

SUMMER 2019

Word **on the street**

NEWS & INFO FOR CO-OP HOMES' CUSTOMERS

co-op
HOMES
part of RHP Group



WELCOME TO YOUR SUMMER EDITION OF WORD ON THE STREET



As the seasons change, so do things here at Co-op Homes. We have some team changes to tell you about. We also want to give you a sneak preview of our exciting plans for repairs reporting.

Our Head of Operations, Sophia Howells is heading off to pastures new and will be sorely missed. We're delighted that Lucy Warwick has been promoted to the new post of Head of Client Services and Alex Forsyth will be joining us as Repairs Manager: a new position we've created to streamline our services.

Jack Keith joins the Governance Team. Jack previously worked at a local authority and was keen to develop his career in a forward-thinking organisation. He's now working alongside Jay-Dee and Lucy to help us meet our administration promises to our co-ops.

In line with our internal changes, we've made some changes to our colour scheme. We've ditched the green and plumped for purple. We hope you approve!

We'd also like to say a big hello to Oddacre. They are slightly different to the traditional co-ops that we currently service because they have both freeholders and leaseholders. There are 47 homes in Hackney – Oddacre were recommended to us by an existing co-op who was keen to promote Co-op Homes as a Managing Agent delivering expert and professional services to its client co-ops.

Neil Tryner, Managing Director

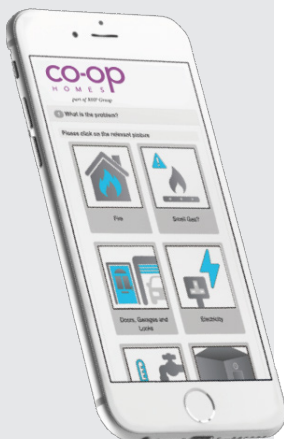
MAKING REPAIRS BOOKINGS EASIER

We're really pleased to tell you about an exciting change to the way we order repairs for you (if this is part of our arrangement with your co-op). From September we'll be giving you access to our new reporting tool – Fixflo. We're one of the first not-for-profit housing associations to use Fixflo, which is a market-leading repairs and maintenance management software.

Fixflo can be used on any smartphone, iPad or PC, laptop or desktop computer, and will take away the hassle we know you, our contractors and our own employees experience in the way repairs work now.

In a few simple clicks, at any time of day or night, you'll be able to:

- ▶ book repairs
- ▶ submit photos and videos of your repairs issue
- ▶ get solutions to common, easy-to-fix repair requests, allowing you to resolve issues yourself without waiting for a contractor
- ▶ receive a record of every repair request by email
- ▶ report issues in over 40 languages
- ▶ see all details about your tenancy and home in one place, including a history of all your repair and maintenance requests.



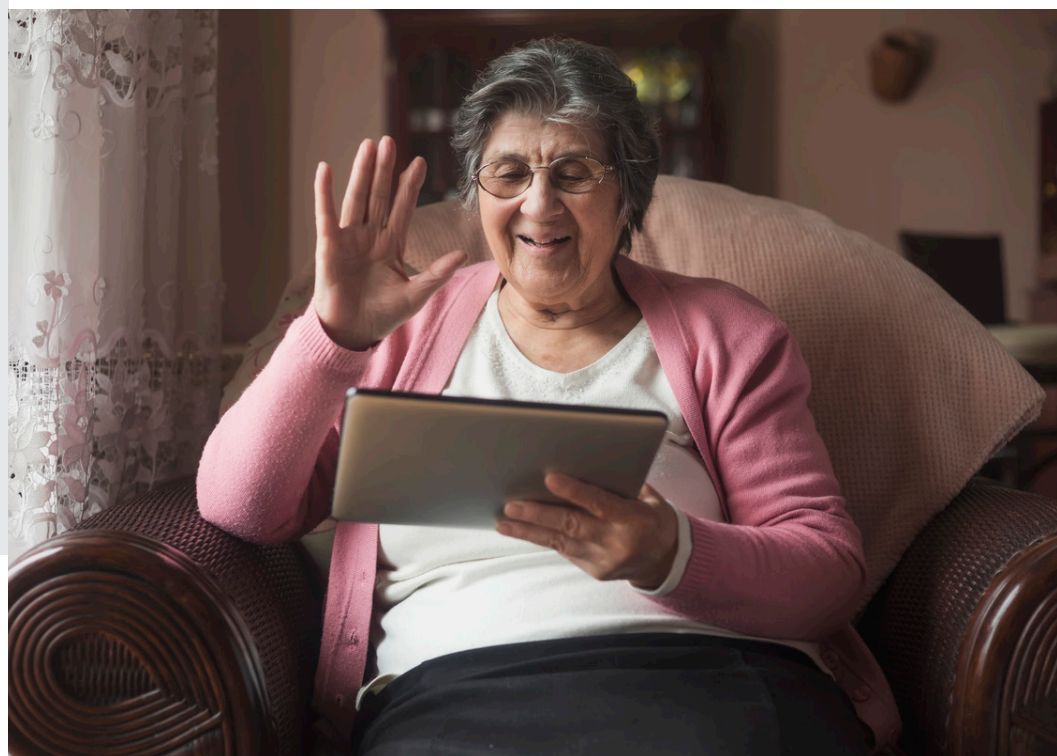
Introducing Fixflo is another digital step forward for us, and as continuously improving your experience of our service is at the heart of what we do, we're excited to see how it will give us even more power to do this. Our Customer Focus Group was very impressed with the way the system looks and how it will work for all the customers.

If you don't have access to the internet or a smartphone or would prefer to report a repair by phone, email or text, don't worry – you'll still be able to contact us.

For more information about Fixflo, check out this video: www.fixflo.com/fixflo-90-seconds.

You don't need to do anything at this stage. We'll be in touch again nearer the time to introduce you to our Fixflo site and let you know how to access and use it.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, get in touch with the customer services team on **0203 166 2608** or by emailing customer.services@coophomes.coop



FIRE SAFETY IN YOUR HOME



It's over two years since the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower.

At Co-op Homes we do all that we can to keep our customers safe from fire and place an absolute priority on fire safety across all our homes. None of our managed buildings have the same cladding as Grenfell - but this doesn't mean we're relaxed about fire safety.

We carry out regular fire risk assessments of all the communal areas we manage. This is a detailed inspection that considers the way buildings are lived in, what fire safety measures are in place, the escape routes and the level of structural fire resistance. Where defects or improvements are identified, we'll raise orders or make plans for put things right, depending on the level of priority and on authority of the co-op (where we carry out this as part of our management agreements).

Please don't leave, store or dump items or hold BBQs in communal areas or on balconies. Clutter can block emergency exit routes and prevent the emergency services from carrying out their duties, and if items are set alight, they give off toxic smoke and gas. They could also explode or cause fire to spread more quickly.

Items that shouldn't be kept in communal areas include:

- ▶ bikes
- ▶ buggies, prams, mobility scooters
- ▶ children's toys
- ▶ large plant pots
- ▶ rubbish you're waiting to throw away

We have a duty to inspect your gas appliances once a year, so if you hear from our gas safety contractor, please make an appointment as soon as you can. If you're in any doubt about the identity of a contractor, please ask to see their ID and call the company to verify - or call us on **020 3166 2608**.

PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT: IT'S EASY

We're reminding everyone about the advantages of paying your rent and service charges by Direct Debit. Once it's set up you'll never have to worry about adjusting your payment when your rent changes. We can also incorporate any arrears into a regular Direct Debit payment plan. Please give us a call on 020 3166 2608 and one of our friendly team will be happy to advise.

As an incentive, we'll be entering all customers who pay their rent this way, plus those who sign up for a new Direct Debit before 30th September 2019, into a prize draw to win one of 10 x £100 Amazon or High Street vouchers or £100 off any rent arrears.

**PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT &
WIN**

So, don't delay, text "DD" to 07398 377388 or give us a call on 020 3166 2608 and one of our friendly team will be happy to help you and put your name into the Prize Draw!

MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR HOME

Did you know that under the terms of your tenancy agreement, you must ask our permission if you want to make changes to your home?

If you hold an Assured (non-Shorthold) Tenancy and have all the planning permission or building regulations approval, we won't unreasonably refuse changes. We do however have the right to set standards or conditions of the work and inspect it when it's finished.

If we discover unauthorised or sub-standard alterations during or at the end of your tenancy, we'll charge you for putting things right.



HOMES FOR THOSE WHO NEED THEM MOST

We try to be transparent at Co-op Homes and sometimes this means letting you know about issues that might disappoint you.

Because we own only 300 properties stretching from Reading to Suffolk and have an agreement with all the different boroughs (where we must offer them three out of every four homes that become empty each year), we rarely get to keep an empty property for our own Co-op Homes residents. This means if you want to move home, you should try to look for one yourself.

Mutual exchange is your best option. If you sign up to Homeswapper at www.homeswapper.co.uk you'll be joining the UK's largest mutual exchange platform, with over 500,000 tenants looking for a swap. It's a simple registration and you can even say you're 'just looking' – If you're a co-op member and can't find the name of your landlord please just select 'Co-op Homes'.

You'll need our permission to carry out the exchange but as long as there are no rent arrears, no restrictions in your tenancy agreement and the properties are suitably sized, we'll agree. For a chat about how mutual exchange works, give us a call on **020 3166 2608** or drop an email to customer.services@coophomes.coop.

Alternatively, if you're living in a CHS property that's too large for you, why not take advantage of our downsizing scheme? We can offer financial benefits and help you choose a smaller property in an area of your choice. We can even help pay your removal expenses! For more information email customer.services@coophomes.coop or call us on **020 3166 2608**.

CALLING CO-OP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS!

Do you want to have a say about the service you're receiving from Co-op Homes? Then the Co-op Homes User Group (familiarily known as CHUG) needs you! CHUG plays an important part in our resident engagement framework, reports to the Board of CHS and is looking to get together again. If meeting with other CHS co-ops representatives a few times a year interests you, please email homes@coophomes.coop.

Whilst CHUG is a totally independent group, with your permission we can pass your details on to the organisers who'll be happy to tell you more.