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) can have a big impact on people's mental health and sense of security.

We want you to feel safe in your home and neighbourhood. Call us to report ASB, or go online to complete the form on our website. We respond to reports of ASB within three working days.

Please remember that if you are in immediate danger you should always call the police on 999.

My Community Fund

The Homes Plus My Community Fund sponsors amazing projects in local neighbourhoods.

We supported a new sensory room for babies and children in Shropshire and a memory café for people experiencing memory loss in Staffordshire. We've also backed volunteers targeting loneliness among men of all ages.

Apply for sponsorship by visiting the My Community Fund page on our website.



Little Rascals soft play centre

WE'RE HIRING

Do you want to join a resilient organisation and help us to make a positive difference to homes, lives and communities?

With a range of opportunities to develop your career, it's a great time to join us.

Roles in housing, repairs, care and support, development and central services, mean that there's something to match your talent and ambition.



Customer Partnership Panel



Virtual Customer Panel

Could YOU become part of our Customer Partnership Panel or Virtual Customer Panel?

These customers work in partnership with us to help improve our services. You can choose the involvement that suits you best, meeting in person or contributing online.

As an involved customer, you could question and challenge us about how we deliver services, have your say on important policies and customer communication, and work with us to improve the experience of all our tenants.

If you would like to help us to make a positive difference, we'd love to hear from you!

#BEMOREINVOLVED

See our latest vacancies online or drop-in to our Community Hubs to chat to us about how you can put the PLUS in homes and care.



#BEMOREHPG

