

## FIRE SAFETY SPOTLIGHT - APARTMENT SCHEMES

### FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

Did you know that we carry out a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) of all of our apartment schemes annually? From now on we will let you know when we are due to complete an FRA so that you can join us and give feedback about the building and any safety concerns you might have. Of course you don't have to wait for an FRA to report any concerns with your building. Contact our Property Team on 01782 968566, Option 1.

### FIRE DOORS

If you have a fire door we **must** inspect it annually. This means that every year we will contact you to make arrangements to visit and complete the inspection. Please give access, when we contact you, the inspection only takes 5 minutes. Remember, a properly working fire door could save your life!

Hadrian Noble is the Society's Head of Property and Building Safety Manager. To contact Hadrian email [info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk) or call 01782 968566.

### FIRE PREVENTION

- Test your smoke alarms weekly and contact us if they aren't working.
- Keep all fire exits clear.
- Always keep fire doors closed.
- Don't overload plug sockets.
- Check your Christmas lights conform to British Standards.
- Unplug Christmas lights when you go to bed or go out.
- Don't burn candles in your home.
- As most fires start in the kitchen don't leave cooking unattended.
- Be aware that after drinking alcohol, the risk of accidents in the kitchen is greater.
- Unplug electric blankets before getting into bed

## Our Annual Christmas Plea.... Disposing of Your Rubbish!

Christmas often results in lots of extra boxes and paper to dispose of. Please don't place bulk waste in the communal bins, it takes up space for general household waste and there may be a reduction in council waste collections over the Christmas period. If you can't dispose of it properly keep it in your home until you can. Also, don't put cooking fats, oils, grease and food waste down the sink. Allow waste to go solid and then dispose of it in your bin.

For those living in our high rise blocks, our refuse chutes are under a lot of pressure over the festive period. Please help to keep them working properly:

- Take larger household items to the skip room, don't leave them in corridors where they will be a fire hazard
- Place rubbish in small parcels, no larger than a carrier bag size, before putting it down the chute
- Don't put large shaped items (such as pizza boxes) down the chute - tear them up first

Remember, a blocked chute affects all of the residents in the building - so please take care.

### GET INVOLVED

If you're looking for a new challenge in 2025 why not think about having your say and helping to shape Stoke on Trent Housing Society's services. Becoming an involved tenant means you can influence our services by getting involved in service scrutiny, focus groups and building safety issues.

If you're interested in becoming an involved tenant or want to learn more about how you can become Involved go to [www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk](http://www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk). You can register your interest by emailing [info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk) or call us on 01782 968566.



---TEAR HERE---

### Complete the missing words in the sentences below:

1. There are 14 \_\_\_\_\_ based across the city.
2. You should also let us know if you change your \_\_\_\_\_ details or emergency/next of kin contact details
3. You don't need to do anything until you've received a \_\_\_\_\_ 'Migration Letter'.
4. Please do not ignore a Universal Credit migration notice or your legacy benefits will \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Our Housing Team lets our properties, collects your \_\_\_\_\_ and is here to support you with your tenancy.
6. If you have a fire door we **must** inspect it \_\_\_\_\_.

Now complete your name and contact details below and send us an image of your entry slip via **WhatsApp** to 07876897172 or email [info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk) with your answers. Alternatively, send your completed entry slip to The Trevor Jones Office, Hammond House, Ridgway Road, Hanley, ST1 3AX.

The 3 lucky winners will be drawn on **11th December 2024** and must be a tenant or leaseholder of the Society.

Name:..... Address: .....

Email: ..... Mobile: .....

WIN  
VOUCHERS  
WORTH  
£50



## Resident Newsletter Autumn 2024

### In this Edition:

- Community Lounges
- ASB Awareness Week
- Universal Credit Migration
- Winter Fuel Payment Change
- Meet The Team
- Avoiding Condensation and Mould
- Stock Condition Surveys
- Fire Safety Spotlight
- Annual Plea—disposing of rubbish!
- Get Involved
- Christmas Quiz

We're giving away a £50 VOUCHER to 3 lucky winners — be sure to read this newsletter and complete the competition on the back page.

### Are your household details up to date?

Please remember to let us know who is living in your home. If we are not aware of everyone living in your home this may affect assignment and succession applications if the worst were to happen. This also includes telling us when anyone moves out of your home. You should also let us know if you change your contact details or emergency/next of kin contact details, just in case we can't get hold of you in an emergency.

To advise us about changes in your household please contact a member of the Housing Team who will be happy to help.

### Hardship Fund

If you are struggling to pay bills or buy food the Society may be able to assist via our Hardship Fund. For more information call us on 01782 968566.



### CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY Friday 13th December

This year the Society team will be supporting Dougie Mac by wearing their festive jumpers.

Join us by sending a photograph of you in your Christmas jumper.

WhatsApp 07876 897172 or email [info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk)

Best jumper gets a £50 shopping voucher.

### Community Lounges

Did you know that there are 14 community lounges based across the city? A community lounge provides a place for you to gain local advice and support available to you and your family. As well as providing a warm space, they provide lots of useful information around a range of issues including:



You will find community lounges in:



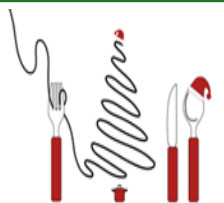
To find your nearest community lounge visit [www.communities-together.co.uk](http://www.communities-together.co.uk)

### Christmas Day Hospitality

Here's a list of organisations providing hospitality for those alone or in need this Christmas day.

- \* Swan Bank Church, Burslem - call 01782 575129
- \* Salvation Army—call 01782 832422
- \* Port Vale Football Club—call 01782 757066

As in previous years, the Society will also be handing out food vouchers to those residents it has been supporting with their welfare needs. We'll be in touch if you qualify.



### CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS

Our offices close for Christmas on **Tuesday 24th December at 1pm** and will re-open at **9am on Thursday 2nd January 2025**.

To report an **emergency repair** during this time call 01782 968566 and press 1 on your telephone keypad. For any other repairs please wait until our office opens on Thursday 2nd January 2025.

There is also lots of useful information on our website [www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk](http://www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk)



# ASB AWARENESS WEEK MAKING COMMUNITIES SAFER

ASB Awareness Week encourages communities to take a stand against ASB and highlights the actions that those experiencing it can take. Organised by **Resolve**, the week features a series of events across the UK involving local councils, police forces, and crime commissioners as well as other partners such as housing associations and community groups. To support the week, the Society will be asking residents to complete an ASB survey and holding ASB information sessions at:

- **Northwood Court**, Community Room - Thursday 21st November 1.30pm till 3.30pm
- **Hammond House**, Lower ground floor reception area - Friday 22nd November, 10am till 12pm

### Reporting ASB

Research has found that almost 1 in 5 people have considered moving home because of the impact of ASB. Despite this, over half of those surveyed did not report the ASB. **If you are experiencing ASB contact us!**

COMPLETE OUR ASB SURVEY. SCAN THE BARCODE OR CONTACT US FOR AN EMAIL, TEXT LINK OR PAPER COPY OF THE SURVEY.

ASB Survey 2024



### TALK TO US- We don't bite!

We know that sometimes it can be hard to deal with everyday life. Everyone has their ups and downs. Our staff are always here for you, and no matter what your circumstances will do their best to help. We see so many people who we could have helped sooner if they had approached us as soon as they were experiencing problems. Please don't bury your head in the sand, whether you are having financial problems or struggling to maintain your home, call us or come to our office for a chat. We don't bite, we care.

## Universal Credit Migration—Important!

The Government are moving some people who are currently claiming legacy benefits such as tax credits, Income Support, Housing Benefit, and Employment Support Allowance onto Universal Credit. You don't need to do anything until you've received a Universal Credit 'Migration Letter'.

Once you've received the letter, you will have 3 months to make your claim for Universal Credit. This is called your deadline date, and it is printed on your letter.

**Getting Support before you make your claim!** You should contact a benefits advisor as soon as possible to check your circumstances to confirm your benefits are maximised before you move to Universal Credit, this will ensure you receive the maximum amount of transitional protection.

**Will I be worse off?** It depends on your personal circumstances. You may be better off claiming Universal Credit. You will be entitled to 'Transitional Protection'. Transitional Protection is a top-up payment, so you do not lose out because of the introduction of Universal Credit. It means that, in cash terms, you cannot receive less than your current benefits at the time when you move to Universal Credit. Some people may still be worse off depending on their circumstances and transitional protection can reduce over time as your circumstances change.

**What Happens if I miss the deadline date on my letter?** Your legacy benefits will stop immediately from your deadline date, you won't get transitional protection and you could be financially worse off. Your Universal Credit won't be backdated.

**How do I pay my rent once I'm on Universal Credit?** Universal Credit is an all-in-one benefit and is paid in one lump sum. Any Universal Credit you are entitled to is paid directly to you and this will include money towards your rent. You should arrange to pay your rent to the Society, we would recommend a direct debit so that it leaves your bank account when you receive your payment, this way you can be sure that you don't fall into any arrears. You can also ask DWP to pay Housing Costs direct to us. It's important that you check your Universal Credit statement every month to confirm who your rent has been paid to, this will confirm if housing costs have been paid directly to you or the Society.

**Please do not ignore a Universal Credit migration notice or your legacy benefits will stop. Contact us if you need advice.**

### Winter Fuel Payment Change

The Government has recently announced scrapping Winter Fuel Payments for all except the poorest of pensioners. Those pensioners not in receipt of Pension Credit or other means tested benefits will no longer get Winter Fuel Payment worth up to £300. Previously it was available to everyone above state pension age. The Government says around 880,000 people in the UK are eligible for Pension Credit but not claiming – are you one of them?

### How to claim Pension Credit

There are many ways to claim Pension Credit. You can apply for Pension Credit online on the Government's website, by calling 0800 991 234, or by printing out and filling in a paper application form. You will need:

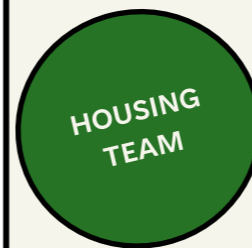
- Your National Insurance Number.
- Information about any income, savings and investments you have
- Information about your income, savings and investments on the date you want to claim from
- Your bank, building society or credit union account details.



**If you are struggling to make an application for pension credit do contact us.**

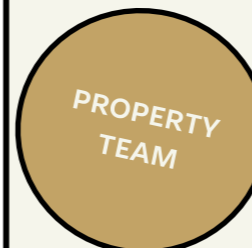
## Meet the Team

You may have noticed some new faces around our schemes over recent weeks and a change to our phone system when you call us. These changes have been made as part of a review of our operational services and the feedback that you have provided through the Tenant Satisfaction Survey and our Annual Visits.



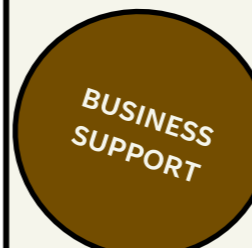
**Our Housing Team lets our properties, collect your rent and is here to support you with your tenancy:**

- Housing Manager - Lisa
- Housing Officer - Kirstie
- Income Officer - Lorraine
- Assistant Housing Officer - Rachel



**Our Property Team manages the repairs to your home alongside keeping it safe and secure:**

- Property Operations Officer - Jon
- Property Compliance Officer - Estelle
- Property Administrator - Katie
- Property Assistants - Chris & Conner

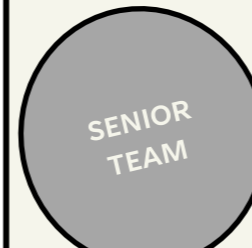


**Providing support to all areas of the business, ensuring the smooth functioning of daily business operations and governance**

- Business Support Officer - Erica



We're keen to know if our changes have so far had a positive impact. Get in touch, we'd love to hear your feedback.



**Our Senior Team coordinates all aspects of the daily management of the Society's Business, ensuring it meets regulatory requirements and providing leadership and direction:**

- Housing Director - Sue Davies
- Head of Property - Hadrian Noble



There is lots of useful information on our website to help you manage your home and your welfare. Go to: [stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk](http://stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk)

To contact us email [info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk) or call us on 01782 968566

### Avoiding Condensation and Mould

At this time of year, condensation can start as moisture in the air, caused by cooking, washing or drying clothes indoors. When moist air hits cooler surfaces it turns to water, which can sometimes lead to mould. Condensation is most likely in places where there is little flow of air, particularly in corners, on or near windows, and behind wardrobes or cupboards.



What can be done to prevent it?

- Wipe down your windows and sills every morning (wring out the cloth after)
- Keep rooms on a low heat setting
- Cover pans when cooking
- Always vent tumble dryers outside the home
- Close the door when having a shower or bath and turn the extractor on
- If you dry clothes indoors open a window
- Don't dry clothes on radiators
- Leave a space between the back of furniture and the wall so air can circulate
- Open your windows or the vents in them
- Use an anti-fungal wash to clear mould (follow manufacturer advice)

**If you need support with any of the above contact the office, we'll arrange a visit to your home and agree an action plan.**

### Stock Condition Surveys

As part of our Planned Replacement Programmes the Society needs to carry out regular Stock Condition Surveys to gauge how components such as kitchens and bathrooms are lasting compared to what we have as their expected life cycle replacement. This helps us to prioritise improvement works and to programme future works and budget for these replacements.

If we get in touch with you to complete one of these surveys please help us by allowing us access to your home.