

hello

SUMMER

2023



We are 20!!

Its 20 years since we set up Empower and started letting houses to adults with disabilities enabling them to live within their community independently.

Help us celebrate our birthday – read more on page 9

Regulator Update

Empower Housing Association is pleased to report that following a period of detailed working with the Regulator of Social Housing, it has now been confirmed as compliant with the Regulatory Standards.

Sara Sharrock CEO said *“It is a great achievement for Empower to be classed as compliant with the Regulatory Standards. Our colleagues and Board are skilled and passionate and have been totally dedicated to implementing the agreed action plan to ensure we meet the Regulatory Standards whilst continuing to provide safe & suitable homes for our tenants. As a team we are fully committed to the continued compliance and future growth of Empower.”*

Please see our website for more information:

www.empowerhousing.org.uk



CBS Conversion

On 1st July 2023 EHA converted from a limited company to a Charitable Community Benefit Society (CBS).

The conversion will not affect our tenants, tenancy agreements, rents or charges, contracts or the services that we provide. Please see our website for more information

If you have any comments, questions or concerns then please do get in touch by emailing:

admin@empowerhousing.org.uk or by writing to us.

New Members to the Empower Team!

We would like to introduce and welcome two new members to the team:



Sianna Perry
Finance Manager



Janette Calvert
Executive Assistant

TENANT INVOLVEMENT

Tenant Involvement

As part of our plans to improve Tenant Involvement, the Housing Management Team will be looking to extend our Performance Review Checks (PRCs) visits to include **Your Voice, Your Choice** discussions to hear your views about our services and how you can be involved and influence the decisions we make.

We will be looking to commence these discussions from October 2023, with more information to follow in our Winter 2023 Newsletter.



Performance Review Checks

Our Housing Management Team love coming to visit you to see how you are and provide housing related support. We are able to explain and advise on utilities, health and safety, provide guidance with household budgeting and housing benefit concerns along with ensuring your home remains suitable for your needs.

In addition to visiting you in your home, we are also available as and when you need us. This extends to working with parents, care providers and other agencies who support our tenants. All the work our Housing Management Team do is to ensure that our tenants are able to maintain their tenancies by understanding their requirements.

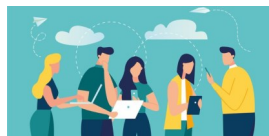


Tenant Satisfaction Surveys

From April 2023 we have been issuing Tenant Satisfaction Surveys to all our tenants. It is really important that you tell us what you think about the services we provide, how we can improve and compare our performance to our peers.

Our survey includes the 12 tenant satisfaction measures that are included on the Regulatory standards covering the areas below—we will publish the results in our annual report.

- Repairs
- Listening to tenants & keeping them informed
- Treatment of tenants
- Complaint handling
- Communal areas
- Your local area
- Anti-social behaviour



If we haven't contacted you already we will be in touch in the coming months to obtain your feedback.

Tell us your Good News stories

We are always on the lookout for contributions to our Newsletters.

Perhaps you have lived in the same EHA property for many years or you may have just recently moved into your new home. We want to hear from **YOU** to tell us your stories!

If you have any interesting articles, good news stories or achievements, please let us know and we will include it in our future news letters.



Get in touch with our Housing Management Team on 01257 260712 option 3 or email HM@empowerhousing.org.uk

HOW DID WE DO?

We are working hard to improve our services to you and provide value for money. We thought you would like to have a look at how we performed over the last 3 months.

Operation Performance	Target	April to June 23	Performance to Target
% of emergency repairs completed on time	100%	100%	👍😊
% of non responsive repairs (7 & 28 days) completed within timescale	95%	95%	👍😊
Number of properties with ongoing damp, mould and condensation works (5 require a 1st inspection and 34 are booked in for a 3 month inspection)	0	39	👎😞
Income collected as a % of total income due for year	100%	96.45%	👍😊
Current tenant arrears % of rent due for year	7%	5.41%	👍😊
Complaints/Anti-social Behaviour Cases			
Number of complaints received—Stage 1 (per 1000 homes)	0	20	👎😞
% of complaints responded to in the allocated timeframe—Stage 1	100%	100%	👍😊
Anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases (per 1000 homes)	0	7	👎😞
Compliments			
Number of compliments received	1 per month	12	👍😊
Property Compliance			
% of properties with a valid annual Gas Safety Test Certificate	100%	100%	👍😊
% of properties with a valid Fire Risk Assessment	100%	100%	👍😊
% of properties with a valid Asbestos Survey	100%	100%	👍😊
% of properties with a valid Electrical Certificate (5 years)	100%	100%	👍😊
% of properties with a valid Legionella Risk Assessment	100%	100%	👍😊
% of properties with a valid Lift Safety Check—including lifting equipment	100%	100%	👍😊
% of homes NOT meeting Decent Home Standards	0%	0%	👍😊

Where our performance is below target we are:

- DMC—monitoring all cases & liaising with tenants. We have reviewed policies & procedures and trained all our colleagues.
- Income collection—we are working with housing benefit, Local Authorities and Care Providers to improve income collection rates.
- Complaints & ASB cases—our complaints are mainly from neighbours/families or tenant reported maintenance concerns with external contractors. All cases are being investigated. by our Housing Management Team.

CONSUMER STANDARDS CONSULTATION

On 25th July 2023 the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) launched a consultation on a new set of standards for all social landlords, designed to protect tenants and improve the service they receive.



As a social landlord, we are required to comply with standards set by the RSH, who will take action if we fail to do so. The new requirements will be even stronger and give tenants greater power to hold their landlord to account.

The proposed standards will:

- Protect tenants by strengthening the safety requirements that all social landlords need to meet
- Require landlords to know more about the condition of their tenants' homes and the individual needs of the people living in them (this will help landlords provide safe and decent homes with good quality services)
- Make sure landlords listen to tenants' complaints and respond quickly when they need to put things right
- Require landlords to be open and accountable to their tenants, and treat them with fairness and respect

The consultation is part of a major, positive change for social housing regulation, with the government giving the RSH stronger powers to scrutinise landlords' performance from April 2024.

The consultation is running for 12 weeks, finishing on Tuesday 17th October 2023, and you are invited to **have your say** the RSH's website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-consumer-standards>

Or email to:

consultation@rsh.gov.uk

Or write to:

Consultation on the
consumer standards
Regulator of Social Housing
Referrals and Regulatory
Enquiries Team
Level 2
7-8 Wellington Place
Leeds
LS1 4AP



An easy read copy of the Standards for Social Housing can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1173413/ERUK_Final_screen_Accessible_Standards_combined



Alternatively you can request a copy from our Housing Management Team by emailing:

HM@empowerhousing.org.uk



NEW SCHEMES & DEVELOPMENT

Fylde Scheme –4 person

We recently handed over the keys to our latest new eco friendly home. Our tenants and their families are delighted with their new place,. This scheme was built by the parent of one of the tenants to provide a “home for life” for his son and his friends, who are all tenants of the property.

The location of the property was imperative in order for the tenants to become part of the community along with accessibility to public transport. All four tenants and their families were involved throughout the build process with the property designed and adapted to meet the current and future needs of each tenant including wheelchair accessibility and adapted kitchen and bathrooms.



The tenants have also designed a bar in the garden which looks great .

Haslingden Scheme

As part of our planned maintenance programme we installed a new kitchen, heating system and bathrooms to one of our properties. We worked with the Care Provider and the property owner to review the layout of the property and make better use of the space incorporating an additional bathroom. As you can see our tenants were delighted with the improvements and said it felt like they had a “new home” .

Our Development Manager John Plowman said *“the works undertaken provided the property with a more user friendly layout, enhancing our tenants enjoyment of their home and future proofing the property”*



John Plowman
Development Manager



ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We want you feel safe and secure in your home. We understand that anti-social behaviour can have a negative impact on you as our tenants and your neighbourhood.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) can cover a range of issues from inconsiderate behaviour to criminal behaviour. Within our ASB policy ([available on our website](#)) we have adopted the following definitions of ASB, being conduct that:

- is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person which directly or indirectly relates to or affects our housing management functions, or
- consists of or involves using or threatening to use their home for an unlawful purpose.



What is Hate Crime?

ASB will be considered as hate crime if the offender has either:

- Demonstrated hostility based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity; or
- Been motivated by hostility based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity

Complaints

EHA's Complaints Policy & Procedure is available on our website,

www.empowerhousing.org.uk. Complaints will be logged by our Housing Management team.

Should you wish to make a complaint or would like to discuss an issue please contact our Housing Management Team:

Team: Tel: 01257 260712 option 3 or

Email: HM@empowerhousing.org.uk



Your responsibility as a Tenant

As a tenant, it is your responsibility to be a good neighbour and to respect the rights of others. Here are some tips on being a good neighbour:

- Be considerate of noise levels, especially at night.
- Keep your property and garden clean and tidy.
- Be respectful of your neighbour's property.
- Speak to your neighbour
- Report any anti-social behaviour to our Housing Management Team, the Police on 101 or Environmental Health at your local council.

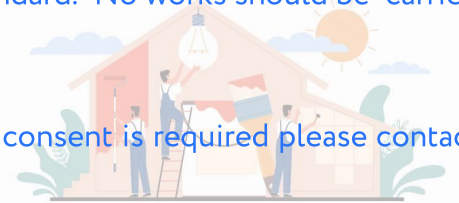
Our Housing Management Team are also available to your neighbours should they feel the need to report any ASB concerns against you or your household.

If you are experiencing ASB our Housing Management Team will investigate the matter and take appropriate action. This may include speaking to the complainant, issuing a warning or taking legal action. ASB cases can often take a lengthy time to resolve depending on the case.

LOOK AFTER YOUR HOME

Alterations to your Property

If you are thinking of making any home improvements to your property you must first obtain our written approval before you start work. If you are considering any works please get in touch with our [Building Quality Manager](#) on [01257 260712 \(option 1\)](#). If we give permission to carry out works we will inspect the works once completed to ensure they are as agreed and of a good safe standard. No works should be carried out without prior permission.



If you have already carried out any alterations and were unaware that our consent is required please contact us so that we can carry out an assessment of the works.

Tenants Guide to dealing with insects, pests & vermin

We are responsible for ensuring our properties are fit for human habitation at the start and throughout your tenancy, however, some responsibility lies with you to ensure you are doing everything you can to prevent infestations.

You are responsible for:

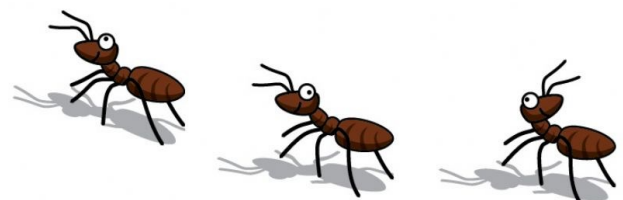
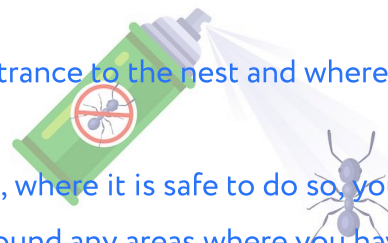
- The removal of wasp/bee hives etc once the property is occupied.
- Any infestation caused by a tenants own negligence (i.e. if food has been left out or rubbish has not been disposed of correctly).
- Any damage caused by pests to your belongings.

We will make you aware of your responsibilities at the start of your tenancy through the Tenancy Agreement and during PRC visits.

Treatment for Ants

You should carry out treatment against ants yourself, and need to be thorough.

- Apply a residual insecticide for crawling insects. You will be able to buy these at many DIY shops and garden centres. Please read the label carefully and follow the instructions on the pesticide you chose, in particular the health and safety advice
- Apply it to the entrance to the nest and wherever ants can enter your home.
- Inside your house, where it is safe to do so, you should apply the insecticide around any areas where you have spotted ants
- Try to create a band of insecticide which ants must cross to get into your home.
- To ensure you get rid of the problem you will need to find their nest. Follow any trails and look around for small entrance holes in the ground surrounded by small piles of fine earth. Once you have found the nest follow the instructions that come with the pesticide about dealing with ants' nests.



DAMP OR MOULD IN YOUR HOME

If you spot damp or mould in your home it is important to act fast. Mould is a health hazard and needs to be treated before it causes harm to you or others in your home. If you have mould or you have any signs of dampness, you must report it to our Maintenance Team immediately on:

01257 260712 option 1.

Damp & Mould

Condensation is the most common form of damp in homes. It appears when excess moisture in the air comes into contact with a cold surface such as a window or a cold wall. It can lead to mould growth and tends to be worse in winter.



It can help if you:

- Cover pans when cooking
- Use extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms. If there is no fan installed or it is not working, you must contact our Maintenance Team as soon as possible.
- Close internal doors when you cook or bathe
- Leave a gap between furniture and external walls



Your responsibilities

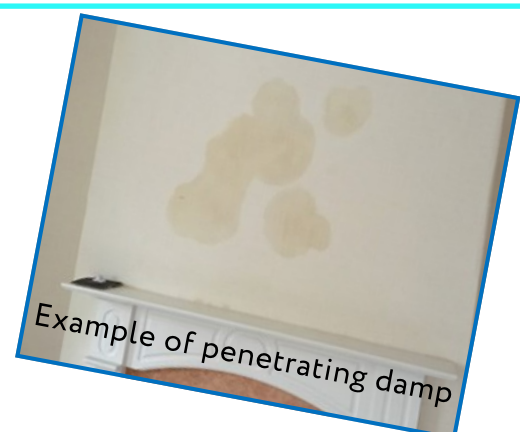
There are lots of things you can do to minimise dampness & condensation in your home. In particular reducing the amount of moisture produced in your home. Everyday activities like cooking, bathing and drying clothes create moisture in your home, which can lead to condensation.

It is therefore important for you to ensure your home is ventilated and heated properly so that damp does not build up.

Adequate ventilation & heating

Ensure all that all rooms are ventilated. Rooms like bedrooms and living rooms usually have airbricks or air grates installed and uPVC windows sometimes have trickle vents installed. These should not be blocked or covered, as they help prevent the buildup of condensation and mould.

Try to keep your home properly heated. It usually helps to have a low background temperature of at least 15 degrees in all rooms.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Empower is turning 20!

This summer EHA is celebrating its 20th Anniversary. Since becoming established in the summer of 2003, almost 632 vulnerable tenants from Scotland to Devon have been provided with specialised supported accommodation and assistance with managing their own tenancies in order to live within their community independently.

To celebrate EHA are holding a series of events during the year starting with a competition for our tenants to design a birthday cake of their dreams. The competition opens for entries on **21st August 2023** with a closing date of **21st October 2023** when all entries will be judged .

The winner of the competition will have their design created into their very own birthday cake and delivered to their door in time for their birthday celebrations!

Entry forms are on the back of this newsletter and must be returned to: **Empower Housing Association, 33-35 Hollinshead Street, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 1EP** or email to HM@empowerhousing.org.uk

Please ensure you provide your name, address, your birthday (date and month) along with details of your cake before returning your design to EHA.

TENANT CELEBRATIONS

We would like to also like to invite you to share your own celebration milestones. If this is something you would like to be a part of please contact our Housing Management Team:

HM@empowerhousing.org.uk
with your Celebration Story and photographs.

From all at EHA we would like to thank each and everyone of our tenants for choosing an Empower home!!

