

Fresh Start for Your Home this New Year : Beat Condensation & Declutter!

The New Year is the perfect time to refresh your home. A few simple steps can prevent condensation, protect your walls, and make your space feel brighter and healthier.

Why it Matters:

Condensation forms when warm, moist air meets cooler surfaces. Over time, it can cause damp, mould, and musty smells—and affect your health.

Quick Tips to Prevent Condensation:

- **Ventilate:** Open windows regularly and use extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms.
- **Keep Warm:** Maintain a steady temperature to reduce moisture settling.
- **Dry Laundry Carefully:** Avoid drying clothes indoors when possible; if needed, ventilate the room.
- **Wipe Surfaces:** Check windowsills, mirrors, and kitchen areas for moisture and wipe dry.

Declutter for Better Airflow:

- Clear out cupboards and wardrobes—packed spaces trap moisture.
- Don't store wet coats, shoes, or towels inside, let them dry first.
- Use breathable storage boxes and leave small gaps between furniture and walls to let air circulate.

Extra Tips:

- Consider moisture absorbers or a dehumidifier in problem areas.
- Check for early signs of damp and mould, and let us know so that we can help you.

Start the Year Fresh!

A little decluttering and airflow goes a long way. **Enjoy a healthier, lighter, and fresher home in 2026!**



Resident Newsletter December 2025

In This Edition:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Christmas Safety
- Independence Day
- Awards & Introductions
- How to Use Storage Heaters
- Looking After Your Mental Health
- Beat Condensation and Declutter
- Stay Connected
- Christmas Quiz

We're giving away a **£25 VOUCHER** to 3 lucky winners so be sure to read this newsletter and complete the competition on the back page.



CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY - 17th DECEMBER

This year, the team will be supporting a local mental health charity by wearing their festive jumpers. Join us by sending a photograph of you in your Christmas jumper and help us spread some festive cheer!

WhatsApp 07876 897172 or email us at info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk
Best jumper gets a £25 shopping voucher.

Christmas Safety: Batteries & Chargers

Christmas is full of fun gadgets and decorations - but batteries and chargers can be dangerous if not used safely. Follow these tips to keep your home safe:

1. Use the Right Batteries

- Stick to the type your device recommends.
- Don't mix old and new batteries or different types.
- Store spares in a cool, dry place.

2. Charge Safely

- Use the charger made for your device.
- Charge on hard, flat surfaces, never on beds.
- Unplug when fully charged, don't leave unattended.

3. Inspect & Protect

- Check batteries for leaks or damage.
- Keep devices away from heat and direct sunlight.
- Keep batteries out of reach of children and pets.

4. Avoid Overloading Outlets

- Don't daisy-chain extension cords.
- Use surge-protected power strips when needed.

5. Dispose Properly

- Recycle batteries at collection points; never throw them in the bin.

Enjoy a bright, safe, and happy Christmas!

Stay Connected

Visit Our Website

- News, events, and announcements
- Online forms and service requests
- Helpful guides and tips for your home

Follow Us on Facebook

- Real-time updates and reminders
- Ask questions and share feedback
- Connect with your community

Why?

- Stay informed about your home
- Access services quickly and easily
- Participate and have your voice heard

Get Started Today:

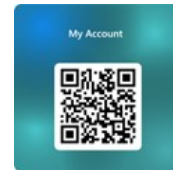
www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk

www.facebook.com/SOTHousingsociety

Stay Connected, Stay Informed, Stay Engaged!



My Account is our customer portal, providing you with an easy way to manage your tenancy. You can access it safely and securely from any smartphone, computer, laptop or tablet. To register contact us by phone or email or use this QR code. We will then create your account and send you a registration link.



HOUSING PERKS

You can now pay less with **up to 18% discount** for what you already buy online and in store with your Housing Perks. The free app will help you to save money on the essentials:

UP TO 18% DISCOUNT

- ✓ GROCERIES ✓ CAR ✓ FUEL ✓ CLOTHING
- ✓ SCHOOL UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT
- ✓ HOME FURNISHINGS & DIY ✓ FAMILY DAYS OUT

HOW IT WORKS

- 1 Download the app for free to your device available from
- 2 Buy a voucher with up to 18% discount
- 3 Voucher appears in app within seconds ready for you to use

HOW TO SIGN UP

- When you download the app, enter organisation ID: **SOTHS**
- Your account will need to be registered to your SOTHS address, so keep your tenancy reference handy.

For more information visit www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk

Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey

If you haven't already completed this year's Tenant Satisfaction Survey, please take a moment to do so now by scanning the QR code. This survey helps us understand what you think about your home and the services we provide. Your feedback will be used to calculate the biennial Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), which will be published and reported back to all tenants as required by the Regulator of Social Housing. **By completing this survey, you will also be entered into a prize draw, where 10 lucky winners will each receive a £25 shopping voucher.**

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2025



Complete the missing words in the sentences below:

1. Don't mix _____ and _____ batteries or different types.
2. Set Input wisely - cold day ahead then _____ input.
3. What you _____ can affect your mood and _____ levels.
4. Clear out cupboards and _____.
5. My Account is our customer _____.

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 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:**



Hardship Support

We all know that winter, and especially the festive season can be hard for many.

If you are struggling to pay bills, heat your home, or simply buy food, we may be able to help through our Hardship Fund.

Give us a call, drop us an email, or pop in to see us.

CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS

Our offices will close for the Christmas period on **Wednesday 24th December at 1:00pm** and will reopen at **9:00am on Monday 5th January 2026.**

If you need to report an **emergency repair** during this time, please call **01782 968566** and press 1 on your telephone keypad. For all **non-emergency repairs**, please wait until our office reopens.

You can also find lots of useful information on our website www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk

Independence Day!

Back in 2017, we made the bold decision to bring the Society's operational services in-house. This led to the creation of our team based in Hanley, who took on responsibility for all resident services, with only IT and accounting support delivered by another local Housing Association.

Since then, a lot has changed. Our team has grown in both size and skills, helping us meet regulatory requirements and continue delivering great services. With the recent introduction of our new Property and Housing Teams, we hope you've noticed the improvements too.

This year, we've taken another big step by recruiting our own finance team so we can manage our accounting and IT services directly. This gives us greater control over our business plans and makes us more resilient. And now, we're delighted to say that as of **1st December 2025 we are fully independent**. A big well done to all of the officers who have been involved in this project, what a great achievement!

Mike's Award!

Mike, has been working hard to achieve his **Level 3 Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Award**.

This nationally recognised qualification covers essential areas of housing knowledge and provides valuable skills.

Mike says, *"Doing the qualification has given me the tools and skills to develop in my role, which I hope will benefit our customers."*

In addition to achieving his CIH award, Mike has also temporarily stepped up into a new role as Housing Officer for the Society.

Congratulations and well done Mike!



Meet Ruth

A warm welcome to **Ruth**, who recently joined us as our new **Finance and Business Support Assistant**.

Ruth's role is part of our new independence structure, helping to keep our finances in order, ensuring your payments are processed quickly and that our contractors are paid on time.

She brings many years of experience in social housing finance, repairs, and customer services, and **she's already settling in brilliantly!**



Anniversary Certificate

And finally, congratulations to Steve — our loyal electrician who has been recognised by the National Inspection Council for his 40 years of dedication and excellence in his electrical certification career. Steve is one of our trusted contractors, having worked with the Society for over 20 years, keeping residents safe in their homes. **Well done, Steve, and here's to the next 40 years!**

How to Use Your Economy 7 Storage Heaters Efficiently

Storage Heaters store heat overnight using cheaper electricity (Economy 7) and release it during the day. Most have two controls, an **Input Charge** (how much heat to store overnight) and an **Output Room/Release** (how much heat to release during the day). Here are some tips for using them:

- 1. Set Input Wisely** - cold day ahead then increase input. Mild day, then lower it. Avoid always setting it to maximum, it wastes electricity.
- 2. Control Output Smartly** - keep output low when you're not in the room or overnight. Increase gradually when you need extra warmth.
- 3. Heat Only the Rooms You Use** - turn off or reduce output in unused rooms. Don't block heaters with furniture, curtains, or clothes.
- 4. Dry Clothes Carefully** - avoid drying wet clothes on or directly in front of heaters, it reduces efficiency and may damage the heater. Heated airers are a great alternative, contact us for chance of a free one.
- 5. Seasonal Adjustments** - autumn/winter: increase input for colder days. Spring/Summer: reduce or turn off heaters if not needed.
- 6. Save Energy** - maintain comfortable but modest room temperatures (18–21 °C). Use timers or smart meters if available to track night-rate electricity.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Leaving heaters on maximum constantly
- Covering or blocking heaters
- Relying on expensive daytime electricity for extra heat

Use your Economy 7 storage heaters smartly — stay warm, save money, and be comfortable all year round!

Looking After Your Mental Health

Many of us associate mental health with depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses, but mental health is something we all have. Just as it's important to take care of your physical health, looking after your mental health is also essential to your overall wellbeing.

Signs of Mental Health Problems

Signs will be unique to you but here's a few examples - trouble sleeping, thoughts or feelings are getting harder to deal with. You may feel sad, hopeless, or fearful. You may feel worried, tense, or afraid (commonly known as anxiety) in a way that doesn't feel normal for you. Mental health problems can often have physical symptoms too. You might find you've lost your appetite or are feeling tired all the time. Being aware of your mental health and what's normal for you means you're more likely to recognise these signs early on. And this means you can take steps to feel better.

Taking care of Your Mental Health

- **Relax** – Have a nice bath, go for a walk, watch your favourite TV show or movie. Many of us don't make the time to wind down so take the time.
- **Practise mindfulness** – by focusing your attention on the present moment, take a few deep breaths, pause and breathe. There is lots of information on the internet to help you do this.
- **Get outdoors**- spending time with nature can help your mental wellbeing. Spending 20–30 minutes in natural daylight may help improve your sleep too.
- **Have a regular sleep routine** – getting enough sleep will make a difference to how you feel. Research also shows that going to bed and waking up at the same time each day can help maintain positive mood.
- **Keep active.** – regular exercise is key to healthy mood and can improve anxiety and depression. Even some gentle exercise can help to give you a boost.
- **Eat healthy** – What you eat can affect your mood and energy levels. Eating more whole foods like brown rice and wholegrain breads can help keep your mood stable. Reducing your caffeine intake and making sure you eat enough fruits and vegetables is also helpful.
- **Stay connected** - keep in contact with friends and loved ones – even if this is just by text or phone.
- **Avoid drugs and alcohol** - using these to cope with problems can do more harm than good

There are a range of mental health services available that you can reach out to:

| Service | Website | Call |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Stoke on Trent Healthy Minds Network | staffsandstoketalkingtherapies.nhs.uk | 0300 3030923 |
| Changes Health & Wellbeing | changes.org.uk | 01782 411433 |
| NHS Mental Health Helpline | staffsstokeics.org.uk | 0800 0328 728 |
| The Dove Service | thedoveservice.org.uk | 01782 683155 |
| Samaritans | | 116 123 |
| SANEline | | 0300 304 7000 |
| National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK | | 0800 689 5652 |
| SHOUT | Text helpline, text SHOUT to 85258 | |

Go to our Wellbeing section on our website www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk for more information.

The Society is always here to offer whatever support we can, so please reach out to us if you need to talk.