

HOUSING MATTERS

Newsletter of Westmorland and Furness Council - Housing Service

THANK YOU LADIES!

For over 20 years Barbara Lavender, Jennifer Lord and Irene Bagley successfully managed our community centre on Cotswold Crescent.

The centre was the base for the popular senior citizens club and Friday night bingo club, but when it closed due to the pandemic, the ladies decided it was time for them to step back and hand over the keys to another group of volunteers.

To mark the occasion, Assistant Director of Housing, Caroline Wagstaff, presented them with flowers and shopping vouchers as a token of our thanks and appreciation for their outstanding commitment to the local community over many years.

Turn to page 10 to read more and details on the reopening of the centre.



SAYING IT WITH FLOWERS! From left: Irene Bagley, Jennifer Lord, Barbara Lavender and Caroline Wagstaff

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POINTS OF CONTACT

Contact details for each of our teams are given on the back page



HAVE I GOT HOUSING NEWS FOR YOU



Welcome to the Summer issue of Housing Matters.

On our cover page we feature three remarkable ladies who have, for over 20 years, successfully managed one of our popular community centres on the Griffin estate. The impact they have made in their community has been valued by residents and by all of us in the Housing Service. They have organised so many events, shopping trips and the popular Friday night bingo to name but a few. Their team work really has been amazing -thank you!

On the opposite page, we reward more of our residents who have been nominated for 'a good neighbour award'. Again, thank you for the fabulous work you do. We so value our strong communities supporting each other on a daily basis which really makes them special places to live.

On page 5 we have the results of our Tenant Satisfaction Survey. Thanks to everyone who took the time to respond to the survey. The survey forms part of a set of measures the Regulator of Social Housing has introduced to monitor how social housing landlords are performing and the results also help us improve our services.

Our Annual Report on page 8 - gives you a good overview of our performance over the last financial year and on page 12 there is a useful article on how to prevent damp and mould.

Last year Westmorland and Furness Council adopted a new Damp and Mould Standard which aims to ensure we are providing and maintaining dry, warm and healthy homes. If you have any worries about damp and mould in your own home, in the article we have included useful contact details, so please speak to us - we take reports of damp and mould very seriously and we will arrange for a surveyor to visit and investigate the problem.

Finally, we know times are difficult and the cost of living crisis is hard but we have various articles on help available with utilities, paying your rent and events to attend for anyone feeling lonely in our libraries and communities.

There is also an item on page 19 highlighting the great news that we now have an Andy's Man Club in Barrow which provides a safe space where guys can talk, laugh and cry but ultimately feel better about themselves. No-one needs to be alone and it is ok to ask for help.

All of our contact details are on the back page of the newsletter. If you need help and support please contact us - the sooner you do, the sooner we can start to help.

Have a lovely summer and let's hope the sun decides to shine!

Caroline Wagstaff
Assistant Director of Housing

RECORD OF RENT PAYMENTS 2024/2025



- Payments made after Thursday afternoon may not show on your account until the following week
- Payments made using Allpay cards or barcode letters can take two working days to reach your account

Wk	From	Payment	Wk	From	Payment	Wk	From	Payment	Wk	From	Payment
1*	01/04/24		14	01/07/24		27	30/09/24		40	30/12/24	
2	08/04/24		15	08/07/24		28	07/10/24		41	06/01/25	
3	15/04/24		16	15/07/24		29	14/10/24		42	13/01/25	
4	22/04/24		17	22/07/24		30	21/10/24		43	20/01/25	
5	29/04/24		18	29/07/24		31	28/10/24		44	27/01/25	
6	06/05/24		19	05/08/24		32	04/11/24		45	03/02/25	
7	13/05/24		20	12/08/24		33	11/11/24		46	10/02/25	
8	20/05/24		21	19/08/24		34	18/11/24		47	17/02/25	
9	27/05/24		22*	26/08/24		35	25/11/24		48	24/02/25	
10	03/06/24		23	02/09/24		36	02/12/24		49	03/03/25	
11	10/06/24		24	09/09/24		37	09/12/24		50	10/03/25	
12	17/06/24		25	16/09/24		38	16/12/24		51	17/03/25	
13	24/06/24		26	23/09/24		39*	23/12/24		52	24/03/25	
									53*	31/03/25	

* NON-COLLECTABLE WEEKS – Payment is still due unless your account is clear

PLEASE NOTE: There are 53 weeks in this financial year and rent will be collected over 49 weeks

GOOD NEIGHBOURS REWARDED

The first recipient of our Good Neighbour 'thank you' is Alan Marwood who regularly litter picks around his local area and removes dog fouling to keep the environment looking clean and tidy. Alan very much deserves this recognition.

A little birdy also told us Alan and his wife, Ann, recently celebrated their very special Diamond Wedding Anniversary – 60 years married! - so we were delighted to present them with some flowers to mark the occasion and we wish them many more happy years together!!

Our second good neighbour is James Hunter (below) who recently assisted our Safe and Strong Communities Team in an extensive clear up operation on one of our estates.

Manager of the team, Caroline Kendall said: "James was a huge help with the clear up and worked together with Westmorland and Furness Council staff to clear the area on the day. He was the only one who offered his assistance and said he would happily help again should the need arise. This sort of community spirit is worthy of mention and, as such, we believe James is a deserved recipient of a good neighbour thank you".



SPECIAL COUPLE: Alan and Ann Marwood



James Hunter

All communities have a person who goes the extra mile to help their neighbours and these people should be celebrated!

If you have a neighbour who regularly helps out and makes a difference in your community, we'd love to hear from you.

The nomination process is very straightforward – here's the details.

OUR INCENTIVE SCHEMES

Rewarding Good Tenants
Prize draw for tenants who comply with their Tenancy Agreement.

Good Neighbour 'Thank You'

Awarded via nomination to anyone living on a Council estate or contributes to the lives of a person or people who live on a Council estate.

Leave It Clean Scheme

£100 of vouchers given to tenants moving out of their property (into private sector housing) who meet certain criteria.

For more details on our incentive schemes, visit our website: <https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/incentive-schemes/> or call Cathy Kirk on (01229) 876523 or email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

ADAPTING YOUR HOME TO MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

Are you, or a member of your household, finding it difficult to remain active and independent in your home because of a disability or ill health?

Sometimes it only takes a small change to your home to make life easier for you. We can carry out adaptations so you can live in a safe and comfortable environment that meets your needs.

Minor adaptations which don't involve any structural changes to your home include:

- Grab rails
- Stair rails
- Lever taps
- Level access thresholds



**MODIFYING YOUR HOME:
Example of minor adaptation**

For more information, contact our Needs Assessment Officer:

Lindsay Gedling: Tel: (01229) 876577 or
email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

NEW CUSTOMER STANDARDS

New standards for housing and housing services came into effect on 1 April.

These standards have been set by the Regulator of Social Housing and are there to ensure that landlords provide an expected level of service to their tenants. There are four main standards, covering a variety of important areas:

-  **Safety and Quality Standard:** Stock quality, decent homes, health and safety, repairs, adaptations
-  **Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard:** Fairness and respect, considering diverse needs, engagement with tenants, information and communications about landlord services, performance information, complaints handling, self-referral
-  **Neighbourhood and Community Standard:** Safety of shared spaces, local cooperation, anti-social behaviour and hate incidents, domestic abuse
-  **Tenancy Standard:** Allocations and lettings, tenancy sustainment and evictions, tenure, support and supply of mutual exchange

We will be holding ourselves to these standards and will be audited by the Regulator to check how we are performing against them.



For more information about the new standards please visit: www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards

WINNERS OF TENANT PERCEPTION SURVEY - PRIZE DRAW

The names of everyone who completed the Tenant Perception Survey were entered into a free prize draw with the first three drawn winning £50 shopping vouchers.

The lucky winners were Sandra Ashton (left) Trina Kavanagh (right) and Mark Treen.

Thanks again to everyone who responded to the survey!



Sandra Ashton



Trina Kavanagh

RESULTS OF SATISFACTION SURVEY

The Regulator of Social Housing introduced a new requirement for all social housing landlords to annually report on a set of measures (TSMs) that tells you how we are doing at providing quality homes and services.

Of the 22 TSMs, 12 are Tenant Perception Measures and we gathered your views on these via the recent survey. The full results including those for the remaining 10 general management measures can be found on our website <https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/about-us/surveys>

Huge thanks to all those who completed the first, of what will be an annual, Tenant Perception Survey. Here's a summary of the results from the questions tenants were asked to answer (covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024). The percentage satisfied relates to respondents that answered either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' to the survey question.



78.2%

satisfied with the overall service provided by Westmorland and Furness Council's Housing Service



84% satisfied with the overall repairs service



78.9% feel we treat them fairly and with respect



80.8% satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair



49.3% satisfied with our approach to complaints handling



71.8% satisfied that their homes are well maintained



67.1% satisfied communal areas are clean and well maintained



77.4% satisfied that their home is safe



54.7% satisfied we make a positive contribution to their neighbourhood



58.2% satisfied we listen and act upon their views



56.5% satisfied with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour



71.5% satisfied we keep them informed about things that matter to them

So ... what happens next?

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to our Tenant Perception Survey. If you didn't get chance to complete it, we will be carrying this out annually, so please complete one next year as your feedback is really helpful for us to improve our services.

I am really pleased with the results and some key areas to note:

- **Satisfaction with the overall repair service we provide is at 84% and 80.8% are happy with the time it takes us to complete the repairs you report.**
- **Just under 79% of respondents feel we treat them fairly and with respect**
- **77.4% feel their home is safe**

You also told us we could improve on the way we communicate with you. Whilst you feel we keep you well informed, just under 60% of respondents told us they feel we listen and act on views.

As a service, we have looked at the perception measures that came out less than 70% and developed an Action Plan to address this and consider how, as a service, we can improve satisfaction in these areas. To read the Action

Plan, visit: <https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/about-us/surveys>

We will certainly work harder at listening to our customers through our tenants and residents meetings and engaging with you and our Members through estate walkabouts. We will be arranging these soon and publicising dates when we're in your area. If you can, follow our Facebook page 'Westmorland and Furness Thriving Communities' for the latest information.

We look forward to meeting with you to listen to issues in your area and working with you to improve this.

As always, if there are any issues you want to raise with us, please get in touch – contact details for each of our teams are shown on the back page.

Caroline Wagstaff
Assistant Director of Housing



COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

At the council's Annual General Meeting held in May, councillors heard more about the council's commitment to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI).

The commitment means that the council will consider EDI in all that it does, whether in relation to individual customers, communities or its own workforce and councillors.

To make its commitment visible and highlight the importance of creating a more equal society, the council is proudly displaying a new badge on its buildings and vehicles. The multi-coloured heart shaped badges read 'Together we are inclusive' and can be spotted on many fleet vehicles, libraries, leisure centres and key buildings.

To read more about our commitment to EDI, visit:
www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk



2023 STOCK CONDITION SURVEY

Thanks to everyone who provided access for Rand Associates to complete the stock condition survey.

The purpose of the five-yearly survey is to collate details of the condition of all Council-owned stock which involved inspecting all housing assets including, houses, flats and bungalows, garages, community centres and communal blocks.

Data gathered from the survey will generate comprehensive information about the condition of our stock and will help us plan and prioritise future maintenance and improvement works and to make informed investment decisions over future years.

The initial results from the Stock Condition Survey indicate that significant investment will be required for kitchens and bathrooms improvements over the next five years. This is a plan and the speed in which it is delivered will be influenced by available resources.

THANK YOU

Our teams work really hard to provide good customer service and it's always appreciated when users of our service take the time to pass on a kind word or two.

Here's some examples of compliments our teams and contractors have received.

LETTINGS TEAM

"Thank you Jacky. Everyone is so helpful, whether it's on the phone or at the office you're part of a super team. Once again, thank you."

(Service User)

DLP (BUILDING) SERVICES

"Special thanks to Alex, who is an asset and excellent ambassador to both the Council and DLP. He is a really helpful and polite young man who made time for me as the customer. He's someone who got on with his work and took pride in the standard of work he did."

(Julie, tenant)

HOMELESSNESS TEAM

"Your positivity, enthusiasm and support has been really helpful throughout this stressful time. I appreciate you all for that, your mix of professionalism and support and how much I have learned from you about the process that so many people experience when trying to navigate potential homelessness."

You're fantastic at your job, a real asset to the Council and the Barrow community. Thanks again!"

(Local Private Landlord)

SAFE & STRONG COMMUNITIES AND HOMELESSNESS TEAMS:

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for everything. I was so impressed at how quickly our service user's needs were addressed and even more impressed by the caring and compassionate attitude I witnessed from everyone, nothing was too much trouble."

"A refreshing change from all too often encountering services/individuals who are far less willing to help or fail to appreciate the barriers some people can face. So thank you!"

(Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust)

UPDATE FROM OUR SAFE & STRONG COMMUNITIES TEAM



Team Work

Once again it has been necessary for our Mobile Neighbourhood Officers, along with volunteers from the Safe and Strong Communities Team, to descend on one of our estates and clear the area of an unsightly amount of rubbish and evident fly-tipping.

We must extend our thanks again to one resident who was amazing in assisting us in clearing the area, we were so grateful. More on this on page 3.

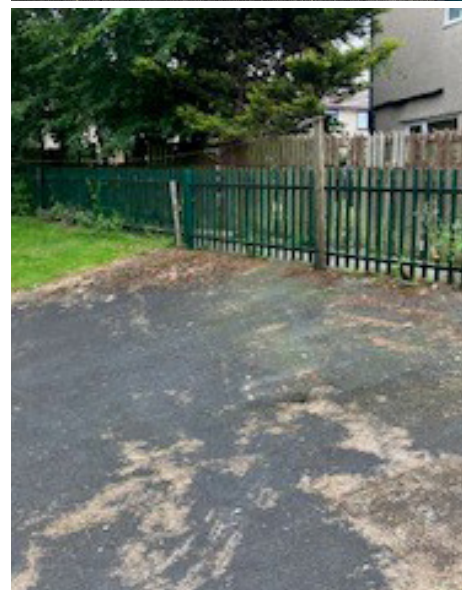
Unfortunately, sights such as this are a regular occurrence on some of our estates. Rubbish and fly-tipping can be dangerous to human and animal health. Accumulated waste is not only unsightly, but attracts vermin and pollutes land and waterways.

Outside of waste collection and contrary to some belief, the Council does not provide a general clean up service. Residents and the general public have a responsibility to ensure communal areas and estates are a clean and safe place to live and for our children to play.

It's inevitable that some rubbish/litter can overspill and will be left following bin collections and we ask that if this happens, please pick up and place in one of the bins to avoid an accumulation.

Fly-tipping is an ongoing problem and we encourage residents to pass on details if they see or are aware of who is responsible. We can then investigate and take action.

Thank you again to all those involved in the latest clean up.



When it comes to problem solving, we're always happy to think outside the box.

An example of this being a situation team member, Peter Buckley, came across proving language isn't always a barrier!

"Whilst investigating black bags dumped in a town centre backstreet, I came across the person responsible who spoke little English. Whilst chatting to him, he told me he was Lithuanian."

"After a bit of a struggle and various 'sign language' it transpired he

didn't know his bin day, had no bin and had only recently moved in."

"I told him I would return and, after a swift visit to the office, and using the wonders of Google translate, printed out in Lithuanian, some clear information about his waste and recycling collections and also gave him a calendar. I also managed to source him a wheelie bin."

"He emailed me his thanks later that day and I've since linked him in with Furness Multicultural Forum."

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 IN NUMBERS

Here's our annual report which gives information on how we performed during the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
We hope this is useful in terms of understanding key costs and our performance.

If you've any queries or comments, please call us on (01229) 876523 or email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Responsive Repairs

£1,524,778 spent on **6,425** responsive repairs:



▲ **1587** emergencies
▲ **1762** urgent
▲ **3076** routine



£237

Average cost of responsive repair

Planned Maintenance Works

£2,430,454 spent on major improvements:



£563,651 central heating



£281,178 rewires



£1,056,811 roofs



£375,235 windows



£153,579 repointing



100%

properties meet Decent Homes Standard

Rents

£88.55 average weekly rent

£433.744 current tenant arrears

6 tenants evicted for rent arrears



Tenancy & Estates

2851 people registered on Cumbria Choice in Furness locality

225 homes were re-let

82.2% properties accepted on first offer

11 properties sold under Right to Buy Scheme

2,486 dwellings managed by Housing Service



Your Home

Gas Safety Checks

100% properties have valid gas certificates

59 warrant applications made to gain access to carry out gas servicing where tenants refused access

£2,682 spent on warrants



Aids & Adaptations

£283,990 spent on adaptations

118 adaptations carried out

Neighbourhood

5 reports of race-related hate Crime

Complaints	Stage 1	Stage 2
Upheld	4	0
Not upheld	6	0
Partly upheld	2	0
Rejected/withdrawn	0	0
Total	12	0

IMPROVEMENT WORKS

FILLING - FENCING - FAREWELL

TARMAC TREATMENT

Planned improvement works are progressing well across the borough.

As well as planned works, we also carry out responsive repairs on Council-owned land.

Here are a couple of examples of work which has been done in response to concerns raised by local residents.

A large area of the Ruskin Avenue shop parade frontage was recently tarmacked.



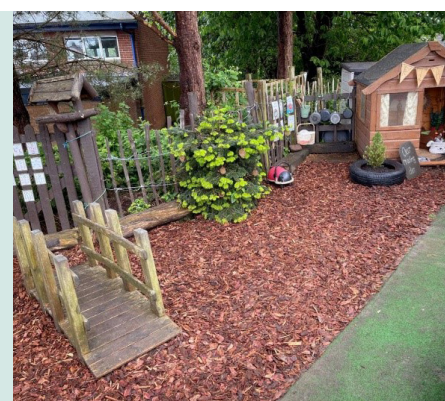
FRESH FENCING

Old timber fencing surrounding the green space on Storey Square in Dalton which had been repaired numerous times over the years, has now been replaced with smart looking metal powder-coated fencing which will last for years!

FAREWELL TO GEORGE JONES

We recently said farewell to our long-standing painting contractors, George Jones. For 15 years they have provided us with an excellent service.

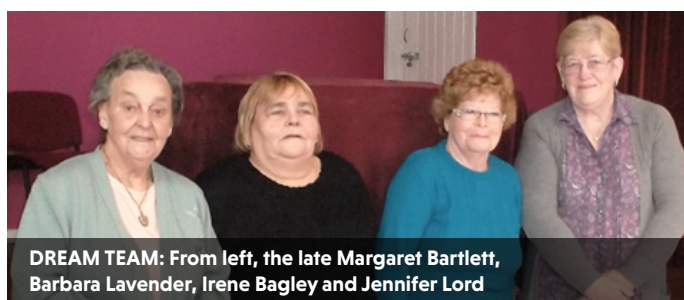
The good news is that two of their operatives are transferring across to Bell Group Painting.



DONATION from contractor: Shout out to DLP who kindly donated and delivered bark chipping to Roose Nursery for their outside play area!

REOPENING OF GRIFFIN

We're really pleased to announce that the Griffin Community Centre, which has been closed since the start of the pandemic, has now officially reopened.



DREAM TEAM: From left, the late Margaret Bartlett, Barbara Lavender, Irene Bagley and Jennifer Lord

Fond farewell...

But before we introduce you to the new volunteers who will now be managing the centre, we must firstly give huge thanks to Barbara Lavender who, with the help of Irene Bagley, Jennifer Lord and the late Margaret Bartlett, successfully ran the centre for many, many years.

It was in the late 1990s that the Griffin Community Management Committee - then consisting of the late Hilda Haigh, Jennifer, Barbara and Marina Bagley - took over responsibility for the community centre. They also formed the committee for the Devonshire Residents' and Tenants' Association which worked closely with the Management Committee and over the years they worked together to secure a number of upgrades to the community centre which included in 2015 the installation of insulation and an energy efficient heating and hot water system.

The Devonshire Residents' and Tenants' Association organised many special events, including out of town shopping trips which were always a highlight of their social calendar as well as seasonal supper evenings. Their weekly Friday Night Bingo Club was hugely popular with players coming from all

areas of the town to play. With funds raised by the various events they were able to donate to many charitable organisations.

The community centre was also the base for the Cotswold Crescent Senior Citizens' Club which met every week with members enjoying special lunches, shopping trips and the customary bingo sessions.

Over the years the Griffin Community Centre has been at the heart of the community, a space where people could get together for various activities and all of this would simply not have been possible without Barbara and the team of volunteers who selflessly ran it for the benefit of the community and for that we are enormously grateful.

As a token of thanks and appreciation, head of housing, Caroline Wagstaff, recently popped to see Barbara, Irene and Jennifer to present them bouquets.

Caroline said: "It was a pleasure to visit Barbara, Irene and Jennifer to thank them for over 20 years of hard work and dedication running the community centre. By forming the committee for the Devonshire Residents' and Tenants' Association they raised funds to provide many upgrades to the centre which have been enjoyed by residents in the community. They organised so many events including the shopping trips which were greatly enjoyed and the extremely popular Friday Night Bingo which saw people travelling from as far as Ulverston to attend."

"As a Housing Service we are extremely grateful - 20 years is a long time for people to give up their time to benefit their community, and we hope Barbara, Irene and Jennifer can now enjoy their free time with family and friends knowing the difference they made to their community."

"I would also like to wish Jacquei and Sharna every success in managing the community centre going forward."

Ocean Wave Community Centre

We are looking for volunteers who would be interested in running the Ocean Wave Community Centre on Central Drive, which has also remained closed since the pandemic.

For more details, please contact the Council's Community Development Officer, Simonetta Tiribocchi, who would be happy to have a chat with you about what's involved in managing the centre. Give Sim a call on 07825 783 060.

A FRIENDLY WELCOME AWAITS

In what will become a regular item, new managers of the community centre, Jacquei Sommerville and Sharna Smith, give an update since the community centre reopened in April.

The opening of the Griffin community centre happened a few months ago for the first time in over four years. We started with a bingo session with around 30 people attending. Everyone was very excited for the opening and most are continuing to come along and support the centre with a few new ones each week.

Our first toddlers group - Little Explorers - started a few weeks ago and was a success with a Saturday session too where older siblings were also welcome and they enjoyed some crafting while the younger ones played.

We have had some lovely donations from the community and this is something we are always looking for - raffle and tombola prizes.

We have some volunteers starting soon on our outside space and once completed we can open the space up to everyone for planting and maybe even a vegetable patch for the community.

Hire of the Community Centre

The hall is available for bookings. Please call Sharna on 07703 398 794 for more details.

Future Events

In the future we are looking to hold fundraising events to enable more events in the hall. We are also looking at a quiz night and any ideas people have we are happy to look into.

Any groups/clubs that are looking for a space to hire please get in touch we will be happy to accommodate if possible.

Contact Jacquei and Sharna on: 07703 398 794

GRIFFIN COMMUNITY CENTRE – WEEKLY ACTIVITIES		
Monday	Bingo	Doors open at 6:15pm for 7pm start. Includes a raffle and tombola. Refreshments served at an extra charge.
Wednesday	Little Explorers toddler group	9:30am – 11am with snacks and drinks for the children included in the price. Chargeable refreshments for adults.
Friday	Little Explorers toddler group	1pm – 2:30pm with snacks and drinks for the children included in the price. Chargeable refreshments for adults.

COMMUNITY CENTRE



EYES DOWN: Popular Monday night bingo
– everyone welcome!



Little Explorers

Baby and Toddler Group

GRIFFIN COMMUNITY CENTRE

Come along and have some fun!

Wednesday morning 9.30 - 11

Friday Afternoon 1- 2.30

£1 per child
(includes refreshments & snacks)

TERM TIME ONLY



HOW TO PREVENT DAMP AND MOULD

Last year the Council adopted a new Damp and Mould Standard which aims to ensure we are providing and maintaining dry, warm and healthy homes.

When we receive a report of damp and mould, we arrange for an officer to visit the property to carry out a full assessment.

In the vast majority of cases, the black mould/damp patches reported to us are caused by condensation and, although unsightly, are easily eradicated.

It's a fact that most homes will be affected by condensation at some point. However, certain activities can increase the problem.

Here are some tips for preventing damp and mould.

Worried about damp and mould?

We take reports of mould and damp very seriously, so if despite taking steps to prevent mould, the problem isn't going away, please get in touch so we can arrange for a surveyor to visit and investigate.

Please also report any repair issues that could cause damp in your home, for example, leaking gutters or pipes.

**Call us on (01229) 876578
or email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk**

TIPS FOR PREVENTING DAMP AND MOULD

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Regularly wipe down surfaces where moisture settles, such as windows and window sills. |  Avoid drying clothes inside. If you have to, make sure a window is open in the room where the clothes are drying. Don't put clothes on a radiator or in front of a fire. |
|  Close the bathroom door when having a bath or shower and open the window when possible for at least 30 minutes afterwards. |  Move furniture away from walls so there's a gap to allow air flow. |
|  Keep lids on pots and pans when cooking. |  Inexpensive dehumidifiers (moister absorbers) placed around your home will draw moisture and damp from the atmosphere. Place them on window sills or in wardrobes or cupboards. |
|  Use the cooker hood or extraction fan if you have one. |  Don't fill cupboards to bursting point – allow space for air to flow. |
|  Clean areas affected by mould. An effective method is to clean off the mould with a spray containing bleach. |  Dry bathroom surfaces after a bath or shower |

KEEPING YOU SAFE

Annual Gas Safety Checks

The safety of our tenants is our top priority and, as a landlord, we are required by law to carry out an annual safety inspection/service of all Council-owned gas appliances and visual checks of tenant-owned appliances. The gas service is free and usually takes no more than 45 minutes.

Our contractor, Sure Group, will always contact you in advance of these checks to arrange a convenient time to visit.

The vast majority of our tenants allow Sure Group access to carry out these crucial checks, but unfortunately access isn't always given in the run up to the due date and this can lead to court action being taken to gain entry.

It is in everyone's best interest that inspections are carried out promptly to ensure all gas appliances are working properly and safely. So please allow access when requested so that everyone stays gas safe - thank you.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

We are nearing the end of a major contract to fit Carbon Monoxide alarms in all our properties fitted with a gas boiler (or gas fire where fitted). These are then interlinked with the existing smoke and heat alarms.

The alarms you have fitted by the Council are then tested as part of the annual gas service to ensure they are fully functional.

As we are required by law to fit these alarms, please allow access for the contractor to install them, as we would have to seek access via court action to carry out the work if access is not granted.

If you are decorating your ceilings next to any of the alarms, please do not be tempted to remove them from the ceiling. You can use the dust cover for the alarm whilst painting and then remove the cover as soon as you have finished. You should not paint over the alarm or the base.

Any questions? If you've any gas-related questions or queries, please give me a call on 01229 876465. **Graham Harcourt, Gas Technician**

ARE YOU STRUGGLING TO PAY YOUR RENT?

If you're struggling financially, we know it's not always easy to talk about it, but our friendly and experienced Rents Team is here to help.

Our expert Benefits Officer, Amanda Morris, can also check you're receiving all the benefits you're entitled to – call Amanda on (01229) 876581.

The sooner you contact us - the sooner we can assess your circumstances and arrange a payment plan that's affordable for you.

Give a member of our team a call today:

- Emma Johnston (01229) 876469
- Carol High (01229) 876397
- or email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk



DID YOU KNOW, YOU COULD BE PAYING LESS FOR YOUR WATER?

If you're struggling to pay your water charges our Money Management Officer, Jo Hughes, may be able to help. She has secured reduced water bills for well over 800 of our tenants.

Successful applicants will be put on one of the seven water support tariffs and, as long as your income doesn't increase, you will remain on the reduced tariff for three years; after this date a renewal application will need to be completed. If your income decreases or has decreased since you last applied, then you may be eligible for a lower tariff.

You must be in receipt of one of the following benefits to qualify:

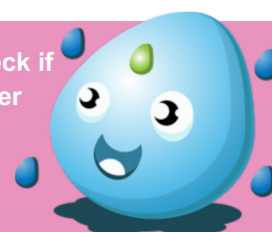
Universal Credit / Job Seekers Allowance / Income Support / Employment Support Allowance / Pension Credit / Housing Benefit / Working Tax Credits / Child Tax Credits / Council Tax Reduction.

For more information or to check if you're eligible for reduced water charges, contact Jo Hughes:

Call: (01229) 876534

Text: 07733 009 558

Email: jo.hughes@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk



ZERO TOLERANCE

Polite Reminder

Here in the Housing Service we pride ourselves on providing excellent customer care. In return, we expect our customers to act in a reasonable manner towards our staff and, in the vast majority of cases, they are respectful and friendly.

Unfortunately, we have noticed a rise in demanding/abusive behaviour towards our staff – which is simply unacceptable.

We are therefore politely reminding customers:

- **The Council will not accept violent or verbally abusive behaviour towards its staff.**
- **People who abuse our staff or premises will be required to leave.**
- **Any customer who telephones our office and is verbally aggressive to staff will be advised that should they continue the call will be terminated.**
- **If required, the police will be requested to remove abusive customers and we will prosecute when necessary.**

We appreciate some customers may be dealing with stressful situations – but we are here to help. Being courteous with each other helps make difficult situations less stressful.

THE EASY WAY TO PAY YOUR RENT

Many of our tenants pay their rent and water rates the hassle-free way by direct debit.

With a direct debit, you simply instruct your bank to make a monthly payment to us for the cost of your rent. Once set up, this payment will then be made automatically on the same date every month, so there's nothing else you need to do.

This makes life easy for you and there's no chance you'll forget to pay. Also, if you pay your water rates by direct debit, £5 per year will be credited to your account.

Setting up a direct debit is super simple and can be done over the phone by calling our Business Support Officer, Georgina Bridgens on (01229) 876478.

Switch to Direct Debit It's as easy as 1-2-3

- 1 Have your bank account details handy**
- 2 Call us on (01229) 876478**
- 3 We'll do the rest**



Regular events at Barrow Library & our branches

(All of these FREE events are held in Barrow Library with the exception of the Read, Rhyme & Play on Monday which is in Walney Library)

MONDAYS

Adult Learning Advice Cafe

10am - 12noon

Meet the Adult Learning team and find out about all the courses coming up.

Read, Rhyme & Play (Walney Library)

2pm - 2:45pm

Stories, music and play time with toys for tots under 5 and their grown-ups.

TUESDAYS

Knit & Natter

2pm - 3:30pm

Friendly knitting craft group, coffee & chat. Open to everyone, regardless of experience!

Barrow Writers' Club

4pm - 6pm

Meet like-minded people in your area and use the library space to work on your writing project! Any writing project welcome.

Read, Rhyme & Play (and Friday morning)

2pm - 2:45pm

Stories, music and play time with toys for tots under 5 and their grown-ups.

WEDNESDAYS

Refugee Drop In

1pm - 3pm

Helpful advice from the council's Refugee Resettlement Team.

Lego Club

4pm - 5pm

We provide the Lego, you bring the imagination!

Golden Hour

5pm - 6pm

Our sensory-friendly hour for neurodiverse customers. The library might be quiet, but the people don't have to be!

THURSDAYS

Sip & Surf

1:30pm - 3pm

Enjoy our relaxed, drop-in IT help group.

HAWC Drop In

2pm - 4pm

For support and advice talk to the council's Health and Wellbeing Coaches.

Friendship Group

2am - 4pm

Relaxed drop-in group. Meet new people, chat, play games, learn a new skill and enjoy a drink and biscuits!

Pokémon Club

4:30pm - 5:30pm

Bring along your Nintendo Switch, phone, tablet or Trading Cards to play with new friends, trade and battle!

FRIDAYS

Read, Rhyme & Play (and Tuesday afternoon)

10:30am - 11am

Stories, music and play time with toys for tots under 5 and their grown-ups.

English Cafe

10am - 12pm

Open to non-native English speakers. Come and play games and practice your English with us. Free coffee and snacks available.

Chess Club

3pm - 4:30pm

Intergenerational chess club in a friendly atmosphere—boards and pieces are provided, all ages from 8+ and all abilities welcome!

SATURDAYS

Story Craft

10am OR 2pm

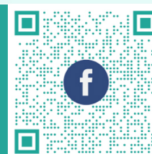
Two themed story craft sessions all based around a new book/theme each week.



Barrow Library is open: Mon to Thurs: 9:30am - 6pm | Friday: 9:30am - 5pm | Saturday: 10am - 4pm

Contact details: Tel: 01229 407370 | Email: barrow.library@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

To stay up to date with everything happening across our libraries, follow us on Facebook!



What's On

Westmorland & Furness Family Hub

ORMSGILL Community Centre

Ormsgill Stronger Together

MONDAY

- Coffee Morning Bacon bun and brew £1.50
- Community Fridge 9am til 10.30am
- The Chill Hub for children 5pm til 7pm

TUESDAY

Well Being Craft Club 9am til 12pm

 with Laura 6pm til 7pm £3

WEDNESDAY

Warm Hub and Community Fridge 9am til 10.30am

THURSDAY

 with Laura 7pm til 8pm £3

FRIDAY

Warm Hub and Community Fridge 9am til 10.30am

FIRST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

BINGO!

Put The Kettle On

Every Thursday 1pm - 3pm

- Enjoy our warm cosy venue with free beverages and snacks
- Friendly faces to socialise with and meet new people
- All are welcome

Barrow & District Disability Association, 71 to 77 School Street, Barrow in Furness, LA14 1EJ

Barrow & District Disability Association is working in partnership with Furness For You to increase volunteering opportunities and tackle loneliness through the Know Your Neighbourhood Fund.

Funded by UK Government

UKCF

CUMBRIA

Furness For You

HAVE YOU DISCOVERED YOUR FREE FRIENDLY FAMILY HUBS YET?



We have free advice, activities, and support for parents and carers of children aged 0-19 (25 with SEND) and friendly help and advice about

We have free advice, activities, and support for parents and carers of children aged 0-19 (25 with SEND) and friendly help and advice about:

- antenatal care and birth
- health visiting
- feeding support
- special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- health, playing and exploring
- active babies and toddlers
- childcare, support, and wellbeing
- advice and help for your older children and into the teenage years.

We are also here to support your own mental health with life's challenges and help you to navigate parenthood.

Our family hubs are located at:

- Barrow Library
- Dalton Community Centre
- Bram Longstaffe Family and Wellbeing Centre
- Limited services at Ormsgill Community Centre

Everyone, from any location in Westmorland and Furness can access our online information, help and advice, where you can browse through in your own time.

Sign up to our free learning zone for useful advice and guidance to support you and your family <https://wandffamilyhubs.org.uk/learning-zone>, whether you fancy learning how to soothe your baby with our baby massage sessions, healthy eating or potty training, or understanding how your teenager thinks, or perhaps get involved in crafts and ideas for learning through play, you'll find lots of resources to help you.



Check out our website <https://wandffamilyhubs.org.uk/> and follow us on Facebook: Family Hubs Barrow-in-Furness for news and updates.

FACE-TO-FACE WITH... AMANDA YELLOWLEY



Hi, I'm Amanda and I'm the Interim Senior Manager – Housing Standards & Services

I have been in my interim role now for a year, and I'm proud of the achievements the Housing Standards Team have made to date.

We have a new Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy, and work is ongoing with the Empty Homes Strategy, Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy and new Disabled Facilities Grants Policy. We are now delivering HUG2 (Home Upgrade Grant) which has been a challenge. And, of course, we should not underestimate the challenges of keeping our services running through the past 16 months.

This is very much a team effort, and I know we will make significant progress over the next year as a team.

AMANDA, TELL US ...

What was your first job?

Dental Nurse

Describe yourself in three words.

Bossy – caring – feisty

What's your biggest claim to fame?

I used to babysit Lee from the boy band 911

Have you any phobias, if so what are they?

Big spiders and flies

What film will you never grow tired of watching?

Grease

What's your go-to TV programme?

Casualty

What's your biggest guilty pleasure?

Pizza

What skill or talent would you most like to learn?

I wish I had learned to play the guitar or piano

If you could give your child-self one piece of advice what would you say?

You've got this girl

What period would you travel to if you were given a time machine?

My childhood

If you could change your name for a day, what would it be?

I wouldn't

What's your favourite board game?

Trivial Pursuit

What's your favourite cuisine?

Italian, but I was brought up on Polish food so that brings back memories

If you could eat one sandwich for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Chicken, pesto, mozzarella and tomatoes

What are your most commonly used emojis?

One with the love hearts around it

What's your most treasured possession?

My house

What or who makes you laugh the most?

My kids – they are hilarious

What makes you roll your eyes every time you hear it?

The Time Warp

What's your favourite quote or saying?

Your own resolution to success is more important than any other thing – Abraham Lincoln

What would your specialist subject be if you were to go on Mastermind?

1980s music

What's the most recent show you've binge watched?

Eric – it was a bit weird, but also hard hitting

If you could meet anyone in this world today, who would you meet?

Jurgen Klopp

What do you do to unwind after a long day at work?

Binge watch TV with the dog

What's your favourite drink?

Red wine

What was the first record you ever bought?

My Girl – Madness

What's your favourite singer/band?

I'm not sure I have just one – I like lots of bands

If you were forced to compete in the Olympic games what sport would you choose?

The sprint to get it over and done with!

Who are your heroes in real life?

My sons x

What superpower do wish you had?

Just to give everyone of home of their own



Do you want to make a difference to your local community?

We're recruiting local Street Voices who can work with us to help address local issues.

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY?

If so, have you considered becoming a Street Voice?

Street Voices are a vital link between the local community and the Council. They take up issues that can improve the community and estate environment.

We have a number of street voices – details are on the back page – but we're always keen to recruit more! So, if you live in an area that isn't covered by a Street Voice and you're interested and want to know what's involved, please get in touch:

Contact Cathy Kirk on (01229) 876523 or email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

WELCOME TO...



Sly McNally

Hi, I'm Sly and I joined the homeless team in February as the Homeless Outreach Worker, covering a variety of homeless issues and engaging with those that are rough sleeping.

My main career path was in policing, having spent 31 years in the police, mainly in south London and the last 14 years as a Detective Constable; I eventually transferred up to Barrow and policed here for 10 years.

I'm enjoying my new job, working as Homeless Outreach Worker. I seem to have it in my nature to help those that have fallen on hard times and equally enjoying the banter I can have with them, which of course builds that trust and rapport.



Tom

Hi, I'm Tom,

I joined Westmorland and Furness Council around seven months ago.

I work in the Housing Department as a Customer Service Advisor.

I have enjoyed getting to know our tenants and helping them with any housing issues. The role is very varied, and every day is different which is something that I enjoy.



Dean

Hi, I'm Dean and at the start of 2024 I joined Westmorland & Furness Council as a Facilities Management Officer.

I'll be a point of contact for all our tenants and their housing repair needs.

I look forward to speaking with many of you and I'm delighted to represent the council.



Dawn

Hi, I'm Dawn and a few months ago I joined the Housing Team as a Customer Services Advisor.

I'm really enjoying my new role as I get to deal with tenants and contractors by assisting them with any repair queries they may have.

This wide variety of tasks ensures that no two days are ever the same.

HOUSING STAFF OFFER THEIR SUPPORT

As a caring council, we want to make sure staff feel supported if they are struggling with their mental health and to spread the message that it's OK to ask for help.

Three members of our staff, along with a number of other council colleagues, have undertaken a two-day training course and are now qualified mental health first aiders.

The training has given them an indepth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing, and they can be on hand to recognise mental health concerns and help staff find support when needed.



CARING STAFF: From left: Peter Rimmer, Karen Hillman and Dean Steeley

RESULTS OF CHRISTMAS COLOURING COMPETITION

We had a fabulous response to our last competition, with lots of brilliant entries!!

Eventually the judges decided top places should be awarded to Millie Faddie in the 7s years and under category, and Florrie May Blythe in the 8-11 year old category – massive well done and congratulations to Millie and Florrie!!

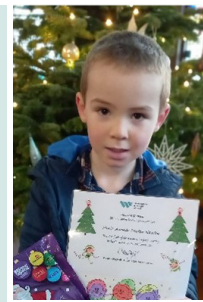
Thanks to everyone who entered the competition and well done to all our runners-up!

WINNER: Millie Faddie



WINNER: Florrie May Blythe

Dexter Newby



Freddie Holmes



Layla Oliver



Connie Blythe



Emily Wilde

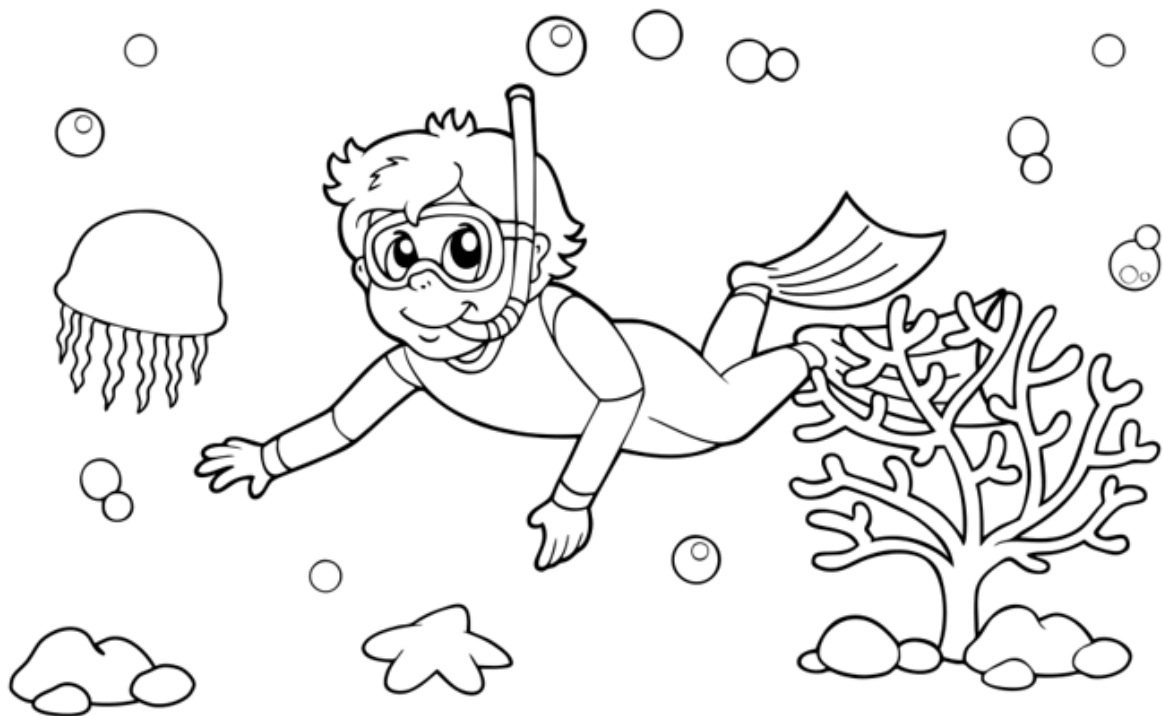


Gracie & Hallie Robertson

SUMMER COLOURING COMPETITION

It's so easy to enter the competition. Simply colour in the picture and return it to Cathy. There are two age groups: 7 years and under & 8-11 year-olds. The overall winners receive a £10 gift voucher. To enter, your parents, carers or grandparents must be Council tenants or leaseholders. **The deadline for entries is 9 August** Please send your entries to: Cathy Kirk, Housing Service, Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow LA14 2LD. Good luck everyone and have a FAB summer!!

LET'S GO EXPLORING!



Name (In capitals please)

Address

Telephone No **Age**

NEW SUPPORT CLUB FOR MEN



Andy's Man Club is a men's suicide prevention charity which has clubs across the county. The club takes its name from Andrew Roberts who sadly took his own life when he was 23.

The great news is that there is now an Andy's Man Club in Barrow, which provides a safe space where guys can talk, laugh and cry but ultimately feel better about themselves. The club meets every Monday (except bank holiday Mondays) at 7pm at Barrow AFC on Wilkie Road and any man over 18 can pop along – NO booking – just turn up, NO fees, NO judgement, NO pressure to talk and 100% confidential – and the brew and biscuits are free!

The first rule about Andy's Man Club is IT'S OKAY TO TALK – it's a group where men don't have to battle to be heard or listened to, but where they can join the fight to reduce the rate of suicide in men.

To find out more:

Facebook: Andys Man Club Barrow in Furness

Website: www.andysmanclub.co.uk

Email: info@andysmanclub.co.uk

FURNESS FOR YOU

Reducing loneliness across Barrow-in-Furness

10 partners based across Barrow have come together to deliver a free service that benefits local people struggling with loneliness. Our team will work with you on a one-to-one basis offering specialised support for you and your needs.

Our partnership covers health and wellbeing, benefits, arts and crafts groups, learning new skills and so much more all for free. Just let us know what you're interested in or need support with and we'll guide you every step of the way.

Services and activities include access to a:

Digital IT Suite, Community Laundry, Energy Advice & Money Mentoring, Boost Self Esteem & Confidence, Sensory & Sleep Issues Support, Interpretation Services & Language Barrier Support, Disablement Advice & Benefits Service, Community Café & Social Activities, Holistic Support for Young People, and more!

We also have volunteering opportunities via our volunteering portal and through our Community Connector.



Together, we are making a difference across Barrow-in-Furness
Our team will work with you on a one-to-one basis offering specialised support for you and your needs.

For more information, please get in touch via email - furnessforyou@cumbriacvs.org.uk
Or visit our website - <https://cumbriacvs.org.uk/projects/furness-for-you/>

We do ask that you complete a short questionnaire upon registration, then you can join any of the following activities for free to benefit your wellbeing and social inclusion. If you are interested in volunteering, let us know. We can help.

Increasing volunteering and tackling loneliness through the **Know Your Neighbourhood Fund** **Furness For You**

ACTIVITY GROUPS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE WITH SIGHT LOSS

Vision Support Barrow and District works to enable and support people with visual impairments to lead independent lives.



**Vision Support
Barrow & District**

Their Vision Support Centre in Cavendish Street is a go-to-place to seek support – whether you're looking for specialist equipment like glasses and symbol canes or looking for advice from one of their officers.

They also host a variety of groups for local people with sight loss including support groups, social opportunities, and classes to learn new skills:

Weekly Sessions

- Crafts - Wednesdays, 1:30pm to 3:30pm
- Knit & Natter - Thursdays, 10am to 12pm

Monthly Sessions

- Kitchen Skills - 1st Wednesday, 10am to 12pm
- Men's Group - 3rd Thursday, 10am to 1pm
- Low Vision Clinic - Friday (when advertised), 9am to 4pm

If you're planning on attending any of these sessions, it's recommended to call first to double-check they're still on: 01229 440556



Vision Support Barrow & District



www.vsbdd.org.uk

Vision Support Centre | 67/69 Cavendish Street | Barrow-in-Furness | LA14 1QD

Tel: 01229 440556 | email: info@vsbd.org.uk

POINTS OF CONTACT

Assistant Director of Housing

Caroline Wagstaff (01229) 876523

Interim Senior Manager of Landlord Services & Homelessness
Rebecca Halton (01229) 876549

Rent Recovery Team

Carol High (01220) 876397
Emma Johnston (01229) 876469
Katie Barker (01229) 876471

Benefit Liaison Officer
Amanda Morris (01229) 876581

Money Management Officer
Jo Hughes (01229) 876534

Safe & Strong Communities Team

Safe & Strong Communities Manager
Caroline Kendall (01220) 876462

Senior Neighbourhood Team Leader
Debbie Cubiss (01229) 876423

Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer
Gordon Robson (01229) 876410

Neighbourhood Officers
Peter Buckley 07843 471 414
Dan Crowe (01229) 876479
Cheryl Waite (01229) 876520

Neighbourhood Support Officers
Simone Singleton (01229) 876580
Lisa Lindley (01229) 876493

Housing Maintenance Team

Housing Maintenance Manager
Nigel Clarke (01220) 876326

Senior Surveyor
Bryan Walker (01229) 876466

Contract Supervisors
Graham Harcourt (01229) 876465
Peter Rimmer (01229) 876530
Ste Herrington (01229) 876492
Jordan Herrington (01229) 876531

Needs Assessment Officer
Lindsay Gedling (01229) 876577

Facilities Management Officer
Dean Steeley (01229) 876365

Business Support Team

Right to Buy
Michelle Bradley (01229) 876483

Household Insurance
Joanne Worrall (01229) 876488

Choice-Based Lettings
Rachael Hornby (01229) 876554
Donna Brown (01229) 876468

Direct Debits
Georgina Bridgens (01229) 876478

Lettings Team

Jackie Rimmer (Snr) (01220) 876550
Andy High (01229) 876345
Jacky Macaulay (01229) 876403

Homelessness Team

Advice (office hours) (01220) 876599
Out-of-hours (01229) 833311

Email:
dutyrefer1@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Reporting Repairs

During office hours
Non-gas repairs (01229) 876578
Gas-only repairs* 0800 031 6578
or 0151 728 5739

Out-of-office emergency repairs
Non-gas repairs (01229) 833311
Gas-only repairs* (01229) 833311

* No heating or hot water
or radiator and boiler
problems



@ Email us: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

✉ Write to us: Housing Service, Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow LA14 2LD

🌐 Website: <https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/housing/council-housing>

📘 Facebook page: Westmorland and Furness Council Thriving Communities

✂ X page: @WandFCThrivComm

TOWN HALL OFFICE HOURS



In Person
Monday to Friday:
9am - 4pm



Telephone
Customer Services (01229) 876543
Monday to Friday:
8:30am – 4:30pm (4pm Friday)

CONTACTS FOR STREET VOICES

Council-recognised street voices within the Borough

Raglan Court & Corporation Terrace:
Mandy Anderson 07925 410 817

Roosegate:
Nicola Bull – 07808 264 941

Newton Road Area, Dalton:
David Pearson – (01229) 230019



Broughton Road Area, Dalton:
Danny Green – 07999 462 934

North Walney Residents' Association:
Steve Thornton – 07856 753 482