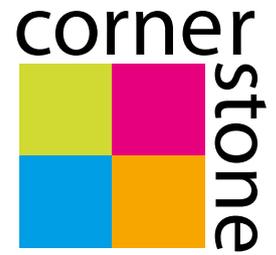


# RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

Creating places that people love to come home to  
January 2024 Issue



Housing People

Great Places, Great Service, Great Business and Great People

A large graphic with a teal background. The main text is '“NOT TOO BAD”' in large, bold, yellow letters with a blue drop shadow. To the right, there is a purple box with 'time to talk day' in white, a red box with '01/02/24' in white, and logos for 'mind' and 'Rethink Mental Illness.' in white circles.

**SOMETIMES MEANS  
I FEEL LOST AND ALONE**

**Have a conversation about mental health**

1 in 4 of people will experience a mental health problem in any given year. And the cost-of-living crisis is only making it harder to look after our mental health – the poorest fifth of the population are twice as likely to develop a mental health problem.

Local services which are available include



## CONTACT US



**Postal**  
Cornerstone House  
Western Way  
Exeter  
EX1 1AL

Please note our office is  
appointment only



**Customer Service**  
01392 273462  
(Option 3)

[mail@cornerstonehousing.net](mailto:mail@cornerstonehousing.net)



**Repairs**  
01392 273462  
(Option 1)

[repairs@cornerstonehousing.net](mailto:repairs@cornerstonehousing.net)

We are open Monday to Friday  
from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

### What you can do on our website

- Report an ASB Incident
- Report a repair
- View your tenant handbook
- Apply for a mutual exchange
- Make a complaint, give feedback or a compliment

### Out of hours

If you have an emergency with your home outside of our normal opening hours, you can call **01392 273462** (option 1) and your call will be diverted to our out-of-hours team.

## WELCOME FROM JANET

Hello and Happy New Year to you all.

The weather is so very cold at the moment, so wrap up warm, drink hot drinks or soups.



As usual I am pleased to say that we have a bumper Newsletter again this month with lots of helpful tips for you. Photos from Selfieland, Time to Talk Day and Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week, to name but a few.

The Residents Engagement Panel has been busy once again, battling against illness we have all ploughed on to read reports and reviews to help our fellow residents. We are about to begin a review of Anti-Social Behaviour if you would like to be involved please get in contact.

We must say hello to our two new Panel members, Hannah and Tina, and a big thank you to them for their support.

I had the pleasure of visiting the Depot, just to see how everyone was and what was going on. They are very busy with Window Replacements, which I hear from the Residents have been a great success. So thank you to all the teams for their hard work.

We would still love to hear from any of you if you have anything you would like to add to the newsletter about your area, or an event that may be happening soon.

Keep Warm

*Janet Gale*

Janet Gale  
Chair, Residents Engagement Panel.

# HOW WE DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES OUT OF HOURS

If you have an emergency with your home outside of our normal opening hours, you can call **01392 273462** (option 1) and your call will be diverted to our out-of-hours team.

**An emergency is something which has the potential to:**

- cause danger to someone's health and safety or
- cause immediate serious damage and destruction to a property, home or building.

Examples include:

- No heating or hot water during winter months (usually between 31st October – 1st May)
- Total or partial loss of electrics to the whole property (multiple lights or power outlets not working)
- Unsafe power – e.g. sparks from electrics
- Total or partial loss of mains water supply (such as no water to entire bathroom, but water in your kitchen)
- An uncontrollable leak – e.g. burst pipe, water tank or any leak that is affecting electrics or could cause damage to the property

Where possible we will complete emergency repairs the same day, but if not possible, within 24 hours of being reported.

In some cases, we will make the situation safe until such time as a routine repair is safe and practical to complete (for example when a window has been broken, we may board it up and make it safe, but the glass requires ordering to complete the repair).



## YOU SAID WE DID

Following feedback from residents about the smell of the carpet in the lift at Norwood House, we attempted to clean it. Unfortunately, this was not successful in removing the odour and it was becoming unpleasant for residents. The flooring has now been replaced with new non-slip cleanable flooring which looks great and there are no more unpleasant smells for the residents of Norwood House.

Please contact your us if you have any ongoing issues.



## STOP READING NOW!



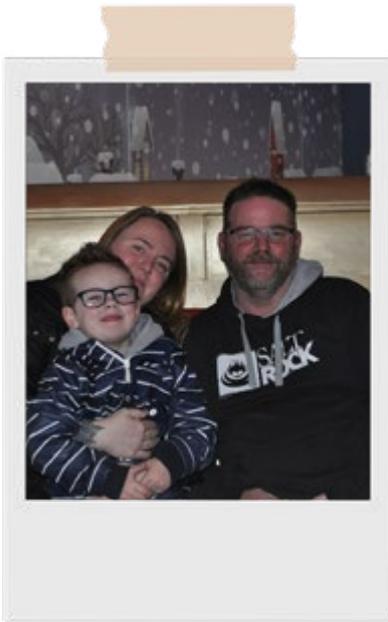
## Test your smoke detectors today!

Contact if you have  
any concerns



# Thank You!

Thank you to all our residents who joined us at Selfieland! We had a great afternoon meeting everyone who came along to take selfies, make Christmas crafts and complete a Christmas Quiz! If you have any ideas of what you would like us to do in the future, please email [mail@cornerstonehousing.net](mailto:mail@cornerstonehousing.net)





## **FIRE DOORS**

We would like to remind all residents that nothing should be attached to a fire door or the door surrounding. Anything which is attached could affect how reliable the door is at stopping the spread of a fire or its overall fire protection. Door numbers and letter boxes are all installed to ensure that this is not affected in anyway and these are fire-rated items.

Things which should not be attached include.

- Doorbells
- Wreaths
- Door knockers
- Over door hangers
- Name signs
- Shoe racks

## CHRISTMAS REGULAR SAVINGS

Have you thought about saving for Christmas 2024 yet?

Westcountry Savings and Loans offer a Christmas savings account which you can save into each month just for Christmas.

If you save £20 a month starting in January, by the end of November you will have £220 to spend on Christmas!

How it works:

- Start at any time in the year
- 1% gross interest added on 31st October annually
- Save up to £200 per month

[www.westcountry.org.uk/Christmas-savings](http://www.westcountry.org.uk/Christmas-savings)



# TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Tenant Satisfaction Measures' (TSM) are a way for tenants to understand how we are performing against key service areas.

The TSM were introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing in April 2023. There are measures covering areas like repairs, safety and complaints. 12 of these measures come directly from customer feedback surveys, below are the results from quarter 3 (October - December.)

We will be touch with resident's who wished to be contacted directly to find out how we can do better. If there any concerns don't hesitate to contact us.

Satisfaction Measure	Percentage of residents satisfied
Overall service	87%
Overall repairs service	93%
Time taken for repairs	96%
Well-maintained home	82%
Home that is safe	79%
Listen and act upon views	73%
Keeping informed	81%
Treats fairly and with respect	87%
Approach to complaint handling	82%
Communal areas clean and well maintained	74%
Positive contribution to neighbourhood	65%
Approach to handling ASB	56%
Easy to deal with	82%
Rents value for money	82%
Service charges value for money	61%



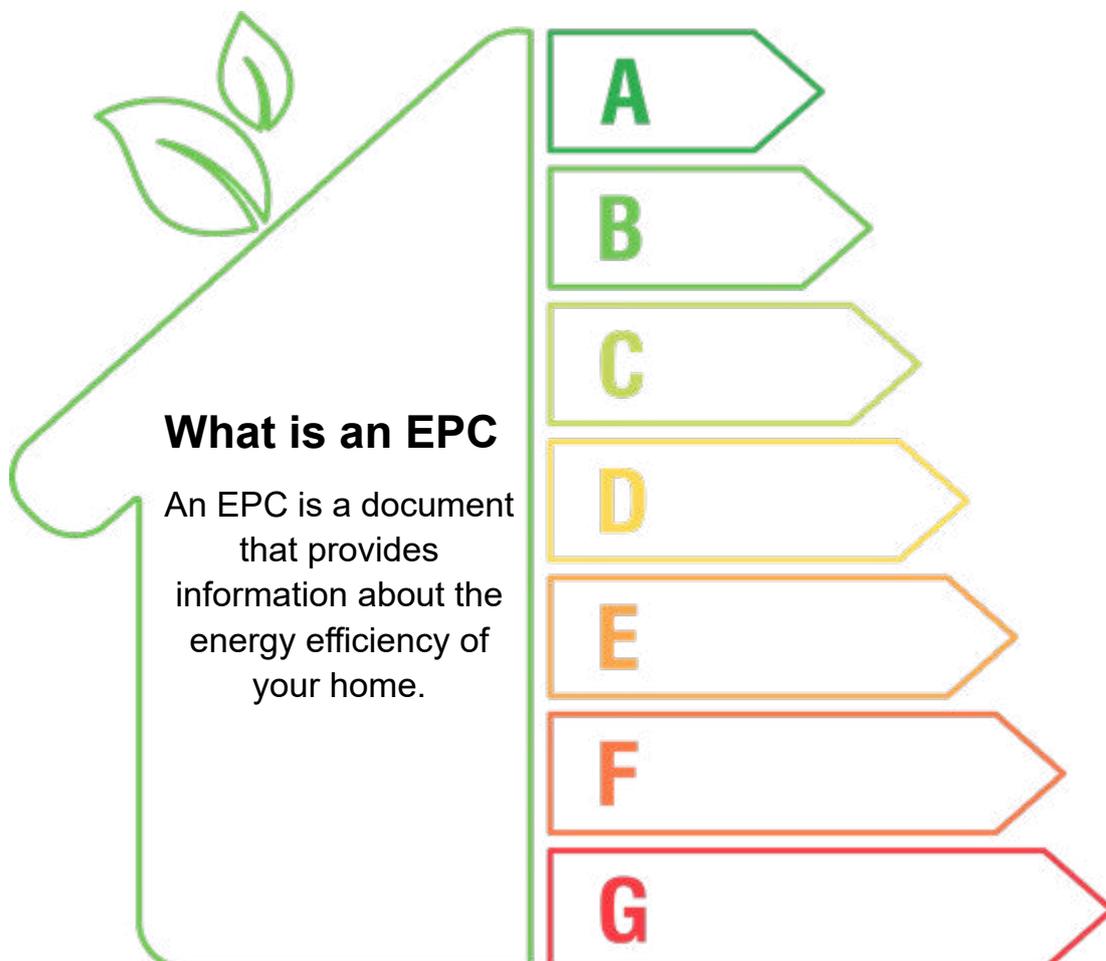
# ENERGY PERFORMANCE CHECKS (EPC) ARE COMING

As part of our commitment to providing homes that people love to come home to, we will be completing EPCs in around 850 of your homes, starting from April. It helps Cornerstone and you to understand the energy efficiency of your home so we can make informed decisions about energy use and costs and whether we can make any changes to your home to improve its energy efficiency. This could include things like the lighting, loft insulation or your heating.

The EPC involves an inspection of your home and these will be completed on our behalf by a contractor called Kovia. They will need access to your loft to inspect the insulation. As you know, it is a condition of your tenancy to not store any belongings in your loft. Please ensure your loft is clear of all belongings for the inspection to take place.

Kovia will contact you directly to arrange a mutually agreeable date and time to visit you when they are ready to start the inspections in your area.

If you have any further queries or concerns please telephone the office on 01392 273462 or send an email to [improvements@cornerstonehousing.net](mailto:improvements@cornerstonehousing.net)



# SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS WEEK

6th - 12th February is Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week. There are many services in Devon which can support you if you are a victim of Sexual Abuse or Sexual Violence, if you are unsure where to turn please talk to us and we can signpost you in the right direction.



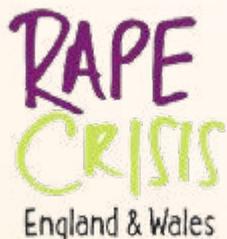
[www.fearfree.org.uk](http://www.fearfree.org.uk)



[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)



[www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)



[www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)



ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME  
[childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk) | 0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



[www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

## **Myth: Rape happens as a result of overwhelming sexual desire.**

Fact: Rapists rape as part of their need for power, dominance and control.

## **Myth: Most rapes are committed by strangers in dark alleys.**

Fact: In reality, most rapes are committed by someone the victim knows - friend, family member, partner or other individuals known to the victim. People are raped in their homes, their workplaces and other settings where they previously felt safe.

## **Myth: Only young, 'attractive' women and girls are raped.**

Fact: People of all ages and appearances, and of all classes, cultures, abilities, genders, sexualities, races and religions, are raped. Rape is an act of violence and control, and has nothing to do with the perceived 'attractiveness' of a victim.

## **Myth: Sexual abuse doesn't happen in same-sex relationships.**

Fact: People in same-sex relationships are just as likely to experience sexual abuse and rape as straight people. Research shows that transgender individuals may be at even higher risk of abuse from their partner. LGBT people can find it difficult to seek support because of additional stereotypes and prejudice they face.

# DOGS IN HOMES

You may have seen there is a change in the law about dangerous dogs which now includes the XL bully breed. There is more information below about this and Cornerstone's expectations when visiting homes with dogs.

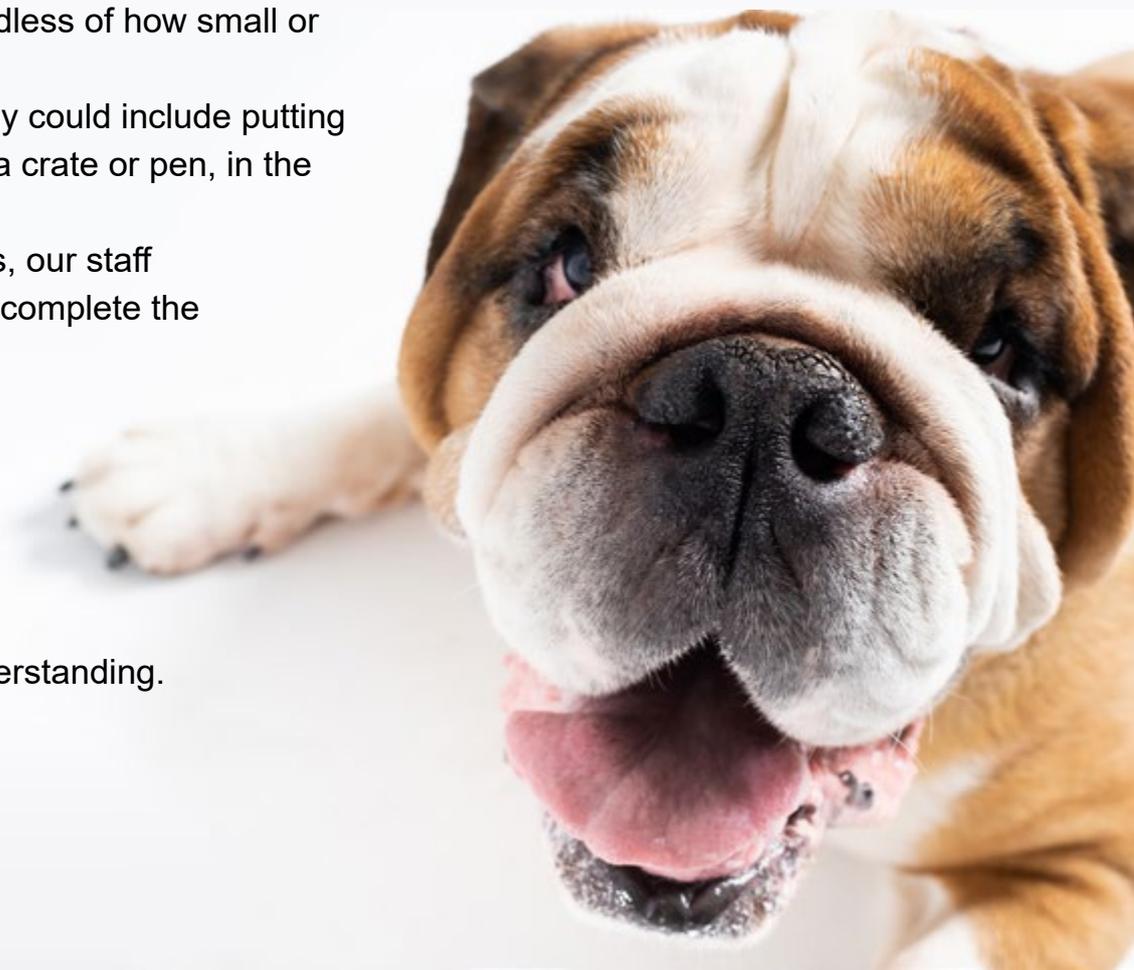
## **Dangerous dogs**

- Currently all dangerous dogs under the Act must be on lead and muzzled in a public area and have an exemption certificate.
- The following dogs are named in the Dangerous Dogs Act, Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro and the XL Bully. It is against the law to own these dogs unless you have exemption certificate.
- If you have one of these dogs and do not have an exemption certificate you are breaking the law and breaching your tenancy.
- If you have one of these dogs with an exemption certificate, they must be muzzled and on a lead in a public place.
- If you own a dog which requires an exemption certificate please email a copy to [mail@cornerstonehousing.net](mailto:mail@cornerstonehousing.net) and we will add this to your file.
- If we receive concerns from residents or staff and we believe the dog is one of the listed dangerous dogs we will ask you provide the exemption certificate for your dogs.

## **For all dog owners**

- We are dog lovers here at Cornerstone but for the safety of our staff and your dog, when visiting your home, we ask that dogs are secured away from the member of staff during the visit. This is regardless of how small or friendly they may be.
- Securing the dog away could include putting it in another room, in a crate or pen, in the garden or on a lead.
- If you refuse to do this, our staff have been told not to complete the visit.

Thank you for your understanding.



# WORLD RELIGION DAY – 21ST JANUARY

World Religion Day is a global day to promote unity and understanding among people of different faiths. We have people with a wide variety of faiths living in our homes including Atheism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Jehovah Witness, Muslim, Orthodox and Paganism. 85% of the world's population identify with a religious group.

Below are a few things you might not have know about different religions.

Almonds and pistachios  
are the only nuts  
mentioned in the Bible.

The five most  
predominant religions  
globally are Christianity,  
Judaism, Islam,  
Buddhism, and Hinduism.

Rastafari is the smallest  
religion, with 600,000  
followers.

Mormons aren't allowed  
to drink tea, coffee, or  
alcohol.



Some faiths require believers to refuse medical treatment. For example, Jehovah Witnesses aren't allowed to receive blood transfusions, and Christian Scientists often refuse all traditional medical treatments.

Dogs are mentioned 14 times in the Bible, and lions 55 times, but domestic cats are not mentioned at all.

Yin and yang are fundamental concepts in Taoism. Yin represents the feminine, passive, and receptive energy, while yang symbolizes the masculine, active, and creative energy. Taoism teaches the importance of balancing these opposing forces.

Christianity is the largest religion in the world, with more than 2.4 billion followers.

Hinduism is the world's oldest religion, according to many scholars, with roots and customs dating back more than 4,000 years.



# PENSION CREDIT

Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with your living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. Pension Credit can also help with housing costs such as rent or service charges.

You might get extra help if you're a carer, severely disabled, or responsible for a child or young person.

Pension Credit is separate from your State Pension. You can get Pension Credit even if you have other income, savings or own your own home.

## To qualify for Pension Credit, you must:

- Have reached state pension age. (Both of you if you are a couple. You don't have to be married or in a civil partnership, you're considered a couple if you live together.)

## Your Income

When you apply for Pension Credit your income is calculated. If you have a partner, your income is calculated together.

Pension Credit tops up your income to:

- your weekly income to £201.05 if you're single
- your joint weekly income to £306.85 if you have a partner

If your income is higher, you might still be eligible for Pension Credit if you have a disability, you care for someone, you have savings or you have housing costs. Even if you have savings, you may still be entitled as the first £10,000 of savings is ignored.

Visit [www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator](https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator) to find out how much you could be entitled to.

If you prefer, have a chat with someone about it (it's free). Call the free government helplines on 0800 99 1234 (8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Pension Credit doesn't just top up your income. It's also your passport to other help. You may get extra amounts if you have other responsibilities and costs.

The top up and extra amounts are known as 'Guarantee Credit'.

This may mean only a few extra pounds per week but it can open the door to other entitlements including a free TV License, free NHS dental treatment and check-ups, free sight tests, vouchers for glasses & contact lenses and possibly help with council tax, housing costs and heating bills in the colder months.

You have nothing to lose by applying, and potentially a lot to gain.

**Details you will need to make your application.**

- your National Insurance number.
- your bank account details.
- information about your income, savings, and investments
- information about your pension (if you have one) state pensions and private or occupational pensions.
- details of any housing costs (such as Rent and Service Charges
- your partner's details (if you have a partner).

If you need help, contact your Age UK Devon to speak to someone who may be able to help you 0333 241 2340.



# TAX CREDITS ENDING

Tax credits are coming to an end, and most people will need to apply for Universal Credit instead, this is called Managed Migration.

Managed Migration for people living in Devon started on 8th January 2024 and you will receive a Managed Migration Notice letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) telling you when you need to make a claim.

Before you make a claim check with a benefit advisor such as Citizen's Advice Bureau or use a benefit calculator as you do not need to do this yet and could be worse off.

You do not need to apply until you get this notice as Under Managed Migration, if you are worse off on Universal Credit, you will receive Transitional Protection.

It is important you do not apply until you have received the Managed Migration Notice. If in any doubt, please contact us and we can signpost you for advice. Check out our Guide here [www.cornerstonehousing.net/move-to-universal-credit/](http://www.cornerstonehousing.net/move-to-universal-credit/)

## GRITTING

The recent cold spell really highlighted the dangers of ice and snow. Cornerstone, as much as we would like to, are not able to grit all our neighbourhoods. However, we have instructed a company called Ground Control to grit the following sites when there is a high risk of ice.

- Mount Dinham
- The Courts
- Cordery Road (including Cherry Barton)
- Norwood house

These sites are being gritted as they have been assessed as high risk for accidents in slippery conditions. There will also be grit bins provided at these sites. If you are concerned about the conditions in your neighbourhood, please contact us to discuss how we can help.