

Winter 2020 Newsletter



Welcome

2020 has not turned out the way any of us would have planned; it has been a year unlike any other and brought big changes to our daily lives.

At Leeds & Yorkshire, we have continued to provide all our core services but have had to make changes to how we do this in order to keep everyone safe. We understand that many people are facing challenges and we are committed to supporting you however we can. If you need any additional help, please get in touch with us straight away.

Despite the difficult circumstances, we have also seen some positives this year. We are excited to have launched our new three-year corporate plan, 'Together 2023', which was developed in partnership with you, our customers. It sets out our new mission, vision and values, building on the improvements of the last two years and focuses on addressing the gaps where we still need to do better. We are also pleased to have recently been awarded the Investors in People Silver Award, the Customer Service Excellence accreditation and retained our top G1 V1 governance and financial viability rating, following an in-depth assessment by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Looking forward to 2021 I hope that we can all enjoy a far more settled year and look forward to better times ahead, as well as

resuming activity we have had to put on hold this year, such as our planned works programme and community drop-in events.

On behalf of the team and board at LYHA, I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Mark Pearson
Chief Executive



Christmas opening hours

We will close at 5.00pm on Thursday 24th December and reopen on Monday 4th January.

If you need to report an emergency repair during this time, please call **0113 278 3335** for our out-of-hours service.

If your repair is not urgent, you can report it online at: www.lyha.co.uk/repairs and we will contact you in the new year.



Don't get wrapped up in debt

Christmas is always an expensive time and many households are facing additional financial stress this year due to the impacts of COVID-19 on jobs and livelihoods. It is our firm policy that we will not evict anyone that is experiencing financial hardship due to the current crisis.

We ask that you prioritise paying your rent; if you are struggling to do this, please speak to one of our Income Officers as soon as possible. They can answer your questions, help maximise your income and signpost you to sources of support.

If you need help with your energy bills you should speak to your individual supplier in the first instance or you may be able to switch to a better tariff: visit www.energyangels.co.uk/homeenergy/ for independent advice and cost comparisons. There is also government help available, including the Cold Weather Payment, Warm Home Discount Scheme (if you receive certain benefits) and/or the Winter Fuel Payment (if were born before 1954). For details of whether you are eligible and how to apply, please visit: www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/heating

We also have our own LYHA Customer Support Fund in place to offer assistance. To find out more, please speak to one of our Neighbourhood or Income Officers.

You said, we did

We listen to what you tell us and take action.

Recent improvements we've made as a direct result of customer feedback include:

- Garden improvements at Green Court and St Peter's Crescent
- New raised beds at the St Mary's rooftop garden
- Improvements to our telephone customer service (88% calls



answered, average wait time under 2 minutes), resulting in being re-awarded the Customer Service Excellence Accreditation (Nov 2020)

- We have seen a rise in complaints about our main gardening contractor. We have recently addressed these issues with the contractor and expect a significant improvement in the quality of work.

Supporting those in need

During 2020 we have raised funds for a number of charities in our region, including The Trussell Trust Foodbanks, St George's Crypt in Leeds and the Barnsley Homeless Alliance who all do fantastic work and are sadly now busier than ever.

During December many of the LYHA team have also taken part in The Big Walk raising money for homelessness support charity, Shelter.



St. George's Crypt



Coping with loneliness

Christmas isn't always the happy time of year it is portrayed to be and it can be very difficult, especially this year when we can't see friends and family in the usual way.

If you are feeling isolated or alone, please don't struggle in silence; there are some great support

services, including The Samaritans (Tel: **116 123**; www.samaritans.org) and Age UK (Tel: **0800 678 1602**; www.ageuk.org.uk) who have years of experience helping people in the same position, as well as lots of more local initiatives. We have included a list of some of these on our website: www.lyha.co.uk/news/support-winter

Get in touch

For all general enquiries:

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www.lyha.co.uk

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Leeds & Yorkshire
Housing Association