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Tenants' and leaseholders' community magazine



NORWICH
City Council

Autumn 2024

Tenant approved



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What would you like to read in TLC?

This magazine is all about tenants, leaseholders and the housing services you're at the heart of.

If you have an idea for a story or want to let us know your views on the magazine, we'd love to hear from you!

Send your
comments to

**communications@
norwich.gov.uk**



If you would like this information in another language or format such as large print, CD or Braille please visit www.norwich.gov.uk/intran or call 0344 980 3333.

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Introduction from Cllr Beth Jones



Welcome to the Autumn issue of TLC magazine

Cabinet member for housing and community safety

I hope you all enjoyed a wonderful summer. I certainly made the most of our beautiful parks and green spaces here in Norwich, and I was thrilled to see six of our parks awarded a Green Flag in July. This achievement is a true testament to the dedication of our volunteers and staff who work tirelessly throughout the year to maintain and improve these vital spaces.

It's also been inspiring to witness the enthusiasm of our communities as they get involved in local projects to enhance their neighbourhoods, making them even more enjoyable places to live.

In this issue, you'll find stories about the NR5 Community Hub, which has revitalised a

neglected area with the help of a 'Love Norwich' grant, and the Growing Matters community group, where a team of committed local gardeners has transformed an unused green space into a thriving community garden.

These stories are a source of inspiration, and I look forward to celebrating more successes in future editions.

On a broader scale, Angela Rayner, the deputy prime minister, recently reached out to local authorities across England, including our city council, with the government's ambitious plans to tackle the housing crisis. Some key points include the introduction of "Golden Rules" to ensure that at least 50% of homes in new

developments are affordable, alongside the necessary infrastructure such as GP surgeries, schools, and transport links. Additionally, a new £450 million fund will support local authorities in acquiring homes for families at risk of homelessness. The government also plans to temporarily lift restrictions on the use of Right to Buy receipts, giving councils greater flexibility in replacing homes sold under the scheme.

I believe Angela Rayner's letter underscores the government's commitment to building more homes swiftly while ensuring that developments are sustainable and meet the needs of our communities—an endeavour I wholeheartedly support.



Waterloo Park

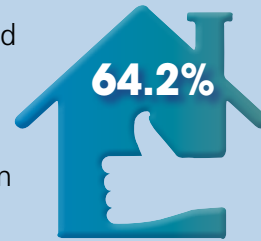
Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

New tenant satisfaction measures were introduced by the Government on 1 April 2023. These measures help monitor how well landlords provide quality homes and services and identify areas for improvement.

64.2% of Norwich City Council tenants who responded to our

survey said they were satisfied with the overall service provided by Norwich City Council as their landlord.

To view all 22 tenant satisfaction measures and see how we measured up, scan the QR code with your smartphone or visit our website.



SCAN ME

www.norwich.gov.uk/tsm

Every check counts

Norwich City Council supported Gas Safety Week 2024 between 9-15 September, this year's campaign focused on the theme "Checking – Every Check Counts."

Poorly installed or maintained gas appliances can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions, and carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO is especially dangerous as it is invisible, odourless, and highly toxic. As your landlord, Norwich City Council takes a wide range of precautions and checks to ensure you are safe.

These include:

1 Keeping gas safety records up to date

The council ensure all gas-related installations are safe and provide a gas safety check record annually.

2 Checking your gas appliances

If we provide gas appliances such as boilers and gas fires, we will ensure they are serviced annually by

a Gas Safe registered engineer. We will also carry out a visual inspection on the tenant's own appliances such as cookers. We advise you to have your own appliances serviced annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

3 Checking for warning signs

Please look out for yellow or orange flames, black marks, pilot lights going out, excessive condensation, or error messages on control panels. Report any issues to the council.

4 Check your carbon monoxide knowledge

Be aware of CO poisoning symptoms: headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse, and unconsciousness. If suspected, move to fresh air and call emergency services and the council.

5 Checking your carbon monoxide alarm

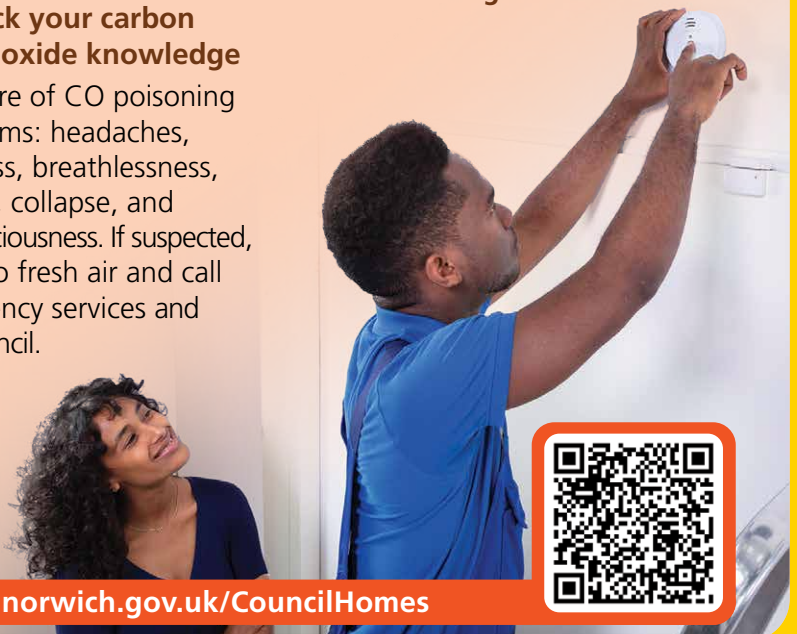
The council install and regularly test CO alarms in every room with gas appliances (excluding cooking appliances) to ensure they meet safety standards.

6 Checking vents and flues

We also check vents and flues are not blocked, as they are vital for safe operation.

Stay informed and safe

for more gas safety advice visit GasSafeRegister.co.uk



For tenancy issues, visit: www.norwich.gov.uk/CouncilHomes

Community star – Rainy Waller

In each issue of TLC, we like to highlight people or groups of Norwich residents who have taken positive action in their community to improve it for all.

For this issue we spoke to Rainy Waller, from the NR5 Community Hub. Rainy, short for Lorraine, is not one to seek the limelight and was a little embarrassed to be recognised in this way, telling us “I’m just a small cog in a big wheel and the recognition really needs to go to the whole community of NR5 who get involved in making sure NR5 is a friendly, clean and welcoming place to visit and live”.

NR5 is part of the North Earlham Estate in Norwich and in the past has been a hotspot for anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Rainy told us “We have an alleyway right in front of our house which had become rundown, forgotten and was an intimidating place to use because of the ASB it was attracting, things seemed to be getting worse, and people were actively avoiding using the alleyway because they felt unsafe.”

I felt we really needed to do something about it, and when I mentioned it to other members of the community, I found I wasn’t alone. I have a good relationship with the communities’ team at the city council and asked for their advice. They advised us to apply for a ‘Love Norwich’ grant. Which we did.”

A few weeks later after submitting our proposals to clean up the area we were awarded a £1200 grant from the fund. We couldn’t wait to get started.”

It was all about ‘Taking back control’ for us. We had a few community meetings and agreed a plan, we earmarked five days in August when we’d try and get as many neighbours, volunteers and council staff to give the alleyway a makeover. We spread the word on social media and soon had lots of willing people.”

As part of the clear up, we litter picked, repaired fences, painted fences, and commissioned an artist to paint some urban art on



the walls. We also asked locals what they wanted to see on the walls and invited children to put handprints on the walls.”

We worked hard, had great support from the council and enjoyed ourselves too. Now, a few weeks on, the place feels safer, people are proud of what we did as a community and are motivated to keep what we’ve created.”

If this inspires you, for more information about Love Norwich grants and to access an application form visit our dedicated webpage gettalking.norwich.gov.uk/grants or scan the QR code.



The Love Norwich grants programme is funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



Green spaces thrive in Mile Cross

Residents of Lefroy Road and Bowers Avenue in Mile Cross were thrilled to welcome guests from Kew Gardens this July. The visit recognised the Growing Matters community group, a team of local gardeners who transformed an unused green space into a community garden.

Growing Matters, part of Green Hearts in the Mile Cross

Projects and Events Group (MXPEG), secured £2,000 from the Kew Gardens 'Grow Wild' initiative. With help from Norwich City Council and Norfolk Wildlife Trust, they purchased tools, raised beds, and plants.

Representatives from Kew Gardens visited to see the garden, which now includes raised beds, a rose bed,

and wildflower patches. Residents gather every Tuesday for a workday, fostering community spirit.

The garden provides residents with joy, harvests and wildlife, and has brought neighbours closer. One resident noted how children love picking strawberries, while others remarked on the area's newfound cleanliness and respect.



Mile Cross residents planting up and enjoying their new community garden.



Proud residents of Lefroy Road and Bowers Avenue celebrating their achievement.

How the TIP helped me



Peter Warren-Ward moved into his Norwich City Council flat in 2016 and was delighted with his new home. Eager to show his appreciation and give back to the community, he was encouraged to join the Tenant Involvement Panel (TIP).

Joining the TIP was a rewarding experience for Peter. He appreciated the training offered, which equipped him with essential skills such as public speaking, navigating official meetings, and handling difficult situations. Peter believes these skills are invaluable not just for TIP members, but also in everyday life and work, providing members with confidence and experience.

Peter also values the insight TIP offers into the management of the city and the scrutiny of its services. He gained a deeper understanding of the financial constraints that influence decision-making and was impressed by the extensive maintenance work carried out each year. Participating in site audits gave him the opportunity to see firsthand how resources are allocated efficiently, while his involvement in procurement work enhanced his understanding of contracts.

Another vital aspect of TIP is the opportunity to scrutinise policy changes and understand how various teams operate. Engaging with decision-makers and offering an outside perspective is key to shaping the city's future.

Peter believes it's essential for the TIP to reflect the diversity of Norwich's tenants, generating new ideas and suggestions. He advocates for more flexible meeting times to accommodate different lifestyles, with council support to make this possible.

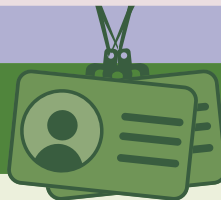
"If you care about the city and where you live and want to make a difference, then join the TIP," says Peter. "It's a very rewarding adventure, and you get out what you put in. You can build a range of skills that can help in your life and employment."

For more information on TIP please scan the QR code or visit our website



www.norwich.gov.uk/tip

New team members



We'd like to introduce you to some new members of our senior management team. Between them they have a tremendous range of experience across local authorities and specifically within the housing sector.

Davina Howes, executive director of housing and community

Before her current role, Davina was director for families and communities at West Suffolk Council and since joining us in April, Davina has been actively

engaging with a variety of different projects across our city. These have included visiting empty properties, observing the refurbishment progress at The Halls, and exploring community projects in Mile Cross and Suffolk Square.

Tony Wiggins, director of property (housing)

Anthony 'Tony' Wiggins was formerly the head of property management and capital delivery at Barking and Dagenham Council. Tony joined us in April and has wasted no

time in reaching out across the Council to understand the challenges and opportunities, as well as leveraging in his skills and knowledge to develop cost-cutting innovative solutions.

Jordan Barr, head of building and safety compliance

Jordan joined us from Hull City Council in January. He is an experienced compliance professional, with 19 years of experience in compliance-related areas and 17 years in the social housing sector.

Transforming homes



Project at Sussex Street

Norwich City Council is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for our tenants by renovating and modernising our properties. As part of this effort, we wanted to show you an example of a recent Whole House Improvement (WHI) project at Sussex Street, where a second-floor, two-bedroom flat has undergone a complete refurbishment.

This ambitious project, completed by our partners at Gasway, has delivered significant upgrades, including a new heating system, modern kitchen and bathroom facilities, asbestos removal, new flooring, and the rebuilding of internal walls. The flat has been fully modernised, creating a fresh and comfortable living space for new tenants.

You can see the transformation in some of the before and after photos below, highlighting the dramatic improvements and the care we're putting into every detail of the renovation.

Speaking about the project, Cllr Beth Jones, portfolio holder for housing at Norwich City Council said, "The whole house improvement project at Sussex Street demonstrates our commitment to our tenants. By undertaking such comprehensive refurbishments, we're not just improving the buildings but also enhancing the daily living experience for our residents. Everyone deserves a safe, comfortable, and modern home, and this project is a prime example of that belief in action."



This WHI project is part of a broader initiative to upgrade council properties across the city. We are working hard to ensure our tenants enjoy the

benefits of these improvements, turning houses into homes that meet modern standards and provide a better quality of life for all.

“...improving the buildings but also enhancing the daily living experience for our residents.”



Before



After

Leaseholder repair

As a leaseholder you are responsible for the inside of your flat or maisonette, and any service pipes or cables which service only your property. The council is responsible for the external fabric of the building and any internal common parts. This includes roofs, drains, windows, external doors, communal lighting and shared paths.

For **non-emergency** repairs, please complete our online

form. You can access the form by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by visiting our dedicated webpage www.norwich.gov.uk/LeaseholderRepairForm



If you need to report an **emergency** repair, please contact us as soon as possible by calling 0344 980 333



between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday, outside of these times please call the same number and choose option 2 for our out of hours emergency contact details.

Moving? Consider a mutual exchange

If you are a Norwich City Council tenant with a secure tenancy and are thinking about moving, a mutual exchange could be the ideal solution. This process allows you to swap homes with another council or housing association tenant, potentially making it easier and quicker to find a new place that better suits your needs.

Why consider mutual exchange?

There are many reasons why tenants might consider a mutual exchange. Perhaps you need to downsize or upsize your home to better accommodate your family. Or you might want to move closer to family, friends, or work. Whatever your reason, mutual exchange offers a flexible and efficient way to relocate within Norwich or even beyond.

How does it work?

The first step in the mutual exchange process is to sign up on the House Exchange website,

where you can search for homes that match your requirements. This platform connects you with other tenants who are also looking to swap homes, giving you access to a wide range of options. Alternatively, many people join mutual exchange groups on Facebook, when they've found a match, they then go through the official process.

Once you've found a potential match and agreed with the other parties involved, all tenants will need to complete an application form. It's important that each party submits a fully completed form, as the exchange cannot be considered until this is done.



What happens next?

After submitting your application, Norwich City Council will review it and confirm whether the exchange can proceed. You will receive a decision within 42 days of the council receiving all completed forms.

A satisfied tenant's perspective

Jane, a Norwich City Council tenant, recently completed a mutual exchange and couldn't be happier. She said: "The process was straightforward, and I was able to move closer to my daughter just in time for the arrival of my first grandchild. It was a much quicker and easier way to find a new home than I expected."

Get started today

For more information please visit our website and search 'House Exchanges' or scan the QR code with your Smartphone.



Sign up for Neighbourhood Watch

Norfolk Police are collaborating with Neighbourhood Watch schemes to address community concerns and improve safety across the county.



Neighbourhood Watch has evolved to focus on the power of neighbours working together to create safer, vibrant, and inclusive communities. Research shows that active schemes can reduce crime and anti-social behaviour by up to 20%.

The police are encouraging communities to join or start a scheme in their area and have funding for new bespoke

Norfolk police officers promoting the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme with Suzy from Norwich City Council's Housing Team.

Neighbourhood Watch signs which are free to groups that sign up.

For more information or to join/ set up a scheme, scan the QR code or visit



www.OurWatch.org.uk or contact PS Burton or PC Harris at NHW@norfolk.police.uk

Estate inspection update



As of mid-August, we have conducted three inspections, with two more planned. Thank you to everyone who has participated, both online and in person.

To maximise participation, we create posters and leaflets in-house, send texts, and arrange visits to promote the inspections. Councillors and other council teams also help spread the word.

During the walkaround, you can score on the condition of various estate aspects, such as cleanliness, stairs, lifts, and lighting. You can also submit surveys beforehand, and, based on your answers, our officers can score on your behalf.

A report is then compiled, discussing scores, comments, and suggestions. The estate management team reviews this to agree on necessary improvements.

Updates are shared with residents through the Get Talking Norwich website, posters, and digital screens. We've also introduced community pages on Get Talking Norwich for tenants and leaseholders to discuss issues, share views, and give feedback.

To get involved, email us at involvement@norwich.gov.uk or visit **www.norwich.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement**

Explore Norwich for less with the Go4Less discount scheme



Norwich residents can enjoy cultural, leisure, and sporting activities at discounted prices through the Go4Less discount scheme. This initiative makes it easier to experience Norwich's offerings at a lower cost.

Cultural discounts

The Go4Less card offers discounted entry to popular venues like Cinema City, Norwich Arts Centre, and Norwich museums. It also provides reduced rates for performances at the Norfolk & Norwich Festival.

Leisure and sports savings

The scheme includes discounts at several sports and leisure

centres, such as Riverside Leisure Centre and Sportspark. Additionally, you can enjoy pitch and putt and footgolf at Eaton Park and Mousehold at reduced rates.

Gardening discounts

Norwich City Council residents can get a 30% discount on standard allotment plots, making it more affordable to grow your own food or maintain a garden.

Eligibility and application

The Go4Less card is available to Norwich City Council residents who meet certain criteria, such as full-time

students, those eligible for a national bus pass, and individuals receiving specific financial support. Dependants aged three and over are also eligible. The card is free, valid for a year, and can be renewed.

Don't miss out on affordable access to Norwich's activities—apply for a Go4Less card today!

To apply, visit our website and search "Go4Less" or scan the QR code with your smartphone.




You said, we did

Managers in the housing service meet on a quarterly basis to review the quality of complaint handling, to ensure timely responses are being provided and to share learning from cases.

Here are some examples of actions we have taken to resolve issues that you have made us aware of during 2023-24.

To view the full report, scan the QR code with your smartphone or visit our website and search for complaints.



You said 	We have 
We did not take personal circumstances into account when pursuing a debt.	Now balanced debt recovery with personal circumstances.
Our standard letters were not always easy to understand.	Started to review all our standard letter and email templates.
Waste and recycling bins were not always there when you moved in.	Now ensured we request these ahead of your tenancy starting.
The different rates we charge for garages were confusing.	Made the charges for garages much simpler.

Contacting Norwich City Council

ONLINE You can report repairs, access council services and make online payments.

www.norwich.gov.uk

Register for 'My Account' to check your rent and council tax balance. Take a look at 'My Norwich' to see what services are available in your area.

POST Norwich City Council,
City Hall, Norwich NR2 1NH.

Out of hours emergencies:
01603 412180.

Free phone payment hotline:
0800 021 7784 (a 24/7 service).

Money advisers:
BudgetingAndMoneyAdvice@norwich.gov.uk

Text relay users only:
18001 01344 980 3333
(9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday).

Leaseholders:
For help and advice on your rights and responsibilities, email the home ownership team on HomeOwnership@norwich.gov.uk

Housing Ombudsman:
info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
0300 111 3000
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Report repairs online

A chance
to win
£50!!

*T&Cs apply

To report non-urgent repairs (and for a chance to win £50):

- **Log in to 'My Account'**
- Sign up for 'Housing Online' to report and book your repair, where you can also manage other elements of your tenancy, including your rent account.

You will need to set up two separate log-ins for both **My Account** and **Housing Online** if you've not logged in before. After you have signed up, you'll only need to sign into My Account to access Housing Online features.

When signing up for the first time, you will need your unique rent reference number, which can be found on your rent notification.

**Available 24/7 and works on
PCs, tablets and smartphones**



Right to Buy

We'd like to remind all our tenants that the Right to Buy allows most council tenants to buy their council homes at a discounted rate.

To check if you are eligible and for more information, please visit our website

and search 'Right to Buy'.

If you wish to apply to buy your home, you can call us on **0344 980 3333** to request an application or email RightToBuyTeam@norwich.gov.uk



Loss of gas or electricity?

If you have lost your gas or electricity supply you should contact your energy supplier directly in the first instance.