

Housing Matters

Newsletter for Westmorland and Furness Council Tenants and Leaseholders

Winter 2025

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Meet our new street voice - Bill McEwan

We're delighted to welcome Bill McEwan as our latest Street Voice!

Bill brings a wealth of experience and a real passion for supporting tenants and making sure your views are heard. We look forward to the great work we'll achieve together.

For more about Bill and what makes him tick turn to page 14.

Have I got housing news for you

As we approach the festive season and the end of another busy year, I want to take a moment to reflect and personally reach out to all our tenants and residents across Westmorland and Furness.

This has been a year of real progress, partnership, and listening. One of our key milestones was launching our new Tenant Engagement Strategy, designed to strengthen how we communicate with you and involve you in shaping the services you rely on. Your voices and lived experiences are at the heart of everything we do, and this strategy is all about making sure they continue to guide us.

We also welcomed our Regulatory Inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing. This is an important process that helps us ensure we're meeting the highest standards and delivering safe, well-managed homes. Thank you to everyone who took part and shared their views.

Alongside this, we're reshaping our Housing Service so that our teams are better placed to deliver high-quality support across the whole area. These changes are focused on making our services more responsive, more consistent, and easier for you to access.

In this edition, we're pleased to introduce Bill McEwan, our newest Street Voice. Bill is well known to many of you and brings a wealth of experience, insight, and enthusiasm to the Tenants' Forum. A sincere thank you to Bill - and to all our Street Voices - who work tirelessly throughout the year to represent their communities. You can read Bill's story on page 10.

On page 13, we take a closer look at Awaab's Law - what it is, why it was introduced, and what it means for tenants. This new legislation is an important step in strengthening housing standards across the country, and I encourage everyone to take a moment to learn more.

We're also sharing a powerful real-life story on page 16 from one of our tenants about her experience with a disrepair claims company. Her journey is a cautionary reminder of the risks these companies can pose, with financial consequences that can be severe - she now faces £18,000 of debt. Please take the time to read her story so you can protect yourself and stay informed.

On page 21, you'll find more detail about our new Tenant Engagement Strategy - what's changing, how you can get involved, and why your feedback matters more than ever. We've also highlighted some of the improvements we've made over the past year and shared what you can expect next as we continue working to deliver the best possible service.

We recognise that many households are still feeling the pressures of rising living costs. Across Furness and Penrith, local venues have once again opened their doors as safe,

welcoming warm places, offering warmth, company and support throughout the colder months. Turn to page 28 for details.

With Christmas just around the corner, I'd like to gently remind everyone that no one needs to feel alone at this time of year. On page 8, you'll find information about local places offering support over the festive period.

Finally, I want to wish you all a happy, safe, and peaceful Christmas. And if you're not feeling festive this year, please don't hesitate to reach out - there are many friendly people ready to listen and help.

I look forward to continuing our work together throughout 2026.

Caroline Wagstaff
Assistant Director of Housing

Have Your Say - Tenant Perception Survey Coming Soon!

We're excited to let you know that M.E.L Research will be carrying out our next Tenant Perception Survey in the New Year.

This is your chance to tell us what you think and help shape the services we provide.

What's happening?

Look out for a letter from MEL Research with your paper survey. Prefer online? You'll also be able to complete the survey digitally - it's quick and easy!

A little thank you...

Everyone who takes part will be entered into a free prize draw to win one of five £50 shopping vouchers! Your views really do make a difference, so please take a few minutes to share them. Thank you for helping us improve!

New Gas Servicing Contractor

We're delighted to welcome Rothwell Plumbing Services Ltd (RPS) as our new gas servicing contractor from 15 December.

RPS has over 30 years of experience keeping homes safe and warm through boiler servicing and repairs across Cumbria, the North West, and the North East. Their friendly, fully qualified engineers are supported by an experienced office team who are ready to help with appointments and answer any questions you may have.

You'll easily recognise RPS engineers by their white vehicles with the large blue 'R' logo.

Regular gas servicing is an important part of keeping your home safe and your heating working efficiently, so thank you for helping us by allowing access when needed. We look forward to working with RPS to provide you with a reliable and professional service.

If you need to report a gas-related repair the numbers you need are on the back page, including the new numbers to call from 15 December.

Looking After Yourself This Christmas

The festive season can be a joyful time, but it can also bring extra pressures - especially if you're already finding things difficult.

For some, Christmas can make feelings of stress, loneliness, or worry feel stronger than usual, so it's important to be gentle with yourself and take care of your wellbeing.

If you don't have family or friends nearby, or feel like there's no one you can talk to, please remember that you are never alone. The Samaritans are there to listen, day or night, every day of the year. You can call them for free on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org

Need some company?

If you'd like some company on Christmas Day, the wonderful Furness Homeless Support Group will once again be hosting free Christmas dinners on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Our local Salvation Army is also open and offering practical support up to and including Friday, 19 December.

Self-care tips

If you're struggling with the pressures of the season, small acts of self-care can make a real difference — whether that's taking a short walk, listening to music, reading, or just having a quiet moment to yourself.

Try not to compare your experiences with what you see in adverts or on social media - they rarely reflect real life and can make us feel worse. Taking a break from social media and reminding yourself that the season doesn't last forever can really help.

Remember, you are not alone

If you need additional support, please refer to the contact details at the bottom of this page for national and local services.

With warm wishes from all of the Housing Services team.

Christmas at Furness Homeless Support Group

Once again, we will be holding our Christmas Shelter at our Bath Street Day Centre. We will be providing a full Christmas lunch with all the trimmings and a gift from Santa for everyone!

Everyone is welcome – no-one should be alone at Christmas.

- Christmas Day 11am – 4pm
- Boxing Day 11am – 4pm

If anyone would like to help fund this, you can donate via our 'Just Giving' page:

<https://justgiving.com/furnesshomeless>

Thanks for your support, it makes a huge difference!

From everyone at Furness Homeless Support Group, we wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful New Year

Furness Homeless Support Group

Salvation Army

19 Abbey Road, Barrow

Our Warm Welcome Space is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10am-2pm /Thursday 10am-1pm

We're open for practical support as usual up to Friday 19 December.

Join us on Christmas Day for worship, 10:30–11:15am.

We reopen at 10am on Wednesday, 7 January for support and our Warm Welcome Space.

For the latest updates, visit our Facebook page – The Salvation Army Barrow in Furness

Samaritans

Call free on 116 123

- 24/7 Christmas Eve
- 24/7 Christmas Day
- 24/7 Boxing day

We're open 24/7, 365 days a year

Street Voices: News and Updates

Bill McEwan – Your new voice on the street

We're delighted to welcome Bill McEwan as our newest Street Voice covering the Bank Lane to Millstone Avenue area of Ormsgill! Many will already know Bill as a local councillor for Ormsgill and Parkside, and now he's taking on this new role as a long-time tenant on the estate.

Bill's always gone the extra mile for local people and now has an official title to match! As Street Voice, he'll be championing tenants' ideas, listening to concerns, and making sure your voices are heard.

He'll also join our Tenants' Forum, bringing tenant perspectives directly into discussions that shape housing policies and community projects. Whether tackling local issues or having a friendly chat, Bill's ready to get involved.

Welcome, Bill - and thank you for everything you already do for our community!

Getting to know Bill...

Q: Bill, what does being a Street Voice mean to you?

A: It's a fantastic opportunity to listen to tenants, understand what matters most to them, and help make positive changes on the estate. I've always cared about our community, and this gives me another way to make a difference.

Q: What are you most looking forward to in this role?

A: Meeting more of my neighbours and hearing their ideas. Sometimes it's the little things that can make the biggest difference, and I want to make sure every voice counts.

Q: Many residents know you as a councillor - how does being a long-time tenant shape your perspective?

A: Living here gives me firsthand insight into what it's like day-to-day. I understand the challenges, the joys, and the community spirit that makes Ormsgill special, and I can bring that perspective to the role.

Q: If you weren't helping the community, what would we find you doing?

A: Being a councillor and street voice keeps me busy, so my downtime is precious. When I'm not working for the community, I love to spend it with my family, just winding down and enjoying the little things.

Q: Any final message for tenants?

A: I'm really looking forward to hearing from as many people as possible. Every voice matters, and together we can make Ormsgill an even better place to live. Don't hesitate to say hello!

Festive Cheer for Local Children

Mandy Anderson, Chair of the Tenants' Forum, delivers gift wrapped selection boxes to Ormsgill Stronger Together's for their upcoming children's Christmas party. The Tenants' Forum was pleased to support the event, with funding from the Tenant Compact Budget."

Have Your Say

Our new Tenant Engagement Strategy

Our new Tenancy Engagement Strategy will give you more chances to get involved and help shape the services that matter most to you. Whether it's through surveys, focus groups, or tenant panels, your voice can make a real difference. Turn to page 21 for more details

Want to take things a step further – become a Street Voice!

Being a Street Voice is a rewarding way to make a real difference in your community. It's a chance to develop communication skills, meet fellow residents and help shape the future of our housing services.

Once appointed, Street Voices become members of our Tenants' Forum together with officers and a couple of elected Members. Meetings are held every three months and there's always a brew and biscuits.

More information can be found on our website:

<https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/get-involved/street-voices>

Interested?

If your area doesn't yet have a Street Voice (details on page 41), we'd love to hear from you.

Call Cathy Kirk on 01229 876523 Email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

For more information

Visit our website for more information on our Tenants' Forum and Street Voices:

<https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/get-involved>

Celebrating Good Neighbours and Tenants!

Our communities shine because of caring neighbours who go the extra mile. Through the Good Neighbour scheme, we recognise those special people who make a real difference - bringing kindness, support, and positivity to those around them.

Well done Debbie!

Earlier this summer, we were delighted to present Debbie Slone with shopping vouchers in recognition of her efforts.

Despite facing health challenges, Debbie has shown great dedication to keeping her home and garden neat and welcoming. She even goes the extra mile by cutting her neighbour's grass - helping create a pleasant environment for all.

Debbie told us her garden is her "saviour," offering comfort and focus during treatment. Her resilience and generosity are truly inspiring!

Thank You Julie and Pauline and the Love Where You Live Team

Sisters Julie Cooke and Pauline Caine began caring for planters in Hindpool four years ago, sparking a fantastic community effort. With support from volunteers, Love Where You Live now maintains ten planters across the estate and holds regular litter picks - bringing colour, pride and care to the area.

To thank them for their dedication, Julie and Pauline were recently presented with Love to Shop vouchers. While they started the initiative, we're grateful to everyone involved for helping make Hindpool a place we can all be proud of.

Good Tenants Rewarded

Huge well done to the latest winners of our Good Tenant prize draw, Julie Vigus and Vanessa McGuirk. Thanks for being such great tenants. Enjoy spending your vouchers!

Want to know more about our incentive schemes?

Good Tenant Draw

Tenants with a clear rent account, no anti-social behaviour, well-maintained homes/gardens, and who allow access for safety checks can enter a quarterly draw to win shopping vouchers (£100 first prize, £50 runners-up).

Good Neighbour 'Thank You'

Residents who go above and beyond to support their community can be nominated to receive a £50 shopping voucher as a thank-you.

Leave It Clean Scheme

Tenants moving into private housing who leave their council home clean, tidy, and repair-free may receive £100 in shopping vouchers.

To apply or nominate, contact Cathy Kirk: 01229 876523, Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 2LD

For more details [Incentive Schemes | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

Awaab's Law – What is it and what does it mean?

Everyone deserves a home that is safe, secure and well maintained. A new social housing law, known as Awaab's Law, came into effect on 27 October 2025, and means landlords must investigate and fix emergency and significant hazards within strict timeframes when an issue is reported.

This new law is named after two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who tragically died after prolonged exposure to mould in his home.

As your landlord, we are fully committed to meeting the requirements of Awaab's Law and making sure every home we manage is safe, well-maintained, and comfortable to live in.

We have put the necessary training and processes in place for our staff and contractors to ensure that we can respond swiftly and effectively to any reported issues.

What does Awaab's Law cover?

- Emergency hazards – issues that pose an immediate and significant risk of harm to your health (e.g. dangerous electrical faults, damaged external doors or windows, and major leaks). These must be investigated and made safe within 24 hours of the landlord being made aware of the hazard.
- Damp and mould that poses a significant risk of harm to your health and safety must be investigated within 10 working days and made safe within a further five working days. There may be some cases where damp and mould are considered an emergency hazard.

What we will do

Under Awaab's Law, we must act promptly when hazards are reported in your home. This includes complaints about damp, mould, and other hazards. Here's how we handle them:

- Investigation: We will inspect and assess any reported problem promptly in line with Awaab's Law timeframes.
- Emergency Repairs: If an issue presents an immediate risk to health or safety, we will make it safe within 24 hours.
- Repairs and Remediation: Any further work needed to fully fix the problem will be completed within a reasonable period, depending on the severity of the hazard.
- Tenant Communication: We will keep you informed throughout the process and provide a written summary if an emergency repair requires further work or investigation.

How You Can Help

- Report any emergency repairs or hazards as soon as you notice them.
- Contact us if you have already reported a problem and are concerned it has not been resolved.
- By reporting issues promptly and letting us act quickly, we can ensure no one has to live in conditions that could harm their health.

Damp and Mould – what you need to know

One of the most common issues covered by Awaab's Law is damp and mould. We understand this can be worrying, but in most cases, it's caused by everyday condensation - which, while unpleasant, is usually straightforward to manage - read our tips below.

Please also check out our damp and condensation videos by visiting:

<https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/your-home/repairs>

Reporting damp or mould concerns

- **Barrow area:** Call 01229 876578 or email housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
- **Eden area:** Call 0300 373 3300 or email housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

See page 61 for our out-of-office numbers.

Want to know more?

We can't cover every detail here, but you can find full guidance by visiting [Awaab's Law: Guidance for tenants in social housing - GOV.UK](#)

Tips for Preventing Damp and Mould

Condensation is one of the most common causes of damp and mould in a home. If condensation is allowed to sit on walls for long periods of time, it can penetrate the outer layers of your walls and seep into furniture where it becomes a longer-term problem, causing mould to grow. But there are things you can do to help reduce condensation.

- Regularly wipe down surfaces where moisture settles, such as windows and window sills.
- Close the bathroom door when having a bath or shower and open the window when possible for at least 30 minutes afterwards.
- Keep lids on pots and pans when cooking.
- Use the cooker hood or extraction fan if you have one.
- Clean areas affected by mould. An effective method is to clean off the mould with a spray containing bleach.
- 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.
- Move furniture away from walls so there's a gap to allow air flow.
- 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
- Don't fill cupboards to bursting point – allow space for air to flow.
- Dry bathroom surfaces after a bath or shower

You Said, We Did

During the year, many of you told us that some bin stores were in poor condition, with rotten timber and cracking brickwork making them difficult to use and maintain.

We listened – and we acted. Across the area, these outdated structures have been replaced with smart, durable metal fencing, creating cleaner, safer, and more attractive spaces for everyone.

Your voice makes a difference. Together, we're creating safer, cleaner, and more enjoyable spaces for all residents.

We'd love to hear from you!

We're always keen to hear from you - whether it's ideas, suggestions, or thoughts on how we do things. Please don't hesitate to get in touch!

Call 01229 876523 or email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Leaseholders' Forum Returns!

Your voice matters - join the conversation.

We're delighted to announce that the Leaseholders' Forum will return early next year! This is your opportunity to share your views, ask questions, and provide feedback on issues that affect your home.

The Forum is a friendly, open space where leaseholders can raise concerns and speak directly with officers about what matters most to you. Your input helps shape priorities and improve decisions for the whole community.

What's next?

Look out for a letter in the new year with full details and the date of the first meeting.

In the meantime, visit <https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/your-home/leaseholders> for updates and more information.

Maintenance Matters News from the Team

Disrepair Claim: Tenant ordered to pay £18,000 in court costs

Imagine being promised an easy solution to your repair problems - only to end up with a huge debt and months of stress. One of our tenants, Andrea, has bravely shared her experience to help others avoid the same mistake.

Andrea's Story

When Andrea noticed repair issues in her home, she simply wanted them sorted.

That's when she was contacted by a company claiming they could help her make a disrepair claim against the council. They assured her it would be straightforward: the council would have to carry out the repairs, and she wouldn't pay a penny.

"At the time, it sounded like the easiest way to get the repairs done," Andrea explained. "I didn't really understand what I was signing - I just wanted things fixed."

But things didn't go as promised. The case went to court, and the judge dismissed her claim outright. The result? Andrea was left with County Court Judgments and a bill for the council's legal costs—a staggering £18,000.

"I never imagined it could end like this. The worry of facing such a huge debt has affected every part of my life"

"It was incredibly stressful and upsetting," she said. "I never imagined it could end like this. The worry of facing such a huge debt has affected every part of my life—I've struggled to sleep, constantly worried about money, and it's taken a real toll on my mental health."

The experience has changed how Andrea approaches decisions:

"Even simple choices feel daunting now because I'm afraid of making another mistake. I hope my story helps others think twice before signing anything."

Our sincere thanks

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Andrea for allowing us to share her story. It takes courage to speak openly about the stress, worry, and financial impact of this process.

Our hope is that by sharing Andrea's experience, other tenants will think twice before signing up with claims companies and avoid the risks she faced.

Our advice: Contact us first

As your landlord, we're here to help and look after you and your home. Please be very cautious if approached by companies offering quick fixes. Don't feel pressured into signing anything - you could end up liable for huge costs if things go wrong.

If you have any concerns about the condition of your home, contact us directly. We'll work with you to resolve issues without putting you at financial risk.

Our repair contact details are on the back page.

Nigel Clarke
Housing Maintenance Manager

Keeping Communal Areas Safe and Clear

Your safety is our top priority, and we need your help to keep everyone protected.

Government fire safety guidance requires hallways, stairwells, and other shared spaces to be kept completely clear.

Why is this important?

Items left in communal areas - especially things that can burn - create a serious fire risk and can block emergency exits. In an emergency, clear escape routes save lives.

What's next?

We'll be adopting a zero-tolerance approach to ensure compliance. Detailed guidance will be sent soon, but please start checking your communal areas now.

Thank you for your co-operation - together we can keep our homes safe and welcoming for everyone.

Gas Safety Checks

Thank You for Your Co-operation!

We're proud that 100% of our homes have valid gas certificates, and that's thanks to you.

Each year, we carry out free gas safety checks on Council-owned appliances and inspect any you own. These visits take less than an hour, and our gas contactor will contact you in advance to arrange a convenient time to visit.

Thank you to everyone who provides access promptly - it helps keep you, your family, and your neighbours safe.

If we can't gain access before the deadline, we may need to take legal steps to enable us to fulfil our legal duty, so please allow entry when contacted.

Together, let's stay gas safe!

Fire Safety and Alarms

Your safety is really important to us. That's why we've installed smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms in all our homes. But do you know what to do if one goes off, or if you smell gas or fumes?

If fire breaks out in your home

- Leave the room where the fire is immediately, then close the door.
- Tell everyone in your home and get them to leave.
- Do not stay behind to put the fire out.
- Call the Fire Service on 999 immediately.
- Wait outside, away from the building.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide is a poisonous, colourless, odourless and tasteless gas produced by the incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels such as gas, oil, wood and coal.

It is often called the silent killer because it can be inhaled without being detected and prevents the blood carrying oxygen to the body's cells, tissues and organs.

Exposure to carbon monoxide can lead to flu-like symptoms or cause serious harm such as brain damage and high concentrations can be fatal.

The carbon monoxide detector fitted in your home emits long intermittent beeps when activated. (By contrast, smoke/heat alarms emit short intermittent beeps when activated).

What to do if a carbon monoxide alarm sounds

1. Call Cadent immediately, the National Gas Emergency Service: 0800 111 999.
2. Ask for a Cadent reference number (you will need this for the Council/gas contractor)
3. Ventilate the property - open windows and turn off all gas appliances.
4. Wait for Cadent – they normally attend within two hours and will make the property safe (usually by capping off the gas supply).
5. If you feel unwell – go to A&E or your GP and request a blood test for possible Carbon Monoxide exposure.
6. Report incident to us, including the reference number, during working hours – 01229 876578. We will arrange for:
 - Our gas contractor to attend the next working day to do a carbon monoxide trigger test and to reinstate the boiler/ heating to safe working order. Normally takes around two hours.
 - Our electrical contractor will also visit to test all alarms in the property.

What to do if you smell gas or fumes but no alarm is sounding

Follow steps 1 – 5 above, then report the incident to us, including the reference number, during working hours – 01229 876578.

- If necessary, we will arrange for our gas contractor to attend the next working day to reinstate the boiler and heating.
- Our electrical contractor will also visit to test all alarms in the property

Every Adaptation Counts

Adaptations arranged by our team transform lives, one home at a time. Behind each grab rail, ramp, shower or stairlift installation is a story of independence restored and daily challenges eased.

For many of our tenants, simple tasks such as bathing, moving between rooms, or stepping outside their front door can become major barriers. Through thoughtful adaptations, we enable people to remain safe, confident, and comfortable in their own home.

It's often the small changes that make the biggest difference. A handrail fitted beside a path allows someone to enjoy their garden again or access the community. A level-access shower means a resident can bathe without assistance. These improvements don't just adapt properties, they empower people to live a more independent life.

Completing an adaptation brings an immense sense of reward for the positive impact the work has achieved. It is hugely rewarding for the team to see residents regain their freedom and independence at home. It's a role the team embraces because it combines compassion often with technical and problem-solving skills, each one different but all focused on improving quality of life.

Dee's Story

For our tenant, Dee, a simple platform outside her home made all the difference:

"I've had a platform put outside my house to make better steps—it is amazing and I feel so much safer. I'm so pleased and grateful for all you are doing for me. It may not seem much to some people, but to actually be able to get outside has been amazing. Lindsay is a very compassionate lady and takes time to sit and chat whenever she is here."

Every completed adaptation reminds us that housing isn't just about buildings, it's about people, dignity, and the ability to live safely and independently in the place they call home.

Lindsay Gedling
Housing Needs Officer

Everything Eden - News | Updates | Community Insights

Wheelie Bin Pilot at Carleton Meadows

Back in February, Carleton Meadows was selected for a pilot scheme to test wheelie bins in place of the blue bags previously used for general waste.

The trial formed part of the council's wider plan to create a new, unified waste and recycling service for the whole of Westmorland and Furness. It followed strong feedback from residents during the council's Community Conversation, where many people expressed interest in switching to wheelie bins for greater convenience and reliability.

Since the pilot began, the scheme has been running well. Residents have reported that the bins are easier to use, more secure in bad weather and help to keep waste contained.

Waste Services Across Westmorland and Furness

The council is preparing to roll out a new, standardised waste and recycling service across the wider area. Early changes are expected in the coming months, with full implementation phased over several years to allow communities and collection teams to adapt.

Gas Repairs Made Easier!

As advised earlier, we've appointed Rothwell Plumbing Services Ltd as our new gas contractor – and this means big improvements for you!

From 15 December, Eden tenants can access the same reliable gas repairs service as all our other tenants both during office hours and out of hours.

We're proud to bring everyone together under one consistent, reliable gas repairs service and it's a real milestone for us in improving our gas repairs provision and making sure every tenant feels supported whenever an issue arises.

Need to report a gas repair? You'll find all the contact details on page 61.

keep them handy!

News from our safe and strong communities team

How our team makes a difference

Our Safe and Strong Communities Team works hard to make sure tenants feel safe and supported in their homes and neighbourhoods.

They tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and work closely with tenants, the police, and other agencies to resolve issues quickly and fairly.

The team doesn't just deal with problems - they look for the reasons behind them.

Sometimes ASB can be linked to things like domestic abuse or exploitation. By taking a trauma-informed approach, they balance enforcement with care, helping people get the support they need while keeping communities safe.

What this means for you:

- We listen and act on reports of ASB.
- We work with partners to protect tenants and prevent harm.
- We support people to make positive changes and keep their homes secure.

A real story of support and care

Here's one example of how our team turned a challenging situation into a positive outcome for a tenant and their community:

When we received reports of ASB and domestic incidents in one of our properties, the story was more complex than it first appeared.

Behind the noise complaints and concerns about drug activity was a tenant, Miss X, living in fear of her own son.

At first, Miss X was reluctant to engage with us - but through patience and trust-building, we discovered she was at risk and needed urgent support.

Working with the police and other agencies, we helped her move to a safer home, installed extra security, and secured a court injunction to keep her son away. After a breach, enforcement action was taken, and he later began engaging with recovery services.

The difference this made:

- Miss X felt safe and in control of her life.
- ASB complaints stopped, and neighbours welcomed the change.
- The perpetrator started working with support services.
- Our team strengthened its approach to spotting hidden domestic abuse behind ASB reports.

This case shows how we combine enforcement with compassion - protecting vulnerable tenants, restoring community peace, and supporting positive change.

If you're worried about ASB or need help contact us: Call 01229 876578 Email:
safeandstrongteam@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Do You Want to Know About Us?

What's next?

The launch of our new Tenant Engagement Strategy

This strategy sets out our commitment to working with residents to ensure that their voices are heard, and their views taken into consideration when making key decisions about housing services, ensuring they can be actively involved in shaping and designing the service they receive from us.

Our commitment is to improve how tenants can get involved to ensure we work together, with you, to tailor our services to meet your needs and listen to your views and feedback in shaping and designing housing services.

To do this, we have agreed three key objectives.

Insight

Develop our understanding of tenants' needs and experiences by strengthening our approach to capturing tenant insights, tailoring approaches to ensure this insight reflects the diversity of communities, including engaging underrepresented groups.

Engagement

Promote meaningful tenant engagement, improving two-way communication with tenants by implementing regular feedback and updates on things that are important to them.

Involvement

Embed a culture of tenant involvement, maximising opportunities for tenants to influence, shape and improve services.

Thank you for your feedback

We asked you for your feedback on the draft Tenants Engagement Strategy.

Thank you to those of you who submitted your feedback, this has been really helpful in finalising the strategy and your feedback has been incorporated into the objectives of the strategy and included within the action plans that set out how we will deliver those objectives.

Service update

We continually look for ways to improve the services we provide to you and ensure you can live in homes that are safe, of a good quality and in sustainable neighbourhoods. We place

tenants at the heart of everything we do when looking at our performance and making decisions around improvements we need to make.

Performance

We have changed the way we monitor and report performance internally as a service, and to Tenants Forum and the wider Council to ensure we are held to account for our performance and provide opportunities for scrutiny. A core set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed and are reported quarterly.

We are designing a new 'Annual Report' for tenants and leaseholders that provides more performance information (including the core service KPI's). We are aiming to launch this in April 2026.

We have introduced a complaint handling performance framework to monitor and review complaints and identify service improvements needed. Tenants Forum are included in this.

We will be looking to create Tenant Panels/Focus Groups to involve tenants in decision making and service improvement across key service areas. This will initially include Repairs and Maintenance and Complaints.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime

We have reviewed our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Hate Crime Policy and procedures to ensure we have an effective and consistent approach to managing ASB and hate crime affecting our neighbourhoods. We have also developed a case management system to effectively log, monitor and report ASB and hate crime.

We will be reporting ASB and hate crime information to you as part of the new 'Annual Report' to keep you informed about how we deal with ASB and hate crime in your neighbourhood.

The new policy can be found on our housing webpages and is also available at the housing office on request. If you require this in an alternative format, please contact Cathy on 01229 876523 or email the housing mailbox housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Keeping your home safe

We have been working hard to ensure we keep your homes safe and maintained to a good standard by:

- preparing for, and embedding Awaab's Law into our policies and procedures to ensure we meet the new requirements and keep our tenants homes free from emergency and significant hazards
- reviewing and making improvements to our fire safety management processes to keep our tenants safe and prevent the risk of fire
- ensuring that all properties have had an electrical safety check and continuing to programme this once every five years. We have completed an additional 681 electric tests in the last 12 months, increasing the overall percentage of homes with a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) within the last five years from 63% to 91%.

We report key safety compliance annually as part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and this will also be included in the new 'Annual Report'

Consumer standards

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

The Regulator of Social Housing will hold us to account on our performance against these standards to ensure we are delivering the expected outcomes for tenants.

We are reviewing, monitoring and reporting our performance against these standards and they are being embedded across all areas of our service.

For more information about Consumer Standards please visit:

www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards

Town Hall Revamp – Project Update

Improvements to the Cornwallis side of the Town Hall ground-floor were originally due to start in November, but recent surveys revealed a few design tweaks that will help us protect the building's historic charm and make sure the new layout works even better for everyone. These small adjustments now will mean a smoother, more polished finish later.

We're especially excited to be bringing back a dedicated Housing Reception for our customers - a friendly, welcoming space designed to make accessing housing services easier, quicker and more personal.

Fingers crossed that by the time the Summer newsletter lands, we'll have unveiled or we'll be getting ready to unveil the brand-new Housing Reception!

Feedback About Housing Services

We'd love to hear from you! Your feedback helps us make things better and create services that truly work for you. Whether you've got something great to share or something we can improve, we're listening—and your right to a quality service will always stay the same.

Here's one of the lovely compliments we've received recently:

Well done DLP Services!

Mrs. Conaghan wanted to pass on huge thanks for the wet room work carried out in her home. She said the team were excellent and she couldn't thank them enough. They tidied up after themselves, and the quality of their work was first class—it's made a huge difference for her.

She also shared that she needed to attend a hospital appointment and felt completely comfortable leaving the workmen in her home. She trusted them fully, and after completing the work they locked the house and posted the key through the letterbox.

A big thank you to DLP Services, who carry out our aids and adaptation works.

Please send us your feedback by:

- Emailing: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
- Calling: 01229 876578
- Writing to us using our freepost address - no stamp required:

Housing Department
FREEPOST RTLL XUYS JHZT
Town Hall
BARROW-IN-FURNESS
Cumbria
LA14 2LD

New Handy Person Scheme

Help for elderly or vulnerable people who are unable to carry out certain jobs in their home.

As your landlord, we are responsible for maintaining the structure and external fabric of your home.

However, there are some small jobs, that we are not responsible for, which could be carried out by the Council's Handy Person Service - a small repairs and assistance service for householders in the Westmorland and Furness area.

Whilst there is no charge for the cost of labour, the occupier will have to provide any necessary items and materials and only people who meet the criteria can apply.

What work can the handy person do?

Council tenants, who meet the criteria, can request the following specific jobs.

- putting up curtain rails, curtains or blinds
- erecting shelves or affixing coat hooks
- changing light bulbs and fluorescent tubes
- fixing down or trimming loose or hazardous carpets
- moving furniture within the home

To be eligible, you must be either:

- Aged 65 and over
- Have a disability or are vulnerable
- About to be or have recently been discharged from hospital
- Considered to be at high risk of falling

How do I contact the Handy Person?

If you are eligible and wish to request the Handy Person, please contact the Council's Housing Standards Team:

- Telephone: 0300 373 3300 (please leave your name and contact number if necessary and the team will call you back)
- Email: housingstandards@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
- Complete online request form:
<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/housing/handy-person-scheme>

Affordable Home Contents Insurance

Did you know? While the building you live in is insured by the Council, your personal belongings aren't covered.

We've partnered with Thistle Tenant Risks to offer specialist, affordable contents insurance designed for social housing tenants.

This pay-as-you-go scheme can be added to your rent payments and covers items such as:

- Furniture and carpets
- TVs and electrical goods
- Clothing and household essentials

It even includes replacement of external locks if your keys are lost or stolen.

Want to know more or get a quote? Call us on 01229 876488 or email

housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Struggling to Pay Your Rent?

Don't wait for the debt to build up. Our friendly Rents Team is here to help you with advice, options and understanding. They can work with you to come up with a payment plan that's affordable for you.

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 help! Give a member of our team a call today:

- Emma Johnston 01229 876469
- Carol High 01229 876397
- Katie Barker 01229 876471
- or email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
- Eden area – Joanne Champkins 01768 212 216

Pay Your Rent the Easy Way

Make life simpler by paying your rent and water rates by Direct Debit.

With Direct Debit, your bank automatically sends us your rent payment on the same date each month—no reminders, no missed payments, no hassle.

Extra bonus: If you pay your water rates by Direct Debit, you'll receive £5 credit on your account each year.

Setting up Direct Debit is quick and easy. Just call our Business Support Officer, Georgina Bridgens, on 01229 876478, and we'll get you started.

Switch to direct debit. It's easy to set up and you never need worry about missing a payment.

It's as easy as 1-2-3

1. Have you bank account details handy
2. Call us on 01229 876478
3. We'll do the rest!

Local Warm Spots/warm Welcome Spaces

With many households still feeling the squeeze from rising living costs, local venues across the Furness and Penrith area have once again opened their doors as Warm Spaces - welcoming places where you can keep warm and reduce heating costs.

Many venues also offer hot drinks or meals, friendly activities such as knit and natter, board games, and the chance to enjoy good company in a warm, safe environment.

This list is available from Barrow Town Hall reception and Voreda House and details can also be found online here:

<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/warmspots>

Warm spots in Askam

Organisation	Location	Open	On Offer
Askam Library	Lord Street	Monday 3pm-5pm Tuesday 10am-1pm Thursday 2-5pm Friday 2pm-5pm	Free membership. Two hours computer access with available printing and books, signposting, activities for adults and families.

Warm spots in Barrow

Organisation	Location	Open	On Offer
Barrow Library	Ramsden Square	Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 6pm Friday 9.30am-5pm Saturday 10am-4pm	Free membership. Two hours computer access with available printing and books, signposting, activities for adults and families. Hot drinks vending machine.
Emmanuel Community Church	2 Dalton Road	Friday 12.30pm-3pm	Warm welcome and refreshments
Furness Homeless Support Group	27 Bath Street	Tuesday 11am-1pm	Meals and hot drink

Organisation	Location	Open	On Offer
Hindpool Community Centre	Nelson Street	Wednesday 12pm-1pm	Hot drinks and meals at the centre provided by St Mary's Church
Mind In Furness	William Bingley Centre, 64 School Street	Saturday 11.30am-4.30pm	Drop in for hot drinks and toast. Peer support group chats with advice on staying well, living and fuel costs, housing, relationships, addictions and loneliness.
Ormsgill Community Warm Hub	Millstone Avenue, Ormsgill	Wednesday and Friday 9am-10.30am	Hot drinks and toast
Re:new Community Charity Shop (Methodist Church)	207 Dalton Road	Monday, Wednesday and Saturday 8.30am-3pm	Hot drinks in the community coffee area.
Roose Temporary Library at Barrow Park	All weather pitch building, Greengate Street	Monday 10am-5.30pm Tuesday 10am-5.30pm Wednesday 10am-1pm Thursday 10am-5.30pm Friday 10am-5pm Saturday 10am-1pm	Free membership. Laptop access, printing, signposting, activities for adults and families.

Organisation	Location	Open	On Offer
Salvation Army (The)	19 Abbey Road	Tuesday to Friday 10am -2pm	Meals, Food Share, signposting, access to courses, budgeting, life skills, board games and children's activities.
Spring Mount Church	Salthouse Pavilion, Roose Road, Barrow	Friday 10am – 12.30pm	Meals, Food Share, signposting, access to courses, budgeting, life skills, board games and children's activities.
St James Church	Blake Street	Thursday 1.30pm-4pm	Hot drinks and snacks. Pop along for a natter or to read or knit. All welcome
St Mark's Church	Buccleuch Street	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.30am - 12pm	Café and clothes bank. Monday: knit and natter/FoodShare; Tuesday: Pool, table tennis, crafts; Wednesday: pool, table tennis, tabletop games: Thurs: games.
Vision Support Barrow and District	67-69 Cavendish Street	Monday to Friday 10am-4pm	Hot drinks, biscuits, sight loss advice and free Wi-Fi.

Warm spots in Barrow Island

Organisation	Location	Open	On Offer
Bram Longstaffe Family and Well Being Centre	Farm Street	Monday 11.30-2pm	Hot and cold drinks, soup, sandwiches, charging small equipment

Warm spots in Dalton

Organisation	Location	Open	On Offer
Dalton Community Church	Market Street	Wednesday afternoons	Tea and coffee, company in warm surroundings.
Dalton Community Action Come and meet each other St. Mary's Church Centre	St. Mary's Church Centre Church Street	Friday 10am to 11.30am	Refreshments.
Dalton Library (within Dalton Community Centre)	Nelson Street	Tuesday to Friday 8am- 4pm	Free membership. Books and comfy seating.

Warm spots in Walney

Organisation	Location	Open	On Offer
North Scale Community Centre	North Scale	Monday and Friday 11am-1pm (including bank holidays)	Warm space and toast and hot drink.
St Mary's Church Parish Centre	Church Lane	Wednesday 12.30 -2.30pm	A warm welcome, hot drinks, toasties and teacakes.
Walney Community Centre	Central Drive	Wednesday 10am-11:30am (YouthAbility Youth Services) Thursday 12pm -2pm (Stitch Different)	Free refreshments, soup/bacon bun, fun quiz, food bags £1, food share freezer – max three items.
Walney Community Trust, Spring Mount Walney	Community Hall, Amphitrite St	Tuesday 11am-1pm	Warm space, hot food, sign posting, course access, budgeting, life skills.
Walney Library	Central Drive	Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 10am-5.30pm Friday 10am-5pm, Saturday 10am-1pm	Free membership. Two hours computer access with available printing, signposting, activities for adults and families, books.

Warm spots in Penrith

Organisation	Location	Open	On Offer
Restore Penrith	11 Brewery Lane (New Squares) Penrith CA11 7BU United Kingdom	Monday-Saturday 10am-4pm	Monday-Saturday 10am-4pm
Penrith Leisure Centre – Chatter Matters	Southend Road, Penrith	Monday 11am-1pm Friday 1:30-3:30pm	Hot drinks, soup and roll, health and wellbeing advice, signposting health checks, table games, team games (seated exercises on Friday) - £2 each
Penrith Library	St. Andrew's Churchyard	Monday and Tuesday 9:30am-6pm Wednesday to Friday 9:30am-5pm Saturday 9:30am-4pm	Activities for all ages, read/chat with customers, free Wi- Fi, PCs (2 hours free for library members) water dispenser

Thinking of Buying Your Council Home?

Under the Right to Buy scheme, eligible tenants can buy their home at a price lower than the full market value. The discount you receive - up to a maximum of £26,000 (updated November 2024) - depends on how long you've been a qualifying tenant

Before deciding, it's strongly recommended that you seek independent legal and financial advice. Buying your home is likely to be the biggest financial decision you'll ever make, so take time to consider whether it's the right choice for you.

The Benefits of Owning Your Own Home

Many tenants choose to buy their home because it offers long-term advantages, such as:

- Security and stability – you own your home outright and can make decisions about it without needing your landlord's permission.
- Investment potential – your home may increase in value over time, giving you an asset for the future.
- Freedom to improve – you can decorate, renovate, or adapt your property to suit your needs and lifestyle.
- Cost certainty – once you've paid off your mortgage, you'll no longer have to pay rent, which can make future budgeting easier.

However, owning a home also means taking on full responsibility for maintenance, repairs, and insurance costs, so it's important to weigh these responsibilities against the potential benefits before deciding.

If You Buy Your House

You'll become responsible for all maintenance and repair costs, including both routine and major structural works, as well as any improvements to the property.

If You Buy Your Flat

You'll become a leaseholder and will need to pay service charges. You'll also be responsible for contributing to the cost of major repairs and refurbishment.

Find Out More

For full details including eligibility, discounts, forms, and links to Government guidance, visit our website: www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/your-home/right-buy

Or call our RTB expert, Michelle Bradley, on 01229 876483.

The Right to Buy Journey – What happens, and who does what

When tenants apply to buy their home through the Right to Buy scheme, Michelle and Bryan pictured here guide the process from start to finish.

Michelle Bradley our Business Support Supervisor manages the first stage, checking applications for eligibility and confirming that tenants qualify for the scheme, including calculating any discount. She contacts applicants to request relevant identification and, once eligibility is confirmed, formally accepts the application (RTB2).

The details are then forwarded to our Senior Surveyor, Bryan Walker, to carry out his detailed property checks

Bryan carries out all site inspections and checks. He reviews any improvements made to the property, inspects the home and garden, and ensures all alterations have been approved and meet safety standards. Minor issues, such as missing handrails, are noted for follow-up, while more serious concerns — like unapproved electrical work — must be resolved and certified before the sale can progress. Bryan records his findings, highlights any structural concerns, and prepares a plan of the property including its boundary edging.

After Bryan's checks are complete, Michelle takes over again. She liaises with the Valuation Office to arrange a property valuation and prepares the Offer Notice, calculating the purchase price based on the valuation and applicable discount. She manages communications with tenant solicitors, sends draft documents including Land Registry documents, handles any enquiries, and coordinates the signing and sealing of the Transfer/Lease.

Michelle confirms completion dates, coordinates with finance, ensures all paperwork is returned, advises colleagues across departments, and sends an acknowledgement letter to the tenant/homeowner.

With Michelle and Bryan guiding the process from start to finish, tenants can be confident that every step of the Right to Buy journey is managed carefully and efficiently.

Have a Complaint or Feedback? - We're Here to Help

Feedback Matters

Your feedback matters. Whether it's a suggestion, a compliment, or a concern, it helps us understand what we're doing well and where we can improve.

Every comment is reviewed and used to shape better services for you and your community.

If you're unsure who to contact, please call 01229 876578 or email:

housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk and you'll be directed to the relevant team. Our full contact details are also listed on the back page.

If you've already raised an issue and feel we haven't responded appropriately, you can make a formal complaint. As a provider of social housing services regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and overseen by the Housing Ombudsman Service, we are committed to handling all complaints properly and fairly.

Here's what you need to know:

How to make a formal complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received, action taken or lack of action, you can make a complaint by:

Completing online form: <https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/your-council/have-your-say/make-complaint/making-complaint>

- Calling: 0300 373 3300
- Emailing: complaints@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
- Visiting: Housing Reception in the Town Hall
- Writing to: Complaints Team, Westmorland and Furness Council, South Lakeland House, Lowther Street, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4DQ

Our complaints process has two stages:

Stage 1 – Initial Investigation

- We'll acknowledge your complaint within five working days.
- You'll receive a full response within 10 working days (or 20 if it's complex).

Stage 2 – Review

- If you remain dissatisfied, you can escalate your complaint for review.
- We'll acknowledge this within five working days and send a final response within 20 working days (or 40 for complex cases).

If you remain dissatisfied after Stage 2, or you feel we have not answered within a reasonable timescale, you can refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Taking your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman

If you've gone through both stages of the formal complaints process and you're still not happy with the decision or you feel we haven't answered within a reasonable timescale, you can complain to the Housing Ombudsman by:

Completing online form: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/online-form/>

- Calling: 0300 111 3000
- Emailing: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- Writing to: Housing Ombudsman Service PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

Find out more about the Housing Ombudsman Service by visiting: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/when-to-get-help-from-the-housing-ombudsman/>

The Complaint Handling Code

We follow the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and publish a yearly self-assessment and an annual complaints performance report. For more information visit: <https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/housing-complaints-handling-code>

Christmas Refuse and Recycling Collection

Week commencing Monday, 22 December

If your collection day is	Your collection will be on
Tuesday, 23 December	Tuesday, 23 December
Wednesday, 24 December	Wednesday, 24 December
Thursday, 25 December	Saturday, 27 December
Friday, 26 December	Monday, 29 December

Week commencing Monday, 29 December

If your collection day is	Your collection will be on
Tuesday, 30 December	Tuesday, 30 December
Wednesday, 31 December	Wednesday, 31 December
Thursday, 1 January	Saturday, 3 January
Friday, 2 January	Friday, 2 January

Foil/metallic type wrapping paper cannot be recycled – please put this in your black bin.

Any extra waste should be placed in bags – don't include foodstuff as this may attract vermin.

Extra recycling can be left in open bags or clear bags.

Disposal of real trees

For residents not on the Green Waste Collection scheme, real trees can be put out with your black bin, and they will be taken by refuse collectors.

For residents on the Green Waste Collection scheme, real trees should be put out on the date of your next scheduled collection.

Green waste collections cease week commencing 29 December and resume 12 January.

Eden Tenants

Please call Joanne Champkins 01768 212 216 or Customer Services 0300 373 3300
visit: <https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-street-cleaning>

Face-to-Face with Peter Rimmer

Hello, I'm Peter, a Senior Surveyor in the Housing Maintenance Department and I've worked for the Council for coming up eight years.

I first joined as a Contract Supervisor in the Maintenance Department, and over the years I've gained a wealth of experience and knowledge that helped prepare me for my current role as Senior Surveyor.

Stepping into a senior role has been a rewarding challenge. It comes with greater responsibility across a range of areas, many of which I'm really passionate about. I'm eager to build on my experience, lead by example, and continue to deliver work to a high professional standard.

My new responsibilities include team leadership, reviewing and improving existing processes, and taking a lead role in tackling damp and mould in line with the new Awaab's Law legislation.

Toolbox Talks

Recently, I've been delivering toolbox talks with our main responsive repairs contractor, Hughes Brothers focusing on the new Awaab's Law legislation and what it means in practice.

These sessions help ensure everyone on the ground understands the standards we expect, the importance of early intervention, and the role we each play in improving tenants' homes. I'm really proud of the partnership we've built - working together means we can deliver more consistent, higher-quality outcomes for tenants.

Looking Ahead

I'm really looking forward to developing further in this role and contributing to the continued improvement of our housing services for tenants.

Peter answers the not-so-serious questions

Describe yourself in three words

Approachable, reliable, strong-minded

What's your biggest claim to fame

Not sure I want to say it - but I was on TV! A show called Starting Up, Start Out – back when I was on the tools, I was the leading project manager when the old cycle shop in Ulverston was converted into a café.

Have you any phobias?

Snakes or spiders!

If you could go back and relive any moment, what would it be?

The birth of my children.

What film (or series) will you never grow tired of watching?

Prison Break – more of a series, but I've watched it four times now!

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

The Traitors.

If you could meet anyone in the world, who would it be?

Mike Tyson.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Always be yourself – never change for anyone.

Do you collect anything?

Not really a collector, but I do buy a lot of fishing gear.

What's your favourite type of food?

Love a roast dinner.

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

Beef and mustard.

What are your most commonly used emojis?

Thumbs up!

What's your most treasured possession?

My little family – they mean everything to me.

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

Any type of drama.

What's your favourite quote or saying?

Live for today, not tomorrow - life is far too short.

What would your specialist subject be on Mastermind?

Construction .. ha ha!

How do you unwind after a long day at work?

Nice walk with the family and dog.

What's your favourite drink?

Vimto - or Guinness if it's been a hard day in the office!

What was the first record you ever bought? *

Can't say I've ever owned one.

What's your favourite singer/band?

Oasis.

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

Shot put champion.

What superpower do you wish you had?

To look into the future ... but I'd also like to be invisible just to see what goes on!

If you had a warning label, what would yours say?

Beware feeding time!

And finally, how would you survive a zombie apocalypse?

Head over to Piel Island and set up a perimeter fence - after all it has a pub!

*Editorial team showing their age!

Welcome to

Jane Martin

Hi, I'm Jane, the newest member of our Customer Services Team.

Outside of work, I love spending time with my beautiful lurcher and even more beautiful granddaughter. When I'm not with them, I enjoy writing poems and watching films.

Before joining the council, I was a tenant liaison officer usually working around Newbarns, prior to this I worked for BT for 27 years.

Gareth Boyle

Hello, I'm Gareth the new Rough Sleeper Outreach Officer for the Homelessness Team.

I've been on the job for a couple of months now and I'm still getting to grips with the role. So far, it's been interesting and varied and I've enjoyed meeting others in this sector and learning from them.

Before this I'd worked in security and leisure, so this is a big change of pace for me.

And farewell to...

Jackie Rimmer

By Caroline Wagstaff, Assistant Director of Housing

On behalf of the Housing Service, I would like to say farewell to Jackie Rimmer, who has now retired after many years of dedicated service.

Jackie began her career with Housing at Dalton Town Hall, before moving to the Housing Office in Barrow, where she progressed to Senior Housing Officer and Team Leader for our Allocations Team and Reception Service.

Many of our tenants will fondly remember Jackie for her kindness and commitment in ensuring new tenants received a warm welcome into their homes. She also played a vital role in supporting our reception teams, who deliver such varied and important service for our tenants and residents.

Personally, and as colleagues, we truly miss Jackie - she has been a loyal, long-serving member of staff, always there to support both her team and our customers.

We wish Jackie a very happy and healthy retirement with Steve and her lovely family, and hope she enjoys every moment with her grandchildren, who are sure to make retirement full of fun and laughter.

Thank you, Jackie - you are greatly missed and very much appreciated.

Morgan Nicholson

We're saying goodbye (but not too far away!) to Morgan, who joined us as a Customer Service Apprentice back in September last year. Morgan quickly became a friendly face in the team, always ready to help and bring a positive vibe to the office.

She now has a new position in the Disabled Facilities Grants team and she's loving it!

We'll really miss having Morgan around, but we're so pleased to see her continuing her journey within the Council.

Congratulations, Morgan, and best of luck in your new role — we know you'll be brilliant!

Results of Summer Colouring Competition

Huge thanks to everyone who entered the last competition – your creativity amazed us!
We're thrilled to announce our overall winners:

- 7 years and under: Robyn Dennison
- 8–11 years: Jessie Higgins

Well done to Robyn and Jessie and all our merit award winners.

Points of Contact

Assistant Director of Housing

Caroline Wagstaff (01229) 876523

Senior Manager - Housing Landlord and Homelessness Services

Rebecca Halton (01229) 876549

Rent Recovery Team

- Carol High (01229) 876397
- Emma Johnston (01229) 876469
- Katie Barker (01229) 876471
- Benefit Liaison Officer
- Amanda Morris (01229) 876581
- Money Management Officer
- Jo Hughes (01229) 876534

Safe and Strong Communities Team

Interim Operational Lead for Safe and Strong Communities

Caroline Kendall (01229) 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 Surveyors

- Bryan Walker (01229) 876466
- Peter Rimmer (01229) 876530

Contract Supervisors

- Graham Harcourt (01229) 876465
- 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 - Donna Brown (01229) 876468
- Direct Debits - Georgina Bridgens (01229) 876478

Lettings Team

- Jacky Macaulay (01229) 876403
- Isaac Jesson (01229) 876345

Homelessness Team

- Advice (office hours) (01229) 876599
- Out-of-hours (01229) 833311
- Email: dutytorefer1@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Reporting Repairs

During office hours

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

*Please note from 15 December report gas-only repairs to 0800 0236 277 or 01524 734 350 or email: housing@westmorlandandfurnesscouncil.gov.uk

Out-of-office emergency repairs

(01229) 833311

Gas repairs relate to no heating or hot water or radiator and boiler issues

Telephone opening times: Monday-Thursday 8:30am-4:30pm (4pm Friday)

Our Information

- 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 Housing Thriving Communities
- X page: @WandFCThrivComm

Eden Contacts

Housing Officer - Joanne Champkins

- Tel: 01768 212 216
- Email: joanne.champkins@westmorlandandfurnesscouncil.gov.uk

Joanne's working days are:

- Tuesday and Wednesday 9am - 5pm
- Thursday 9am - 1pm

For urgent issues outside of these times, call: Customer Services on 0300 373 3300 or email housing@westmorlandandfurnesscouncil.gov.uk

To report out-of-office emergency repairs: Call Customer Services on 0300 373 3300

Contacts for Street Voices

Council-recognised street voices

Raglan Court and Corporation Terrace:

Mandy Anderson 07925 410 817

Roosegate:

Nicola Bull – 07808 264 941

Newton Road Area, Dalton:

David Pearson – (01229) 230019

Bank Lane to Millstone Avenue, Ormsgill:

Bill McEwan - 07795 806 193

Broughton Road Area, Dalton:

Danny Green – 07999 462 934

Carleton Meadows, Penrith:

Scott Jackson - 07920 408 094