

# InTouch

Issue 60 Winter 2024



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# Welcome to the winter edition of InTouch

As the year comes to a close, I hope you all have a very happy and healthy winter and enjoy the festivities.

In this brand-new December edition of InTouch, we focus on staying well this winter and share financial help and advice which includes information about the Winter Fuel Payments, Pension Credit and our ReConnect Project in partnership with Plymouth Energy Community (PEC).

During the winter it's especially important to stay connected with your friends and family, or members of the local community, which can boost your wellbeing and mental health. If you'd like support with your wellbeing this winter or to find out more information about Wellbeing Hubs, please reach out to our PCH and Livewell Southwest Partnership team who are there to support you.

In our Plymspirational feature, we share the amazing work of an uncle and nephew duo who have been described as 'local heroes' by their community for their tireless volunteering to keep their neighbourhood tidy. Keep up the good work Marti & Alfie!

Over the last few months, PCH has secured its first affordable homes in Lifton and completed a refurbishment of a block of flats in Stoke. We spoke to resident Kim who is delighted with the refurbishment, which has reduced her energy bills and improved the overall comfort, health and wellbeing of our residents living there.

In September, PCH celebrated the completion of the North Prospect Regeneration, and we held a special celebration event for staff past and present and North Prospect residents, as well as key partners. As part of the celebration, attendees had the chance to tour the area on a PCH-customised Land Train, which was later made available to pupils from a nearby school to enjoy.

We share the steps we are taking to make our tall buildings safer and our response to the Building Safety Act to ensure that our six tall buildings are compliant with the Act's requirements so we can ensure residents are living in a safe environment. We also highlight what we've been doing to include residents in the conversation of building safety.

Winter is a time to take extra steps to ensure you stay safe in your home, and in this edition, we share top five fire safety tips and festive fire safety information as it's important to make sure your festive decorations are safe to avoid the risk of fire.

If you have any stories about your achievements, or the good work of your neighbours, we want to hear from you. Contact us on [news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk](mailto:news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk) or message us on Facebook, X or Instagram.



*Valerie*

**Valerie Lee,  
Chair of the Board**







# Looking After Your Wellbeing This Winter

## Would you like support with your wellbeing this winter?

Please contact our PCH and Livewell Southwest Partnerships Team via [healthandhousing@pch.co.uk](mailto:healthandhousing@pch.co.uk) or give us a call on **0808 230 6500** to access support from our Wellbeing Officer.

### Staying connected with people around you

As the nights draw in, it can be easy to shut the curtains in a warm home and stay indoors. However, it is important to stay connected with other people as this can boost your wellbeing and mental health.

Good social relationships with those around you are an essential component to mental wellbeing, so try to stay in regular contact with family, friends or neighbours over the winter months.

There are also number of volunteering opportunities across the South West to help you to stay connected this winter and beyond. Search for volunteering opportunities on the 'Go Volunteering' website.

### Wellbeing Hubs

Wellbeing Hubs offer friendly and welcoming spaces for socialising or obtaining advice on mental health, household finances or general information.

Contact our Wellbeing Officer at [healthandhousing@pch.co.uk](mailto:healthandhousing@pch.co.uk) for more information about Wellbeing Hubs near you or search 'Wellbeing Hubs' online.

### NHS Health Check

If you're between 40 and 74 and don't have pre-existing health conditions you should be invited to an NHS Health Check every five years. The health checks can also be carried out at local pharmacies.

If you think you are eligible but have not been invited, please contact your local GP.

### Alcohol

It's a good idea to be conscious of how much you are drinking as alcohol consumption can have a negative impact on your physical and mental health. It's also important to be vigilant to issues surrounding addiction.

If you have concerns around alcohol consumption, visit the NHS website.

### Flu vaccine

Vaccinating against the impact of flu can be an effective way to prevent severe illness and as the months become colder, cases of flu can become more prevalent. Vaccination can be an effective way to prevent severe illness and even hospitalisation.

You can find out more about the flu jab on the NHS website.

### Learn new skills

Learning a new skill can be a great way to deter winter blues by keeping you focused on something that might interest you.

There are lots of craft groups open to the public throughout Plymouth, even some organised by PCH. Getting stuck-in to a new hobby can give a sense of purpose and entertainment.

Contact your local housing team for more information.

# Financial Help and Advice this Winter

If you're struggling to find the money to cover your rent, the most important thing is to let us know.

We have dedicated staff who are waiting to help you and can assist with information and support about claiming benefits, recommend local charities and offer helpful advice on financial matters.

There are also many companies providing hardship grants to support with utilities during the cost-of-living crisis.

Get in touch by calling us on **0800 028 0350** or email us on **[Rent.enquiries@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk](mailto:Rent.enquiries@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk)**

## Pension Credit

If you've reached State Pension age, you might be able to apply for Pension Credit. Pension Credit is a weekly benefit to boost your income. It's based on how much money you have coming in.

Check if you can get Pension Credit on Citizens Advice Plymouth website.

Citizens Advice Plymouth is hosting outreach sessions across Plymouth.

Find out more about the drop-in sessions within the Financial Help and Advice webpage on the Plymouth City Council website.

## Winter Fuel Payments

The Winter Fuel Payment is a payment you can get once a year to help you pay for heating during the winter.

The rules for Winter Fuel Payments have recently changed. From winter 2024 you'll now only get the payment if you or your partner get certain benefits, like Pension Credit.

It's worth applying for Pension Credit even if you don't think you'll get much. If you get Pension Credit

you'll be able to get other money and help like the Winter Fuel Payment.

You'll receive a Winter Fuel Payment if you successfully apply for Pension Credit by 21 December - as long as your Pension Credit is backdated to any date between 16 and 22 September.

You won't get the Winter Fuel Payment until your Pension Credit claim is successful.

## ReConnect Project

Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) is working with PEC to offer advice and practical support to residents who may be worried about energy bills or heating their home.

As part of the project, Energy Advisors are available to help our residents:

- **Remain on supply or get reconnected**
- **Address energy debt and negotiate repayment plans with suppliers**
- **Access any financial support you may be eligible for**

The project was launched on Thursday 17 October 2024 and we were joined by PCH and Livewest staff available to advise on support available, Citizen's Advice Plymouth offering information and advice, One You Plymouth offering information on health and wellbeing services and Food is Fun providing a slow cooker demo, tasty recipes and delicious free samples.

To find out more or to be referred to the project, please contact the Project Team:

**Email: [healthandhousing@pch.co.uk](mailto:healthandhousing@pch.co.uk)**

**Call: 01752 237 990 / 0808 230 6500**



# Foodbank Support across the South West

If you need help to get food to feed yourself or your family, there are a number of organisations locally which could offer support.

## Plymouth

The Plymouth Food Aid Network has usefully created a Community Food Access Map with all the different charities, community groups and organisations who are able to provide food support to people in Plymouth. This includes food banks, food larders and community fridges where food is either free or low cost. Their map also details the locations which also provides a warm space.

**Visit the Plymouth Food Aid Network website:**  
[www.pfan.org.uk](http://www.pfan.org.uk)

Plymouth Foodbank is part of a nationwide network of foodbanks supported by the Trussell Trust and can provide three days of nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to local people who are referred to them.

**Visit the Plymouth Foodbank website:**  
[plymouth.foodbank.org.uk](http://plymouth.foodbank.org.uk)



## Cornwall

Cornwall Council has created a Community Food Support Map to illustrate the community food support across Cornwall.

**Visit the Cornwall Council website:**  
[www.cornwall.gov.uk/people-and-communities/support-for-residents-struggling-with-the-cost-of-living/find-out-where-to-get-help-with-food/](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/people-and-communities/support-for-residents-struggling-with-the-cost-of-living/find-out-where-to-get-help-with-food/)

## South Hams

South Hams District Council has created a directory of foodbanks operating in the South Hams.

**Visit the South Hams District Council website:**  
[www.southhams.gov.uk/foodbanks](http://www.southhams.gov.uk/foodbanks)

Read more on InTouch online  
[bit.ly/SWFoodbankSupport](http://bit.ly/SWFoodbankSupport)



## Wild visitors in your garden...



Following on from our PCH in Bloom' feature in the Spring edition of InTouch, one of our residents got in touch with us to let us know about the wild visitors in their garden.

They said: "I'm a regular reader of InTouch and wanted to contribute as I've been noticing some really cool visitors to my garden over the past few weeks from squirrels, bees and various different types of insects.

"Here are the various visitors I've noted so far: Red Tailed Bumble Bee, Cabbage White Butterfly, Speckled Wood Butterfly, Eastern Grey Squirrel and White Tailed Bumble Bee."

Send us photos of your wild visitors to [news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk](mailto:news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk) for us to share in our next edition of InTouch early next year.





## What's on this Christmas: National Trust

A number of the National Trust's houses and gardens across Devon and Cornwall are being transformed for Christmas. They can be accessed car-free by using public transport.



### Christmas at Cotehele

Every year Cotehele's gardeners build a 60-foot garland from thousands of flowers grown on the estate. You do not need to book to visit Cotehele, which can be accessed car-free by using public transport.



### Christmas at Saltram

Experience the magic of Christmas at Saltram 2024 and explore festive trails, grand interiors, and a captivating portrayal of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas.

Festivities begin on Friday, 22nd November and run through to Wednesday, 1st January. House entry must be booked in advance to guarantee your visit. Saltram can be accessed car-free by using public transport.



### Christmas at Killerton

Killerton will be immersed in festive cheer, with fairy lights and garlands filling the house and stable block. Festive family fun will be on offer in the outdoor trail, taking you through the gardens and Chapel grounds. Killerton can be accessed car-free by using public transport.

Visit the National Trust website for more information.



# Contact details over the festive period

If you need extra support this winter, there are a number of support services you can get in touch with.

## Mind

Their support line is a safe space for you to talk about your mental health. Their advisors are trained to listen to you and help you find specialist support if you need it.

Call free on **0300 102 1234** Monday to Friday between 9am to 6pm.

## Time to Talk

Aims to improve well-being for people with a disability or who are deaf, by reducing loneliness and isolation.

**0300 303 3691** (free phone) or text them on **0785 642 6940** during their opening hours or leave a message and they should get back to you.

## Age UK Advice Line

Open every day including Christmas, providing answers and reassurance to older people who have no one else to turn to.

Call free on **0800 678 1602** – 8am to 7pm.

## Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)

You can call the CALM on **0800 58 58 58** (5pm–midnight every day) if you are struggling and need to talk.

## The Silver Line

A free helpline for older people **0800 470 8090** every day 24/7.

## Combat Stress

Treatment and support for armed forces veterans who have mental health problems.

Combat Stress's helpline is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year - **0800 1381 619** / [combatstress.org.uk](http://combatstress.org.uk)

## The Samaritans 24/7

Call free on **116 123**



Read more on  
InTouch online



# Safety should not be a luxury

## The steps we're taking to make our tall buildings safer.

Seven years have passed since the tragedy at Grenfell when 72 people lost their lives, sparking a public inquiry into the fire and its circumstances.

Phase 1 of the inquiry led to the introduction of the Building Safety Act to help restore confidence in the safety and standards of all buildings. The Act is based on empowerment and regulation, with some key aims and principles:

- **Residents will have more of a say in how their building is kept safe and how they raise safety concerns.**
- **Landlords will need to demonstrate they have effective measures in place to manage safety risks in tall buildings.**
- **Leaseholders will not be the first port of call for historical safety problems.**
- **Construction products will be regulated with requirements to ensure products are safe for their intended use.**

The Building Safety Act has significant requirements in place to maintain the safety of residents in tall buildings, particularly those over 18 metres in height.

As part of our response to the Act at PCH, we have carried out extensive work to ensure that all six of our tall buildings over 18 metres - Morley Court, Woodlands Court, Marlborough House, Tavy House, Tamar House, and Lynher House - are compliant with the Act's requirements so we can ensure residents are living in a safe environment.

**Jonathan Cowie, CEO at Plymouth Community Homes, said:** "Resident safety is our top priority at Plymouth Community Homes, and we have a commitment to

ensure our buildings, especially those over 18 metres, are maintained and managed correctly to keep our residents safe and comfortable."

**"Resident safety is our top priority at Plymouth Community Homes"**

**Valerie Lee, Chair of the Board at Plymouth Community Homes, said:** "We have worked hard to achieve a level of safety for our residents living in our tall buildings that meet the requirements introduced by the Building Safety Act. Additionally, we have been engaging and working collaboratively with residents through our Tall Buildings Panel and Resident Engagement Strategy, ensuring the needs and levels of accessibility for residents are met, including individual evacuation plans for residents where this is a need."

Phase 2 of the inquiry was published in September, looking at the built environment, fire safety management and refurbishment of the Grenfell Tower.

We must remember those who tragically lost their lives in this preventable disaster, and we must learn from it and do what we can to keep people safe in their homes.

PCH fully supports the inquiry's findings and wants to work with residents in the community, our partners and the local Fire Service to ensure we leave no stone unturned in our aspirations to keep people safe in their homes.

Here we'd like to share with you some of the things we've been doing to improve the safety of our tall buildings - and to include residents in that conversation.





## Resident Engagement Strategy – Tall Buildings

We consulted with residents in each of our tall buildings and created an engagement plan for each building based on the feedback we received. The strategies tell us how residents would like safety information communicated, how they want to be involved and what matters most to them.

As part of our strategy, we keep updated information on residents with specific vulnerabilities who may need additional help in the event of a fire. This information is shared with the Fire Service with the resident's consent, and a copy is kept in a secure location for the Fire Service in the event of an emergency.

## Tall Buildings Panel

We've created a panel of residents from across our tall buildings to meet regularly. They discuss building safety, how we can improve communication with residents, and how to encourage reporting of any problems around the buildings.

## Tall Buildings Handbooks

A bespoke handbook for each tall building has been created which gives residents important information about their building's safety measures, communal areas and fire safety. It also contains useful information such as what local amenities are available.

## Building Safety Manager

We have appointed a Building Safety Manager who will become the accountable person for the safety of each of our tall buildings. This role will be responsible for managing the safety across the buildings and work with the Tall Buildings Panel to ensure residents have a voice in how their building is run.

## Fire Service familiarisation visits

We host Devon & Somerset Fire Service regularly for walkabouts of our tall buildings. This gives the Fire Service a chance to familiarise themselves with the buildings and plan for what would happen in the event of an emergency.

## Sprinkler installations

We carried out a retrofit installation of sprinklers to our buildings at the Mount Wise Towers in the immediate aftermath of the Grenfell tragedy. Since then, we have installed sprinklers in two more of our tall buildings, Morley Court and Woodlands Court, to maximise fire safety in these buildings.





# Celebrating the completion of the North Prospect regeneration

To mark the official completion of a 12-year long project to completely regenerate the North Prospect community in Plymouth, Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) hosted a special celebration event at both The Beacon Community Hub in the heart of North Prospect followed by a VIP reception at the Home Park Club Argyle Lounge.

PCH staff past and present and North Prospect residents attended along with all those involved with the regeneration including Plymouth City Council, Homes England, Barratt Homes, Countryside Partnerships, Mitchell Architects, Taylor Lewis and Kendall Kingscott to name a few.

We were also joined by Commodore Jake Moores OBE DL Royal Navy and Lord Mayor Cllr Tina Tuohy, as well as city-wide partners including Devon & Cornwall Police, Womble Bond Dickinson, City College Plymouth, Livewell and Princess Yachts.

Guests had the opportunity to reflect on the journey of transforming the community as they learned more about the history of North Prospect, and the impact of the regeneration through a specially designed history exhibition located at The Beacon, showcasing historical images, memorabilia and touching memories shared by local people.

Attendees also had the chance to tour the area during the event on a specially arranged, PCH-customised Land Train, viewing some of the redevelopment and hearing a potted commentary about the development on route.

After the morning celebration event finished, the Land Train was made available to pupils from nearby school, Mayflower Community Academy, with around 60 primary school children visiting the specially curated history display at The Beacon for part of their history studies before taking tours on the Land Train during the afternoon.



## When asked about the day, the Year Two children shared their thoughts in class:

"The train was so fun, and we saw lots of houses that were new and some that were older. The houses were very different."

"I saw my house in one of the pictures. I didn't know it was part of a project."

"I liked looking at the timeline of the when each thing was built because we've been learning about timelines in History."



Find out more on our website



# History of North Prospect

The transformational £130m project, the largest regeneration scheme of its kind in the South West, began in 2012 and saw the demolition of almost 800 homes in a poor condition over the following years.

The North Prospect community now includes more than 1,100 high quality, energy-efficient new homes, offering a better variety of house types, sizes and tenures. The building works were so substantial that the construction of new homes was divided into five phases, which are now complete.

The project delivered 491 new homes made available for affordable and social rent, and 195 for purchase as shared ownership, creating overall 686 affordable homes— more than the 605 socially rented homes previously in the area. PCH also refurbished a further 300 social rented homes.

The regeneration has led to a reduction in crime in the area of 59%, and improved employment outcomes for local people.

Over the years, the North Prospect regeneration scheme has been shortlisted for several industry awards, including Best Project at the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence, and scooped the Best Regeneration Project award from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

Before the regeneration, the area formerly known as Swilly had become synonymous with social deprivation, antisocial behaviour and crime. Initial considerations for a regeneration project began almost 30 years ago, and the work has succeeded in improving the wellbeing of residents through the strategic use of architectural features, such as open spaces to help deter antisocial behaviour.

Recently completed surveys and research have recorded that total crime in North Prospect has dropped by 59% since the regeneration, while public order offences have reduced by 76%.

From the beginning of the project, PCH sought to rehouse as many residents back into the local area as possible. Efforts were made to safeguard the rights of families with roots in the area. During the final three phases of works, more than 70% of residents were able to move back into new homes in the neighbourhood.

Read more on InTouch online  
[bit.ly/NPRegeneration](https://bit.ly/NPRegeneration)





# PCH Charity Football Match 2024

Staff from across Plymouth Community Homes turned out in force on a cloudy Saturday in September to host a football match to raise money for our Charity of the Year, Luna's Fund.

We are delighted to announce that the event raised a total of £2,504.54 for Luna's Fund, a charity offering practical and emotional support to bereaved parents in Devon and Cornwall. The Charity was founded in 2018 by Aimee and Ryan, Luna's parents, following the loss of their first-born daughter Luna in 2017.

PCH staff, members of the Luna's Fund family, contractors and their families took time out of their weekend to support the event at Harpers Football Centre (formerly GOALS) and while most of the players were cheered on by those who came to support, other staff busied themselves selling raffle tickets to raise more cash.

**"On behalf of the Trustees of Luna's Fund, thank you to all of the teams and players for their time and to the generous local businesses who donated raffle prizes, we've never seen a raffle like it!"**

**Aimee Green, CEO of Luna's Fund, said:** "We are incredibly grateful to Plymouth Community Homes for organising this incredible event. On behalf of the Trustees of Luna's Fund, thank you to all of the teams and players for their time and to the generous local businesses who donated raffle prizes, we've never seen a raffle like it!"

"The services we offer are priceless for families in need. We will be using the funds raised from the tournament to support grieving parents with two relaxing getaways at a destination of their choice in October.

"We will also be able to fund three private antenatal scans for two sets of anxious parents who are enduring pregnancy after loss, giving them reassurance when they need it the most.

"Thank you so much for supporting our charity and for making a huge difference to those we support."

We were supported by a number of individuals and local business who donated items for the raffle, and we'd like to thank everyone for their generosity.



Read more on InTouch online

[bit.ly/PCHCharityFootball](https://bit.ly/PCHCharityFootball)





# 15 Years of PCH Giveaway

On 20 November 2024, we celebrated 15 years of Plymouth Community Homes (PCH).

15 years ago, PCH was formed following the ownership transfer of 16,000 homes from Plymouth City Council to create a new housing association.

To celebrate this momentous occasion in style, we gave away 15 prizes up to the value of £100 over 15 days. The giveaway began on 6 November 2024, with prizes being given away in a prize draw daily until our 15th anniversary.

From days out and the latest tech, to vouchers at a range of retailers, we gave away something for all ages and for all the family to enjoy.

For entry into the prize draw, our residents simply needed to sign up for our monthly newsletter and look out for our daily giveaway emails.

Over the 15 days we received a staggering 16,294 entries to our prize giveaways and welcomed 285 new resident subscribers to our monthly newsletter. We hope you enjoyed the excitement of entering into the draw every day to celebrate with us.

Our new monthly newsletter subscribers will continue to discover the latest news across PCH and have the chance to enter our monthly competitions and prize giveaways.

To hand over the prizes to their new owners, we met with a number of our winners, who were all delighted with their prizes.




**"Carol regularly visits the cinema with her best friend. Sadly, her best friend's mum died in November, so Carol has said the next three cinema trips are on her!"**



**"Dean has just been diagnosed with diabetes and is now really keen to keep up his fitness. He is now able to track his activity with his prize!"**

Sign up to our monthly newsletter  
[bit.ly/pchnewsletter](https://bit.ly/pchnewsletter)








Read more on InTouch online



# Litter picking duo wows the community

An uncle and nephew duo have been described as 'local heroes' by their community for their tireless volunteering to keep their neighbourhood tidy.

Marti Hoe and nephew Alfie Roberts Freeman (aged 9) are PCH residents who have been rolling up their sleeves up to four times per week to litter pick around Efford.

Alfie continued: "One day we had 150 bags in Efford, and it took five volunteers and three hours of work to complete our task."

Their efforts have not gone unnoticed as many have remarked at how pristine the area has been looking lately.

**"The best thing I love about litter picking is I've met so many children and adults who become my friends"**

"I like it when the community pulls together."

**PCH Communities Worker, Ryan Huws, said:** "People are noticing and commenting on how tidy

The pair have even encouraged others to roll up their sleeves by setting up a dedicated Facebook page for Efford litter pickers, which is part of the Clean Our Patch volunteer group, of which Marti is an ambassador.

Efford looks. The pair are becoming 'local heroes' in the way they are caring and looking after their community and neighbourhood."

Nine-year-old Alfie is no stranger to volunteering. Earlier this year he was recognised for his efforts and scooped himself a Blue Peter Badge for his litter-picking.

**Marti said:** "I'm very proud of Alfie as he clearly has a passion for cleaning up the community. There is no stopping him."

**Alfie said:** "I started litter picking in March this year. I soon met Ash from Clean our Patch at Highview School Summer Fete. We asked if we could volunteer too."

Luckily for Alfie, he is not alone in his passion for keeping the streets clean. The Clean Our Patch volunteer group meets on the last Sunday of each month from 10am until midday. The group also meets at Deer Park the last Friday of every month at 11am for two hours.

"My uncle and I go out nearly every day. The best thing I love about litter picking is I've met so many children and adults who become my friends, like Joshua and Scarlet."

Marti added: "We're currently looking for volunteers to help out. It's a great way to meet new people and make friends. Also, it's great exercise and good for mental health too."





# Fire safety in the home this winter

Winter is a time to take extra steps to ensure you stay safe in your home.

Fire and smoke can spread very quickly – and both can kill. You, your family and visitors to your home all have a responsibility to help prevent the outbreak of fire.

You can read more about Fire Safety on our website, and we have also created a special 'Winter Ready' section full of helpful advice.

## Fire Safety: Top 5 Tips



Mobile devices, tablets, vapes, e-cigs, e-scooters and e-bikes have lithium batteries which can be especially dangerous – make sure you read the safety instructions carefully and dispose of any items safely



Keep anything flammable away from sources of heat – candles and curtains are a notoriously dangerous mixture, but also make sure not to dry clothes on electric heaters



Don't overload plug sockets – it seems easy to put extra plugs into an extension lead, but make sure you're not overpowering the socket or using anything that is damaged



Be safe when cooking – if you're rushing to put together something to eat, a carelessly draped tea towel could catch fire from the hob. Be organised and tidy when cooking and make sure you turn everything off afterwards



Know your escape routes and evacuation plan – if there's a fire in your home, what's the safest and quickest way out? If you live in a flat, what's the evacuation procedure? Familiarise yourself with these so that in the event of an emergency, you know what to do and don't panic.

## Home safety visits

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service offer home safety visits which will provide you with free advice about staying safe in your home. To book a free home safety visit call **0800 7311 822**.

Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service are offering an online home fire safety check through Safelincs which has been developed through a partnership between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Fire Kills and Safelincs.

To determine if you are eligible for a free home fire safety check please visit Safelincs to request one. If you meet the criteria, you will be contacted to arrange a convenient date and time.



Read more about Festive Fire Safety on InTouch online

[bit.ly/PCHInTouch](https://bit.ly/PCHInTouch)



# Plymouth Community Homes secures first affordable homes in Lifton

**Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) will be delivering more affordable homes in Devon after securing 16 energy-efficient homes in Lifton.**

The 16 new homes, consisting of one-, two-, three- and four- bedrooms are being purchased within the Oakdene development in Lifton, a village on the edge of Dartmoor and on the border of Devon and Cornwall.

Of the 16 homes being built by Wain Homes, 10 will be offered for affordable rent and six homes will be made available for shared ownership purchase through our sales brand SO Living.

The homes will be prioritised to those with a local connection to the area to meet the specific needs of the community, which has been made possible thanks to the support from key partner, West Devon Borough Council.

**Gavin Sutton, Senior Project Manager at PCH, said:** "The plan for the estate, with the generous open spaces including the village green centred with the old oak tree

is pleasing. It is great to again be working with the team at Wain Homes who we know to build quality homes."

**Cllr Mark Renders, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Housing, said:** "Creating lower cost, high quality

homes which our local people need is one of our top priorities, and we are delighted to welcome these new homes to Lifton."

**"...we are delighted to welcome these new homes to Lifton."**

The homes which are to be offered for rent or shared ownership sale through PCH will be available from Spring 2025.

For more information or to register an interest in one of the shared ownership homes, visit the SO Living website.



## Refurbishment of Plymouth flats completed as part of £1.95m Decarbonisation Project

**Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) residents living in Stoke could save money on their energy bills this winter after a £1.95m refurbishment project was carried out on a block of flats to improve the building's energy efficiency and overall feel.**

PCH secured £270,000 Wave 1 Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) funding as part of the project in partnership with Plymouth City Council for the refurbishment of 24 homes in Alcester Close.

The project began in August 2022 and completed in September 2024, and included replacing windows, alongside ventilation upgrades, drainage improvements, external access was improved, and fencing and balcony improvements were made, with new, energy-efficient insulation installed to the external walls.

The key outcomes of the project were to deliver warm, energy efficient homes, which will reduce energy bills for our residents, reduce carbon emissions and improve the overall comfort, health and wellbeing of our residents.

**PCH resident Kim, said:** "It's lovely, the refurbishment has made such a difference already and it's perfect for the winter. The changes that have been made can be seen big style, and most importantly the electric and gas bills have gone down which of course is a huge help."

The PCH Asset Management Team worked with Classic Builders (SW) Ltd and Kendall Kingscott who designed and delivered the work.





# Decarbonising our homes

We're working to deliver energy efficiency measures which will contribute towards reducing energy bills for our residents.

Our vision at Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) goes beyond delivering good quality social housing and we're dedicated to providing first class services to our residents.

We're working to deliver energy efficiency measures which will contribute towards reducing energy bills for our residents.

A priority in our Strategic Business Plan is to decarbonise our existing homes and our business by 2050.

## Delivering our Business Plan

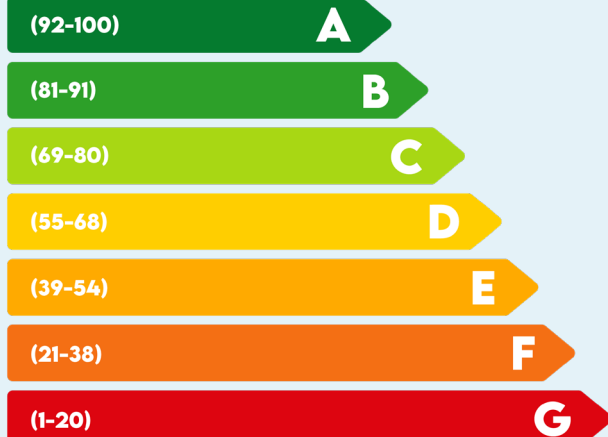
The Asset Management team at PCH is responsible for delivering this priority, and our first step to achieving this is to understand our homes, so we can review which energy measures can be applied retrospectively to help improve the property's energy performance (measured through an EPC) - and ensure the EPC is lower than a C rating.

## What is an EPC?

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) provides an energy efficiency rating (displayed on a A-G scale) for a property, and is a legal requirement in the UK when a property is marked for sale, rent or is newly built.

If you want to review the EPC for your property, visit [www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate](http://www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate)

### Highly energy efficient with low bills



Low energy efficiency with higher running costs

## Benefits of applied energy measures

There are multiple benefits to applying additional measures, including:



**Increasing the warmth of our homes**



**Positively impacting the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents**



**Reducing energy bills**



**Reducing the carbon footprint**



**Contributing towards reducing fuel poverty**

## Major Works Investment Programme

Every year, we have a Major Works Investment Programme to refurbish and upgrade our homes and blocks, decarbonising more properties to help reduce energy bills for our residents.

The main focus of the investment programme is making sure all our rented homes are maintained to the Decent Homes Standard, which is a technical standard established by the Government for social housing.

As part of this programme, we'll be carrying out a range of works including mechanical and engineering, planned maintenance and refurbishment works.

Find out more about the Major Works Investment Programme on our website.





# We're committed to resolving problems of anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We are fully committed to resolving problems of anti-social behaviour (ASB) with your help.

ASB is defined as 'acting in a way that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more people not of the same household'.

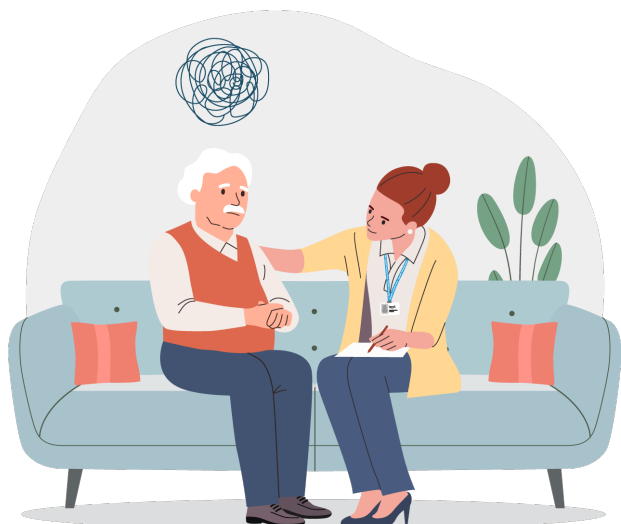
Our teams work in a multi-agency approach with statutory organisations such as Plymouth City Council, Victim Support, the Police, Public Protection, Environmental Health, Social Care and Health to tackle and help prevent further ASB.

We also work with other Housing Associations to develop best practices across our industry, as well as expert voluntary organisations such as Victim Support, Shelter, Resolve and several charities helping vulnerable members of society.

## What you can do

Can you speak to the person causing the nuisance? Do they realise their behaviour is upsetting their neighbours?

Make sure you are calm when you speak to them and think about what you say. Making a list first will help you to remember what in particular annoys you. Contact your local Housing Officer to make them aware.



## What we can do

Once you have contacted us, we will ensure you receive a timely response and, if appropriate, will offer you a copy of the initially agreed action plan.

Depending on the type and severity of your complaint, in most cases, we will contact the other person(s) involved to explain that we are aware of a problem and attempt to resolve matters quickly.

**You can also report ASB using our dedicated form on our website or to report a nuisance when we are closed, call our dedicated out of hours service on 0800 0287 377.**

We will initially try to resolve all issues by discussing the matter with the person(s) causing the nuisance and offering solutions.

In more complex cases, and if the issues continue, with your assistance we may be able to take appropriate legal action. If legal proceedings are started, the judge will want to see that every effort has been made to try to solve the problem first. It is therefore essential we consider all reasonable resolutions before we can start legal proceedings.

If we need to take further action, we will need you to collect as much evidence as possible, which may include recording dates and times of the offending behaviour. Video and sound recordings are always very useful in such cases, and we can give you details of a mobile phone App you can do this with. Without this information there is very little we can do to resolve the situation for you.

Find out more about anti-social behaviour on our dedicated Help and Advice section on our website.





# Marjon Health & Wellbeing Clinics

Plymouth Marjon University (Marjon) believes that everyone deserves to live a healthy, fulfilled life and has set up a number of clinics in the belief that education, self-reflection and social support can improve quality of life.

Staff work with individuals, helping them to manage their conditions through community-based, sustainable education and support programmes, and their approach is to encourage lifelong health and wellbeing through human connections in groups and a focus on the people, rather than a disease or condition.

Clinics run throughout the year across the city to support individuals with different needs, including counselling clinics, cancer support clinics and more.

Their Health and Wellbeing 360 consists of a health check, followed by a musculoskeletal assessment and are delivered using the University's world-class facilities. A Body 360 is suitable for people of all ages and ability, regardless of age or ability.

Health checks cost £30 when carried out by a student under supervision, or £45 if conducted by a member of staff. To book a session at the clinic, email [sportscience@marjon.ac.uk](mailto:sportscience@marjon.ac.uk).



For more information visit

[www.marjon.ac.uk/mhw/info-for-patients/](http://www.marjon.ac.uk/mhw/info-for-patients/)



## Efford Community Network

The Efford Community Network was set up in September 2019 with support from PCH with a view to improve the community life of residents living in Efford and the surrounding area.

Since its creation in 2019, the Efford Community Network has organised a number of successful community events with over 1,000 local people attending different events.

The network has also been involved with other local projects including advocating to get a new defibrillator, setting up a helpline during the Covid-19 pandemic and supporting local litter picks.

Earlier this year, network members were successful in securing a £5,000 grant from the Plymouth Octopus Project (POP) and are now in a great position to organise more community events and further support local residents.

In September 2024, the Efford Community Network held its first AGM (Annual General Meeting) and was joined by Martin, John, Ryan, Kath, Emily, Woody, Stuart, Mike,



Maria and Gem. Attendees included a mixture of volunteers, local residents, a community builder, as well as representatives from PCH, Plymouth City Council, POP and High View Primary School.

**Ryan Huws, Community Development Officer at PCH, said:** "From its inception, the network has gone from strength to strength attracting local people, businesses, and organisations to work together to make positive contributions to the lives of those who live in Efford.

It's been a privilege and so worthwhile to be involved with the network".

To find out more, please email Ryan on [rheinallt.huws@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk](mailto:rheinallt.huws@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk)

# Sign up to MyPCH




Visit [mypch.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk](https://mypch.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk)  
or download the new MyPCH app.


We're always keen to hear what you're up to, so if you'd like to tell us about something we can include in one of our publications, we'd love to hear it.

Email [news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk](mailto:news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk)

## Plymouth Community Homes

Plumer House, Tailyour Road, Crownhill, Plymouth, PL6 5DH

 [www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk](https://www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk)

 0808 230 6500

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