YOURNEWS

Welcome to Your News

Winter 2022



Get in touch

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When asked how it felt to be 103, Joe humorously replied, "it's better than being 102", and added that he doesn't feel anything like his age. He couldn't give us any words of wisdom about his secret to reaching such an incredible age, but a wonderful family, a passion for cycling, and a good drop of whisky were mentioned!

A decorated veteran, Joe served in the Royal Artillery and was part of the second wave that landed on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944 (D-Day). He was also part of Operation Market Garden in Holland, which was later made into the film 'A Bridge Too Far', starring Sean Connery and Michael Caine.

Joe served alongside some well-known faces
- Arthur Lowe, better known for his role as
Captain Mainwaring in Dad's Army, and former
Liverpool FC Manager Bob Paisley. His Liverpool
connections don't stop there, as he grew up
with another renowned Liverpool FC Manager,
Joe Fagan – however it is worth noting that
Joe himself is an Everton supporter and has a
number 100 shirt from his centenary birthday.

After the war, Joe trained and worked in building coaches and spent some time repairing lorries. He went on to work in insurance sales and used his bike to get to appointments.

Joe was a keen cyclist and a member of a cycling club for many years. His son Mike recently found his old bike from 1938 in a shed and has been working to restore it.

Joe spent 69 wonderful years married to the love of his life, Lillian, before she sadly passed away almost three years ago. Together they lived in Maghull and had four children (three boys and a girl). Now the family has grown to include eight grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Joe said that he couldn't praise his family more.

The family are clearly equally proud of their dad and all his achievements, but also for 'just being our dad, being there for us'.

Joe moved to Ryfields in Warrington three years ago. He and his family selected Ryfields Retirement Village because of its independent living, with support on site.

Joe spoke highly of the Village and said:

"It is lovely living here at Ryfields. Everyone has been so wonderful."

Danielle McCann, Operations Manager at Ryfields said "Everyone from Your Housing Group wishes Joe a huge Happy Birthday. He is a wonderful member of our community here at Ryfields, everyone knows Joe! We are so pleased that we were able to accommodate a party for him this year, the Knitting Group did a wonderful job, and it was great to see everyone having such a lovely afternoon."

THE FACES BEHIND OUR FRONT DOORS









...is all about you, telling us, about you!

SHARE YOUR STORY - it could be anything from starting a business, charity work or something more personal.

Please visit:

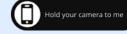
www.yourhousinggroup. co.uk/customers/customer connect/

Click on:

'Share Your Story With Us'

WE CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR FROM YOU!







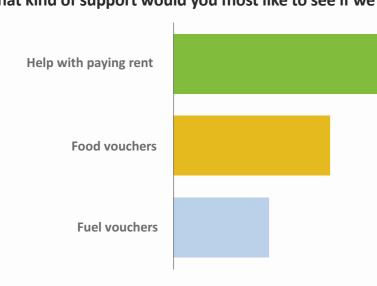
SURVEY RESULTS

A huge **thank you** to everyone who took the time to complete the survey we recently sent out via email.

Over three quarters of you told us that you understood why we are considering raising rent this year.



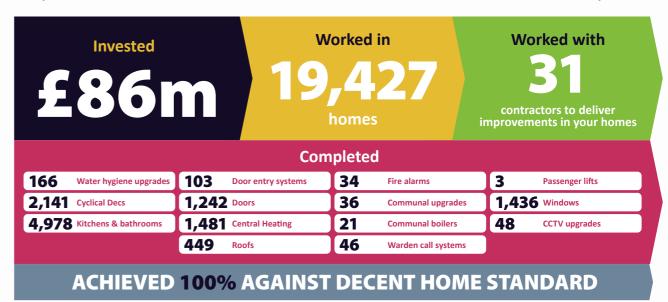
What kind of support would you most like to see if we set up a special hardship fund?



We have always tried to keep our rent at affordable levels, but as with all businesses, this is balanced against the rising costs of other essential goods and services. As a **not-for-profit organisation**, you may already be aware that all the rent goes directly back into the services we provide for you, including repairs, maintenance, home improvements, and support.



By April 2022, we will have already....



Plus, we will continue to maintain the financial support measures we have in place, which includes:



BENEFIT SUPPORT INCLUDING CLAIMS & APPEALS



FURTHER SIGNPOSTING TO ADDITIONAL SUPPORT



DEBT ADVICE



PERSONALISED BUDGETING



RENT PAYMENT
PLANS & SUPPORT



IF YOUR RENT HAS INCREASED, YOU MAY NOW BE ENTITLED TO BENEFITS OR SUPPORT THAT YOU WERE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR BEFORE

Please, if you are now experiencing difficulties, or do so in the future, get in touch with our Money Advice Team who are always on hand to offer a range of support and advice.



www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk/contact-us



RENT REVIEW - FAQS

Why could my rent be going up?

As you know, as your landlord, we are able to review the rent annually. We have to follow guidelines that are set out by the Government, and in 2019, a five-year policy was introduced allowing housing associations like us to increase rents in line with inflation for five years.

How much could my rent increase?

If rent does go up, we are allowed to increase it, at the most, by 4.1% (Consumer Price Index +1%). The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is essentially the cost-of-living measurement.

Example

If your rent is currently

it would become £83.28

What is CPI?

Inflation is measured by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which records the prices of hundreds of everyday items. These items are called the "basket of goods", and they're being constantly updated. For instance, in 2021 hand sanitiser and men's loungewear bottoms were added, but sandwiches bought at work were removed.

Every month, the ONS releases its measure of inflation, showing how much these prices have risen since the same date last year. This is known as the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).

Example

If the price of a bottle of milk is £1 and it rises by 5p, then milk inflation is 5%.



When would my rent go up from?

If your rent is increasing, you will soon receive your usual annual rent review letter with the details of your new weekly, fortnightly or monthly amount as well as further information on support and advice. The new rent amount would come into effect from 1 April 2022.

What if I can't afford the increase?

We can help you budget, access welfare benefits and support services, or put you in contact with other organisations who can help you. Please get in touch so we can help.



WHO'S WHO AT YHG?

Dean Slavin

Customer Engagement & Relationship Manager

 How would you describe your role at YHG/fix360 to friends and family?

I generally just say I work for a housing association - most of my friends call me Chandler Bing (because no one knew what he did on Friends either)!

2. What are you currently watching on TV?

When I'm not subjected to The Wizard of Oz, I've been squeezing in Midnight Mass.

- If you could invite five celebrities (dead or alive) to a dinner party who would they be?
- Neil DeGrasse Tyson
- Uma Thurman
- Ricky Gervais. I think he's hilarious and enjoy his views outside of the comedy world also
- Amy Winehouse
- Kenny Dalglish. All time hero!

4. What is your favourite song?

'Time to Say Goodbye' by Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman.

5. What is the best gift you've ever received?

There's a print which hangs in my office and was bought by a former colleague. It represents my story perfectly so I found it really special that someone would be that thoughtful.

6. What is your biggest achievement?

Watching my daughter develop good values and a caring nature at such an early age.

- 7. Tell us your top three TV show recommendations
- Watchmen. Russian Doll. Dark.
- 8. What's your favourite decade, and why?
 Noughties Lots of holidays and no real cares!

9. What fictional place would you most like to go to?

The land of Oz - providing I could take my little girl (it'd be weird if it was just me).

10. What is your favourite season and why? Autumn - I like the changing of the seasons and getting outdoors as much as possible.

11. What is your favourite takeaway food/fast food restaurant?

Chinese!

12. Do you have any pets?

We had two fish (Bruce and Nemo) until last week, but they accidentally died!

My little girl was fuming!

13. Do you have a middle name?

Francis so yeah, my initials spell out the name of an old furniture store!

14. What are three words you'd use to describe yourself?

Dad. Principled. Misunderstood.

15. Now ask a colleague to describe you in three words! What are they?

Approachable. Supportive. Forward-thinking.

16. Are you a morning person or a night owl? Morning!

17. What is one thing on your bucket list? I'd like to go to a football World Cup Final.

CELEBRATING LGBT+ HISTORY MONTH

My thoughts on LGBT+

By Victoria Green, Learning & Development, Your Housing Group

Let me start by saying thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts! I've worked in housing my entire working career and one of the things that keeps me loving what I do is the sense that we're helping support communities.

Community and creating places where people can thrive is at the heart of what we do at Your Housing Group, but community isn't just about a neighbourhood. Community, for me, is about much more than that. It's a shared space (physical or online) where we can feel safe, share experiences, or an identity. It's about having something in common. And that's how I see being a member of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans + community. A community I'm proud to be a part of.

LGBT+ people have always existed. They've been part of every community but lived very private lives because they had to exist outside of the accepted norms of the time. Over the years, they've had their identities ignored, destroyed, glossed over, and retold from a different perspective. One example is the story of Edward II, whose disastrous reign is only now being understood by historians through the lens of the impact sexuality had on how he was perceived.

However, because of this marginalisation, LGBT+ people carved out their (often hidden) communities, finding comfort and acceptance there. Places that eventually sprung up like a 'gay village' which most cities still have and which thrive. These spaces have grown up with the community, from secret underground clubs to now popular mainstream hotspots.

Colleague



The Stonewall Inn in New York City was the catalyst for social change, when, 53 years ago, it was raided by the police. This led to three nights of civil unrest whereby the LGBT+ community, largely made up of the trans community and people of colour, tired of the police brutality, fought back. The 'gay rights' movement as it was coined, was born.

The growth of the online community has impacted us all over the past 20 years or so (who would've thought we'd be happily having virtual games nights in 2020?) But it's also enabled LGBT+ people to connect in new ways and explore what their sexuality and gender means to them.

However, to end on a personal note, the fact that I've been encouraged to write this is one of the many reasons why I'm proud to work for Your Housing Group. The world isn't perfect. Still very far from it, but I know at work, I can be me, because we champion inclusivity and celebrate diversity, and we are actively trying to improve by listening and learning. So, let's be better together.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU!

Tony has been a Your Housing Group resident for 18 years but has lived in one of our Manchester City Centre apartment blocks (formally Tung Sing) for eight years now and in his own words, "I love it."

Tell us a bit about yourself...

"I'm almost 65 now but I was brought up in Liverpool by my Grandma and Grandad who I call Big Mum and Big Dad and it's thanks to them, and my strength of character, that I am what I am today. Big Dad worked on the docks and Big Mum worked at Tate's (sugar) factory and it was a rough and ready part of the city, but I was happy. "I came out to them when I was 19 and Big Mum said, 'what like in the papers with boyfriends and that?' and I said, 'yes' and she said she knew. She told me that you could see from the moon that I was gay! But it made everything so much easier and bear in mind that this was 40-odd years ago, so things were very different then. I am so grateful for them both."

What's life like for you?

"It's great and to be honest, it always has been but as you can imagine, being a gay man isn't always easy. I'm openly gay and I hate saying that - 'openly' - as feels like I'm rebelling against something which I'm obviously not! I just am what I am. I've had questions such as 'Were you born gay or did something happen to you when you were younger?' or 'How long have you been gay?' or 'Were you a mummy's boy?'. I guess it makes me think, would you ask someone who was straight these things and we know the answer to that. I'd be lying if I said it didn't make me angry. People need to educate themselves and grow up. I am what I am and who cares? Well, they shouldn't." "I have a wonderful partner, Richard, of 21 years and we're hoping to get married soon as covid ruined it the first time."



What's it like living in a YHG home?

"Again, I'm happy and I always have been. I have wonderful neighbours and friends and it's great living where I do as many of my neighbours are of Chinese heritage so culturally, it's so rewarding. I must mention David Yue too (a YHG Officer) who is just wonderful and does so much for us. I do miss Liverpool though and will probably move back to Sefton Park one day."

What could we do to better support people from the LGBT+ community?

"Put yourself in my shoes. I just want – or rather I'd appreciate, as I'm sure everyone does – being represented when you are writing a newsletter or creating policies or sharing stories about things that matter. I always read the newsletter as I'm not online and don't email or have social media – my phone needs winding up! – so I enjoy Your News, but it would be nice to feel like I, like so many other residents who are gay or fluid or trans etc., recognise ourselves in the world. It's better than it was but we all know we have a long way to go."



YOU SAID, WE DID...





You may recall in our last newsletter to you (Autumn 2021) we shared a little information about the surveys we carry out throughout the year.



Monthly, quarterly, or seasonal 'transactional' surveys

This is a survey about a specific item such as repairs, grounds maintenance or cleaning etc.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI) surveys

For Grove Village, Maple West, Oak Priory and Willowbarns as they are funded differently through partnership agreements with local

Other surveys

Other neighbourhoodfocused surveys or specific project surveys

In 2021, we carried out a range of surveys and thanks to you, we received 17,180 responses over the year!



STAR: Survey of Tenants & Residents STAR(t): Survey of Tenants & Residents (transactional)

Annual

STAR: Annual

Additional

Customer Survey



WE VIEW FEEDBACK AS A GIFT -

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY.

And we use it to shape and improve our services.

THANK YOU!

REPAIRS



You said that we often came to carry out a repair, but we couldn't always do it there and then.



We've been working on giving as many of you as possible a 'First Time Fix' - your feedback is one of the main reasons we're doing this!

We've given operatives more time for certain types of works to ensure they can complete the job, rather than just inspect at first visit.

We told you about our new system called 'Dynamic Scheduling' which means that when you book a repair, the system will automatically select the most suitable operative for the job, based on their location that day, their skillset and availability to complete the job in one go (if possible).

We can now see that if an operative has two repairs at the same property, they can complete the jobs at the same time.

Making sure that operatives have the right materials to undertake the works there and then for the majority of jobs.

INVESTING IN YOUR HOMES



Many of you live in blocks or schemes and wanted to see the communal areas you all share and enjoy updated.



We are working in several areas over the next few years, including: Our six Manchester City Centre schemes will be receiving £2.9 million worth of communal upgrades including a new roof at Princess Court.

Victoria Close and Irwell Close in Liverpool are receiving approximately £800,000 worth of improvements, including new glazed windows to replace existing grated frames on upper-floors.

COMMUNICATION



You told us you weren't clear when a job had been completed or where a job was up to.



We've improved the efficiency and speed of our communications, so you don't have to chase us.

We've introduced text messages to let you know when work is completed, along with the digital completion certificates which is also a receipt of the works.

Getting in touch with you more often about the status of jobs or if you're waiting for an appointment to be made due to confirmation from subcontractors or material deliveries

SAFETY



Safety is our number one priority and we know there is work to do.



We have introduced various measures and continue to do so.

We have written to almost all of our residents now asking whether you have damp and/or mould and started working on immediate and longer-term repairs to ensure your physical and mental health is protected.

We have started carrying out safety walks to inspect high-rise buildings in detail and as a result have developed an action plan for Liverpool. We are now reviewing this initial work and plan to roll this out across all high-rise buildings throughout 2022.

We are also holding our first High-Rise Forum in February 2022 for residents who live in buildings over 18 metres in height.

CUSTOMER SCRUTINY PANEL (CSP)

WE'RE LOOKING

FOR CSP MEMBERS!

If this sounds like something you might like to be involved in, please email yourvoice@yourhousinggroup.co.uk or call Chris Quigg, Customer Scrutiny Manager on 07917 087732

Follow the link by holding your phone camera on this QR Code and clicking the link that pops up!

www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk/
customers/customer-connect/
customer-connect-overview/
customer-scrutiny-panel/





What is Customer Scrutiny?

The Regulator of Social Housing requires us to work with and provide support to our customers, by ensuring we thoroughly examine, or scrutinise, the service we offer. Good customer scrutiny holds us to account as well as giving you, as a resident, a platform for your voice to be heard.

Scrutiny

/'skruːtɪni/

noun

Critical observation or examination.

The CSP sits within our Customer Connect framework and to ensure we have a robust, reliable and consistent system in place, a role on the Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) requires time and commitment.

Recent review

In December 2021, the panel reviewed how customer complaints are handled. They reviewed policies, documentation and also looked at the surveys we carry out with you throughout the year. A handful of complaints were examined in detail to better understand our customers' experience when making a complaint, and further information gathered through phone calls with these customers. They also spoke to our colleagues who deal with complaints.

The panel were able to make recommendations which will be introduced over the next twelve months and include:

- Introduce a clear and simple stand-alone complaint handling procedure to accompany the policy
- Amend the policy to better explain how you will be treated when you make a complaint
- Annual customer relationship training for all colleagues who deal with complaints.



WE'RE LOOKING FOR CUSTOMER CONNECT PANEL (CCP) MEMBERS TOO!

Would you like to play a key role in ensuring the voice of our customers is heard?

We're looking for Customer Connect Panel (CCP) members - tenants or leaseholders – to liaise with YHG's decision-makers and make recommendations about what all our customers need.

- You'll play a key role in making sure our services work for everyone
- You'll be able to influence local priorities and make improvements within your neighbourhoods

We will support you with any reasonable child-care costs when needed by reimbursing you and we'll be flexible by holding alternative meetings during the day and evenings, as well support you to join meeting in person or online.

If you are interested, please contact:

Chris Quigg, Customer Scrutiny Manager on 07917 087732 or via email at your.voice@yourhousinggroup.co.uk



What's the difference?

| Customer Connect Panel | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Ongoing, less formal liaison with YHG | | | | |
| Formal meeting every six weeks | | | | |
| Minimal customer contact outside panel | | | | |
| Panel-led discussions | | | | |
| Very part-time | | | | |
| | | | | |



Brookhouse Estate Action Day, Crewe

At the end of last year, we visited Brookhouse Estate, Crewe. Along with Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire Service, The Guinness Partnership, and Peaks and Plains Housing, we carried out a survey to see how you felt about your neighbourhood. Thank you to everyone who spoke to us on the day. We were pleased to hear that almost 4 out of 5 of you felt safe in your homes. However, we now better understand some further issues including antisocial behaviour, drug activity, and the need for better traffic calming measures.

We're working through all of this feedback and will update you on our plans and improvements.



Adlington House

We've been working closely with residents at Adlington House over the last few years, to get a Residents' **Association Committee** up and running again. In a recent meeting, we found that visitors were parking illegally on footpaths making it

difficult for residents to walk by so we have now installed bollards to prevent this.

We have also agreed:

- A Residents' Association Committee for everyone at Adlington House
- To ensure regular contact with our Housing Management team
- To hold committee meetings every six weeks

Village Green,

Back in the Summer of last year, a number of travellers accessed the Village Green in Birchwood, Warrington. This is an open green space used by many of you to enjoy the fresh air, walk your dog and exercise in but when the travellers left, it was unusable.

It took time, alongside the local Council and the Police, to clear up the rubbish and contamination. We have also installed concrete barriers to prevent any further issues and we are now consulting with those of you who live in the area, as well as the Parish Council, to discuss more permanent

preventative options. Our aim is to get this completed by the end of March 2022, which we will fully pay for, so that this lovely green space can be used year-round.

VALENTINE'S DAY RECIPE

How to make your loved one a Valentine's Day feast with fail-safe steak and homemade chunky chips

40 mins Prep: Cook: 2 hours Serves: 2

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp finely chopped parsley 50g butter, softened, plus a little extra

1 red chilli , finely chopped

juice and zest 1/2 lemon olive oil

2 x rib-eye steaks, seasoned 2 handfuls mixed salad leaves

FOR THE CHIPS

450g floury potatoes, such as King Edward or Maris Piper, peeled and cut into chunky chips

2 tbsp olive oil

1 tsp thyme leaves

1 garlic clove, crushed

METHOD

STEP 1

For the chilli butter, mash the parsley into the butter with the chilli, a squeeze of lemon juice, the zest and some seasoning. Chill until firm.

STEP 2

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. For the chips, toss all the ingredients on a baking tray, then season. Roast for 35-45 mins until golden and crisp.

Heat a good glug of oil in a frying pan. Add the extra butter and the seasoned steaks, fry for 2-4 mins on each side, then transfer to plates. Toss the leaves with olive oil and lemon juice. Divide between the plates, add the chips and top each steak with a piece of chilli butter.

www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/rib-eye-steaks-chilli-butter-homemade-chips

goodfood

Cut Costs by choosing skirt, flat-iron or frying

Rib-eye steaks with chilli butter & homemade chips

Always allow your meat to rest, even for just a few minutes, it makes all the difference!



In the Autumn Your News, we named the incorrect winners of the Tallest Sunflower in the **Blooming Lovely gardening** competition.

We're really sorry.

The correct winners are:

TALLEST SUNFLOWER



Josie and Elves KINGSWOOD





Mr Lee & Mr Tang Roby **AYTOUN COURT**

& Bumblebees Bloomers OTTERBURN HOUSE

YEAR OF THE DRAGON WORD SEARCH

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YEAR OF THE TIGER

DUMPLING TIGER **KUNG HEI FAT CHOI DRAGON DANCE** ZODIAC RED **FIREWORKS HAPPY NEW YEAR** ASIA **LANTERNS**



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