

Northamptonshire
Rural
Life

The residents' newsletter for
**Northamptonshire Rural
Housing Association**

SUMMER 2016

www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk



Northamptonshire
Rural Housing
Association



Back Home!

Karin Poolton is delighted to be starting family life back in the village where she was born and bred.

Having lived with her parents in Norton all her life, Karin was forced to move away when she was expecting her son, Theo, as she couldn't afford to rent a property in the village with her partner, Matthew.

Now the family feel like they're back home. "We love village life in Norton and Theo loves the donkeys in the field next door!" says Karin.


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Remember to like
us on Facebook
and see all our
latest news

• Read more at, visit www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk

Local Housing Allowance Caps

Local Housing Allowance is a way of working out how much benefit you can get to help pay towards your rent.

The amount of Local Housing Allowance you can receive is set at a certain level for the size of property and the area in which you live.

The Local Housing Allowance rates for your area can be found at lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/Search.aspx However, these will only apply if you signed a new tenancy after 1st April 2016 and you are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. The regulations will not come into effect until 1st April 2018.

If my tenancy began after 1st April 2016 how will this affect me?

1. I am under 35 years old and single (receiving Housing Benefit/Universal Credit)

If you don't have any dependent children living with you, the benefit towards your rent will be capped to the Local Housing Allowance rate for a room in shared accommodation.

2. I am 35 or over and of working age (receiving Housing Benefit/Universal Credit)

If the Local Housing Allowance for your household is lower than your rent (after any bedroom tax reduction) then the benefit towards your rent will be capped at the relevant Local Housing Allowance level.

However, if the Local Housing Allowance for your household is higher than your rent, only the Bedroom Tax rules will be applied.

3. I am of Pension Credit Age (receiving Housing Benefit/Universal Credit)

You will not be affected by the bedroom tax but the benefit towards your rent will be capped to the relevant Local Housing Allowance rate for your household size if you are under occupying your property.

You can find further information and examples of how the LHA caps will affect you by visiting the 'living in your home' section of our website.

Remember, if you signed your tenancy before April 2016 then the new Local Housing Allowance benefit caps will NOT affect you.

Local Support

If you are elderly, disabled or have an illness, visit www.socialcareinfo.net to find details of the support available to you.

Simply put in your postcode to see a directory of organisations in your area who can provide social care, advice and support locally, as well as national information about your rights and entitlements and independent advice organisations.

Summer fun

Summer's here at last and it's great to be out in the garden, but please be considerate to your neighbours.

- Don't play music too loud outdoors, especially late at night.
- If you're having a party, let your neighbours know – or invite them too!
- Try not to use noisy gardening equipment for long periods – give the neighbours a break.
- If you own a dog, make sure it's well exercised to avoid it barking all day.
- Make the kids aware that other people want to enjoy their own gardens too.



Insure yourself

While we insure your home, it's your responsibility to insure your furniture and belongings against fire, theft or vandalism. It's important to get home contents insurance and many companies offer it at a low cost and let you pay in weekly or monthly instalments. You can use our insurance company - Arthur J Gallagher - or choose one of your own. Don't be tempted to put it off.



Right to buy

At present there is no formally agreed scheme which extends the Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants. This continues to be worked on by the National Housing Federation and Government.

There are a number of pilot schemes taking place across the country and the outcome of these will shape how the arrangements work in practice. We understand that there is still much work to be done, and any scheme will enable Associations to use their discretion on which homes can be sold.

The timetable for the introduction of the scheme is unclear, but it is anticipated in the Autumn, at which point the Association will set out its own policy in relation to the Right to Buy. If you have any queries please contact us.



Residents now have more choice than ever before when it comes to their new kitchen.

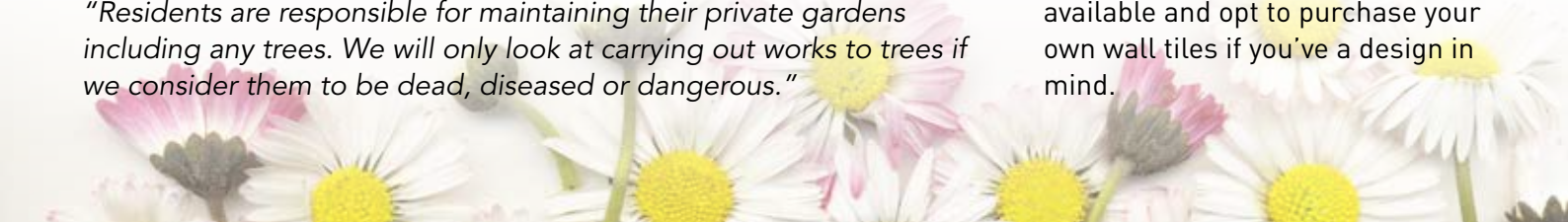
Did you know you can select the type of finish and handles for your kitchen cupboards, choose from four different styles of floor coverings and four worktop finishes including Cumbrian Stone and Galaxy Black? You can even choose your preferred sink and taps from a small selection available and opt to purchase your own wall tiles if you've a design in mind.

Ask us... Have you got a question about your home or the services we provide? If so, ask away! We'll be answering one of your questions in every newsletter. Simply email them to sue.haywood@midlandsrural.org.uk



James asked: "I have a large tree in my back garden. Can you tell me who is responsible for maintaining it?"

David Krause, Development and Maintenance Manager says: "Residents are responsible for maintaining their private gardens including any trees. We will only look at carrying out works to trees if we consider them to be dead, diseased or dangerous."



Maintenance Man

Welcome to Steven Shellard who has become our new Maintenance Surveyor.

He says: "I'm very excited to have been given the opportunity to come and work for NRHA as it has great properties in some unique areas. My team has been very welcoming and I've settled in very quickly."



Our performance

We're committed to continuously improving the service we provide. During the past financial year ...



Complaints

2 formal complaints were received. All were acknowledged within 3 working days. None were upheld.



Compliments

2 compliments were received – 1 for planned maintenance and 1 for housing management.



Calls

94% of calls were answered within 20 seconds (target 90%). Repairs are the most common reason for residents calling.



Repairs

Overall repairs satisfaction was 96% (target 96%).



Out of Hours Repairs

98% of out of hours calls were answered within 25 seconds (target 95%).

Celebration Event

To celebrate Rural Housing Week in July, a special event was held in Braunston when local councillors were invited to lay the first brick for our development of 10 new homes for affordable rent and two for shared ownership.



Ant action

Ants are out and about during the warm weather, but don't tempt them into your home!

1. If you spill any food or drink, wipe it away immediately.
2. Try not to leave dirty dishes by the sink for too long.
3. Store food away in airtight containers.
4. Wash up pet bowls straight after feeding time.

5. Take out your rubbish regularly and keep bin lids tightly shut.
6. Mix one part vinegar with one part water and wipe on kitchen surfaces and floors.

If you see any ants, wipe them away before a whole army arrives! Follow the trail to see where they're getting in and block any cracks with sealant. Put down natural deterrents such as salt, chalk, curry powder and cinnamon.

Rent statements

As we've been moving to a new housing management system, there isn't a rent statement included with this newsletter. Your next one will be sent out with the Autumn newsletter. If you need to view your rent statement log onto our website and register with MyHomeOnline or call 0300 1234 009.

Service standard

Our contractors, engineers, surveyors and officers will provide a mutually convenient time to call to carry out the required repair / inspection.



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Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association,
Whitwick Business Centre, Stenson Road,
Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4JP.

Tel: 0300 1234 009 **Fax:** 01530 278086
E-mail: enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk
Website: www.northamptonshireha.org.uk

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