IMPORTANT: Your housing service is changing

With your help, we have developed Housing+, a more personalised service that aims to provide additional support to help people look after themselves and their home. The new service will soon be rolled out across Sheffield following a successful trial in the South East of the city. Read on to find out how it might affect you.
We have consulted with you about how housing services should be delivered in the future. Based on what you told us, we have developed Housing+.

It works by having a Neighbourhood Officer look after a number of households in their geographical ‘patch’. The main benefits are:

- More contact with customers in their own homes
- Teams that work more closely with other services
- Better access to services that improve health and well being
- Targeted work at the early stages of rent arrears and anti-social behaviour
- Officers having a more visible presence on estates

**What’s in the +?**

- Housing services in your area will be co-ordinated by your local Neighbourhood Team
- Your Neighbourhood Officer will have knowledge of other council services, and will be able to help you access these if you need additional support in your tenancy
- Our staff will visit you in your home and provide the information you need. They can also help if you need support in accessing online services

**What will stay the same?**

- You will still get in touch with us via the Call Centre, as you do now
- You’ll still be able to call into your local housing office with a query or problem
- We will work hard to make sure that there is minimum disruption to the service we provide you

Housing+ will not affect the amount of rent you pay. You won’t necessarily see any major differences right from the start as we aim to make the changeover as seamless as possible.

As we aim to offer a more personalised service, your Neighbourhood Officer will probably be in touch with you at some point in the near future.
Welcome to the Spring 2016 edition of InTouch magazine.

My name is Gill MacLaine and as a tenant living in Stradbroke, I have been involved in the test phase of Housing+.

If you are not already aware, you will soon know all about Housing+ - a new approach to delivering the council housing service in Sheffield. There have been articles in InTouch over the last two years or so and this issue features a special supplement in advance of its citywide roll-out this summer.

Initially I was sceptical about Housing+ but I have found it very beneficial. Having a single point of contact to discuss issues such as communal refuse, anti-social behaviour and ideas for improvement, is most effective. It offers continuity and the opportunity to build a working relationship between tenants and the Council.

Sometimes it makes the world of difference knowing that person will either act swiftly on your behalf or signpost you elsewhere.

In my personal experience, Housing+ is a valuable service that has improved my community and, as a tenant with disabilities, improved my quality of life, the quality of my tenancy, and provided reassurance and support.

Other tenants should find out who their Housing+ contact is and get to know them. They are here to work with us to improve our communities so make use of the service they provide as nothing beats that personal touch.

To find out more about Housing+ call 0114 293 0000 or log onto www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing.

Best wishes,

Gill MacLaine
Guest Editor

Fostering

One of the most rewarding things you can do

Lynne and Philip Roberts, a married couple in their late 60s, are council tenants who have been fostering children for the past 16 years. The Roberts don’t think they fit the usual stereotype of foster carers. So they wanted to share their story to encourage others who are thinking about fostering to give it a go.

Lynne said: “I was 52 and we knew we had wanted to foster for a number of years. We have six children, most of them had left home and our youngest at 13 was growing up fast. I felt sure we wouldn’t meet the criteria to foster as we were over 50, had both been married before and lived in a council house. But Philip persuaded me to give the Council a call. We filled out our application, a social worker came to visit and after a six month process - to our delight - we became foster carers.

Since then we have fostered 38 children and have two children with us at the moment.

One of my main worries was what would happen if we had any problems but we were given a social worker from the start who has always been there at the end of the phone if we need them. You are never left without support from the Fostering Team and there are also monthly support meetings with other foster carers.

It is one of the most rewarding things we have ever done, just seeing the change in the children you care for. You often can’t see it at the time but when you look back at how far they come, from being withdrawn or not speaking any English, you can really see the difference you are making to these children’s lives. It’s often the simple things that make a real difference - things that we take for granted. I remember taking one little boy to the seaside and his eyes were so wide when he saw the sea. He said ‘look at the big bath water’! And there was a two-year-old who was too scared to walk on the sand.

If it’s something you have been thinking about, don’t think ‘I can’t do this’. Go along to a meeting or call the Council’s Fostering Team to find out more and give it a go. It is incredibly rewarding.”

Sheffield Council is particularly keen to hear from people who can care for older children or keep brothers and sisters together, as well as people who can offer permanent homes to children.

www.sheffield.gov.uk/fostering
sheffieldfostering
Each year we advertise 20 exciting apprenticeship opportunities across all areas of housing. From construction and surveying to rehousing and homeless services, we could hold the key to a successful career for you.

Every day is different, with a wide and varied workload that might include:

- Helping someone with financial problems work out a debt repayment plan
- Working with legal services to resolve anti-social behaviour cases
- Planning a maintenance programme for thousands of homes
- Getting involved with community events and initiatives
- Helping a homeless person find a new home

We go way beyond maintaining bricks and mortar - people are at the centre of everything we do and we can become an important part of their lives. We provide one of the best housing services in the country, so you will be joining a team that really knows what it’s doing!

Many of our previous apprentices have gained permanent employment with us. We welcome enquiries from people of all backgrounds because we want our workforce to be as diverse as the communities we serve.

Don’t take our word for it - see what Anika and Nick have to say about the scheme...

**ANIKI’S STORY**

Anika joined the housing apprenticeship scheme late last year:

“I wanted to gain skills and knowledge in housing and do my NVQ without going to college on a long-term basis.

“I am really enjoying the visits out as it gives me the opportunity to get involved and develop skills I never thought I would.

“As I had just left school, I was quite a nervous character when it came to going to different places but I’m now much more confident.

“I am hoping to have a permanent job at the end of my apprenticeship or at least be in a good position to be able to work in another sector of the council or have a similar role within housing.”

**NICK’S ONLINE DIARY**

One of our apprentices is keeping a monthly online diary to show in more detail what an apprentice might be doing on a day-to-day basis.

Nicholas Anderson was one of 16 new housing apprentices who started work with Sheffield City Council at the start of 2015.

He works in the income management team and his diary illustrates the ups and downs of working life, from the challenges he faces to praise from managers and colleagues.

To find out how he has developed into his new role, take a look at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing).

Read about the fantastic work of our estate officer apprentices on page 8.
IMPROVING COUNCIL HOMES ACROSS SHEFFIELD

Work continues on the five year £300 million investment programme to improve council homes in Sheffield.

The ambitious project aims to:

• protect buildings for the future
• reduce the number and cost of repairs
• improve the energy efficiency of homes

There are several key parts of the programme.

ROOFING
Around 4,600 homes had roof renewal and roofline works in 2015/16, with 6,000 more planned for 2016/17.

KITCHENS, BATHROOMS, WINDOWS & DOORS
Around £38 million will be spent over the next five years to carry out work that was either not carried out as part of the Decent Homes programme or now no longer meets the required standard.

United Living will carry out the work in north, north west and east areas, whilst Keepmoat has won the contract for central, south east and south west areas. Wates will carry out work on windows and doors citywide.

Work for 2016/17 will be prioritised at the 1,700 or so properties that received no Decent Homes work.

ADAPTATIONS
There is an annual budget of around £1.8m to deliver adaptations to over 500 properties, improvements that help people live independently at home.

HEATING & INSULATION
The programme to upgrade all ‘obsolete’ heating boilers was completed at the end of March 2016, except to those where it was not possible to gain access.

The heating programme to replace old boilers will continue on a planned basis, along with those that breakdown and are beyond repair.

Heat meters continue to be installed to homes on the Community Heating network. Around 2,500 were completed in 2015/16 and the programme will finish in 2016/17. Annual consumption figures show this work is saving on average over £200 for customers.

In 2015/16 we have continued to carry out loft and cavity wall insulation work to any property identified as needing it.

FIRE SAFETY
Essential fire safety work was completed at 4,900 properties in 2015/16 and the programme finishes in 2016/17.

Work that started in October 2014 to install sprinkler systems to the 540 ‘ranch’ style properties was completed in 2015/16.

COMMUNAL AREAS
In 2016/17 upgrades will take place to communal areas of low rise flats, including new windows, doors, flooring and lighting.

Wilmott Dixon are working in the east, central, north, north west and south east areas, and Kier will be doing some work in the south east and south west areas. Around 600 blocks will be completed in 2016/17.

GARAGES
Over the last two years a group - that includes tenant representatives - has reviewed the Council’s 5,000-strong stock of garages.

Each garage location was appraised, based on condition and improvement works needed, demand from customers, rent loss and customer feedback.

Recommendations were made for each location, based on its sustainability over the next 15 years, and agreed at Local Area Housing Forums in October 2013.

Around £3.5m will be invested in garages across the city, including the demolition of around 1,500 and the improvement of 3,400.

Demolition work should start around July 2016 and improvement works in Oct/Nov 2016.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
Before any improvement work takes place, customers will get a letter explaining what is happening and who to contact for more information.

You can find out what work is planned for your home and what year this is due to start by visiting our website at www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing and using our address search facility.

For general enquiries email us at HomesInvestment@sheffield.gov.uk or call 0114 293 0000.
A small team of apprentices and estate officers have transformed hundreds of gardens at vacant properties across the city.

Since January 2015, they have completed work to 507 gardens and dealt with 48 issues around landlocked sites, no man’s land and re-establishing tenant garden boundaries.

The four estate officer apprentices - working towards an NVQ Level 2 in Horticulture - have helped estate officers clear gardens, cut grass and redefine boundaries by pruning shrub beds and hedges.

Their work has been invaluable in getting properties re-let as quickly as possible, maximising rental income.

The team members are Ellis Bethell, Tom Shaw, Ryan Wilde, Josh Gallagher, Steph Hardman and Andy Willis.

For more information contact 0114 2930000 and ask to speak to the Estate and Environmental Services Team.

The amount of rubbish dumped in communal areas has reduced dramatically following an educational campaign with customers.

Since May 2015, a team of Waste Support Officers has been working at ‘hotspots’ across the city, tackling incorrect waste disposal at blocks of flats and maisonettes.

As part of the Love Where You Live promotion, officers have also engaged with residents and taken enforcement action where needed.

The impact of their hard work is continuing to show across Sheffield.

There have been big reductions in waste removal from communal areas of blocks on Ironside Road, Blackstock, Plowright and Haslam Crescent in the Gleadless Valley area, as well as Roscoe, Liberty Fairbarn and Woodfarm blocks in the North West.

The estate team was regularly clearing large quantities of waste from the blocks’ communal areas, peaking in March 2015 when they visited on 166 occasions.

Since the campaign started, they have removed waste from the blocks on less than 40 occasions each month, and in some blocks less than 20.

The project has clearly had an enormous impact and people who live in these blocks are pleased with the results.

The Tenant and Leaseholder Advisory Group working with us on this project have already discussed and provided feedback on a number of key issues, including:

- Feedback from tenants at City Wide Forum
- Communications for the project
- Buying a new fleet of vehicles for the new service
- Performance monitoring
- What the new service will look like from Day One

The project is progressing well, with a number of sub-groups working on key areas of the project. These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-group</th>
<th>Working on ...</th>
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<tr>
<td>People / Human Resources</td>
<td>Ensuring a successful transfer of staff from Kier to the Council, and effective training for these staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Readiness</td>
<td>Ensuring that a structure is in place to support, govern and monitor the performance of the service when it transfers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Communications Technology (ICT)</td>
<td>Ensuring necessary ICT systems are in place to enable the Council to deliver the service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial Services</td>
<td>Supporting effective procurement of the materials and goods needed to deliver the service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Providing financial and budgetary expertise to the project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Engagement</td>
<td>Ensuring all interested parties – particularly customers - are well-informed and involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles and Accommodation</td>
<td>Ensuring that the transport and accommodation facilities needed to deliver the service are in place</td>
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The project currently underway to transfer the housing repairs and maintenance service from Kier into the Council from April next year.

You can find out more about the project on our new web page at www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/initiatives/housing-repairs-maintenance-insourcing-project/management

We will also keep you updated as the project progresses in other ways, including articles in future editions of InTouch. But in the meantime if you have any questions or comments, please do get in touch with us. Email HousingRepairsInsource@sheffield.gov.uk or call 0114 293 0000.
Review will help improve

A huge review of how the council housing service engages with its customers has taken place.

Four members of the Housing and Neighbourhood Advisory Panel (HANAP) – Sally Klic, Christine Lupton, Terry Bawden and John Kite – looked at all aspects of community engagement and what could be improved.

They have produced a report that includes a list of recommendations, including:

- Extending invitations to some local meetings to a wider range of tenants and residents
- A review of terms of reference for all groups and forums
- Creating a directory of all tenants’ groups and forums
- Introducing short Q&A sessions before local meetings
- Having meetings chaired by a levy-payer
- Giving people new to a meeting information about the purpose and how they can contribute
- Reducing the overall number of meetings slightly but having the option to arrange ad-hoc meetings when local issues arise
- Exploring other online methods of engagement including Citizen Space, Facebook and Twitter

The full report and set of recommendations are available at www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing

Read on to find out what the review team did and how they did it.

Community engagement

We believe this is the biggest tenant-led engagement review

Sheffield’s Council Housing Service has experienced in recent years.

We engaged with large numbers of meeting attendees and spoke extensively to tenants and leaseholders.

We were not guided by budgets or influenced by staff and management, although we did meet with both. Our aim was to improve engagement and the quality of meetings without duplication where it wasn’t necessary.

We met with South Yorkshire Housing Association and Sanctuary Housing to compare how they engaged with their customers and whether their ways of working could be adopted within the Council. We found the staff at South Yorkshire Housing had a strong team who worked much closer with the tenants and tenant groups. They used an unusual but extremely effective way of supporting groups and events.

By offering funds they would expect the community to give time back, ideally in a different sphere, for example by helping in a care home or cutting someone’s grass. It meant a small sum of money affected the lives of twice as many people. We think this may be something to consider when Housing+ rolls out across the city.

We were particularly keen to increase engagement but the biggest stumbling block is who the invitations go out to.

Currently the council invite just Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs) to local meetings but there is a large swathe of Sheffield’s tenant population that are not within a TARA and don’t know about the meetings. Similarly local meetings are closely linked to the Housing Revenue Account so those affected by it should have their say.

We looked long and hard at how best to engage with the wider tenant community and believe as the council moves towards Housing+, staff would be better placed to share information with the tenants they visit.

We understand some people will have reservations about the changes recommended however what we can say is that nothing has been changed just for the sake of it. We have given a great deal of thought to every recommendation including reducing the frequency of some partnership groups and reviewing the agenda items.

We also met with the Challenge for Change group. Having examined some of the reports they have written, we were extremely impressed with their work. Their role, without question, is invaluable and benefits all tenants and leaseholders.

We were, however, concerned about the size of the group. Just a handful of people do lots of work and we were worried as to how long such a small group can be sustained. We recommend reviewing the selection process and would like a staff member, a Challenge for Change member and a HANAP representative to sit on the selection board. We feel there is plenty of talent out there that could be tapped into.

This gives an overview of the work we have carried out and some of the changes put forward. We are confident engagement across Sheffield Council Housing will improve as a result.

It is important for us to thank not only the tenants and leaseholders who gave their opinions but also community engagement staff who gave their time, helped arrange meetings for us and shared our information at the appropriate meetings. Without their support this piece of work would have taken a great deal longer.

If you would like to discuss the review with us, call 0114 293 0000 or email getinvolved@ sheffield.gov.uk

"
Universal Credit goes live in Sheffield

On 18th January this year Universal Credit was rolled out in Sheffield by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

It combines the following benefits into one monthly payment:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income Related Employment Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

Any tenant of working age making a claim for benefits could meet the criteria for claiming Universal Credit. Jobcentre Plus can help you find out or you can check which benefit you should claim on the DWP website at www.gov.uk

Universal Credit is paid monthly and includes housing costs, which is called the Housing Costs Element. It is claimants’ responsibility to use this to pay their rent.

Working with the DWP

A number of teams across Sheffield City Council are helping to deliver services in partnership with the DWP.

Customer Services at Howden House can help tenants referred by the DWP to make a claim online if they are unable to use a computer.

Income Management’s Money Advice Officers are supporting claimants who the DWP think will have difficulty budgeting their Universal Credit payment throughout the month.

And the Sheffield Benefit Service is working with the DWP to ensure Housing Benefit claims close down to £258 from £350 for couples and families, and £500 to £385 per week for £258 from £350 for single claimants.

For more information about Universal Credit log onto www.gov.uk or www.moneyservice.org.uk

New welfare reforms for 2016

As you will be aware, the Government has introduced many welfare reforms over the last five years and further changes will take place in 2016.

Housing Benefit

There are three main changes:

- Late claims will only be backdated for up to 4 weeks for claims made from 1st April onwards
- There will be a maximum payment of 4 weeks for absence from the UK with effect from the summer of 2016
- Family premium will be removed from the Housing Benefit calculation. This will reduce Housing Benefit for some claimants

These reforms also apply to the Housing Costs Element of Universal Credit

Reduced Benefit Cap

The Benefit Cap limits the maximum household income that can be derived from benefits for working aged claimants. From autumn this year a further reduction comes into force, taking the maximum income down from £500 to £385 per week for couples and families, and down to £258 from £350 for single claimants.

Local Housing Allowance

The Local Housing Allowance limits the amount paid in Housing Benefit or the Housing Costs Element of Universal Credit. It has been applied to private sector tenancies for some time and is now being rolled out to social housing tenants.

Anyone signing for a tenancy from 1st April 2016 will have their Housing Benefit or Housing Costs Element limited to the Local Housing Allowance from 1st April 2018.

What are we doing to help?

Anyone who bids for or takes a tenancy from 1 April 2016 will be told how it affects them via the Sheffield Property Shop website and prior to sign up.

Need help?

If you have problems affording your property you can request a Discretionary Housing Payment if you have a shortfall in Housing Benefit. However as this is not guaranteed or paid long term you should think about finding affordable accommodation or contact Income Management on 0114 293 0000 if you need help or advice.

Keeping the family amused this summer can end up being expensive. But, with a bit of forward planning and some savvy money-saving it’s possible to have a good time, with out spending all your pennies. So here are some tips for making your money go further.

- Find free stuff to do
  Little Sheffield has lots of free activities for under fives, follow Little Sheffield on Facebook. Or visit www.welcometosheffield.co.uk or www.wow247.co.uk (choose Sheffield) for cheap ideas on what to do in Sheffield. Sites like www.netmums.com and www.mumsnet.com are also worth looking at for ideas.

- Be sport savvy
  You may be eligible for a Slice discount leisure card which costs just £3 for 12 months and offers discounts for activities such as swimming and ice skating. You can apply at most leisure centres in Sheffield.

- Use your pins not your purse
  Try and find activities near your home, so you can save on your bus fare. Your school, Sure Start or local TARA might have activities going on in the summer.

- Discover the great outdoors!
  Sheffield is blessed with some of the best parks and green spaces in Europe. Visit Graves Park for a fantastic day out and check out www.thearbourdor.co.uk for loads of things to do/places to go in and around Sheffield (runs, trails, walks, bike rides etc) for the whole family.

- Be Money Smart
  Sheffield Money 0114 399 5555 can provide short term loans for everything from fixing the car to a new washer. You can also check what benefits you are entitled to by visiting www.entitledto.co.uk

- Explore family group deals
  Group buying sites can offer big discounts for one day only. Visit sites like www.livingsocial.co.uk and www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk for great deals on attractions and family days out.

- If you are planning to take a holiday, start saving early
  Sheffield Credit Union, 0114 276 0787 can help you do this.

- Cut down on summer food costs
  Take a picnic rather than buying food out. Shop at the right times when the stores are discounting, try going veggie for a day, visit your local market or get the kids involved with helping you cook from scratch. It’s also worth checking out coupon sites like www.groupon.co.uk/sheffield, www.couponshop.co.uk and www.freestuff.co.uk/printable-vouchers/shops/

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The new policy that sets out the rules for allocating council housing in Sheffield went live on 1st April 2016.

Called the Allocations Policy, it aims to ensure the Council can:

• Meet its legal obligations and duties to people in housing need
• Make the best use of Sheffield’s housing stock
• Achieve value for money

The new policy sets out the criteria for joining the housing register and letting social housing through the Council. It replaces Sheffield City Council’s Lettings Policy, which is now defunct.

It has brought about some changes for our customers and we have contacted those currently on Sheffield City Council’s housing register to explain how they are affected by them. Those customers most affected have received a letter directly.

The Council’s new Allocations Policy does not change the rules on Mutual Exchange. These remain the same.

There is a dedicated webpage at www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing providing further information about the Allocations Policy and the changes it introduces, along with a policy document to view or download.

If you have any feedback regarding the new policy, please tell us by using the online housing contact form, visit one of our public offices or contact the call centre.

Each year we will ask people on our housing register to check the information we hold about them.

This is important because it ensures that customers are able to bid for homes on the Sheffield Property Shop website and are matched to the right properties.

Many of the applications on our housing register haven’t been updated for a while now, and we know some details are out of date.

We will identify all active applications which are more than 12 months old and ask customers to update their information where necessary or confirm their details are correct.

Customers will receive an email or letter from us telling them how to log onto their online account, update and confirm their details or get further help and advice if they need it.

Customers have 28 days to action and confirm their details. Applications will be cancelled for those who do not do this, which means they will no longer be able to bid for properties and will lose any waiting time they have accrued to date.

If a customer changes any of their details, such as updating their address, they must provide identification (ID) for themselves and all household members.

A full list of the ID we will accept is on the Sheffield Property Shop website at www.sheffieldpropertyshop.org.uk

We will continue to offer help and support for our vulnerable customers to update their details and provide ID.

We understand that not everyone has a computer or internet connection at home but there are lots of other options including:

• Internet cafes
• From a smart phone
• At a friend or relative’s house where there is internet access
• Public libraries
• UK Online Centres
• Self service computers at Howden House First Point
• Any Area Office
• Sheffield Property Shop at Howden House

Further help and advice on this and other rehousing issues is available at Sheffield Property Shop, any Area Office, First Point or by calling 0114 2930000.

Whether you want to move around the corner or miles away, a mutual exchange might be perfect for you.

It works when two social housing tenants, living anywhere in the UK, agree to swap properties with each other. It can take place between tenants of the same or different landlords.

Mutual exchanges can work really well if you want to move for family, work or other reasons.

Once we receive your application to exchange, you could move within as little as 4-6 weeks.

Sheffield City Council subscribes to HomeSwapper, a web-based mutual exchange service that allows you to view thousands of properties across the UK and advertise your property if you want to swap.

You can register online to use this service at www.homeswapper.co.uk

Once you find a suitable property and the tenant agrees they’d like to exchange with you, simply put in an application form and wait for us to give you permission to move.

There are very few grounds for refusing a mutual exchange and while permission is normally agreed, issues such as current rent arrears or outstanding repairs will have to be put right before we allow you to move.

You must not move without permission as your tenancy may be at risk

The Council’s new Allocations Policy does not change the rules on mutual exchange, which remain the same.

If you would like more information, please go to the Council Housing Website or call 0114 293 0000.
An unused, neglected woodland has blossomed into a beautiful community space thanks to the efforts of local people.

Abbeydale Wildlife Wood stretches from Dalton Court Community Centre to Sellars Street and was previously used as a dumping ground for rubbish.

Members of Abbeydale Tenants and Residents Association worked hard with local people to clear the land and turn it into a natural haven.

Bird houses, bat boxes and insect hotels built and decorated by local children are helping to attract animals and wildlife to the area.

Volunteers have planted over 1,000 bluebells and 1,550 young sapling trees, and local children designed signage for the wood.

An £11,000 Community Pocket Park grant - one of only 88 awarded nationwide - has recently helped to fund a meandering pathway through the wood.

“Our next project is a custom-made wooden carving decorated with foxes, owls and other woodland creatures that we hope will be on the site soon,” said Stewart Holmes, Chair of Abbeydale TARA, pictured with his wife Pat.

“It’s amazing what has been achieved considering the state it was in before - it was an absolute tip. We would like to thank everyone who has helped us get this far.”

Young and old are coming together to enjoy and share poetry in sheltered schemes across the city.

Sheffield University English Society volunteers tour schemes reciting poetry and chatting to tenants about their favourite poems.

The project is now in its third year and the sessions are popular with tenants, who often ask students to visit them again the following year.

It’s just one of several activities run across all of the Council’s 30 sheltered schemes, aimed at tackling loneliness and isolation by getting older people out of their flats and making new friends.

Other sessions include card making, decoupage, collaging, art, making canvases, colour therapy and reminiscing.

Highlighting the plight of homeless people

Fundraisers are sleeping rough in Stradbroke next month to raise awareness of homelessness.

Stradbroke TaCA (Tenants and Community Association) and The Link Community have organised ‘My Sleep Out’ on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th July in aid of the Cathedral Archer Project (CAP).

Volunteers are giving up their bed for one or two nights on secure land at the back of the Link Community Hub, making their own shelters and cooking food outside from basic rations.

To take part they will donate to CAP or get sponsored, raising awareness and vital funds at the same time.

“Many of our volunteers and hub users have endured periods of homelessness and the Archer Project was a major help in getting their lives back on track,” said Helen Eadon of Stradbroke TaCA.

“We want to raise funds for those most at risk but also awareness of the hardships those on the street endure.”

CAP provides hot meals, access to showers and washing facilities, onsite nurses and dentists, as well as workshops, volunteering opportunities and a range of services that help people move on with their lives.

On July 9th at 1pm, the Link garden will open so everyone can come along and support those taking part. There will be food, refreshments, singers and musicians.

To find out more contact Helen Eadon on 07973 837664 or email hteadon@btinternet.com

POETRY IN MOTION

FOR SHELTERED RESIDENTS

Young and old are coming together to enjoy and share poetry in sheltered schemes across the city.

Sheffield University English Society volunteers tour schemes reciting poetry and chatting to tenants about their favourite poems.

The project is now in its third year and the sessions are popular with tenants, who often ask students to visit them again the following year.

It’s just one of several activities run across all of the Council’s 30 sheltered schemes, aimed at tackling loneliness and isolation by getting older people out of their flats and making new friends.

Other sessions include card making, decoupage, collaging, art, making canvases, colour therapy and reminiscing.

Highlighting the plight of homeless people

Fundraisers are sleeping rough in Stradbroke next month to raise awareness of homelessness.

Stradbroke TaCA (Tenants and Community Association) and The Link Community have organised ‘My Sleep Out’ on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th July in aid of the Cathedral Archer Project (CAP).

Volunteers are giving up their bed for one or two nights on secure land at the back of the Link Community Hub, making their own shelters and cooking food outside from basic rations.

To take part they will donate to CAP or get sponsored, raising awareness and vital funds at the same time.

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BRANCHING OUT

at Abbeydale Wildlife Wood

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BRANCHING OUT

at Abbeydale Wildlife Wood
Sheffield Directory
Your new virtual best friend!

Need support to remain in your home?
Want to get fit?
Feeling isolated or need help to get a job?
Looking for a youth club for children with autism?

A new website called Sheffield Directory pulls together details of over 8,000 clubs, groups and services that you could spend hours searching for elsewhere - it's the first place you should look when you go online.

Find out about:

• Childcare and toddler groups
• Help at home, including home support, equipment and adaptations, handyperson and gardening services
• Learning, work and volunteering opportunities
• Support for carers
• Transport and mobility
• Advice and information on addiction, debt and benefits, bullying, housing and homelessness, adoption and lots more...

Discover a host of activities including: drama groups, rambling clubs, art classes, gardening groups, friendship clubs, health and wellbeing activities, dance classes, lunch clubs, choirs, martial arts, yoga and much, much more...

Does your child or young person have a disability or special educational need? The Sheffield Directory also includes a range of information about support and services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This is called the 'local offer'.

Find out about:

• Support for your child or young person at school or college
• Help with caring such as short break services and overnight respite
• Support groups
• Inclusive activities and days out
• Nurseries, childminders and after school clubs
• Independent travel and SEN transport
• Supported living and employment

You can find out what is going on in your area, how to get there and what other people think about the services on offer.

Explore www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk
- you won’t know how you managed without it!

Sheffield Directory
Your new virtual best friend

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE 2016 - BIG FRIENDLY READ
This summer, children are invited to take part in the FREE national Roald Dahl inspired reading challenge. Read six books over the summer and collect stickers and prizes along the way. On completion receive a medal, certificate and entry into a prize draw for a 'Big Friendly Read' goody bag!
A great way to maintain a child's reading level and keep them entertained over the summer.

THE SHEFFIELD eLIBRARY
is available 24/7 on your computer, smartphone and tablet. Browse FREE magazines including Hello, Top Gear and BBC Good Food. Relax with FREE ebooks: Hop into history, delve into mystery, romp through a romance. Sit back, relax and listen to FREE eAudiobooks. A great escape when doing housework or trapped in the car.

READING WELL, SHELF HELP
Reading Well Books on Prescription can be borrowed from all Sheffield libraries and they're FREE. They can help you manage your wellbeing using self-help reading. The scheme is endorsed by the NHS and consists of three collections: Adult Mental Health, Living with Dementia and Books for Young People.

www.sheffield.gov.uk/libraries
To get this information in... your preferred language

If you would like an interpreter to go through InTouch with you in another language, please contact your nearest area office to arrange this. You can find a list of offices on our website at www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing or call 0114 293 0000 or 0114 205 3333.

Getting in touch with Sheffield City Council

• Fill in our online form at www.sheffield.gov.uk/contacthousing
• Call us on 0114 293 0000 or 0114 205 3333
• Visit any of our offices or reception points
• Log on to www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing
• Write to us at Council Housing Service, PO Box 483, M33 0DH

New Area Names

Our six Housing Areas will soon change to the seven below:

+ North Sheffield Neighbourhood Team
+ Burngreave and Shiregreen Neighbourhood Team
+ Firth Park and Southey Neighbourhood Team
+ East Sheffield Neighbourhood Team
+ South East Sheffield Neighbourhood Team
+ South and South West Sheffield Neighbourhood Team
+ City and West Sheffield Neighbourhood Team

They will change with the rollout of Housing+ across the city. Over the summer there will be events in your area where you can meet your Neighbourhood Officer and find out more about Housing+. Look up your Housing Area at www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing
Test phase brings positive results

We recently evaluated the Housing+ test phase in the South East of Sheffield by talking to customers, staff, partners, councillors and Tenants and Residents Associations. At the point of carrying out the surveys, around 500 customers had experienced Housing+.

The majority who responded rated their Neighbourhood Officer as very helpful, resulting in an average score of 8.8 out of 10. Based on their experience of it, 93% of customers said they would recommend Housing+.

The results tell us we are moving in the right direction and have also identified areas where we need to carry out more work to ensure a smooth roll out across the city. You can find the full report at www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing

The impact of Housing+ on health

We are working with Public Health and the University of Sheffield to find out whether dealing with low level issues early, taking a preventative approach and signposting to other services impacts on the health and wellbeing of our customers.

Over the next year, the study will look at groups of customers in the South East - where Housing+ has been delivered for over a year - and other similar groups of customers in different areas of the city to understand the links between Housing+ and health and wellbeing. We’ll let you know how the study progresses in future issues of InTouch.

Find out more

Some of the customers who took part in the Housing+ trial in South East Sheffield have helped us produce a video that explains what it’s all about.

Watch it at www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing where you can also find out more about Housing+. 

Here’s what customers have to say about Housing+

I feel safer, the area’s more pleasant to live in and my home is more comfortable

For me Housing+ means extra - more help and support for tenants

Having a regular face makes us more confident in referring tenants for support

Housing+ goes above and beyond - they have helped refer people to food banks, drug and alcohol support ... dealing with any hidden issues there may be

The benefits of Housing+ are enormous. You quickly build a rapport and relationship

I have mental health problems and struggled when I first moved into my property but my Neighbourhood Officer supported me all the way

Contact us

Call 0114 293 0000

www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing

search for Sheffield's Council Housing Service

Twitter logo: follow us @HousingSCC