

Our Homes Newsletter

A newsletter for Chesterfield Borough Council tenants and leaseholders

Autumn 2017



Extensive consultation
with tenants begins

Roll out of
Universal Credit

Water rate payments
moving to Severn Trent



CHESTERFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposed changes to your tenancy agreement

A tenant consultation will be held this month about several proposed changes to your tenancy agreement. In the next few weeks all tenants will be sent:

- A copy of the existing tenancy agreement
- A summary of the proposed changes
- A notice of our intention to change the tenancy agreement
- A questionnaire asking for your views on the proposed changes.

It is important that you read the information pack you are sent as the proposed changes will be relevant to all council tenants. We will also be holding a series of drop-in sessions for tenants (see page 4). Please read through the proposals and come along if you have any questions or views.

Why is the tenancy agreement being changed?

The tenancy agreement was last reviewed in 2011 and needs to be updated to reflect all the changes that have happened since that date.

Changes to council services

At the same time, we want to consult with you about some proposed changes to other services you receive.

The reason for this is that, since April 2016 we have not had as much money to spend on services for tenants, including repairs and improvements because of:

- The Government's decision to cut rent by one per cent each year from 2016 to 2020. This will reduce our income by £10 million over this period and by £173 million in the next 30 years, which will severely impact on our plans to invest this money in improving your home and providing new ones.
- The introduction of benefit changes, particularly Universal Credit, which means that tenants will receive their benefit payments monthly in arrears. Council rents will no longer be paid directly to the council at source, meaning the responsibility for paying rent rests with you as the tenant.
- In other areas of the country where this new system has started, rent arrears have increased significantly. This loss of rental income means there is less money to invest in council home improvements.

What this means

As we will have much less money we need to look at what services we provide and the way we provide them.

So, over the summer, we worked with tenants, councillors and staff to look at how we can reduce expenditure and prepare for the full introduction of Universal Credit.

To do this we have looked at what changes are necessary in the following areas:

- Repair obligations for tenants and the council
- The collection of rent and water rates
- Spending on empty homes

We have come up with some proposals and want to consult with tenants about them. This month, as part of the tenancy agreement consultation, we will send every tenant a pack giving details of the proposals and asking for your views.

Tenant satisfaction survey

In November, we will be asking a random sample of tenants to complete a satisfaction survey to get your views on the service we provide.

Everyone who completes the survey will be entered in to a prize draw to win £50 of High Street vouchers.

The survey, which is known as the STAR survey, is held every two years so we can track how your satisfaction with our services has changed over time.

This survey method is used by councils across the country, so it also enables us to compare our performance against other landlords.

Not everyone will receive a survey – it will be sent out to a randomly chosen sample of 2,500 households in November. The survey is also separate to the public consultation on the tenancy agreement.

If you receive a survey please take the time to complete it and return in the pre-paid envelope provided. All those returned will be entered into the prize draw.

Your feedback is important to us and enables us to identify areas where we need to improve our service to you.

We will publish the results of the survey in the Spring edition of Our Homes.



Consultation events

To explain all the proposed changes to your tenancy agreement and other services we are holding a series of drop-in consultation events across the borough during October and November.

Events are listed in alphabetical order by place name to help you find the session nearest to you, although tenants can attend any of the events. We will be joined at the drop-in sessions by staff from Severn Trent Water who will be able to answer any queries about changes to water rate payment methods (see page 5).

The drop-in sessions will be held at:

Venue	Date	Time
Barrow Hill Memorial Hall , 3 Station Road, S43 2PG	Thu 23 November	2:00 pm to 4:30 pm
Boythorpe Community Centre, Hunloke Avenue, S40 2PD	Thu 19 October	2:00 pm to 4:30 pm
St Marks Church, St Mark's Road, Brampton , S40 1DH	Thu 16 November	2:00 pm to 4:30 pm
Brimington Community Centre, Heywood Street, S43 1DB	Wed 8 November	11:00 am to 1:30 pm
Markham Court Communal Room, Duckmanton Road, Duckmanton , S44 5HH	Tue 28 November	2:00 pm to 4:30 pm
Monkwood Road Community Room, Dunston , S41 8DG	Tue 21 November	10:00 am to 12:30 pm
Burns Close Community Room, Grangewood , S40 2SW	Thu 19 October	10:00 am to 12:30 pm
Hasland Village Hall, Eastwood Park, S41 0AY	Mon 23 October	2:30 pm to 4:30 pm
Holmebrook Family Centre, Wardgate Way, Holme Hall , S40 4SL	Tue 14 November	2:00 pm to 4:30 pm
Inkersall Methodist Church, Summerskill Green, S43 3SR	Tue 28 November	10:00 am to 12:30 pm
Loundsley Green Community Centre, Cuttholme Road, S40 4QU	Tue 14 November	10:00 am to 12:30 pm
Eventide Rest Room, Cherry Tree Grove, Mastin Moor , S43 3AP	Tue 21 November	2:00 pm to 4:30 pm
St Patricks Church Hall, 98 High Street, New Whittington , S43 2AZ	Thu 9 November	2:00 pm to 4:30 pm
Bonsall Court Community Room, Bowness Road, Newbold , S41 8AW	Thu 26 October	10:00 am to 12:30 pm
Winster Court Community Room, Newland Dale , Stonegravel, S41 7QJ	Thu 23 November	10:00 am to 12:30 pm
Old Whittington Resource Centre, Social Club, Station Lane, S41 9NL	Thu 9 November	10:00 am to 12:30 pm
Wimborne Crescent Community Room, Pevensey , S41 8PT	Wed 25 October	10:00 am to 12:30 pm
Outwood Academy, Highfield Lane, Peveil , S41 8BA	Thu 26 October	2:00 pm to 4:30 pm
Poolsbrook Community Centre, Social Club, Cottage Close, S43 3LP	Friday 3 November	11:00 am to 1:30 pm
Stand Road Park Pavilion, Racecourse , S41 8SR	Wed 25 October	2:00 pm to 4:30 pm
Gussies Kitchen, St Augustine's Church, St Augustine's Road , S40 2EP	Tue 31 October	4:00 pm to 6:30 pm
Speedwell Rooms, Inkersall Road, Staveley , S43 3JL	Tue 7 November	4:00 pm to 7:30 pm
Assembly Rooms, Market Hall, Chesterfield Town Centre , S40 1AR	Thu 2 November	4:00 pm to 7:30 pm

If you have difficulty in attending or making your views clear (eg you have a disability or English is not your first language), contact Kim Walsh on (01246) 345430. We can help with transport and provide information in a format that you prefer.

Severn Trent Water rates changes

The way many tenants pay your water rates will change from **April 2018**.

From this date Severn Trent Water will collect water rates directly from you instead of us taking payments alongside your council rent and then passing it on to them.

Anyone who has a water meter will already pay their water rates directly to Severn Trent Water but the change will affect all other council tenants.

Staff from Severn Trent Water will be joining us at our tenancy agreement consultation events to talk through these changes and answer any questions you may have (see page 4).

It is important that you contact Severn Trent Water before April 2018 to set up a payment method or you could find yourself receiving the full bill for your 2018/19 water rates next March, which could be several hundred pounds.

Contact Severn Trent Water on **03457 500 500** or visit their website at www.stwater.co.uk to find out about the different methods of payment available.

Your water bills should not be any higher by paying them direct to Severn Trent Water - and some households could even save money if they have a water meter fitted.

You do not have to ask for permission from us to have a water meter installed at your home. However, if any work needs to be carried out before a water meter can be installed, please contact our repairs team on **0800 587 56 59**.

If you have a water meter and receive a means tested benefit, have a medical condition and use large amounts of water, you may be eligible for a capped charge on your bill. Further information is available by calling Severn Trent Water on **03457 500 500**.

Full roll-out of Universal Credit in the Chesterfield area

If you receive any of the benefits listed below and are not already on Universal Credit, you will be affected so please read the following information:

- Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

From November 2017 the Government is to roll-out Universal Credit in the Chesterfield area, which will replace all other benefit payments. However you have received your benefit payments in the past, on your switch over to Universal Credit, you will receive monthly payments.

Your local Jobcentre Plus or Tax Credits Office will tell you when you have to move to Universal Credit. Once you've claimed Universal Credit, any benefits from the above list will stop and you'll start getting Universal Credit instead. Your benefits may end before your Universal Credits start and there could be a delay in receiving your first monthly payment of four weeks or more.

Your rent is payable to Chesterfield Borough Council every week. Previously if you were entitled to help with your rent payments, this was paid every week by the Housing Benefit Team directly to your rent account. Under Universal Credit, the help towards your rent payment will be paid directly to you and included in your monthly benefit payment.

This means your weekly housing benefit payment will finish and you must start paying full rent. In addition to having to pay your full rent, as Universal Credit is paid monthly and always four weeks in arrears, you may not be able to pay your rent when it is due and you could end up with rent arrears.

If you don't pay your rent, you could be evicted from your home and we can't help if you don't speak to us. So please contact the Rent Recovery Team to advise of a possible delay in your rent payment or if you are having difficulty paying your rent on [01246 345501/10](tel:0124634550110).

Your local Jobcentre Plus or Tax Credits office will tell you when you have to move to Universal Credit. To claim Universal Credit, you have to fill out an online claim form at www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit. If you need help filling out the form, call the Universal Credit helpline on [0345 600 0723](tel:03456000723) (or text phone [0345 600 0743](tel:03456000743)).



Remember rent payments are a 'priority debt' and should be paid before most other debts. If you don't pay, you can't stay.

You may still be entitled to financial support towards your Council Tax from Chesterfield Borough Council by claiming Council Tax Support. For further advice please contact the team on [01246 345345](tel:01246345345).

Skills support for new job opportunities coming to Chesterfield

Chesterfield is seeing significant investment with more than £700 million of key developments underway in this year. It is estimated that more than 4,000 new jobs could be created in the next five years through the growth of Markham Vale and as a result of major regeneration projects including Peak Resort and Chesterfield Waterside.

Improving the skills and work readiness of people in Chesterfield is vital to ensure that local people can get these job opportunities and can progress within their current jobs.

A Skills Action Plan for Chesterfield was approved in June, which supports our objective of making sure that people benefit from growth in Chesterfield.

Activity will be delivered through the four key objectives to ensure that local people understand the range of skills support available and benefit from training and employment opportunities arising from new investment in the town.

1. We will work with partners to ensure that local people and businesses have the right skills to access current and future employment opportunities
2. We will work with our Local Enterprise Partnerships and Education Partners to ensure that skills provision is aligned to future jobs growth and economic opportunities from emerging sectors.
3. We will maximise the number of training, employment and supply chain opportunities for local people arising from new development and secured through Local Labour Agreements.
4. We will provide clear advice and support to local people and businesses about the range of skills programmes available

Whether you are looking for employment or an apprenticeship or are seeking training to improve your existing skills to support a career change or progress within your current job, there is a wide range of support available in Chesterfield.

The Skills Action Plan and details of all the programmes available in Chesterfield, can be found on our website at www.chesterfield.gov.uk/skills or by calling the Economic Development Team on [\(01246\) 345 254](tel:01246345254)



Interview with Cllr Helen Bagley, cabinet member for homes and customers

When and how did you start as a local councillor?

I became a councillor for St Helen's ward four years ago during a by-election and was delighted to be re-elected in 2015. I was keen to continue the work of the previous councillors and to represent local residents and help to make St Helen's ward and my home town of Chesterfield a better place to live and work.

What is involved in your current role as cabinet member for homes and customers?

My new portfolio, homes and customers, means that I have cabinet responsibility for the council's customer service strategy and customer services, revenues and benefits, housing management, estate improvements, supported housing and Careline, and homelessness.

What has been your biggest challenge in the role?

The challenge is finding the time to investigate deeper into important areas. This would allow me to look at different ways of doing things, to understand best practice and to address underlying causes of problems so I can prevent them happening. Ensuring that we can deliver a viable Housing Business Plan despite continued savage cuts from central government and making sure that these have a minimal impact on our tenants and residents, is also a challenge.

What achievement makes you most proud?

I have really enjoyed seeing tenants, members and council staff working together in working groups over the last four months to look at how we can minimise the impact of cuts to our housing budget. Having everyone working together to find solutions is definitely something I will be continuing to do and something I will hope to duplicate in other areas of my portfolio.

What do you think the housing service does well?

I am really pleased that, despite the financial difficulties we face following the rent reduction in each year from April 2016, we have continued to invest in our housing stock, providing new kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, central heating systems, external wall insulation and modern electrics. In the last two financial years we spent over £27 million, with a further £19 million worth of improvements to homes and estates planned in this current year. This means that our homes, continue to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard and are safe and warm for our tenants.



Wimborne Crescent and Winster Court community rooms refurbished

Two of the council-run community rooms have recently been refurbished providing an improved space to be used by the surrounding community. Wimborne Crescent and Winster Court community rooms have had full refurbishments to improve their facilities, make them more accessible, dementia friendly and provide a nice space to meet. The colour schemes, facilities and furniture provided have all been chosen with this aim in mind. It makes these spaces enjoyable places to spend time, whether taking part in an activity or using the room as a meeting place to watch TV and have a drink with other members of the community.

Coffee mornings will take place at both of these rooms to consult with the local community about how they want them to be used. There are already a number of groups who have expressed an interest in making regular use of the spaces for a variety of activities.

The coffee morning will take place on 18 October 10.30 am to 12 noon at Wimborne Community Room, Pevensey, S41 8PT. A coffee morning at Winster is to be confirmed in the near future. All are welcome to attend and your ideas for future activities will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in attending either of these coffee mornings or would like to make use of one of the rooms on either a regular or one-off basis then please contact the social inclusion officer:

norma.gregory@chesterfield.gov.uk or phone 07815 094 658 for more information.

If you would like to set up a new group using any of the six community rooms available, Norma will be more than happy to provide you with further information.



After refurbishment



Aston Court celebrates two milestone birthdays

Residents at Aston Court have recently celebrated significant birthdays for two of their tenants.

Albert Swift turned 90 at the end of July and the following day, fellow tenant Harold Hurst celebrated his 100th birthday.

Tenants from Aston Court celebrated both birthdays with a lunch out in Staveley and had cake back in their communal room.

Harold received his telegram from the queen to commemorate his century and has had it framed ready to be displayed in pride of place in his flat. Congratulations to Albert and Harold.

Thanks for recycling

We'd like to thank Chesterfield residents for helping us increase the amount of waste we send to be recycled.

One of the things we are often asked is exactly what should go in each bin.

For residents who have their own bins here is a handy guide to help you in your recycling. Please make sure all items are clean, dry and loose. This helps when the materials are sorted and recycled.

In the body of your blue bin

Yes please:

- ✓ Plastic bottles eg milk and drinks, shampoo, bleach and cleaning products (remove lids and place in loose)
- ✓ Plastic pots and tubs eg yoghurt pots, margarine, ice cream, clean plant pots
- ✓ Plastic food trays and punnets eg raw meat trays, fruit punnets
- ✓ Drinks cans and food tins
- ✓ Chocolate and biscuit tins (plastic and metal)
- ✓ Clean crumpled aluminium foil and food trays
- ✓ Empty aerosols
- ✓ Metal lids from jars and bottles
- ✓ Card and corrugated cardboard
- ✓ Newspapers, magazines, brochures, catalogues and directories (including Yellow Pages)
- ✓ Junk mail
- ✓ Envelopes (no need to tear out any windows)
- ✓ Greetings cards and wrapping paper (no glitter, tape and plastic)

No thanks:

- ✗ Polystyrene eg packaging and trays
- ✗ Plastic items, eg buckets or toys
- ✗ Drinks and food cartons (Tetra Paks) eg fruit juice and Pringles tubs
- ✗ Foil pouches eg pet food and coffee
- ✗ Waxed frozen food boxes
- ✗ Crisp packets/wrappers
- ✗ Plastic film eg bubble wrap, magazine wrapping, lids from food trays
- ✗ Nappies and general waste
- ✗ Textiles (clothing and bedding)



Please recycle food waste and garden waste in your green bin.

Use your black bin only for items that cannot be recycled.

For more information, visit:
www.chesterfield.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling

In your black box (caddy) inside the blue bin

Yes please:

- ✓ All glass bottles and jars – please rinse and remove lids

No thanks:

- ✗ Pyrex and drinking glasses
- ✗ Window glass
- ✗ Light bulbs
- ✗ Microwave plates

Stand Road Fun Day

A summer community fun day was held at Stand Road Park on in August.

A litter pick group, the Racecourse Rubbish Rangers, organised the event in association with the Friends of Stand Road Park with the support of Chesterfield Borough Council.

Activities included games, sports, arts and crafts and light refreshments. Councillor Helen Bagley, the council's cabinet member for homes and customers said: "It was a really good day where tenants working with our Neighbourhood Rangers on a litter picking project also took the initiative to arrange a wonderful fun day for the local community."

Graham King, chair of the Friends of Stand Road Park, added: "We welcome this initiative from the Racecourse Rubbish Rangers litter pick group. Their community volunteers go out in all weathers to pick litter from our streets in the park's catchment area. Now they have organised this fun day on the park for everyone to enjoy and have some fun."

Jenson Shaw aged 10 won a family ticket for four to see the pantomime Peter Pan at the Pomegranate Theatre in December for guessing the correct number of items in the recycling bin.



Thanks to Feral

Feral, a tenant at Pevensey Court has done a fabulous job of tending the raised garden directly in front of Pevensey Court.

Feral took it upon himself to nurture self-set seeds and plant some new plants to make the front of Pevensey Court a beautiful picture throughout the summer. Feral said he likes to make the most of nature by encouraging self-set seeds with his philosophy being "if it's pretty, leave it".

This certainly worked this year at Pevensey Court with the front looking lovely with the many varieties and colours of plants. Many tenants in the area including members of the community group 'Friends of Pevensey Green' have all praised Feral's amazing efforts. The chairman of the Friends of Pevensey Green expressed his gratitude that Feral had taken such an interest in making the area look nice. [Thank you Feral.](#)



Get in touch

Council contacts

Careline (including support service)

T: 0300 323 0076

Customer services contact centre

T: 01246 345 345

Environmental services (bins and recycling)

T: 01246 345 345

Home improvement agency (minor improvements)

T: 01246 345 748 / 345 701

Homelessness prevention team

T: 01246 345 825

E: homelessness.prevention@chesterfield.gov.uk

Homelessness (out of hours)

T: 08456 058 058 or 01629 532 600

Housing option team (housing waiting list and allocations of council housing)

T: 01246 345 700

E: onthemove@chesterfield.gov.uk

Housing Benefit and Council Tax support

T: 01246 345 345

Minicom: 01246 345 285

Neighbourhoods team

T: 01246 345 071

E: neighbourhoods.team@chesterfield.gov.uk

Rents and rent recovery

T: 01246 345 501 / 345 510

Reporting repairs during office hours

T: (Freephone) 0800 5875 659

E: repair.requests@chesterfield.gov.uk

Repairs - emergency only (out of hours)

T: 01246 345 041

Text / voice messages

T: 07960 910 264

ARE WE ACCESSIBLE TO YOU? IF NOT ASK US!

کیا ہم تک آپ کی رسائی ہے؟ اگر نہیں تو ہمیں بتائیے!

你可覺得易於與我們接觸？若不同的話，請提出要求。

Czy łatwo jest skontaktować się z nami? Jeżeli nie, powiedz nam o tym!

Siamo accessibili nei vostri riguardi? In caso contrario rivolgetevi a noi!

Smart phone app

Get our free smart phone app. Just type Chesterfield Council into your app store.



Christmas closure dates

Council offices will be closed on the following dates:

- Monday 25 December
- Tuesday 26 December
- Wednesday 27 December
- Monday 1 January