

# **Housing Matters**

**Newsletter for Westmorland and Furness Council  
Tenants and Leaseholders**

**Summer 2025**

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## Thriving communities: supporting St. Mary's Hospice together

Community is at the heart of our council, and nothing shows that better than coming together for a great cause.

With cancer touching so many lives, we're proud to support the incredible work of St. Mary's Hospice. Leading the way is our Senior Surveyor, Bryan Walker, whose fundraising is as inspiring as it is entertaining - his latest feat saw him don a wig and heels as a Pink Lady from Grease! From Bryan's recent fundraising events Council staff based in Barrow Town Hall have raised over £1,700 for our local hospice.

## Have I got housing news for you

Summer is here, bringing some welcome sunshine as we continue delivering key services for our residents.

This edition is full of updates, news, and stories to help you stay connected with our service and communities - including fundraising events led by Bryan, our Senior Surveyor, in support of St Mary's Hospice, a brilliant local charity supporting so many residents.

Read how residents are improving their community, plus a touching story of our team helping 'lovely Reuben' find his way home - showcasing the strength of our communities and Housing teams.

Find our Annual Report for 2024/25. We're proud to announce we have invested over £1 million into major improvements across our housing stock – ensuring 100% of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard. This investment reflects our ongoing commitment to providing, safe, warm and comfortable homes for our residents. Resident safety is our top priority and 100% of our properties hold valid gas safety certificates, ensuring every home meets strict safety standards. Whether through rigorous safety checks, responsive maintenance, or proactive investment, we are continuously working to protect our communities – because a thriving community starts with a safe home.

You can read how one tenant was able to escape safely from her flat after being alerted by a working smoke alarm.

We're committed to helping residents live safely and independently, which is why we've completed 303 home adaptations—from handrails to stairlifts—across our council properties. These improvements support people to stay in their homes longer, close to family, friends, and community. It's part of our person-centred approach, delivering not just housing, but homes for life.

Health and safety remains a top priority. New fire regulations require all internal and communal areas to be kept clear. We'll soon send guidance to help residents support safe,

accessible buildings. Your cooperation is key to maintaining secure homes and safer communities for all.

We welcome Scott our newest Street Voice for Carleton Meadows properties in Eden. Our Street Voices play a vital role in helping us stay connected with our residents. Acting as a bridge between residents and ‘thriving communities’, they help us listen, learn and act on issues that matter the most to you. By gathering feedback, raising concerns and sharing updates, Street Voices are helping us improve communication and build stronger, more responsive services. We are incredibly grateful for their time, energy and dedication to making sure every voice in our community is heard. If you’d like to become a Street Voice or learn more about this role, please get in touch we’d love to hear from you!

We’re proud to announce within the last year the addition of a further six brand new homes to our housing stock, making a total of 81 homes on our Carleton Meadows estate in Penrith – marking a major step forward in our mission to provide high-quality, affordable housing for our communities. These new properties are designed to offer safe, comfortable and energy efficient homes for individuals and families, helping to meet local housing needs and support thriving communities.

Finally, whatever the weather, getting outside is great for our mental health and we’re lucky to have beautiful parks and green spaces nearby—perfect for a walk, picnic, or simply relaxing with family, friends, or a good book.

Take care and enjoy the summer!

**Caroline Wagstaff**

**Assistant Director of Housing**



## Record of rent payments 2025/2026

Payments made after Thursday afternoon may not show on your account until the following week.

Payments made using Allpay cards or barcode letters can take two working weeks to reach your account

### Weeks 1 to 26 (7 April 2025 to 29 September 2025)

Week	From	Payment
<b>1. Non-collectable week. Payment is still due unless your account is clear</b>	<b>7 April 2025</b>	
2	14 April 2025	
3	21 April 2025	
4	28 April 2025	
5	5 May 2025	
6	12 May 2025	
7	19 May 2025	
8	26 May 2025	
9	2 June 2025	
10	9 June 2025	
11	16 June 2025	
12	23 June 2025	
13	30 June 2025	
14	7 July 2025	
15	14 July 2025	
16	21 July 2025	
17	28 July 2025	
18	4 August 2025	
19	11 August 2025	
20	18 August 2025	
<b>21. Non-collectable week. Payment is still due unless your account is clear</b>	<b>25 August 2025</b>	
22	1 September 2025	
23	8 September 2025	
24	15 September 2025	
25	22 September 2025	
26	29 September 2025	

## Weeks 27 to 52 (6 October 2025 to 30 March 2026)

Week	From	Payment
27	6 October 2025	
28	13 October 2025	
29	20 October 2025	
30	27 October 2025	
31	3 November 2025	
32	10 November 2025	
33	17 November 2025	
34	24 November 2025	
35	1 December 2025	
36	8 December 2025	
37	15 December 2025	
<b>38. Non-collectable week. Payment is still due unless your account is clear</b>	<b>22 December 2025</b>	
39	29 December 2025	
40	5 January 2026	
41	12 January 2026	
42	19 January 2026	
43	26 January 2026	
44	2 February 2026	
45	9 February 2026	
46	16 February 2026	
47	23 February 2026	
48	2 March 2026	
49	9 March 2026	
50	16 March 2026	
51	23 March 2026	
<b>52. Non-collectable week. Payment is still due unless your account is clear</b>	<b>30 March 2026</b>	

## Celebrating good neighbours and tenants!

In each edition, we shine a spotlight on residents who go the extra mile to make our estates a better place. This time, we're thrilled to show our appreciation through our Good Neighbour Thank You scheme to Lincoln, Tracy and Mark - whose efforts haven't gone unnoticed.

### Lincoln Johnson

Lincoln has shown that age is no barrier when it comes to making a difference. Earlier this year, he was awarded the Love Barrow Young Citizens of the Year 2025 for his commitment to agriculture, farming, and the wellbeing of the Ormsgill estate.

His hard work, care for the environment, and dedication to keeping our estate green, safe and tidy is truly inspiring.

A huge thank you to Lincoln for everything he has done!

### Tracy Stewart

Tracy, a resident of Craven Park Court, has taken it upon herself to tidy the large public grass area next to her block - painstakingly edging the grass along the pathways – which is no small task. She said she felt she had to do her bit for the area.

Her efforts have made a real difference, and we're so grateful for the pride she takes in her neighbourhood.

A huge thank you to Tracy for the work she's done – she so deserves this recognition.

### Mark Moss

Mark is nominated by our housing support officer, Lisa Lindley, for his initiative and community spirit. When a skip was delivered to tackle fly-tipped rubbish in the bin store, Mark took it upon himself to fill it – clearing the area and saving our Mobile caretaking Team from having to divert from other important jobs. His help made a real difference, and we're grateful for his hands-on help and positive attitude.

## Good tenants rewarded

Huge well done to the latest winners of our Good Tenant prize draw, Marie & Alan Wallace and Helen McHugh. Thanks for being such great tenants. Enjoy spending your vouchers!

## Want to know more about our incentive schemes?

- visit: [www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/incentive-schemes](http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/incentive-schemes)
- call Cathy Kirk on 01229 876523
- email: [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

## Reunited with Reuben: a tail of teamwork and kindness

When Petra, one of our new tenants, was struggling with illness and stress after moving, she wasn't able to return her keys in person. Housing officers Jacky and Isaac stepped in to help – and ended up doing much more than expected.

When they arrived to collect the keys, Petra tearfully shared that her beloved 12-year-old rescue dog, Reuben, had gone missing. Jacky immediately reached out to our local mobile operative, Sue Vaughan (who works part-time at the Council's kennels) and she alerted Jacky to a Facebook post about a found dog that matched Reuben's description. After a few messages, she connected with the kind woman who had taken Reuben in - just a short distance away!

Thanks to quick thinking, community connections, and a big dose of compassion, Reuben was soon back home, safe and sound, with a very grateful Petra. "I've had Reuben for eleven years—he's an amazing dog and fantastic with all my four grandchildren since they were infants," Petra said. "Thank you again to the lovely Housing staff who got him back to me – they have been so kind and very helpful to me over the past week or weeks - and thanks also to the lady from Angle Meadow Lane for letting Reuben have a sleepover!"

It's a lovely example of teamwork, community spirit, and the little extra things our Housing team does to support tenants.

## Annual Report 2024/25 in numbers

Here's our annual report which gives information on how we performed during the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

We hope this is useful in terms of understanding key costs and our performance.

If you've any queries or comments, please call us on (01229) 876523 or email [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk).

## Responsive repairs

- £2,206,945 spent on 6,681 responsive repairs
- 1,464 emergencies
- 1,875 urgent 3,342 routine
- average cost of responsive repair £330

## Planned maintenance works

- £1,143,274 spent on major improvements
- £191,936 central heating
- £266,056 rewires
- £123,664 windows
- £252,867 roofs
- £308,751 repointing
- 100% properties meet Decent Homes Standard

## Rents

- £91.46 average weekly rent
- £502,566 current tenant rent arrears
- 7 tenants evicted for rent arrears

## Your home

### Gas safety checks

- 100% properties have valid gas certificates
- 73 warrant applications made to gain access to carry out gas servicing where tenants refused access
- £3,692 spent on warrants

### Aids and adaptations

- £387,867 spent on adaptations
- 303 adaptations carried out

## Tenancy and estates

- 3,276 people registered on Cumbria Choice in Furness locality
- 171 homes were re-let
- 19 properties sold under Right to Buy Scheme
- 2,473 dwellings managed by Housing

## Neighbourhood

11 reports of race-related hate crime:

- 7 race
- 1 religion
- 1 disability
- 2 homophobic

## Complaints

Outcome	Stage 1	Stage 2
Upheld	6	0
Not upheld	10	4
Partly upheld	0	0
Rejected/withdrawn	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>

## Street voices: news and updates

### Tribute to Allan

Allan dedicated nearly two decades to tenant representation, which began in 2001 when he was appointed as a Street Voice for Barrow Island. From those early days, his passion for fairness and representing tenants led to him becoming a member of the Cumbria Residents' and Tenants' Forum. He travelled extensively to attend meetings, always putting the needs and voices of tenants first.

As proud Chair of the Tenants' Forum, Allan brought wisdom, integrity, and unwavering dedication. His efforts helped shape housing services for the better, ensuring that tenants had a strong and respected voice at the table.

But beyond his many contributions, Allan will be remembered most for the person he was a true gentleman—kind and respectful with a genuine concern for others.

Allan made a difference. He will be missed, and he will be remembered - with respect, admiration, and heartfelt thanks.

### Tenants' Forum Support Local Group - spreading Easter cheer

Mandy Anderson, Chair of the Tenants' Forum, helped spread some Easter joy by delivering Easter eggs for Ormsgill Stronger Together's Chill Hub events.

The eggs were funded through the Tenant Compact Budget and brought smiles to many local children over the Easter period.

### Help shape your community – become a street voice

Nobody knows your neighbourhood better than you. That's why we're looking for local residents who can help us understand what matters most to tenants. By sharing your views - and those of your neighbours - you can help shape housing services that truly meet the needs of your community. Together, we can create cleaner, better-maintained areas that people are proud to call home. Stronger communities start with local voices!

### Build skills and confidence

Getting involved doesn't just benefit your neighbourhood - it can also be a great opportunity for personal growth. Volunteering can boost your confidence, improve your wellbeing, and help you develop valuable new skills and experience. Supporting others can also bring a sense of purpose and keep you mentally active.

### Not ready to go it alone? Pair up with a neighbour!

Not ready to do it alone? No problem - team up with a neighbour and become joint Street Voices – everything's better with teamwork!

### New street voice for Eden

We're excited to announce that Scott Jackson has been appointed as the new Street Voice for Carleton Meadows in Eden. Scott brings energy, local knowledge and a strong commitment to community involvement.

### Interested?

If your area doesn't currently have a Street Voice and you'd like to learn more, we'd love to hear from you.

Call Cathy Kirk on 01229 876523 or email: [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

## Town Hall reception set for exciting revamp

Visitors to Barrow Town Hall can expect to see some exciting changes in the coming weeks and months, as preparations are under way to transform part of the ground floor, creating a more welcoming and accessible space for all visitors.

Once completed later this year, the redesigned area will feature two distinct reception spaces: one for Housing's customer service team, and another for council tax, benefits, and all other council enquiries. The updated layout has been planned to improve both functionality and appearance.

The upgrades will include the installation of modern lighting and comfortable, contemporary furniture. Accessibility is a top priority, with improved layouts to support visitors of all ages and abilities. In addition, free-to-use self-service computers will be available to help residents access council services and complete online forms with ease.

### New Town Hall coffee shop!

While The Forum is temporarily closed, its popular café has found a new home in the Town Hall. The relocated café is now open on the ground floor, alongside other essential services such as public toilets, Barclays hub, and the Forum box office and information desk. These facilities are easily accessible from the Duke Street main entrance of the Town Hall - just opposite The Forum.

## Opening times

Town Hall coffee shop:

10am to 3pm, Monday to Saturday

The Forum Box Office/information desk/Barclays Hub

9am to 4pm, Monday to Saturday

## Not moved over to Universal Credit yet?

Since March 2023, the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) has been gradually moving people in receipt of Legacy Benefits to Universal Credit. This process is expected to continue until the end of 2025.

## What to look out for

If you've yet to move over to Universal Credit, look out for a letter called a 'Universal Credit Migration Notice' from the DWP. This letter is very important. It will inform you that your current benefits are ending and that you need to make a claim for Universal Credit. It will also clearly explain what you need to do and by when.

Do not take any action until you receive your Migration Notice, as applying too early could result in a loss of benefit entitlement.

Once you have received your letter, you must make a claim for Universal Credit within three months of the date shown on the notice to continue receiving financial support.

## Need Help?

If you need assistance making your claim or have questions about the migration process, please contact our benefits officer:

Amanda Morris: (01229) 876581 or 07843 470831

For more information about the Universal Credit migration process, visit: <https://ucmove.campaign.gov.uk/>

## Need a change? Try a mutual exchange

Is your current home too big, too small, or no longer in the right location for you?

Whether you want to be closer to family, move for work, or simply find a home that better suits your needs, a mutual exchange could be the answer.

A mutual exchange is when two council or housing association tenants agree to swap homes. It's a great way to find a move more quickly than relying on Cumbria Choice as not



all tenants are eligible to use the scheme to transfer between properties. It puts you in control.

You can apply through Cumbria Choice to register your interest in a mutual exchange and view other properties that match your needs. Once you find a match, both tenants need to contact their landlords to seek approval for the exchange and you will be supported to do this from there.

You can swap with any other social housing tenant anywhere in the UK - not just in your current area. All social landlords, including us, must allow mutual exchanges.

## For more information:

Visit <https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/your-home/home-swaps-and-transfers>

Cumbria Choice: <https://www.cumbriachoice.org.uk/>

Call: (01229) 876554

Email: [cbl@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:cbl@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

## Update from our Safe and Strong Communities Team

In this edition, we shine a spotlight on two persistent problems —dog fouling and fly-tipping—and show how our team is taking action to keep our shared spaces clean, tidy and pleasant for everyone. We also want to remind tenants of the need to keep communal areas clutter-free.

### Dog fouling patrols

Dog fouling isn't just unpleasant - it's a health hazard – and we continue our efforts to tackle it in public spaces across the district.

The good news is, most dog owners are responsible, always cleaning up after their pets.

But unfortunately, a small minority still leave mess behind, spoiling shared spaces for everyone.

To raise awareness and encourage good habits, our Enforcement Officer, Peter Buckley, recently joined forces with Councillor Ben Shirley – and Peter's enthusiastic 11-month-old hound, Bruno - on a patrol around Askam.

Together, they met dozens of considerate dog walkers, with dogs on leads and carrying plenty of waste bags. During the patrol they put stickers on bins and posts and reminded owners of their responsibilities. Prior to this local councillors had delivered over 1000 leaflets to local households.

### £100 fixed penalties

This isn't the end of our campaign. Based on information gathered during their patrol, Peter will be returning to Askam for future enforcement patrols and won't hesitate to issue £100 fixed penalties to those who fail to pick up after their dogs.

Our officers continue to monitor this issue across our district, so to help us to help you please be a responsible dog owner and clean up after your pet.

### Bag it. Bin it. Keep our spaces clean

Let's all do our part to keep our parks, paths, and pavements clean -for everyone, and every paw! If your dog does its business, do the decent thing: bag it, and if there's no bin, take it home.

This is what 67 dog waste bags looks like, cleared from just one area on one of our estates thanks to our mobile caretakers.

Imagine how much more pleasant our spaces would be if every owner cleaned up after their own dog.

### Report it

You can report incidents of dog fouling online at [www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](http://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk) – search “dog fouling.”

## Hefty fines issued for fly-tipping

Our team is committed to tackling this issue and making it clear that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

As part of ongoing enforcement efforts, an individual was recently fined £250 for dumping rubbish in a bin store on one of our estates, despite the presence of refuse bins on site.

### Report it

If you have any information about fly-tipping in your area, please report it confidentially by emailing: [safeandstrongteam@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:safeandstrongteam@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

## Advanced notice – fire safety in communal areas

New fire safety regulations require that internal communal areas are kept clear and there will be a zero tolerance approach moving forwards in line with government legislation.

Items left in hallways and stairwells - especially combustible items - pose a serious fire hazard and can also obstruct emergency exits.

As the safety of our tenants and leaseholders is our top priority, this is an advanced notice that letters with further details are to be sent to everyone living in properties with communal areas.

Thank you in advance of your cooperation.

## **Maintenance matters – news from the team**

### **Smoke alarm saves life – a real reminder**

Earlier this year, one of our tenants experienced a serious fire in her flat. Thanks to her smoke alarm, she was alerted in time and was able to escape unharmed. Had the smoke alarm not been installed and working properly, the outcome could have been tragic.

All of our properties are fitted with mains-powered smoke alarms with battery back-up. These are tested once a year during the gas safety inspection, but it's tenants' responsibility to regularly check that they're working.

### **What you need to know**

- Test your smoke alarm every month – press and hold the test button for 10 seconds – you should hear a loud beep.
- In case of fire, the alarm will sound with short, sharp beeps. Evacuate the property immediately and call 999.
- For false alarms (like burnt toast), press the test button to reset the alarm
- If you hear a beep every 30 seconds, this means the alarm needs to be replaced. Report it to us straight away so we can install a new one.
- Never remove or tamper with the alarm – doing so puts your safety – and the safety of others - at risk.

### **Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms – now interlinked**

Smoke alarms are interlinked with carbon monoxide (CO) alarms, meaning if one alarm is triggered, all connected alarms in the property will sound.

It's important to know the difference in alarm sounds:

- Smoke Alarm: short, sharp, continuous beeps
- Carbon Monoxide Alarm: longer beeps with pauses in between

Please take a moment to familiarise yourself with the sound of each alarm, and always treat any alarm activation seriously.

## Carbon monoxide

Over the past year or so, the Council has been installing carbon monoxide alarms in all properties with gas boilers or gas fires.

This is a crucial safety measure and a legal requirement to help protect residents from the dangers of carbon monoxide.

While the majority of homes have now been fitted with alarms, there are still a few properties where we have not been able to gain access. If you have not yet had a carbon monoxide alarm installed, please contact Keith Wilson Electrical as soon as possible on 07739 355 909 to arrange an appointment.

Please be aware that the council is legally obligated to ensure these alarms are in place. If necessary, we will apply for a warrant of entry from the Magistrate's Court to gain access and carry out the installation. This applies to any property with a gas-burning appliance, except for gas cookers and hobs.

## Check if you can make improvements to your home

As a landlord, we are responsible for maintaining the structure and fabric of your home. However, as a tenant, you have the right to carry out some types of alterations or home improvements at your own expense, but you must get written permission from us first.

The type of work that would require permission, includes:

- Works to garden areas, including patios and driveway
- Kitchen or bathroom alterations
- Erection a greenhouse or shed

Alterations made without our prior consent may be removed by us and you could be recharged for the cost of returning the property back to its original condition.

For more information or to submit a request to carry out home improvements, please contact our Maintenance Team on 01229 876365 or email

[housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

## In the next edition...

### Disrepair claims

In her own words, one tenant shares how she was pressured into taking the Council to court over disrepair only to end up facing thousands of pounds in fines. Don't miss this powerful first-hand account and the vital lessons it holds for others.

But in the meantime, be warned, cold callers are in the area again - most recently on Newbarns and Ormsgill - falsely claiming to be surveyors working for the Council. If you're ever unsure, please speak to us before taking any action or signing anything.

## Griffin Community Centre

### A space for everyone

Since the much-anticipated reopening of Griffin Community Centre last year, we've been delighted to see our spaces filled with activity, laughter, and community spirit once again. A wide range of weekly sessions are now running, with something for all ages and interests.

From the ever-popular bingo nights to our fun and friendly Little Explorers toddler group, there's plenty to get involved in. We also host the Barrow Twins and Multiples Play Group, diamond art and card making sessions, and the lively NRG Dance Group.

In addition to our weekly schedule, the centre regularly holds charity coffee mornings and tabletop sales, creating opportunities for the community to come together, support good causes, and enjoy some company and conversation.

Everyone is welcome and we'd love to see you at any of our events.

### Griffin Community Centre – weekly activities

Day	Activity	Time
Monday	Diamond art and card making	1pm to 3pm
Monday	Bingo	Doors open 6.15pm for 7pm start
Tuesday	Barrow Twins and Multiples Play Group	10.30am to 12pm £2 voluntary contribution
Tuesday	Little Explorers Baby and Toddler Group	9.30am to 11am £1.50 per child, £1 siblings Snacks and juice provided
Sunday	NRG dance group	10am to 1pm

### Looking for a space to hire?

The Centre is available to hire for birthday parties, anniversary celebrations, club meetings, fitness classes etc. Whether you're planning a one-off celebration or need a regular venue for your group or club, we'd love to hear from you!

Jacqueline and Jordann  
Griffin Community Centre  
07921 464 806 or 07411 953 768

Email: [thegriffinbarrow@gmail.com](mailto:thegriffinbarrow@gmail.com)

Follow us on Facebook for all the latest news: [NEW Griffin Community Centre](#).

## Ocean Wave Community Centre

We are looking for volunteers who would be interested in running the Ocean Wave Community Centre on Central Drive.

For more details, please contact the Council's Community Development Officer, Simonetta Tiribocchi, who would be happy to have a chat with you about what's involved in managing the centre. Give Sim a call on 07825 783 060.

## Complaints – do you know how to make one?

Our teams are committed to delivering the very best service they can. Whilst we always strive to meet your needs, on occasions we recognise that our services may fall short of your expectations. In such circumstances we would always encourage you to contact us at the earliest opportunity as we may be able to simply resolve or put the issue right for you.

If you have reported an issue to us and you do not think we have taken the appropriate action or responded in a suitable way, you can make a complaint to let us know what you think has gone wrong. From the initial contact with us, to making a formal complaint, this is what you need to know:

### Tell us about the problems you're having

If you're unhappy about something we've done – or haven't done - then please tell us about it as soon as you can so we can look into it.

At this point, most complaints can be dealt with quickly and informally by staff who provide the service.

Tel: (01229) 876578

Email: [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

### Make a complaint to the council

If it hasn't been possible to resolve the complaint informally, you can make a complaint to the Council by:

Completing online form: <https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/your-council/have-your-say/make-complaint/making-complaint>

Calling: 0300 373 3300

Emailing: [complaints@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

Visiting: Housing Reception in the Town Hall

Writing to: Complaints Team, Westmorland & Furness Council, South Lakeland House, Lowther Street, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4DQ

For more information and to read the Council's new complaints and compliments policy visit: <https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/your-council/have-your-say/make-complaint/making-complaint>

## Taking your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman

If you've gone through both stages of the complaints process and you're still not happy with the decision about your complaint, or you feel we haven't answered within a reasonable timescale, you can complain to the Housing Ombudsman by:

Completing online form: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/online-form/>

Calling: 0300 111 3000

Emailing: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Writing to: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

Find out more about the Housing Ombudsman Service by visiting: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/when-to-gethelp-from-the-housing-ombudsman/>

## Service enquiries

We often receive enquiries as complaints where our customers do not actually want to make a complaint but are unsure of how to raise their query.

If this is the case, please contact the relevant team – all direct contact details can be found on the back page.

If you are unsure of who to contact, please email [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk) or call **01229 876578** and you will be directed to the relevant team.

## New handy person scheme

### Help for elderly or vulnerable people who are unable to carry out certain jobs in their home

As your landlord, we are responsible for maintaining the structure and external fabric of your home.

However, there are some small jobs, that we are not responsible for, which could be carried out by the Council's Handy Person Service - a small repairs and assistance service for householders in the Westmorland and Furness area.

Whilst there is no charge for the cost of labour, the occupier will have to provide any necessary items and materials and only people who meet the criteria can apply.

To be eligible, you must be either:

- Aged 65 and over
- Have a disability or are vulnerable
- About to be or have recently been discharged from hospital
- Considered to be at high risk of falling

## What work can the handy person do?

Council tenants, who meet the criteria, can request the following specific jobs.

- Putting up curtain rails, curtains or blinds
- Erecting shelves or affixing coat hooks
- Changing light bulbs and fluorescent tubes
- Fixing down or trimming loose or hazardous carpets
- Moving furniture within the home

## How do I contact the Handy Person?

If you are eligible and wish to request the Handy Person, please contact the Council's Housing Standards Team:

Telephone: 0300 373 3300 (please leave your name and contact number if necessary and the team will call you back)

Email: [housingstandards@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housingstandards@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

Complete online request form: <https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/housing/handy-person-scheme>

## Everything Eden: News, Updates and Community Insights

### Final Keys Handed Over at Carleton Meadows

We're excited to share that late last year the final six affordable homes at Carleton Meadows were handed over to the Council for social housing - bringing the total number of affordable homes in Penrith delivered through this development to 81!

To mark the occasion, our Housing Maintenance Manager, Nigel Clarke, joined Jonny Renwick from Persimmon and Kathryn Dean from Knights — who's been handling the conveyancing for the past six years — as the final keys were handed over.

Councillor Judith Derbyshire, Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety, said: "This milestone marks the successful completion of a project that has provided much needed affordable homes for local families. Thanks to great teamwork with Persimmon



Homes and Knights, we've been able to offer much-needed social housing to our communities."

A huge thank you to Nigel Clark, our Housing Maintenance Manager, and Joanne Champkins, our Housing Officer, for all their hard work in making sure everything went smoothly with the handover and letting process.

And most importantly — a very warm welcome to the six new households who have joined the Carleton Meadows community!

## Welcome Scott – your new street voice!

Following a successful voting process, we're thrilled to introduce Scott Jackson as the newly appointed Street Voice for Carlton Meadows!

Scott will serve as your local representative—someone who's here to listen, support, and guide. While he's not expected to fix every issue himself, Scott can help point you in the right direction by connecting you with the services and teams who can assist. Whether you're unsure who to speak to about a concern or simply want to raise an idea, he's here to help.

Importantly, Scott will also act as a vital link between tenants and the Housing Service. He'll gather your feedback, ideas, and concerns and make sure they're heard at the Tenants' Forum, where your voices help shape decisions and improvements across our service.

Scott, lives on the estate with his lovely family: wife Gemma and daughters, Becky and Charlotte, says: "“Thank you to everyone who voted for me to become your Street Voice. I hope to be a faithful conduit for your concerns, hopes and ideas and to help create a great relationship between the council and our community!”"

Scott can be contacted by phone or email: 07920 408 094 or email [scottmjackson87@hotmail.com](mailto:scottmjackson87@hotmail.com)

## Contact us

If you've any queries regarding your tenancy, including arrears or rent payments, anti-social behaviour, repairs or a need to move, contact your housing officer, Joanne Champkins: Call 01768 212 216

Email: [joanne.champkins@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.champkins@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

Joanne works: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9am to 5pm and Thursdays 9am to 1pm.

For urgent issues outside of these times, call Customer Services on 0300 373 3300 or email: [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

## Results of the Satisfaction Survey

From 1st April 2023, the Regulator of Social Housing introduced a requirement for all social housing providers who own 1000 or more units of social housing to annually report on a set of measures that tells you how we are performing as a landlord at providing good quality homes and services. These measures are called Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).

There are 22 TSMs including:

- 12 Tenant Perception Measures – these were measured via our Tenant Perception Survey, which took place between December 2024 and March 2025
- 10 General Management Measures – these are measured through information we hold within our systems and by repairs contractors.

The feedback you gave us in completing the survey helps us to understand what we're doing well and, more importantly, the areas that we can improve.

A big thanks to everyone who completed the survey and congratulations to the four lucky winners of the prize draw who each won £50 of shopping vouchers!

Below is a summary of the results from the survey which covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

The percentage satisfied relates to respondents that answered either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' to the survey questions.

- 79.6% satisfied with the overall service provided by Westmorland and Furness Council's Housing Service
- 81.6% satisfied with the overall repairs service
- 79.6% satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair
- 73.8% satisfied that their homes are well maintained
- 79.7% satisfied that their home is safe
- 67.8% satisfied that we listen and act upon
- 81.4% feel we treat them fairly
- 60.9% satisfied with our approach to complaints handling
- 67.8% satisfied communal areas are cleaned and well maintained
- 62.8% satisfied we make a positive contribution to their neighbourhood
- 62.3% satisfied with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour
- 70.7% satisfied we keep them informed about the things that matter to them

## For more details

To view the full TSM results, a summary of the approach taken to the survey and a copy of the questions used, please visit our website

<https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/councilhousing/about-us/performance-and-standards>

## What do the results tell us and what's next

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to our Tenant Perception Survey. If you didn't get chance to complete it, we will be carrying this out annually, so please complete one next year as your feedback is really important to us.

The results are really positive and some of the findings we are particularly pleased about are:

- There has been an improvement in satisfaction across 9 of the 12 tenant perception measures, which shows the improvements we have made since last year's results have been effective. This is particularly noticeable in your satisfaction with complaint handling, which has been a key focus for us over the last 12 months so this is really positive to see.
- We will focus on improving satisfaction across the other measures by continuously improving our services.
- Tenants' safety is very important to us, which is why completing 100% of the required safety checks is a priority and we work hard to achieve this. We are pleased that 79% of our customers feel safe in their homes. We will continue to work hard to improve this further, as we want all customers to feel safe in their homes.
- Providing good quality homes is also very important to us so it is pleasing to see an improvement in satisfaction in homes being well maintained, backed up by our decent homes compliance being 100% and the results showing a noticeable improvement in response times for emergency and non-emergency repairs.

As a service, we are always looking to improve tenant satisfaction and engaging with you to get your views is key to us being able to do this. We will be looking to improve the way we engage and involve tenants so that you feel your voices are heard and views acted upon. Keep a look out on our Facebook page 'Westmorland and Furness Thriving Communities' for further information.

The full TSM results set out our key areas of focus for 2025/26 based on this year's results.

As always, if there are any issues you want to raise with us, please get in touch – contact details for each of our teams are shown on the back page

Caroline Wagstaff

Assistant Director of Housing

## Congratulations to our prize winners!

Huge congratulations to the lucky winners of our free prize draw whose names were the first four to be drawn and who each won £50 of shopping vouchers:

- Brenda Wharton

- Alan Williamson
- Lorraine Cooper
- Sharon Savage

Be sure to complete the next Tenant Perception Survey later this year and you could be our next lucky winner.

## **A workplace that works for everyone**

At Westmorland and Furness Council, we know that life doesn't always fit neatly into a 9-to-5 schedule. That's why we offer flexitime to our employees.

This flexible approach helps our staff balance personal commitments, stay motivated, and take care of their well-being – all while continuing to provide great service to our communities.

By supporting a healthier work-life balance, we're building a more adaptable and understanding workplace for everyone.

Want to know more about what it's like to work with us?

Check out job vacancies and take a look at the full range of employee benefits here

<https://careers.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/our-benefits>

## **Regular Free events at Barrow, Walney and Roose libraries**

Our local libraries are more than just a place for books - they're vibrant community hubs offering a variety of events and activities for all ages. Whether you're looking for storytime sessions for toddlers, creative workshops for teens, or book clubs and tech help for adults and seniors, there's something for everyone. Roose Library's temporary home is in the artificial pitch building in Barrow Park (close to the leisure centre).

### **MONDAYS**

**Read, Rhyme & Play (Walney)**

10am—10:45am

A story, a song, and a bit of fun. Head to Walney for this morning story time!

**Read, Rhyme & Play (Roose at Barrow Park)**

10:30am—11am

A storybook and a song to start the day! This group is great for our early readers.

## TUESDAYS

Read, Rhyme & Play (Barrow)

2pm - 2:45pm

A story, a song, and a bit of fun. This afternoon story time is at Barrow Library!

Knit & Natter (Barrow)

2pm – 3:30pm

Regardless of what you're making, pop along and have a chat at this craft group.

Digital Drop-in (Roose at Barrow Park)

3pm-4pm

Technology troubles? Pop along with your phone, tablet or laptop, and we'll see what we can do to fix the problem and teach a little too!

Lego Club (Walney)

3:30pm-5pm

We provide the Lego, you bring your imagination!

Barrow Writers' Club (Barrow)

4pm - 6pm

For all writing long and short! Come and write with some like-minded authors– whether you need a quick proofread or just a nice spot to write.

## WEDNESDAYS

Refugee Drop-In (Barrow)

1pm - 3pm

Helpful advice from the Council's Refugee Resettlement Team.

Library Time (Walney)

3:30pm-5pm

Drop by and make the most of our space. Go on the computers, play with toys, do some colouring, read a book, or just chill and enjoy the peace and quiet.

Lego Club (Barrow)

4pm - 5pm

We provide the Lego, you bring the imagination!

Golden Hour (Barrow)

5pm - 6pm

Barrow Library's sensory-friendly hour, ideal for neurodiverse library users.

## THURSDAYS

### Sip & Surf (Barrow)

1:30pm - 3pm

Sharpen your IT skills at Sip and Surf. Suitable for all learners. Either use our computers or bring your own device.

### HAWC Drop In (Barrow)

2pm - 4pm

An advice drop-in with Health and Wellbeing coaches. Any and all inquiries welcome– from jobs, to healthcare, to housing.

### Friendship Group (Barrow)

2pm - Grab drink and enjoy a chat, board games, and all sorts of other activities.

### Lego Club (Roose at Barrow Park)

3:30pm-5pm

Build and play with the library's box of Lego to your heart's content at this junior club.

### Pokémon Club (Barrow)

4:30pm - 5:30pm

Trade, play and chat at our after-school Pokémon club. Bring your games, cards and toys and have fun with other Pokémon trainers!

## FRIDAYS

### English Café (Barrow)

10am - 12pm

A great place to get to grips with the English language with volunteers and other learners on hand to have a chat and a drink.

### Read, Rhyme & Play (Barrow)

10:30am - 11am

Storytime! Join us for a story, a song, and a full toybox to wrap it all up! Great for our youngest customers just starting their reading journey.

### Board Game Club (Barrow)

3pm - 4:30pm

Enjoy a game or two at our casual all-ages club. A great place to start learning or meet likeminded people.

## SATURDAYS

Story Craft (Barrow)

10am and 2pm

Join us every week for a story and a fun, themed activity– it's something new every time!

## Westmorland and Furness Family Hub – have you discovered your local family hub?

Did you know you can access free, friendly support through your local Family Hub?

Whether you're expecting a baby, raising a toddler, or supporting a teenager, our Family Hubs are here for parents and carers of children aged 0–19 (or up to 25 for those with special educational needs and disabilities).

### Free holiday activity fund

The Family Hubs are offering free Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) sessions to eligible families. These will be run across the Westmorland and Furness area and have been designed to meet the needs of local communities. Email [HAF@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:HAF@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk) to check your child's eligibility.

For more details search 'HAF' on the Council's website

<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/>

### Support for families in financial hardship

In addition, the Focus Family Team continue to offer support to families living with financial hardship and those looking to improve their situation by moving into work. Email them for advice and support: [Focus.Family@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:Focus.Family@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

### Support for young carers

Many of the young people in Westmorland and Furness are carers for family members and friends. A carer is defined as "anyone, including children and adults, who looks after a family

member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid."

Our partners in Carers Support Cumbria offer a wide range of support for young carers and can be contacted for further advice: Call 08443 843 230 or visit

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

## Where to Find Us

Our family hubs are located at:

- Barrow Library
- Dalton Community Centre
- Bram Longstaffe Family and Wellbeing Centre
- Ormsgill Community Centre (limited services)

Check out our website <https://www.wandffamilyhubs.org.uk> and follow us on Facebook: Family Hubs Barrow-in-Furness for news and updates.

## Affordable home contents insurance

Although the building you live in is insured by the Council, your contents and belongings are not covered by insurance.

We have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks who provide specialist, affordable contents insurance for social housing tenants. This pay-as-you-go contents insurance scheme can be paid alongside your rent and will include cover for items such as furniture, TV, clothing, carpets, electrical items and general household goods. It also covers replacement of external locks if your keys are lost or stolen.

For more information on our home contents insurance scheme and an idea of what it would cost, give us a call on 01229 876488 or email: [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

If you make a claim, there's no excess to pay!

## Struggling to pay your rent?

Don't wait for the debt to build up. Our friendly Rents Team is here to help you with advice, options and understanding. They can work with you to come up with a payment plan that's affordable for you.

Our expert Benefits Officer, Amanda Morris, can also check you're receiving all the benefits you're entitled to – call Amanda on 01229 876581.

The sooner you contact us - the sooner we can help! Give a member of our team a call today:

- Emma Johnston 01229 876469
- Carol High 01229 876397
- Katie Barker 01229 876471

Or email: [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

Eden area – Joanne Champkins 01768 212 216



## Helping you live safely at home

Are you, or a member of your household, finding it difficult to remain active and independent in your home because of a disability or ill health?

We can carry out adaptations to ensure your home suits your needs, helping you live safely and comfortably.

Minor adaptations include:

- Grab rails
- Stair rails
- Lever taps

Major adaptations include

- Wet room
- Through-floor lift

For more information, contact our Needs Assessment Officer: Lindsay Gedling on 01229 876577 or email: [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

## Pay your rent the easy way

Many of our tenants pay their rent and water rates the hassle-free way by direct debit.

With a direct debit, you simply instruct your bank to make a monthly payment to us for the cost of your rent. Once set up, the payment is made automatically on the same date every month, so there's nothing else you need to do and there's no chance you'll forget to pay.

Also, if you pay your water rates by direct debit, £5 per year will be credited to your account.

Setting up a direct debit is super simple and can be done over the phone by calling our Business Support Officer, Georgina Bridgens on 01229 876478.

Switch to direct debit. It's easy to set up you never need worry about missing a payment

It's as easy as 1-2-3

1. Have your bank account details handy
2. Call us on 01229 876478
3. We'll do the rest!

## Barrow celebrates International Women's Day

In March, many local residents gathered to celebrate International Women's Day.

There were a number of events being held locally, one of which was a march organised by Women's Community Matters. Everyone gathered in the Town Square in the morning. It was lovely to see so many in good spirits and a bonus the weather was kind.

Before the march began, there were words from Hayley Preston, Project Manager, Women's Community Matters; our Mayor Judith McEwan and local MP Michelle Scrogg.

The parade then made its way along Portland Walk, down Dalton Road and along Abbey Road to the Nan Tait Centre. The pace was set and the march led by the amazing Boom Dang Drummers. Many shoppers and local retail staff were on hand to join in and cheer everyone along.

Once at the Nan Tait Centre, there was music, crafts, hot and cold drinks, food, stalls and much more. It was such a well organised event, full of positivity and colour and just another reminder of the great staff and invaluable services of Women's Community Matters.

## **Barrow Women's Community Matters**

Women's Community Matters is run by women, for women and young people aged 11 to 19 years.

We offer a wide range of support groups, courses, activities and appointments in a safe place making a positive difference to the lives of women and young people in Barrow with Love, Care, Compassion and Kindness.

We offer support and signposting around benefits advice, housing issues, domestic or sexual abuse, the police, courts, prison, mental wellbeing, employment, education and social activities.

We welcome ALL women through our doors.

If you have any questions or want to speak to a 'real' person – in confidence - please get in touch.

We're based at the Nan Tait Centre on Abbey Road, Barrow and our reception is open:

- Monday & Wednesday 9:30am – 4pm
- Tuesday & Thursday 9:30am – 6pm
- Friday 9:30am – 1pm

Drop-in for a drink and chat: Mon & Wed 10am – 12noon

Drop-in for young women 11-19 years: Thurs 3:30 – 4:30pm

Drop-in for young men 11-19 years: Tues 3:30 – 4:30pm

Call: (01229) 311 102

<https://www.facebook.com/WCMBarrow>

Email: [reception@womenscommunitymatters.org](mailto:reception@womenscommunitymatters.org)

Website: <http://www.womenscommunitymatters.org>

## Face-to-face with...Rebecca Halton

Hello, I'm Rebecca (Bex) Halton and I'm the Senior Manager of Housing Landlord and Homelessness Services.

I'm based at Barrow Town Hall and have worked here for 14 years having previously worked within homelessness and the housing landlord service for Barrow Borough Council.

I started working for the Council as a Housing Management Trainee (graduate opportunity) and have gradually gained experience and knowledge to enable me to now lead the service areas I once worked on the frontline for, which has proven to be invaluable in knowing what the service and customers' needs are.

My role is varied, and no two days are the same! Both of my service areas are very much frontline and dealing with the most vulnerable residents in our communities. My teams provide invaluable advice and support to our residents and ensure that the Council complies with its statutory responsibilities and acts as a responsible landlord in line with regulatory standards.

I love my job (even though it can be ridiculously busy!) because I care about people and making a difference to their lives so that everyone has access to opportunities and are able to rebuild their lives when they face difficult times.

I am proud to lead my teams and develop services that put the customer at the heart of everything we do. I look forward to delivering our action plans to strengthen the service we offer to customers and working together with other services to meet the needs of our communities.

## Bex answers the not-so-serious questions

**Describe yourself in three words** Friendly, wise and an overthinker!

**What's your biggest claim to fame?** Don't think I have one!

**Have you any phobias, if so what are they?** Wasps!

**If you could go back and relieve any moment, what would it be?** Probably a pregnancy and birth not spent in lockdown, surreal experience.

**What film will you never grow tired of watching?** The Holiday.

**If you could give your child-self one piece of advice what would you say?** Hard work pays off, believe in yourself.

**Do you collect anything?** Random McDonalds and Kinder egg toys courtesy of my children!

**What's your favourite type of food?** Chinese.

**If you could eat one sandwich for the rest of your life, what would it be?** Something with cheese.

**What are your most commonly used emojis?** Smiley faces and the monkey with hands over its eyes!

**What's your most treasured possession?** My children.

**What makes you roll your eyes every time you hear it?** Better not answer this lol!

**What's your favourite quote or saying?** Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.

**What would your specialist subject be if you were to go on Mastermind?** Jack of all trades, master of none I'm afraid!

**What do you do to unwind after a long day at work?** I don't do unwinding very well to be honest, but probably playing Scavenger Hunt on my phone!

**What's your favourite drink?** Costa skinny flat white with caramel.

**What's your favourite singer/band?** Westlife.

**If you were forced to compete in the Olympic games what sport would you choose?** I couldn't think of anything worse lol!

**What superpower do wish you had?** Freezing time.

**If you had a warning label, what would yours say?** Caution! This person overthinks most things and doubts herself regularly.

**What is your mantra?** I am grateful for all that I have as I know how precious life is and how quickly it can be turned upside down.

**And finally, how would you survive a zombie apocalypse?** Probably try and psychoanalyse the zombies and reason with them ha ha!

## Moving on up!

### Tom Farren

Congratulations to Tom on his promotion from Customer Service Advisor to Homelessness Triage Officer. We're confident he'll make a great impact in his new role.

## Peter Rimmer

Huge well done to Peter on his well-deserved promotion from Contract Supervisor to Senior Surveyor.

It's great to see his commitment rewarded with this next step forward.

## Welcome to...

### Christopher Coltherd

Hello, I'm Christopher and I started working in the Mobile Caretaking Unit in December.

Since joining the team, my experience has been nothing short of brilliant. I work alongside fantastic colleagues and a great, supportive supervisor.

It's a role I really enjoy and I hope to finish my working career here.

### Jess Harris

Hi, I'm Jess and have been a Homelessness Officer since February, providing support to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Previously, I've supported adults and children during challenging times both within Westmorland and Furness Council and in the voluntary sector. Prior to this, I worked for 18 years within the NHS.

I'm passionate about supporting people and enjoy the diversity that working with people brings daily.

### Lorraine Bush

Hi, I'm Lorraine and I joined the Housing Service at the end of May as a customer service advisor. I am enjoying getting to know everyone.

This job has a wide variety of tasks so no two days are the same.

### Danny Bouffler and Shane Gelling

Danny and Shane have joined our Mobile Catering Team.

## And farewell to...

### Laura Heasley

Laura has been with the council for seven years, the last five of which have been working within the Homelessness Service Team, providing first point of contact for those experiencing homelessness.

She has been an integral part of the team and will be very much missed by us all.

### Dawn I'Anson

In March this year, Dawn retired from the Council after working in the Housing Service for a year.

She was a much-valued member of the Customer Service Team and will be missed by everyone.

We wish Dawn a long and healthy retirement.

### Sly McNally

Sly has been working as Homelessness Outreach Officer for the last 12 months assisting those who are dealing with homelessness and facing rough sleeping. His commitment to the role has been a key part in the successes he has achieved, supporting people when they are facing the most challenging times in their lives.

Sly has his future planned out and will be using his time to travel the globe. We wish him all the best and safe travels!

## Hopelessly devoted to a good cause

Huge congratulations to Bryan Walker, our Senior Surveyor, whose incredible fundraising efforts over the past year have raised an impressive £1,776 for St. Mary's Hospice.

Bryan's fundraising activities have been filled with creativity and good humour, helping to engage and bring smiles to everyone involved.

Most recently, Bryan organised a Dress Down Day for colleagues in the Town Hall but of course he didn't just dress down, he dressed up. Channelling the iconic spirit of the film, Grease, Bryan transformed into one of the legendary Pink Ladies, complete with bouffant hairdo and satin jacket. His unforgettable look not only raised funds but also lifted spirits throughout the day.

Always modest, Bryan insists he's just the drum banger for the cause and doesn't want any praise, but we think his energy and commitment deserve a special mention.

So, thank you Bryan and to everyone who supports these events – your generosity is helping St. Mary's continue their vital work in our community.

## Feedback about housing services – thank you

Making sure you're happy with our service is our top priority. That's why your feedback is so important. It helps us improve what we do and build the right services for you. So, whether it's good or bad, we want to hear what you have to say.

And whether you make a compliment or a complaint, your right to receive a good quality service will not be affected.

Here are some compliments our teams and contractors have received.

### Hughes Brothers & DLP Lindsay Gedling & Jordan Herrington, Housing Service

"Thank you for installing grab rails and new step and security light to my flat. It's made such a difference and the workmen were very helpful and polite, thank you again".

"May I thank the contractors who carried out the work outside my bottom flat , especially the plasterer called Mike who works for DLP, he was very polite and cleared up after the day's work demolishing the wall outside my front door. Thank you again Mike." (Two separate compliments from John, tenant)

### Homelessness Team

"Thank you Kathryn, I'm so grateful for all the help. It will take time to get home right but so happy to have a bungalow in a nice area and so happy never to be homeless or threatened again. Such a relief. I appreciate all your help & from the team at council offices at Barrow. Kind regards" (Service user)

### Housing Estates/Safe & Strong Communities Teams

"I'd like to say a big thank you for the work you have done in tackling the problem of dog fouling and rubbish in my local area. Absolutely brilliant, I can't thank you enough. It's made a positive change to the state of my mental health." (Tenant)

### Housing Service

"We have been council tenants for many years. We wish to thank the former Barrow Borough Council and Westmorland and Furness Council for the excellent and satisfactory service they have always provided." (Former tenants)

## Please send us your feedback by:

Emailing [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

Calling 01229 876578

Writing to us to us using our freepost address - no stamp required:

### **Housing Department**

FREEPOST RTLL XUYS JHZZ

Town Hall

BARROW-IN-FURNESS

Cumbria LA14 2LD

## Council housing grass cutting service

We are currently in the process of negotiating a new agreement for the grass cutting service we provide tenants with.

This is taking slightly longer than originally hoped, however we are working hard to resolve this. In the meantime, we ask that, where possible, tenants seek assistance from family members or friends to keep on top of gardens until the new contractor can be on site.

If this is not possible and you are worried about your health and safety then please contact us and we will do our best to assist.

We thank you and appreciate your patience and understanding during this transitional period.

Check out our Facebook page for any updates.

## Have your say on waste and recycling options

The Council wants your views on options for future waste and recycling services in Westmorland and Furness, such as:

- Size of containers
- Wheelie bins
- How often your waste and recycling would be collected
- Green waste charges

Your views will be used to help finalise the design of the new-look services, with the first changes being rolled out before the end of the year.



For more information and to complete the survey, or visit [www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/news](http://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/news) and search 'waste', but be quick, the survey closes on Friday, 11 July.

Paper copies of the survey are also available in Barrow Town Hall reception area.

## **Our work in communal and public spaces**

We kindly ask you to allow our staff and contractors to carry out their work in outdoor communal areas without interference.

Your co-operation helps us maintain a safe and efficient service for everyone.

If you do have any questions or concerns about work being undertaken by the Council, please contact us:

Email: [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

Call: 01229 876578

## **Translation services**

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone 0300 373 3300.

## **Results of the Christmas colouring competition**

Huge thanks to everyone who entered the Christmas colouring competition.

Your entries were just brilliant which made judging extremely difficult, but eventually we decided the top two places should go to Marshall Price in the 7s years and under category and Ali Al Obeidat in the 8-11 years category.

Congratulations and well done to them both!

And well done to all our merit award winners:

- Tim Zapukhliak
- Jessie Higgins
- Elsie-Rose Newby
- Lexi-Mai Newby
- Dexter Newby
- Layton Wearing

We were thrilled to learn that Layton's dad entered the same competition over 20 years ago when he was Layton's age. It's wonderful to see the tradition continuing across generations! Like father, like son!

## Summer colouring competition

The printed version of the newsletter contained an image of a park with trees, flowers and kites in the sky to colour in.

It's super easy to enter the competition. Simply colour in this picture and return it to us. There are two age groups: 7 years and under 8-11 year-olds.

The overall winners receive a £10 gift voucher. To enter, your parents, carers or grandparents must be Council tenants or leaseholders. The deadline for entries is Friday, 1 August. Send your entries to: Cathy Kirk, Housing Service, Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow LA14 2LD. Good luck everyone!!

## Volunteer with Vision Support Centre Barrow

The Vision Support Centre in Barrow is a local charity supporting people with sight loss to live confidently and independently. We're looking for volunteers to join our friendly team!

Make a difference - volunteer with us!

There are lots of ways to get involved, including:

- Helping on children's and youth trips
- Supporting social groups like crafts, bingo, theatre visits, trips to museums and social evenings
- Telephone befriending (can be done from home)
- Fundraising at local events
- Outdoor activities like walking trips
- Volunteer driving (mileage reimbursed)
- Admin and marketing support at the centre

We're flexible and welcome new ideas!

Part of our charity is Ostley House, a residential home in Barrow specialising in dementia and sight loss care. Volunteer roles here include:

- Gardening and maintenance
- Supporting the in-house café, cinema, and pub

Interested?

Call 01229 440556

Email [info@vsbd.org.uk](mailto:info@vsbd.org.uk)

## Need urgent help for mental health?

NHS 111 now has a mental health option you can use to call for urgent mental health help.

If you are experiencing significant emotional or mental health distress, call 111 and select the mental health option.

This service offers 24/7 advice and support if you are:

- Experiencing worry, anxiety or fear that you can't control
- Hearing voices or seeing things that others can't
- Considering harming yourself
- Find yourself withdrawing from your friends or family

## **Furness For You Connect Hub: Social Fridays**

1pm to 3pm

Bring along your own projects – whether it's crafting, knitting, journaling or just something you're working on. It's all about connecting with others, enjoying a cuppa and having a good time.

For more information contact Vickie on 0773 627 6476

Furness For You Connect Hub, Howard Street, Barrow, LA14 1NB

## **Love Barrow Families Youth Squad**

Weekly activities and food, designed by Youth Squad.

Free – every Thursday, 5pm to 6.30pm

At LBf, The Old Fire Station, 1a Abbey Road, Barrow

To register aged 8+ tel 01229 823020

## **Points of contact**

### **Assistant Director of Housing**

Caroline Wagstaff (01229) 876523

### **Senior Manager - Housing Landlord & Homelessness Service**

Rebecca Halton (01229) 876549

### **Housing Maintenance Team**

Housing Maintenance Manager

Housing Maintenance Manager - Nigel Clarke (01220) 876326

### Senior Surveyors

- Bryan Walker (01229) 876466
- Peter Rimmer (01229) 876530

### Contract Supervisors

- Graham Harcourt (01229) 876465
- Ste Herrington (01229) 876492
- Jordan Herrington (01229) 876531

### Needs Assessment Officer

Lindsay Gedling (01229) 876577

### Facilities Management Officer

Dean Steeley (01229) 876365

## Rent Recovery Team

- Carol High (01229) 876397
- Emma Johnston (01229) 876469
- Katie Barker (01229) 876471

### Benefit Liaison Officer

Amanda Morris (01229) 876581

### Money Management Officer

Jo Hughes (01229) 876534

## Business Support Team

- Right to Buy - Michelle Bradley (01229) 876483
- Household Insurance - Joanne Worrall (01229) 876488
- Choice-Based Lettings - Donna Brown (01229) 876468
- Direct Debits - Georgina Bridgens (01229) 876478

## Lettings Team

- Jacky Macaulay (01229) 876403
- Isaac Jesson (01229) 876345

## Safe & Strong Communities Team

Interim Operational Lead for Safe and Strong Communities

Caroline Kendall (01229) 876462

### Senior Neighbourhood Team Leader

Debbie Cubiss (01229) 876423

### Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer

Gordon Robson (01229) 876410

### Neighbourhood Officers

- Peter Buckley 07843 471 414
- Dan Crowe (01229) 876479
- Cheryl Waite (01229) 876520

### Neighbourhood Support Officers

- Simone Singleton (01229) 876580
- Lisa Lindley (01229) 876493

## Homelessness Team

- Advice (office hours) (01229) 876599
- Out-of-hours (01229) 833311
- Email: [dutytorefer1@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:dutytorefer1@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)

## Reporting Repairs

### During office hours

- Non-gas repairs (01229) 876578
- Gas-only repairs\* 0800 031 6578 or 0151 728 5739

### Out-of-office emergency repairs

- Non-gas repairs (01229) 833311
- Gas-only repairs\* (01229) 833311

\* No heating or hot water or radiator and boiler problems

## Our information

- Email us: [housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk)
- Write to us: Housing Service, Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow LA14 2LD
- Website: <https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/housing/council-housing>
- Facebook page: Westmorland and Furness Housing Thriving Communities
- X page: @WandFCThrivComm

## Eden contacts

Housing Officer - Joanne Champkins

- Tel: 01768 212 216
- Email: [joanne.champkins@westmorlandandfurnesscouncil.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.champkins@westmorlandandfurnesscouncil.gov.uk)

Joanne's working days are:

- Tuesday and Wednesday 9am - 5pm
- Thursday 9am - 1pm

For urgent issues outside of these times, call: Customer Services on 0300 373 3300 or email [housing@westmorlandandfurnesscouncil.gov.uk](mailto:housing@westmorlandandfurnesscouncil.gov.uk)

## Contacts for Street Voices

Council-recognised street voices

[Raglan Court and Corporation Terrace](#)

Mandy Anderson 07925 410 817

[Roosegate](#)

Nicola Bull – 07808 264 941

[Newton Road Area, Dalton](#)

David Pearson – (01229) 230019

[Broughton Road Area, Dalton](#)

Danny Green – 07999 462 934

[Carleton Meadows, Penrith](#)

Scott Jackson - 07920 408 094