

# Empower's Tenant Newsletter

WINTER EDITION | DECEMBER 2024

## empowering you

Richard, our Housing and Tenant Support Officer, met with three of our wonderful tenants from East Lancashire. Together, they co-produced our new Empower Service Standards.

The feedback from these sessions was excellent. All three tenants emphasised that being involved in decisions affecting their homes and tenancies was just as important to them as being involved in their care plans.

We want to extend a huge thank you to Richard, the tenants, and the Lifeways Paragon team who provide support to our tenants for their hard work.



[Full Version of our NEW Empower Service Standards are available on our website](#)

## empowering partnerships



## Fylde Coast Pan Disability Games

On Thursday, September 12th, Together We Can Do hosted the first Fylde Coast Pan Disability Games.

The event aimed to highlight the efforts of various clubs and organisations in the area that encourage disabled individuals, including some of our tenants to participate in sports regularly. Empower was proud to sponsor this event.

Held at Blackpool Sports Centre, the games saw over 120 disabled adults from 6 local organisations compete in Boccia, Football, and Netball.

The event was well received, with positive feedback from participants and spectators alike, making it an enjoyable day for everyone involved.

# Welcome to your Winter edition of our Newsletter from Empower

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print and may be available in alternative languages upon request. Please contact 01257 260712 or email [HM@empowerhousing.org.uk](mailto:HM@empowerhousing.org.uk)

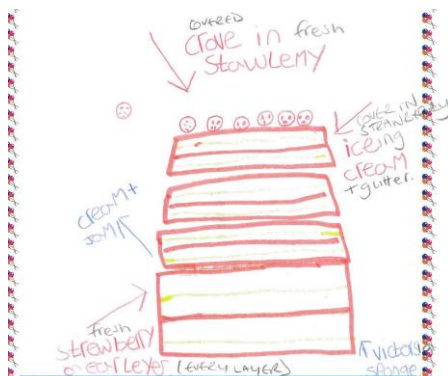
## empowering you

### Birthday Cake Competition

Remember our Design the Birthday Cake of Your Dreams competition from Summer 2023?

**Laura was our winner!**

Here's a reminder of her winning cake design, and a picture of Laura with her birthday cake.



Laura

## Empower in Bloom Winners Announced!

Earlier this year, we kicked off our Empower in Bloom Sunflower engagement session with a competition to celebrate the start of Spring.

We received feedback on what Empower services are most important to you - these include having friendly staff and excellent repairs and maintenance services including keeping your gardens nice.

**We have the results, and we're excited to announce the winners.**

**1st Anthony, Claire and Martin**

**2nd April and Julie**

**3rd Doreen and Rossana**



Anthony



Claire

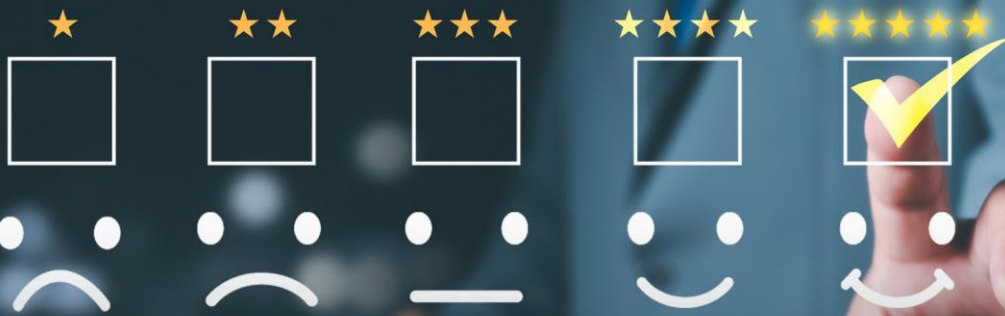


Martin

## And the winner for the best picture is Peter

A big congratulations to everyone who took part in Empower in Bloom!

All prize winners will be featured on the Empower website



## What you said about us - Compliments

“

Carl the gardener is an absolute star, the lads love him to bits. He really makes their day when he calls, and nothing is too much trouble. He always leaves everyone feeling happy.

“

We are really happy with our new shower tray it like Buckingham Palace!

“

The Maintenance Officer handling the call was very quick to respond to our request to install thumb turn locks following a change in a tenant needs.

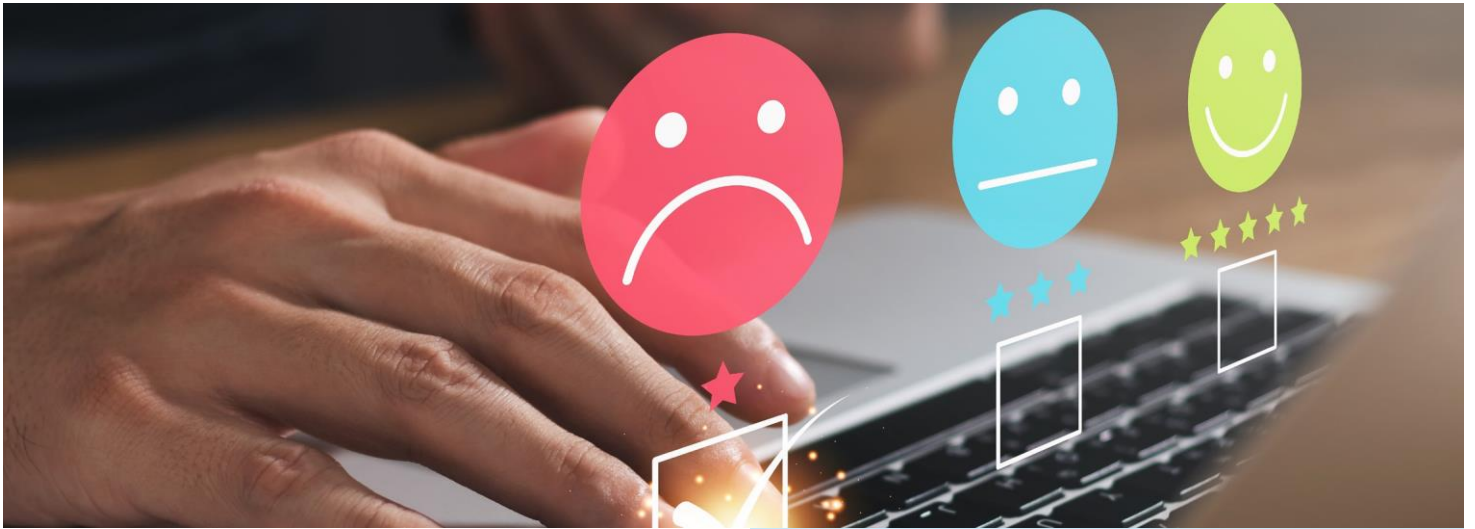
”

I have settled in wonderfully in my new home and am enjoying living independently with the support of my care provider.

”

The contractor who attended our home to install a new kitchen was a pleasure to have around and interacted with those we support brilliantly.

The contractor spoke to the tenants about what was going on and went above and beyond by supporting a tenant to get involved.



## We value your complaints

We aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and as a result make sure we learn and improve our services.

Since April this year, we've received:

**5 complaints**

We were handled within the required timescales, and none were escalated to Stage 2 –

### What have we learnt from these complaints?

- we need to improve communication with our tenants and their support providers so we will ring ahead of any appointments to ensure that everyone is clear when the work will be done and what work is to be completed;
- to ensure the quality of any work we complete is good - we will do a post inspection visit or a telephone satisfaction survey;
- we need to ensure that our contractors have the right information about our tenants' needs and any special requirements they may have around access – so we will create a tenant profile that is provided on all works orders that we create



## How to make a complaint

Sometimes we may get it wrong. If something does go wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. You can make a complaint by;

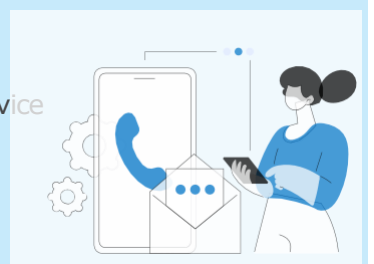
- contacting the Housing Management Team on 01257 260712, option 3.
- Reporting online via the Empower website
- Reporting to a colleague when they visit you
- In person at the Empower office
- Email to [admin@empowerhousing.org.uk](mailto:admin@empowerhousing.org.uk)
- Writing to us at: Empower Housing Association, 33-35 Hollinshead Street, Chorley, PR7 1EP

Our complaint handling procedure can be found on our website [www.empowerhousing.org.uk](http://www.empowerhousing.org.uk) which explains and provides further detail on how you can make a complaint.

Empower is a member of the Housing Ombudsman Service. If you are not happy with how we have responded to your complaint you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service online at <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>, or

By phone: 0300 111 3000

In writing to:  
Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 1484  
Unit D, Preston PR2 0ET





## Top tips for your home now winter is upon us.....

### Information for Support Providers - Smoke, Heat & Carbon Monoxide Detector - how to change the battery.

If your detector beeps every 45-60 seconds, it means the battery backup needs to be replaced, which is the tenant's responsibility. EHA is responsible for the electrical wiring and replacing faulty detectors.

#### To replace the battery:

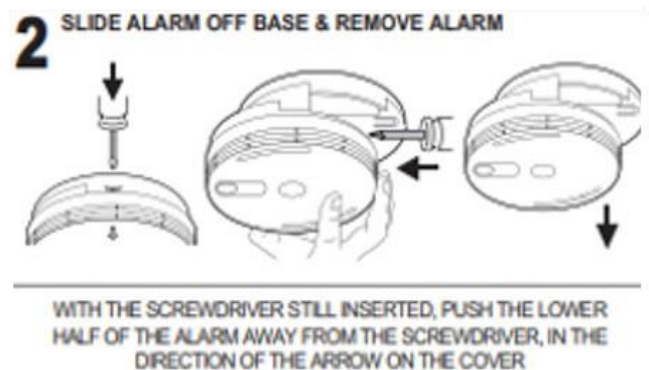
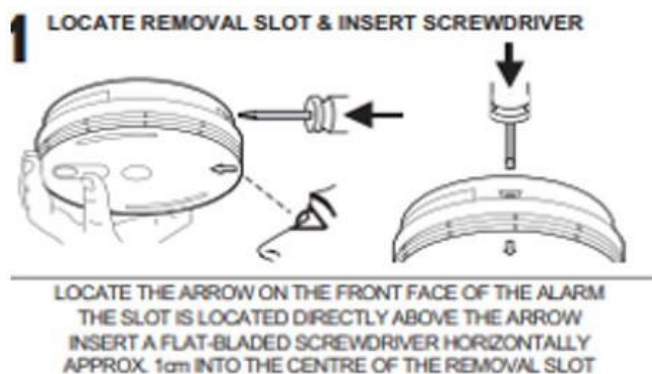
1. Locate the beeping detector: A red light will flash on the unit that's beeping. If you have an alarm control panel, press the locate switch to find the beeping detector. Press the test/silence button on the control panel to silence the alarm for 10 seconds

2. Turn off the power to the detectors at your fuse box/consumer unit.

3. Disconnect the alarm from its base or plug and remove the battery. Some models can be twisted off their base (follow the arrows), while others require a screwdriver to release a tamper-resistant locking tab.

4. Drain **residual** power: Hold the test button for 10 seconds to drain any remaining power before inserting a new battery. Make sure you have new replacement batteries ready to install immediately.

5. Reconnect the alarm: Place the unit back on its base and test it to ensure it's working properly.








## Damp, Mould & Condensation

Damp, Mould and Condensation increase during the winter months due to temperature differences, increased indoor humidity, poor ventilation and cold surfaces.

If you have any issues with damp and mould, then please report these to us.

The table below shows how much moisture we can create each day within our homes and what steps we can take to help reduce this:

| Moisture comes from:         | Amount of moisture added into the air:  | Things you can do to help reduce moisture:  |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Two people at home breathing |  3 pints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't forget to let moisture out - open windows</li> <li>• Keep trickle vents open</li> <li>• Keep extractor fans switched on when bathing and when cooking, washing, or drying clothes.</li> <li>• Put lids on pans when cooking.</li> <li>• Do not put clothes on radiators</li> <li>• Wipe condensation from windows and sills as soon as possible after it forms</li> <li>• Keep furniture away from walls</li> <li>• Heat your home - a balance of heat and air will keep you and your home healthy.</li> </ul> |
| A bath or shower             |  2 pints |   |
| Drying clothes indoors       |  9 pints |   |
| Cooking and use of a kettle  |  6 pints |   |
| Washing dishes               |  2 pints |   |

## How decluttering can make your home safer

National charity Mind defines hoarding as “having so many things that you cannot manage the clutter where you live and find it difficult or impossible to throw things away.”

We know that some tenants like to keep items that are important to them. However, having too many things can make it hard to clean your home properly. This can increase the risk of rodent infestations, dust, and mould, which can cause health problems. Hoarding can also make it difficult to move around your home, increasing the risk of trips and falls and can be a fire risk.

Please make sure that objects are not blocking internal and external doors, as this can make it harder to leave your home quickly in case of a fire. It can also make it difficult for emergency services to enter your home.

As your landlord, we need to access your property for repairs, maintenance, and safety checks. Too much clutter can make it hard for our contractors to do their work, which could prevent them from completing their safety checks.

If you feel like you need support in managing your hoarding, please talk to your care provider or our Housing Management Team on 01257 260712, option 3. You can also get information and help from:

- [www.hoardinguk.org](http://www.hoardinguk.org)
- [www.hoardingdisordersuk.org](http://www.hoardingdisordersuk.org)
- [www.hoarding.support](http://www.hoarding.support)
- [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

## White Goods - Important Information

Please note that a faulty appliance is not considered a 24-hour emergency. EHA will work to fix the issue as soon as possible. However, if a part is needed or the appliance needs to be replaced; this may take time. You should have a plan in place to manage until the issue is resolved. Remember to regularly clean the filters on your washing machine and tumble dryer. If you're unsure how to do this, you can find the instruction manual online or contact EHA for help.



## All About You - Data Collection Form

It's important for us to have the latest information about our tenants so we can provide services that meet your needs. Please fill out the All About You form and return it to us so we can update our records. We've sent a copy of this form to each tenant. Thank you!



## Join Our Festive Christmas Card Competition

We're feeling the holiday spirit here at EHA and would love for you to join in the fun by participating in our Christmas Card Competition - the winning card will be sent out to all our Tenants and Stakeholders in 2025. We will ask our Board to choose the winning design. Please send in your entry by the end of February 2025.

Do you think you could help us plan our newsletter and other tenant publications - including the tenant page on the website, then why not join our **NEW Empower Reading Group** please drop us an email if this is something you would like to get involved in [hm@empower.org.uk](mailto:hm@empower.org.uk)



# Introducing Dawn Astin to the Empower Team as the new Director of Housing and Operations

I started working at Empower in September 2024, bringing 25 years of experience in housing with care and support. My background includes managing specialist supported housing, which involves housing services, property maintenance, tenancy support, anti-social behaviour (ASB) services, and tenant engagement.

I have worked with individuals who have learning or physical disabilities, as well as those with autism. Recently, I was employed by a large Local Authority, where I assisted in developing new homes for people with care and support needs - a field I am deeply passionate about.

Currently, I am focused on two key areas: - creating a strong tenant engagement strategy, this strategy aims to build a positive, collaborative relationship with our tenants and meet regulatory requirements.

I am also focusing on ensuring we provide a high-quality maintenance service, working and planning on improving communication with tenants.

This newsletter is one of my first projects at Empower, and I am thrilled to showcase the fantastic work of my colleagues and our tenants. I look forward to what we can accomplish together in 2025!



**Dawn Astin**  
Director of Housing and Operations

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## A day in the life of Dominic...



**Dominic**  
Maintenance Technician

We had a chat with Dominic, one of our Maintenance Technicians, to learn more about his role at Empower.

### How did you come to work in social housing?

With a background in maintenance and construction, I wanted to use my skills in the housing sector. I found the role at Empower and was drawn to the focus on supporting people with vulnerabilities and disabilities. It made the job feel more meaningful, like I was making a real difference in people's lives.

### What does your role at Empower entail?

I handle the day-to-day maintenance of our supported living properties, ensuring they are compliant, and that tenant safety is always a priority.

### What is the most meaningful part of your job?

The most rewarding part is engaging with the tenants and seeing how the work we do positively impacts on their lives.

### What are your biggest challenges?

The biggest challenge is finding the best solutions that meet tenants' needs and comply with housing safety regulations in a timely manner.



# Empower over Christmas

## Holiday Closure Notice - Our office will be closed for Christmas and New Year.

The telephone lines will close at 2pm and the office will close at 3pm on Tuesday the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, reopening on Thursday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2025 at 8.45am

Outside of these hours we will be providing an emergency only repair service.

You can contact us on 01257 260712 or 07791 763 570 with an emergency repair.

In case of an emergency, we aim to have a contractor at your home the same day or within 24 hours of your call. The contractor will inform us if more work is needed.



## What is an Emergency?

An emergency is a fault that carries the risk of immediate injury to people or major damage to the property, such as:

- Electrical fittings in contact with water
- Live or bare electric wiring
- Sewage overflowing into the home
- Outside doors that need securing
- Burst storage tanks, cylinders, or pipes
- Failure of heating / hot water systems
- Broken windows
- Gas Leaks

If you smell gas or your CO2 detector sounds, call the 24-hour Gas Emergency Hotline immediately at 0800 111 999 or via textphone (minicom) at 0800 371 787. If you use British Sign Language (BSL), you can use Sign Live to contact the National Gas Emergency Service for free.

**Remember:** You must also contact us on 01257 260712 or 07791 763 570 to report a suspected gas leak.

