

Resident  
newsletter  
Summer 2021



# Leicestershire Rural Life

Leicestershire Rural  
Housing Association Ltd

 LeicsRural  
[www.leicestershirerha.org.uk](http://www.leicestershirerha.org.uk)

## Welcome to your summer newsletter

### In this issue...

- [Introducing our new housing officer](#)
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## Introducing our new housing officer



We've listened to our residents who have asked for more housing officers and are pleased to welcome new officer **David Kolodynski** to the team.

David will be the dedicated housing officer for Leicestershire Rural Housing residents. He'll be coordinating all things housing including allocations, advising on rent queries, benefit notifications and anti-social behaviour.

For those of you who know Claire Baggaley, she is still here, but will be working with residents in a different region.

This additional officer role will help us provide more effective housing management, safeguarding and resident engagement.

Reduced patch sizes for each officer will enable us to have a more visible presence on your schemes and deliver a more responsive, supportive and focused service for all our residents.

[Find out more about David >](#)

## What's new?

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### > New improvements request form



If you'd like to make improvements, alterations or additions to your home, you must obtain our written permission before starting any work. You can use our new [online form to request permission](#).

We won't refuse permission without a good reason, but we may grant permission that includes special conditions regarding the standard of the work.

You can go ahead with cosmetic decoration without our consent such as painting internal walls or putting up shelves (in accordance with your tenancy agreement).

We are currently updating our Tenants Own Improvement Policy. This policy will clarify what types of improvements need our permission and how we'll manage repairs for items installed by tenants. As soon as the policy is ready we'll add it to the website and let you know.

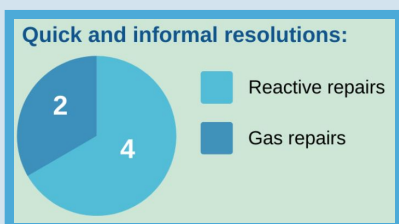
[Send us a request to make alterations >](#)

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### > How we're performing

We introduced our new complaints policy in April and we think it's important that we're transparent about how we're performing.

Between 1st April and 30th June 2021, we had six quick and informal resolutions and one formal complaint. You can see below which service areas these relate to:



There's more [detailed information about our complaints performance](#) on our website.

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## > Contacting us

- Many staff are working remotely so may call you from a withheld number.
  - If you want to email us about repairs or tenancy matters please email us via [myhomeonline](mailto:myhomeonline) or at [enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk)
  - If you call and leave a message, members of staff have 24 hours from when they return from their visits or meetings to contact you.
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### What do you think of our annual report?



Each autumn we create an [annual report](#) for our residents and partners about our performance and achievements.

This is part of our promise to be open and accountable in everything we do.

Before we start the 2020 – 2021 report, we'd appreciate your feedback on [last year's report](#). Is the level of information ok? Is there anything else you'd like to see included?

If you have any comments or suggestions, please email us at [communications@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:communications@midlandsrural.org.uk)

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### Communications survey

Thanks to everyone who completed the recent communications and engagement survey – your feedback is really important.

We'll let you know what the key findings are, and what we plan to do, in our next newsletter.

And we'll be in touch with the lucky winner of the £50 shopping voucher prize next week.

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## All the latest benefits and financial support news

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### Financial support if you're 'pinged'

If you're one of the 100,000s of people who've been 'pinged' and told to self-isolate by the NHS Covid-19 app or instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test & Trace, there's a range of financial support you could get.

- Working from home as you've been pinged? You're eligible for a tax rebate.
- Can't work from home while self-isolating? You may be able to get sick pay.
- Self-employed? Check if you can claim the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant.
- On a low income? You may be able to claim a £500 self-isolation payment, but there's no guarantee

[Find out more about these benefits>](#)

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### TV licences for over-75s and pension credit



Since August 2020 people aged over 75 are required to pay for their TV licence. They were previously free to this age group, unless they receive pension credit.

Due to COVID there was an extended transition period for ending the free TV licences, which finished on **31 July 2021**.

#### You need a TV licence to:

- watch or record programmes as they're being shown live on TV, on any channel
- watch or stream programmes live on an online TV service (such as ITV Hub, All 4, YouTube, Amazon Prime Video, Now TV etc)
- download or watch any BBC programmes on BBC iPlayer.

If you watch any of these without a licence you risk a fine of up to £1,000.

**Households receiving pension credit can still get a free TV licence, but you must apply for it.**

[Find out more about TV licences and pension credit>](#)

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## Universal credit £20 boost to be phased out

The government has confirmed the £20-per-week boost to universal credit, which was introduced in March 2020, will be phased out this autumn.

If you need any help and support, take a look at our [financial support webpages](#), or [get in touch](#).

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## Gas and electricity bills will rise in October – think about switching supplier



Due to an increase in global prices for fossil fuels, especially gas, a typical gas and electricity customer is likely to see their bill go up by over £100 a year.

Now is a good time to switch supplier to make sure you're on the best possible tariff.

Take a look at [ofgem accredited energy comparison websites](#) and switch before prices rise on 1st October.

You can also find [details of other energy benefits and support schemes](#) on our website.

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## Severn Trent Water customers could save 90%

Severn Trent Water customers may be able to save up to 90% off your water bill by applying to their 'Big Difference' scheme. Eligibility is based on your household income.

You can find more information and apply on the [Severn Trent Big Difference website](#).

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## Heating news

### Heating repair delays

We're aware that some residents are still experiencing delays with heating repairs and we're really sorry if you're effected by this.

We're working closely with our contractors to improve communications and the quality and responsiveness of our service.

Thank you for your patience.

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## Give your heating a check before it gets cold

As we approach the autumn, now is a good time to check your heating is working properly.

In the next couple of weeks, please switch your heating on just for a short time. If there are any issues please [let us know](#) as soon as possible, so we can get them sorted for you before the cold weather arrives.

## Ask us...

Have you got a question about your home or the services we provide? If so, ask away! We'll answer one of your questions in every newsletter. Simply email them to [communications@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:communications@midlandsrural.org.uk)

**This edition's question is...**

### "Can I have a rent statement?"

We no longer send out quarterly rent statements.

However, you can view your rent account on your [myhomeonline](#) account. This is available 24hours a day, 7days a week.

If you can't access your [myhomeonline](#) account or need any help, please email [enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk) or call us on 0300 1234 009.

## Share your story

We're on the look out for residents to feature in future issues of our newsletter. If you'd like to tell us why you like living in your home and community, call 0300 123 4009 or email [communications@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:communications@midlandsrural.org.uk)

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