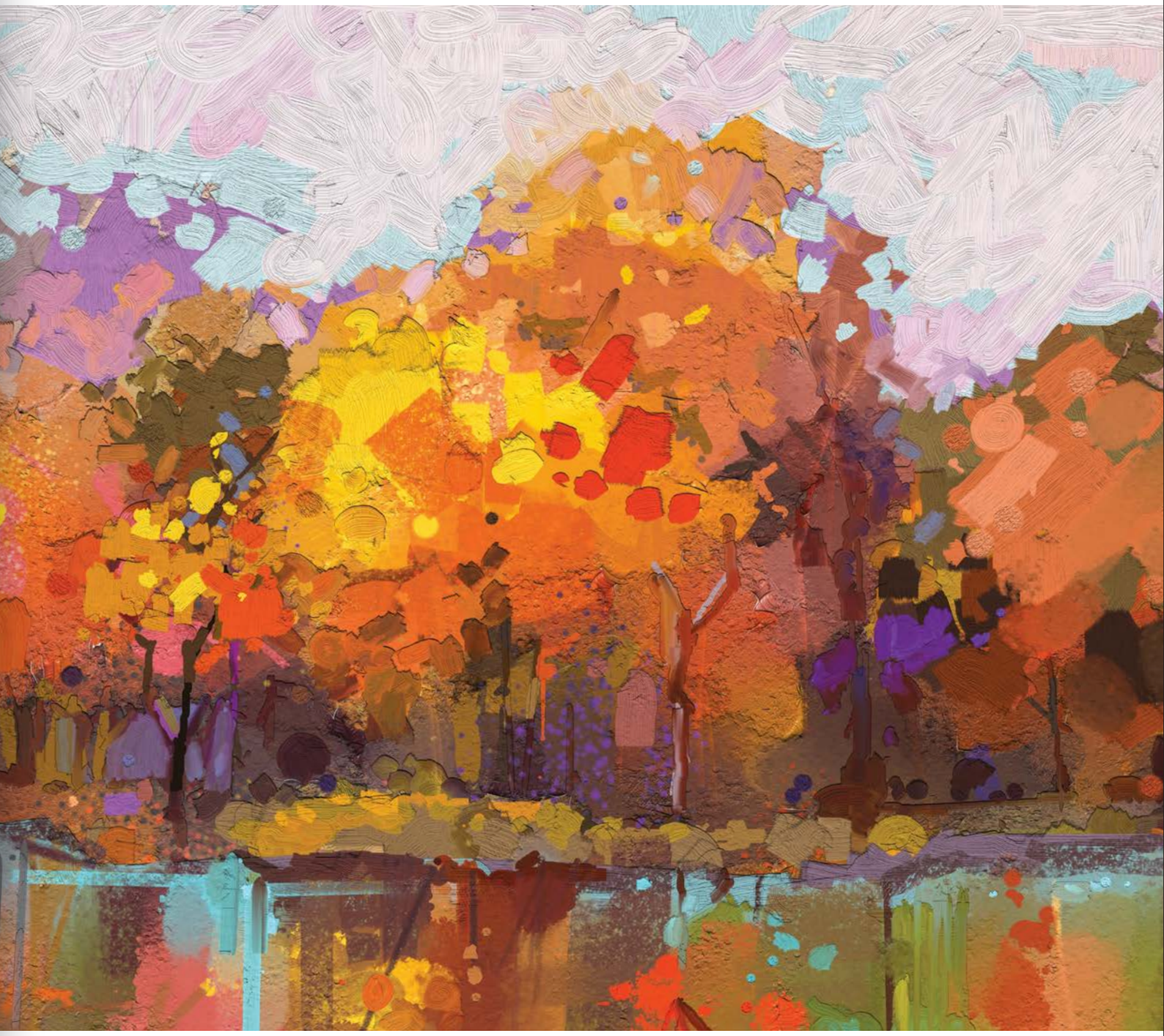
Leicestershire rurallife

Leicestershire Rural Housing Association
Residents' Newsletter | Autumn 2026

Leicestershire Rural
Housing Association Ltd



T. 0300 1234 009 / E. enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk / www.leicestershirerha.org.uk

Welcome

Hello and welcome to the autumn edition of Leicestershire Rural Life.

Inside you can catch up with some familiar faces from our team and see how our new homes in Breedon are coming along.

With winter on its way, we've also included plenty of practical information to help you stay warm and look after your home, alongside details of the financial support available if you need a helping hand. And, because your views really do matter, you can find out how to get involved and help us make our services better.

We hope you find this issue useful and, as always, if there's anything you'd like to talk to us about, please get in touch.



Colder weather can increase the risk of condensation in our homes. To help, we've enclosed a damp and mould leaflet with information on reducing condensation, recognising the signs of damp and mould, and getting help if you have concerns.

Please take a few minutes to read the leaflet and keep it handy for future reference.

If you notice damp or mould in your home, please report it to us as soon as possible so we can help.

In this issue:

1. **Meet the team**
2. **Thistle home contents insurance**
3. **Time to get your home ready for winter**
6. **Gas service appointments**
8. **Using AI? Keep it simple**

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10. **New homes taking shape in Breedon**
12. **Help with heating costs this winter**

    Read more in our Annual Report

hello!

Say… to two members of our team





"A big thank you Lauren for all your assistance with the property my mother is renting from you. She is super happy with all the work that has been done."

Resident's daughter

David, your Housing Officer

David supports residents with all aspects of housing and tenancy management, including allocations, rent queries, scheme visits, benefit notifications and anti-social behaviour.

For those of you who haven't met David, he's great at finding solutions when challenges arise, and his background in specialist housing support is a great benefit to our residents.

"Please pass my thanks to David for his help during a difficult time."

LRHA resident

… and Lauren, your Maintenance Surveyor

Lauren has been part of the Leicestershire Rural Housing team for over 15 years. She oversees day-to-day maintenance, getting empty homes ready to relet and working with contractors to keep everything safe and running smoothly. But, as Lauren started out in our Customer Care Team, she knows about most aspects of the Association!

Could you afford to replace your belongings?

THISTLE TENANT RISKS



Unexpected events such as storms, burst pipes, fires or burglaries can cause damage to the things in your home. If this happens, contents insurance can help with the cost of replacing your belongings.

While we insure the building itself, it's your responsibility to arrange insurance for your home contents. Home contents insurance includes cover for items such as furniture, electrical appliances and other household possessions.

The National Housing Federation has teamed up with Thistle Insurance Services to provide the 'My Home' contents insurance scheme, designed specifically for people living in social housing. The scheme offers flexible and affordable cover, with a range of payment options available.

To find out more, visit:
www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/contents

Time to get your home ready for winter

Inside your home:

Test your heating

Turn it on for 20-30 minutes to make sure it's working properly. If you spot a problem, **let us know** before the cold weather arrives.

Check your radiators

Cold at the top but warm at the bottom? Sounds like they need bleeding. Take a look on our website for a 'how to' guide. If you have any concerns, **let us know**.

Find your stop tap (just in case you need it!)

If a pipe bursts, you'll need to turn the water off quickly. It's often under the kitchen sink, but may also be in a cupboard, downstairs toilet or under the stairs.

Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

Press the test button regularly. If you have any concerns, **please contact us**.

Outside your home:

Clear leaves from gutters and drains

Leaves can cause blockages, leaks and damp. **Report** any blocked or damaged guttering.

Protect outdoor pipes and taps

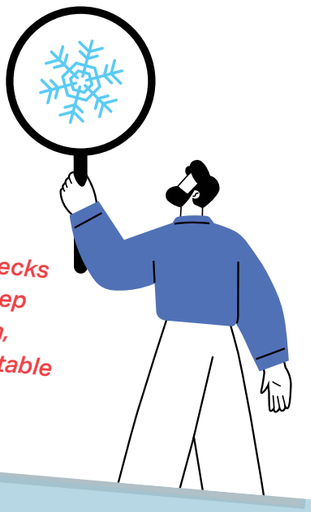
Use pipe insulation to help prevent freezing.

Secure garden furniture and toys

Strong winds can move loose items and cause damage.

Check outside lights are working

If any are broken, **let us know** so we can repair them.



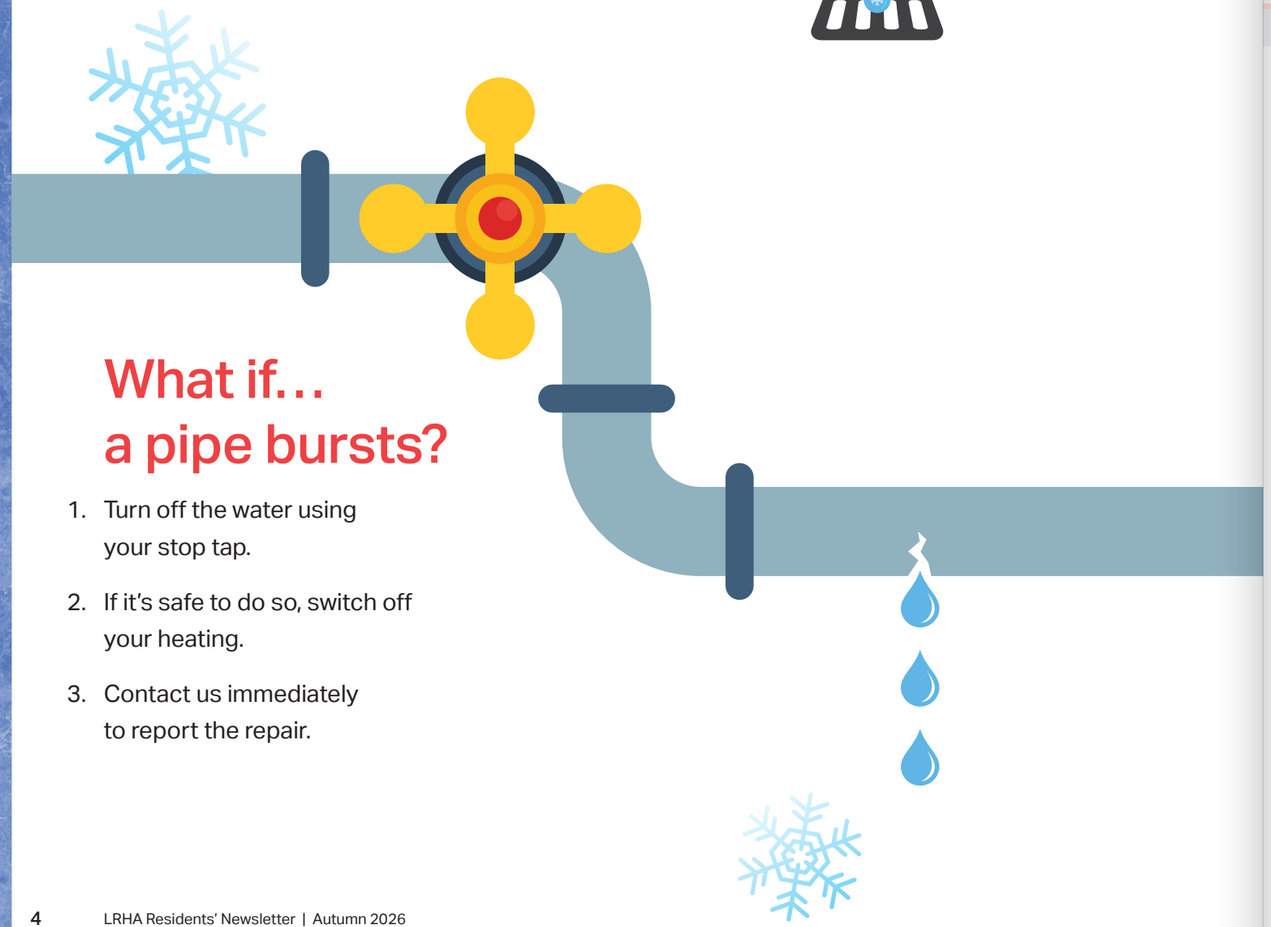
A few simple checks now can help keep your home warm, safe and comfortable this winter.

What if… your boiler stops working in freezing weather? *A frozen condensate pipe could be the cause…*

1. Find the small plastic pipe running from your boiler to an outside drain.
2. Pour warm (not boiling) water over the frozen section.
3. Reset your boiler.
4. If the pipe has thawed, your boiler should start working again.

   If your boiler still isn't working, please contact us.





What if… a pipe bursts?

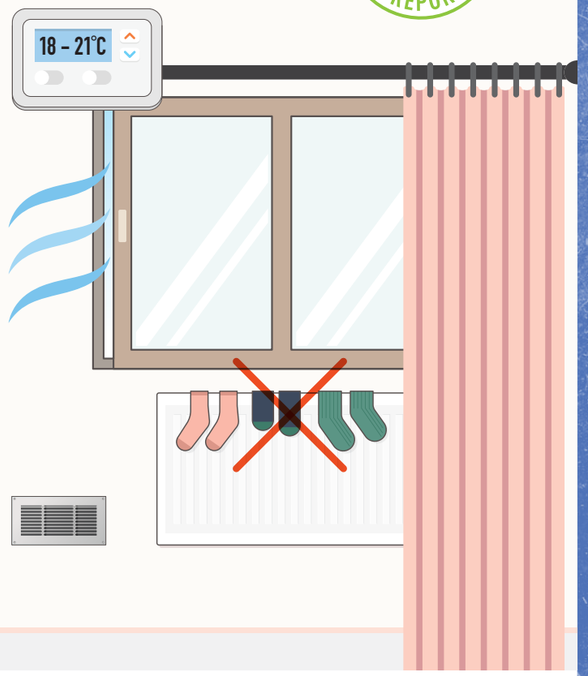
1. Turn off the water using your stop tap.
2. If it's safe to do so, switch off your heating.
3. Contact us immediately to report the repair.

Keeping your home warm and well ventilated

DAMP & MOULD SEE IT, REPORT IT

A warm home is usually easier and cheaper to heat than a home that gets very cold and then has to warm up again.

- Use your thermostat to keep your home at a comfortable temperature.
- Don't block radiators with furniture, thick curtains or clothes.
- Close curtains at dusk to help keep heat in.
- Open windows for a few minutes each day to let fresh air circulate and help reduce condensation. This can help prevent mould from forming.



Do you have a combi boiler?

Set your heating to between 18° and 21°C.

TOP TIP!

Got an air source heat pump?

Leave your heating on at a minimum of 18°C all the time.



Need to report a repair?

Winter is our busiest time for repairs. Small issues can quickly become bigger ones during cold, wet weather, so if you notice a leak, damaged guttering, faulty heating or any other repair issue, please report it as soon as possible.

A little preparation now can help prevent bigger problems later.

“I told you I wouldn’t be home, so why did the engineer still come?”

We’re often asked this, and we completely understand why it can be frustrating.

Gas service appointments

The answer is that annual gas safety checks are a legal requirement. We must make sure a gas safety check is completed every year. We also need to keep records showing we’ve made repeated attempts to gain access to your home before the gas safety certificate expires.

Sometimes this means an engineer must still visit and leave a calling card, even when you’ve already told us you won’t be home.

We know this can seem frustrating, so here’s how the process works.

Around two months before your gas safety certificate expires, our contractor, Phoenix Gas, will send you an appointment by letter.

If the date isn’t convenient, please contact Phoenix as soon as possible (their details will be on the appointment letter).

Depending on engineer availability, Phoenix may be able to rearrange the appointment straight away.

However, this isn’t always possible. To meet our legal responsibilities, we need to make and record a series of attempts to gain access to your home before the gas safety certificate expires. These attempts must take place at different times during the lead-up to the gas safety certificate expiring.

Why might the engineer still visit?

If rearranging your allocated appointment would move it to a later point in the process, the original appointment may still need to go ahead, so that we have evidence that an access attempt was made at that time.

If the original appointment needs to go ahead, the engineer will attend and leave a calling card if nobody is home.

We know this can feel frustrating when you’ve already told us you won’t be in. Please be assured that we aren’t ignoring your request to rearrange. If we can move the appointment, we will.

What happens next?

When you call Phoenix, let them know your upcoming availability. Once the original appointment date has passed, they will call you to confirm a new appointment.

Our aim is always to work with you to find a suitable date and complete the gas safety check as quickly and conveniently as possible.



At a glance:

What happens if you can’t make the first allocated appointment?

Step	What happens?
1. Can’t make your appointment?	Contact Phoenix as soon as possible and let them know your availability.
2. Appointment reviewed	Phoenix will check whether your allocated appointment can be rearranged.
3. Original appointment may still go ahead	In some cases, the engineer may still need to attend the original appointment as part of the gas servicing process (even if you’re not home).
4. New appointment arranged	Phoenix contacts you to confirm/arrange another appointment (if needed).
5. Gas safety check completed	Once the check is carried out, the process ends until next year’s service is due.

Why annual gas safety checks are so important!

- They help keep your home safe
- They ensure that your boiler and gas appliances are working correctly
- They help protect you, your household and your neighbours

What happens if we can’t get access?

We and Phoenix will continue trying to contact you and arrange further appointments.

If we still can’t gain access before the gas safety certificate expires, we may need to take legal action to gain entry and complete the safety check.

We always want to avoid this, which is why we start the process early and make several attempts to contact you first.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation. We know the process isn’t always straightforward, but these checks play an important role in keeping you, your household and your neighbours safe.

Find out more about the process on our website: www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/gas-service

Using AI?

KEEP IT SIMPLE :)

When you contact us about a problem, concern or complaint, the most helpful thing you can do is explain it clearly in your own words.

Many people now use AI tools, such as Copilot or ChatGPT, to help write emails and letters. These can be useful for putting thoughts into words, but they can sometimes make assumptions, include incorrect information and create very long messages, making it harder for us to quickly understand what's happened and how we can help.

You don't need to write a formal letter, quote legislation, refer to policies, or use legal language.

The clearer the information, the quicker we can understand what's gone wrong and work towards a solution.

If you'd rather talk things through, give us a call. We're happy to listen, ask questions, and discuss the issue with you.

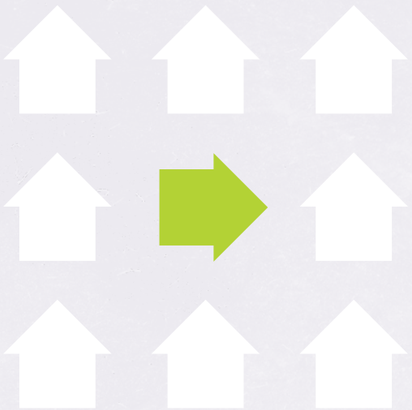
Contact us in whatever way works best for you, whether that's by phone, email or letter, we're here to listen and help.

A SIMPLE CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU PRESS SEND, ASK YOURSELF:

- What happened?
- When did it happen?
- How has it affected me?
- What would I like Leicestershire Rural Housing Association to do?

A few clear details can help us resolve things more quickly for you.



Helping us to put things right

Sometimes things don't go as they should. If that happens, please let us know so we can look into your concerns and work to put things right.

Our Complaints Policy and Complaints Process explain what you can expect from us if you make a complaint. You can find them on our website at: www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/complaints

If you'd like the information in another format or need support to make a complaint, please get in touch.

Making information easier to find with STAIRs

SOCIAL TENANT ACCESS TO INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

STAIRs, which stands for *Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements* was introduced in October 2026 by the Regulator of Social Housing. It's designed to make it easier for social housing households to find information about how we manage our homes and services.

You can now find key information about how we're run, how we spend money and about the services we provide **on one page on our website**.

If you think information should be included on our STAIRs webpage but you can't find it, you can ask us to review it.

Looking ahead

From 1 April 2027, customers will have a new right to ask us for specific information about the management of their home. We'll share more details about this before April.

Find out more at: www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/STAIRs

Could you help us make services better?

Residents help shape our services in lots of different ways.

Some review draft policies before they're introduced. Others give feedback on proposed changes, complete surveys, or help us choose new contractors and services.

We keep things flexible. Rather than holding formal panel meetings, we contact residents when opportunities arise and invite them to take part in areas that interest them. You can choose how much or how little you get involved.

The feedback we receive helps us make better decisions and improve our services for everyone.

Would *you* like to **have your say?**

Visit our website to find out more about the different ways you can get involved, or give us a call on 0300 1234 009.

www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/have-your-say

NEW

New homes taking shape in Breedon

Good progress is being made on 18 new affordable homes in Breedon. The development includes 12 two-bedroom homes and 6 three-bedroom homes, all for social rent.

This is the third phase of affordable homes on Southworth Road in Breedon. The continued support for affordable housing in the village reflects the important role these homes play in helping support housing need in the local area.

Interested in one of the new homes?

If you're interested in being considered for one of the new Breedon homes, you'll need to be registered on Housing Jigsaw, the North West Leicestershire District Council's (NWLDC) housing register before the homes are advertised.

1. **Complete the registration application form on the Housing Jigsaw website: www.nwleics.gov.uk/find_a_home**
2. **If you're eligible, you'll be added to the NWLDC housing register.**
3. **The Breedon homes are expected to be advertised on the Housing Jigsaw website around two months before they're ready.**
4. **When they're advertised, you'll need to place a bid through the Housing Jigsaw bidding system.**
5. **NWLDC will then nominate eligible applicants for the homes.**

If you think you may need affordable housing, we'd encourage you to register with NWLDC. Don't wait for the homes to be advertised.



For more information, please contact:
David Kolodynski on 0300 1234 009
enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk





Cost of living support

Help with heating costs this winter.

Winter Fuel Payment

If you were born on or before 27 June 1960, you could receive a Winter Fuel Payment of £100 to £300 to help with heating costs this winter. Most eligible people will receive the payment automatically.

For full details and to check your eligibility, visit gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment

Warm Home Discount

The Warm Home Discount is a £150 discount on your electricity bill for eligible households. If you qualify, the discount is applied directly to your bill, so you do not receive the money separately.

Most people who are eligible will receive the discount automatically. The scheme is due to reopen in October 2026 for winter 2026/27.

For more information and eligibility details, visit gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme



Beware of scams

Never share your bank details or personal information in response to unexpected calls, texts or emails about energy schemes or energy bill support. If you're unsure, contact the organisation directly using its official contact details.

Did you know?

A few things about your tenancy

Your tenancy agreement sets out what you can expect from us, as well as your responsibilities as a resident. Here are a few useful reminders about your home and tenancy.

Making changes to your home?

You'll need our written permission before making alterations or major improvements, both inside and outside of your home. This helps us check the work is safe and explain any conditions that may apply.

Find out more and request permission at: www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/alterations

Thinking about getting a pet?

Please ask for our permission first.

Find out more and request permission at: www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/pet-request

Has someone moved in or out?

Household changes can affect your tenancy, so please tell us if someone moves in or out. You may also need to discuss other tenancy changes with us.

Find out more at: www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/changes

Who's responsible for repairs?

Some repairs are ours to handle, others are yours.

If something needs fixing, you can check who's responsible at: www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/repair-responsibilities

Not sure? Just ask

Tenancy agreements can vary. If you're unsure about anything affecting your home or tenancy, please get in touch. We're happy to talk things through and help you understand what you need to do.

Read more in our Annual Report

Our Annual Report covering April 2025 to March 2026 is available to download.

www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/annual-reports

If you'd like a hard copy of the report, or any further information, please email enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk or call 0300 1234 009.





Interested in how many complaints we've had and what they are about?

We publish our complaints performance every three months on our website. Take a look: www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/complaint-performance

Our office will be closed on the following dates…



Friday 18 December

For Christmas and New Year we close at 12 noon on Thursday 24 December and reopen at 9am on Monday 4 January 2027.

If you're a resident with an emergency repair request during this time, please call 0300 1234 009 and select the option to report an emergency repair. If this number is unavailable, please call 01452 922927 for our out-of-hours service.

Not sure if it's classed as an emergency repair?

Visit: www.leicestershirerha.org.uk/report-repair

Could MyHomeOnline work better for you?



Take our two-minute survey and help us understand what residents need from our customer portal. **It doesn't matter whether you use MyHomeOnline regularly, occasionally or not at all. We'd still like to hear from you.**

Scan the QR code to take part, or give us a call on 0300 1234 009. **If you take part, you'll be entered into a draw to win one of five £20 shopping vouchers.**

No heating?

We make it a priority in winter.

Between 1 October and 31 March, a total loss of heating is classed as an emergency repair, and we'll aim to attend within 24 hours of you reporting the issue.





For the safety of our staff and contractors, please make sure dogs are kept under control whenever we visit your home. This helps us carry out visits, repairs, inspections and servicing safely and efficiently.

We're here to help

Need to report a repair, update your details or ask a question? You can contact us on MyHomeOnline, by phone, email or online.

T. 0300 1234 009
E. enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk
www.leicestershirerha.org.uk
@LeicsRural