



WILLOW TREE

HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2023



CONTENTS

Energy saving and ventilating your home

PAGE

2 - 3

Damp & Mould. New Development - North Petherton

4 - 5

Budgeting advice and paying rent

6

Reporting a repair over the Christmas Period

7

Complaints and the Housing Ombudsman

7

Opening times over the Christmas Period and our offices

8

ENERGY SAVING AND VENTILATING YOUR HOME



REQUEST A SMART METER FROM YOUR GAS AND ELECTRIC SUPPLIER TO DIGITALLY TRACK YOUR DAILY USAGE

TURN APPLIANCES OFF AT THE WALL WHEN NOT IN USE



TURN LIGHTS OFF IN ROOMS THAT ARE NOT BEING USED



CHECK THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY RATING WHEN BUYING NEW APPLIANCES

DO A FULL LOAD OF LAUNDRY, DON'T LEAVE IT HALF FULL



ENSURE FURNITURE ISN'T BLOCKING YOUR RADIATORS OR STORAGE HEATERS



Is your home energy efficient and well ventilated?

It is crucial to know how much energy you are using within your household, you can make simple changes in your home to reduce your carbon footprint.

For more suggestions on how to save energy, you could visit any of these helpful websites:

moneysupermarket.com/gas-and-electricity/energy-saving-tips

energysavingtrust.org.uk

It's important to know how much electricity you are using, in order to help you make those small but crucial changes!

Is your home well ventilated? Home ventilation means the removal of air and new fresh air from outside replacing it. Ventilation removes stale air, ensuring your home feels fresh and comfortable, as well as helping to remove moist air that can lead to issues such as condensation and damp.

INVEST IN ENERGY SAVING LIGHT BULBS



BRING THE TEMPERATURE DOWN ON YOUR THERMOSTAT. A REDUCTION OF JUST 1 DEGREE CAN MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE



WHAT IS DAMP AND MOULD?

Damp in properties is caused by a build-up of moisture, this can be caused by various issues with a building. Moisture can also build up from condensation as a result of daily living activities, particularly in properties with inadequate ventilation. Mould can develop in damp atmospheres, particularly when it is cold and it cannot be dismissed as a “lifestyle issue”. While condensation is created by daily activities such as bathing, cooking and drying clothes, or even breathing which creates moisture in the air and so will give rise to higher levels of humidity in the property which could be the cause of increased damp mould or condensation.

TYPES OF DAMP AND WHAT CAUSES IT

Too much moisture causes damp and mould. There are 3 types of damp:-

- Penetrating damp
- Rising damp
- Condensation



Condensation is common

TOP TIP

Open a window for 15 mins each morning to circulate air

Penetrating damp

Penetrating damp happens when water seeps into a building. This can happen when - The roof or render is damaged, blocked gutters, pipes that are leaking, Areas around sinks, showers or baths are damaged, such as cracked grouting or worn out sealant.

Rising damp

Rising damp happens when water rises from the ground through the floor and into the walls of the building. You can often see rising damp because it leaves a tide mark low down on affected walls.

Condensation and mould

Condensation happens when warm humid air hits a cold surface, such as windows and external walls. Warm humid air is made by activities such as showering or cooking.

Condensation is common in areas where there is little air movement, such as:-

- Behind furniture, under work surfaces, on north facing walls and in corners of rooms.

You can help prevent the build-up of condensation by:

- Frequently emptying the water in condensing tumble dryers, putting lids on saucepans when cooking and drying washing outside when possible
- Opening bedroom windows for 15 minutes each morning, allowing air to circulate and keeping your trickle vents open on your windows if you have them
- Opening the window, putting the extractor fan on and closing the door if you are showering or bathing
- Avoid placing furniture right up against walls because this makes it difficult for air to circulate and encourages mould to grow

If you have concerns about damp and mould in your home, your first step is to report this to our Customer Services Team on – 01934 750 780.

NORTH PETHERTON – COMING SOON

7 Affordable Homes to include

- 2 Shared Ownership
- 5 Affordable Rent



COMPLETING IN FEBRUARY 2024



BUDGETING ADVICE OVER CHRISTMAS

Keep paying bills

Don't forget, in December you still need to pay your normal household bills, such as your Rent, Council Tax and your utility bills. If you get paid earlier than usual, consider paying these bills as soon as you can, so you know that what you have left is what you can spend on Christmas.

Set your festive budget

Setting a festive budget is probably the single most useful step you can take – but fewer than one in three of us do this. Make a list of the people you want to buy presents for, set a budget for each and stick to it. Plan ahead when it comes to your other shopping too; for example, on food, decorations and visiting family.

Spread the cost

There are lots of good deals around at Christmas, so make sure you shop around to get the best price. You could leave buying your presents until later in the month as sales often start early. You could also spread the cost of Christmas over the whole of December by buying non-perishable food items earlier in the month.

Buying online

Leave items in your online basket and wait, you may get a money off deal from the company. Look for discounts and offers. Check cash back websites like Topcashback, Quidco to get money back when shopping.

Resist borrowing more

It can be very tempting to borrow money to pay for the cost of Christmas. Think about whether you can afford to pay it back. If you do decide to take out credit, check the terms and conditions and create a personal budget to make sure you can afford the repayments.

Benefits and Allowances

Check what you're entitled to, as many go unclaimed every year. Use an online benefits calculator www.moneysavingexpert.com

Groceries

Cut your grocery bill by planning your meals ahead so you only buy what you need, buy own brand labels and check the reduced aisle. If you are experiencing problems affording food, speak to your local council or Citizens Advice to find out where your nearest food bank or community shop is.

Just buy for kids

You could agree with your family and friends just to buy for the children. If you still want to buy for adults, you could consider doing a 'Secret Santa' so that each adult only buys one gift. Handmade presents are often cheaper and have that personal touch.

We know that sometimes it can be difficult to start a conversation about presents, but you may find that your friends and family are more than willing to go ahead with your suggestions.

Look out for free activities

With the kids off school there is always pressure to keep them entertained. If you're not careful, the cost of keeping them busy will soon mount up. Find out if there are free activities in your area over the holiday period. They may be advertised online, in the local newspaper and community centres.

Get advice now

If you are worried about your debt, get free debt advice NOW. Don't wait until the New Year. The earlier you seek free debt advice, the sooner you can deal with your debt and ease your worries.

REPAIRS OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD



If you have a maintenance emergency while the office is closed, please use the out of hours telephone numbers below. Please remember, if your call is deemed not to be an emergency you may be charged for any callout that you request.

If your property is less than a year old and you have an emergency or urgent repair, please refer to your Home User Guide for contact information for the developer.

Type of emergency

Gas emergency heating and renewable heating or gas hot water repairs

All other emergency repairs, including electric heating and electric hot water repairs or Health & Safety issues

For Cornwall, Plymouth, West Devon, South Hams, Torridge & Teignbridge

All other areas

Complaints

Willow Tree Housing Partnership (WTHP) is focusing its attention on listening to our tenants to establish strong lines of communication. We want to solve problems quickly and prevent others from happening in the first place.

In June 2023 WTHP introduced a new Complaints Policy and Procedure which reflects the Housing Ombudsman's Code. We want to ensure that our complaint handling process is accessible to our residents, is consistent, and that it enables the timely progression of complaints for our residents, as set out in the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code. We also complete the Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code self-assessment annually, this enables us measure our performance and compliance against the code. Our self-assessment, along with our Complaints Policy and Procedure can be found on our website www.willowtreehousing.org.uk/make-a-complaint

We now have a WTHP Residents' Scrutiny Panel and one of the standing agenda items is a regular review of complaints (anonymised) that have come into the organisation. We accept we don't always get things right! However, how we respond, manage and learn from complaints to develop a positive complaints culture, is something WTHP is committed to. All our staff have undergone training and we have a designed Complaints Officer who coordinates complaints throughout the complaints process.

In June and July 2023 a Tenant Satisfaction Survey was undertaken by an independent market research company, Acuity Research and Practice. This survey focussed on tenants' opinions on their homes and the services received by WTHP as their landlord. One of the areas was around complaints handling and you can view the report entitled 'Tenant Satisfaction Measure Findings 2023' on our website www.willowtreehousing.org.uk/get-involved

Anyone can contact the Housing Ombudsman by accessing their website

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us

Email – info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone – 0300 111 3000

OPENING TIMES OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD

Friday 22 nd December	9AM - 4PM
Saturday 23 rd December	CLOSED
Sunday 24 th December	CLOSED
Monday 25 th December	CLOSED
Tuesday 26 th December	CLOSED
Wednesday 27 th December	CLOSED
Thursday 28 th December	CLOSED
Friday 29 th December	CLOSED
Saturday 30 th December	CLOSED
Sunday 31 st December	CLOSED
Monday 1 st January	CLOSED
Tuesday 2 nd January - Normal Office Hours Resume	9AM - 5PM

Somerset Office

Eastbridge House
Pill Road
Rooksbridge
Somerset
BS26 2TN

Devon Office

Studio 5-11
Millbay Road
Plymouth
Devon
PL1 3LF



Why not join in on social media, give our pages a like? We are active on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) (now X) with updates on the work we do and regular posts with hints and tips on resident safety #maintenancemonday, #wellbeingwednesday and #safetysaturday

Is there something you'd like to see, let us know!

www.willowtreehousing.org.uk

DELIVER & GROW

Registered Address: Eastbridge House, Pill Road, Rooksbridge, Somerset BS26 2TN