



Hardenherald



We have rung the changes

Call our Repairs Contact Centre on **0300 7906 555** to report your repair and it will be free from landlines and mobile phones where 0300 numbers are included in your contract.

For pay as you go mobiles, the 0300 number is far cheaper than the 0845 one.



387 down, 216 to go!

New homes handed over.

A total of 387 new affordable homes have now been handed over to Harden Housing customers, thanks to the Regeneration of North Solihull and the North Solihull Partnership.

WM Housing is a member of the Partnership and the new housing is owned by WM Homes and Whitefriars Housing and being managed by Harden Housing. It is part of a wider development programme, which includes homes for sale, new primary schools and village centres. Harden is actively involved in helping build community spirit and relationships within the regeneration area.

All the homes are designed to the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3, which exceeds the

national Building Regulations standard for energy efficiency. As a result, customers should have lower utility bills.

The majority of the new homes have solar water heating systems, and all have high levels of insulation and water saving features such as dual flush toilets and aerated taps.

One happy customer told us: *"Very helpful association, really quick and helpful. Lovely house can't fault the property, it is insulated very well. Love the new house, especially the ensuite!!!"*

- Miss B. Connor of Raglan Way.

- Funding has now been confirmed for another 216 affordable properties which are being developed for Harden Housing in North Solihull through the Partnership.

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Helping with Hardship

Money Advice Officer, Geraldine Mulhern helps Harden customers apply for benefits they are entitled to, and to access the debt advice service.



Sizzling Savings - Spotlight on August 2011

21 customers took up the Money Advice Service
£31,951.03 was the annual income/savings

The amount included £7020.00 for two claims for Income Support / Job Seekers Allowance. Other benefits were made of Arrears Repayment arrangements, Housing Benefit entitlement, Housing Benefit Backdate Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Benefit/Discounts, Crisis Loan, Compensation Payment, Water Meter Installation Saving and a Water Trust Fund application.

Focus on Rent

Harden Housing will be focusing on rent payments between **7th - 11th November 2011**. Staff will be making contact to discuss any outstanding payments of rent. They will also be offering debt advice and help with benefits and budgeting.

If you are experiencing financial problems and would like to make an appointment at home or at our office, please contact us on:
0121 457 4600



Making the case for added help

Geraldine has helped some Harden customers apply for Discretionary Housing Benefit - payments which are made for a limited time in addition to Housing Benefit.

Case A

A pensioner had opted to receive Housing Benefits direct. Since Housing Harden was unaware he was in receipt of Housing Benefits we did not apply for an increase when rents rose, and nor did he. The pensioner was almost £1000 in rent arrears. Geraldine applied for Housing Benefits to be increased and backdated and for Discretionary payments to help him meet short term hardships.

Case B

A part time worker was struggling to meet financial commitments. Geraldine discovered that he was entitled to £18.86 Housing Benefit a week, which was backdated. She also successfully applied for Discretionary Housing Benefit for 26 weeks to enable him to reduce and pay off his arrears.

What's Cooking?

A disabled customer had built up substantial water bill arrears. Geraldine agreed a repayment package with Severn Trent. Once the customer had started to pay off the arrears, she approached Severn Trent Trust Fund who wrote off more than £700 off the arrears, and gave the customer a new gas oven, after hearing that her oven had broken.

If you are having difficulty paying your rent, or meeting your bills, contact Geraldine at Harden on: 0121 457 4600, email her at:
Geraldine.Mulhern@wmhousing.co.uk

Geraldine's advice is **FREE** to all of our Harden customers.

Join your Estate Walkabouts

A great opportunity for you to point out issues you feel need addressing on your scheme – and it's a chance to get to know our Housing Officers as well.

If you would like further information call your Housing Officer on: **0121 457 4600**

Housing Officer, **Perminder Marwaha** will be joining residents on 11th November at: **Britannic Park** at 2pm

On 18th November at: **Cherry Trees** at 3.30pm

On 25th November at: **Church Lane** at 2.30pm and **Devon Close** at 3.30pm

On 10th November at: **Gillot Road** at 2pm, **Lotus Court** at 3pm and **Peter Frost House** at 4pm

On 1st December at: **Meadow Close** at 2.30pm

On 4th December at: **White Street** at 2pm

On 9th December at: **Newhall Street** at 3pm

On 18th December at: **Lime Court** at 11am



Housing Officer, **Mandeep Jagpal** will be joining residents on 6th February 2012 at: **Harden Keep** at 10am, **Malins Road** at 10.30am, **895 Bristol Road** at 11am

7th February 2012 at: **Bell Court** at 10am, **Harden Court** at 10.30am, **Lannacombe Road** and **Thurlestone Road** at 11.30am

14th February 2012 at: **Rea Place** at 10am



Housing Officer, **Jonathan Gwinnett** will be joining residents on 22nd November and 28th February 2012 at: **Upper Church** at 9am, **Vicarage Close** at 10am and **Dibdale** at 11.30am

On 20th December and 20th March 2012 at: **Clocktower View** at 9am, **Harden Vale** at 10am and **Crimmond Rise** at 11am

On 16th January 2012 at: **Pavilion Court** at 3pm

On 17th January 2012 at: **Ladypool Close** at 9am, **Gilbert Court** at 10am, **Twyford Close** at 11.30am and **Badgers Bank** at 2pm



Housing Officer, **Angela Smith** will be joining residents on 6th December at: **Dalloway Close** at 9.30am, **Edward Road/Pershore Road** at 10.30am, **Benmore Avenue/Columbia Close** at 11.15am, **Bristol Road/Bellvue** at 11.45am and **Belgravia Close** at 12.15pm

On 8th December at: **Snitterfield Drive** at 10am, **Coppice Walk** at 11.30am and **Tanworth House** at 1pm

On 9th December at: **Moorlands Lodge** at 12.30pm

On 13th December at: **Yardley Road** at 9.30am, **Aspen Close/Sorrell Drive** at 11.15am, **St Agnes Close** at 2.15pm and **Harlequin** at 3.15pm



Housing Officer, **Louise Butler** will be joining residents on 14th November and 13th February 2012 at: **Auckland Drive/Kingfisher Way/Swift Close and Tame Avenue** at 10am-11am, **Leyton House** at 11am-12noon, **Arran Way and Mull Croft** at 12noon-1pm, **Windward Way Flats** at 1pm-2pm

On 17th November and 16th February 2012 at: **Larch Croft** at 10am-11am, **Ballard Walk** at 11.30am-12noon, **Compton Croft/Fillingham Close/Barnard Close** at 12noon-1pm, **Carisbrooke Avenue and Dunster Road** at 1pm-2pm, **Raglan Way and Picton Croft** at 2pm-3pm.



Housing Officer, **Suzanne Ross** will be joining residents on 24th November and 23rd February 2012 at: **Sydney Court** at 10.30am, **Melbourne Road/Maitland Drive/Ayres Close/Freemantle Drive/Kitsland Road/Berrowside Road/Canberra Gardens/Longmeadow Crescent/Darwing House** at 11.15am-12.30pm, **Timberley Croft** at 2pm and **Hurst Close** at 3pm



Keep us on **our toes!**

Are you passionate about your surroundings?

If so, you could become a Customer Monitor to help make sure that our ground maintenance, communal cleaning and window cleaning contractors provide the service we expect.

The current contracts end on 31st December 2011 and the new ones will start on 1st January 2012.

As we went to press, we were evaluating the tenders we had received and hope to announce the successful bidder shortly.

If you are interested in becoming a Monitor, contact:

Housing Services Manager,
Ruth Bhullar on: 0121 457 4600
 or email: ruth.bhullar@wmhousing.co.uk



Are we meeting our **Service Standards?**



Responding to you

68% of letters and emails were answered within 7 calendar days*.

Access to our services

We received **0** requests for access to customer files or computer records.

Repairs

98.7% of our emergency repairs were completed or made safe within 24 hours

99.7% of our urgent repairs were offered an appointment within 7 calendar days*

100% of our routine repairs were offered an appointment within 28 calendar days*

99.9% of our homes with a gas supply have received an annual gas safety check.

Managing your home

78% of anti-social behaviour reports were responded to within 14 calendar days*

67% of harassment or racial harassment reports were responded to within 3 calendar days*

Responding to complaints

83% of complaints were responded to within 14 calendar days*.

These figures are for the period April 2011 - September 2011

* Except for bank holidays and office closures.



Transformed!

Welcome to Groveley Park

Customers helped celebrate the success of a £17.2 million six-year regeneration project, which has transformed a council estate in the shadow of the former Rover factory in Birmingham.

The project received £8.5million of funding from the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) and has seen a total of 142 outdated council homes on the Nimmings Farm estate, in Longbridge, demolished and replaced with 172 new homes on the newly named Groveley Park.

Built by WM Housing Group on land acquired from Birmingham City Council, the new homes are part of a wider £1billion regeneration of Longbridge.

Seventy-eight-year-old Molly Gardner, who has lived on the Nimmings Farm estate for 49 years,



was one of the first residents to move back. She said: *“The redevelopment has made a big difference. People who come here comment on how lovely it is and how different the homes are now.”*

“It feels like the area has moved on and is a much better place to live now. We loved our old house, but the houses before had been there a long time and they all looked the same. Now there is a nice mix of different types of homes and the outlook is much better.”

Molly was a part of the Estate Development Group, a group set up to involve residents in the project.

Two homes have been constructed to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 which is the highest rating achievable under current government targets and are the first to be built in the West Midlands using HCA funding.

Six flats have also been developed by Advance Housing to provide accommodation for people with learning disabilities.



Down Your Way

Pavillion Court

Find out about the associations schemes and hear from the people who live in them.

- **Where is it?** Lichfield
- **What does it consist of?** 4 bedsits and 8 two-bedroom flats for people over the age of 50
- **When was it built?** 1982
- **What is it like to live there?** Mrs Bryan, 93 is one of the original residents at the scheme. *“I do like living here. It’s a nice area and it’s*



quiet. The other residents are all very pleasant and helpful. The scheme is handy for everything with a Post Office and a supermarket close by Lichfield is a lovely place generally and I have been very happy here over the years”.

Louise trials new technology

Housing Officer, Louise Butler, is trialing a new way of working out on estates.

She has been given an iPad to help her work more effectively when she is out of the office / away from her desk. So far the results have been positive.

She is able to deal with customers queries, book appointments, access rent account information and update notes all while she is out and about.

She can also get her call backs and emails so she is easily contactable by customers, contractors and colleagues.

This technology is allowing Louise to spend more time out on her estates dealing with customers directly, which is what our customers have asked for.



If you would like this leaflet in large print or audio format, please contact the Communications Team on **024 7676 7029**.

Need help in your own language?

Arabic

"هل تحتاج إلى مساعدة بلغتك"

French

Vous avez besoin d'aide dans votre propre langue

Kurdish

تایا بیویستت به یارمهتی به زمانێ خۆت ههیه.

Somali

Ma'u baahantahay in lagugu caawiyo luuqadaadda

Polish

Wymagają Państwo pomocy w swoim języku?

Cantonese

需要母語幫助

Tel: 0121 457 4600

Contact corner

Ground Floor, One Parklands, Rubery, Birmingham, B45 9PZ

We are open from 9am - 5pm every day except Wednesday, when we close between 12.30pm - 1.30pm for staff training.

Call: 0121 457 4600 Email: harden@wmhousing.co.uk www.hardenhousing.co.uk



Harden Christmas Opening Times: the office will close for business at 5pm on Friday 23rd December and will re-open at 9am on Tuesday 3rd January 2012

Contact Centre Christmas Opening Times: 24th - 27th December (inclusive) emergency only service, 28th - 30th December (inclusive) the contact centre will be open from 8am - 8pm as normal, 31st December - 2nd January 2012 (inclusive) emergency only service and from 3rd January 2012 normal opening hours apply.