



## Latest updates for residents at The Ridgeway

February 2023



### Cost of living help

Rising cost of living is a key concern for people nationwide and it can be overwhelming to keep track of what can be done to ease the impact of increased outgoings. We want to make it easy for resident to access useful advice and support that can hopefully reduce the rising cost of running your home this winter.

#### How we can help

- **Support with claiming benefits**

We have a Welfare and Benefits Advice team at Network Homes that can support you with claiming benefits. The team has helped residents claim more than £1.5million each year for the past three years and £2.4million last year. This includes housing benefit, Universal Credit, disability benefits, pension credit and carers allowance. We can also help with Discretionary Housing Payment applications. In some cases, we can help gain grant funding.

If you would like to speak to the team, please call **0300 373 3000** or email them at [welfareadvisors@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:welfareadvisors@networkhomes.org.uk).

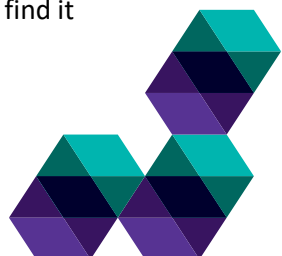
- **Charitable fund**

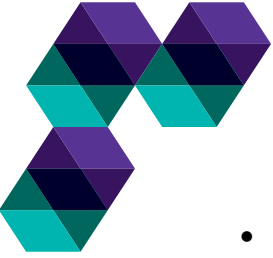
If you have had a change in circumstances that has reduced your household income or you're experiencing financial difficulties, you may be eligible to receive support from us through our charitable fund. The most common ways we support people through the fund is by providing food vouchers, beds and white goods. We've also helped with small electronics, energy vouchers (prepayment meters with a card or key only), and school uniforms.

You can find out more information and apply to our charitable fund by visiting the charitable fund page on our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/charitablefund](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/charitablefund).

- **Cost of living hub**

We have a cost of living help section on our website where you can access the support we provide, top tips and information about support from external organisations. You can find it in the advice section or directly at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/costofliving](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/costofliving)





- The Hertford food pantry is now open at the Sele Community hub at Fleming Crescent. They can assist you if you are affected by the rising food costs by collecting and distributing surplus fresh food from local supermarkets. You can now visit the hub three times a week and fill your bags with food.

Opening times are:

Mondays – 1pm to 2pm

Wednesdays – 1.30pm to 2.30pm

Saturdays 11am to 12pm

### Support from your local council

- **Hertfordshire County Council cost of living help and advice**  
For tips to support you through the rising cost of living you can visit Hertford County Council's cost of living support hub at <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/help-to-manage-the-cost-of-living.aspx>

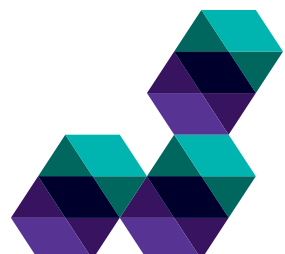
## 8 Ways to Keep Warm

1. **Block out draughts** - The best way to keep your home warm without turning up the heating is to stop the current heat from escaping.
2. **Use your curtains** – keep curtains open in the day to let light and warmth in if you receive sunlight during the day through the window, and close them before it gets dark.
3. **Lay down rugs** – if you have laminate or wood flooring, lay down rugs in your home.
4. **Dress in layers** – wearing more clothes, such as putting on a jumper or other layers, rather than one thick piece of clothing can help keep you warm.
5. **Socks and slippers** – keeping your feet warm by wearing thick socks and / or slippers in your home.
6. **Hot food and hot drinks** – eating hot meals and drinking warm drinks will help to warm you up.
7. **Hot water bottles** – use a hot water bottle.  
**Keep moving** – stay active to boost your circulation. Try to move around at least once an hour and try not to sit still for long periods of time.

## Condensation, damp and mould

Too much moisture in your home can lead to damp and mould. Excess moisture can enter your home in several ways and the most common causes are from condensation and penetrative or rising damp. If too much moisture builds up and is left untreated, mould may start to grow.

There are a few things you can do to help reduce excess moisture in your home. Here are a few tips to try out:





- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when they are in use. This will help prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to get condensation.
- Avoid drying washing on your radiators, or if you do, then dry it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open.
- Use saucepan lids when cooking.
- Put a small amount of cold water in the bath before you turn on the hot tap.
- Place furniture slightly away from the wall. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.
- Wipe down condensation or water (including on window ledges and sills) with a cloth every morning, and ensure it is wrung out and dried properly between use.

To find out more ways to reduce excess moisture in your home, information on the causes of damp, mould or condensation, how to tackle it and how we manage these issues, visit the condensation, damp and mould page on our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/condensation](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/condensation).

## Items left in communal hallways

We have noticed that some residents are still leaving personal items in communal hallways even though we have a zero tolerance policy to items left in communal areas. This policy means that we have removed items we have found in these areas without notice and we will continue to do this.

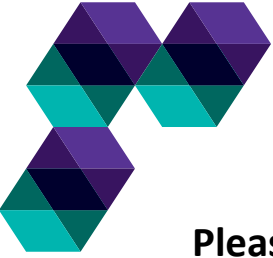
We do not allow residents to store items in communal hallways or areas. There is a TORT notice on your notice board which highlights the importance of keeping areas free from personal items, and that we will remove them without notice.

Your estates officer, along with Newgreen, will be visiting the estate within the next few weeks to check and remove items. If you have left any personal belongings in the communal areas, please remove them immediately.

## Pigeons on your estate and around your home

There's a high cost each year to local authorities and housing associations to clean, repair buildings, and provide pest control proofing. If you feed pigeons around your home, you are encouraging them to roost and perch nearby. Pigeon droppings are acidic and can erode stonework, resulting in long term costly damage. The feeding of pigeons also attracts rats and mice, which take any uneaten food and can also cause a health risk to you and your family. Please do not feed pigeons anywhere on your estate.





## Please take recycling seriously

Recycling contamination occurs when materials are sorted into the wrong recycling bin (placing a glass bottle into a mixed paper recycling bin for example), or when materials are not properly cleaned, such as when food residue remains on a plastic yogurt container.

### What happens if I put the wrong things in my recycling bin?



If you put the wrong items in your recycling bin, the Council may not collect your bins. Sometimes things like nappies and food waste could spoil the rest of the recyclables and mean a whole load may need to be disposed of and not recycled.

Due to contamination of the recycling and the council then refusing to collect the bin, we must arrange for our contractors to dispose of the bins at a cost which will be **service chargeable to all residents**. It is important to recycle properly to avoid such unnecessary additional cost to you.

### How to prevent recycling contamination

1. Rinse your containers as soon as they're empty and before placing in the recycling bin.
2. Sort your recycling materials.
3. Check the recycle material list to see what is accepted and how to sort it.
4. Follow your local council's recycling guidelines.
5. Remind other residents about the recycling guidelines as their actions could cause your recycle bin not to be collected by the council if it's contaminated.

If you live in a block of flats, you should have access to communal recycling bins. These will have labels that clearly show what you can recycle.

## New ways to pay your rent and service charge coming soon

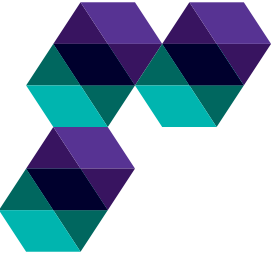
From spring / summer 2023, we will be making some changes to the ways you can pay your rent and service charge with us. We'll be replacing our existing payment provider, allpay, with a new payment provider, PayPoint. The changes in payment provider will mean new online payment links, a new payment app, and more places for you to pay in cash over the counter.

There's nothing you need to do right now to prepare for the change. However, if you currently use the Post Office to make a payment to us you may want to consider changing to another payment method ahead of the change as we will no longer be able to accept cash payments made at the Post Office. You will still be able to make cash payments at other locations that display the PayPoint sign. You can find out about all the alternative payment methods we have available on our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/payrent](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/payrent).

We will be updating the information about payment options on our website and in your My Network Homes online account ready for you to use when we make the change. We will also let you know nearer the time how you will be affected and if there's anything you need to do.

### Latest update from Network Homes





## Anti-Social behaviour (ASB)

If you think you're experiencing ASB, please check out our ASB toolkit to help you identify ASB and understand the steps you need to take if you're experiencing it. You can find the toolkit on our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/asbtoolkit](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/asbtoolkit)

## Estate walkabout

Please check out our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/get-involved/estate-inspections](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/get-involved/estate-inspections) for the dates of the upcoming Estate Walkabouts with partner agencies. Please get in touch with Steve Cherry, your Neighbourhood Officer, on 0300 373 3000 or by email at [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk) if you would like to attend. If we have a lot of interest, we will need to ensure we are compliant with current restrictions, but there will be other opportunities to work with us in the future.

## Stay put fire safety strategy for your building

**The fire strategy is a stay put policy.** This means unless you're directly affected by a fire, told by the emergency services or a Network Homes staff member to evacuate, you should stay in your home. Remember if you do need to evacuate because of a fire, do not use the lifts. Close the door behind you and safely make your way out of the building before calling the emergency services on 999. If you require an additional fire safety information or any assistance development your escape plan in the event of a fire, please contact Network Homes on **0300 373 3000**.

## Sele Community Hub

The Sele Community Hub at 18 Fleming Crescent is free to Sele Farm Community Groups to use for events, meetings, etc. If you're interested in using the Hub, please contact Tim Goodwin at [Tim.goodwin@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:Tim.goodwin@networkhomes.org.uk).

You can book The Hub directly via CVS: email [selebookings@cvsbeh.org.uk](mailto:selebookings@cvsbeh.org.uk) or call 0300 123 1034.

## Important contacts

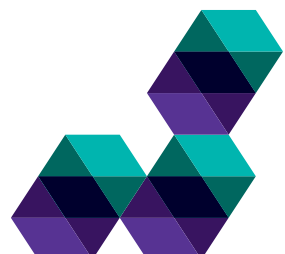
If you have any **issues with communal cleaning or grounds maintenance service**, call New Green on 01707 871 516 or email [admin@newgreen.co.uk](mailto:admin@newgreen.co.uk)

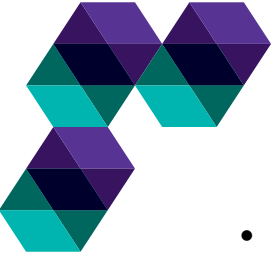
**Steve Cherry is your Neighbourhood Officer who manages your estate.** You can contact Steve by phone on 0300 373 3000 or by email at [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk).

If you need to report a repair, check on the progress of an existing repair or need any other information get in touch by:

- Your My Network Homes account – [www.mynetworkhomes.org.uk](http://www.mynetworkhomes.org.uk)
- Phone – **0300 373 3000**
- Email – [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk)
- Website – [www.networkhomes.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/contact-us)

**Latest update from Network Homes**





- Facebook – [Networkhomesuk](#)
- Twitter – [asknetworkhomes](#).

If you need to **report crime**, please visit <https://online.et.police.uk> to report minor or non-urgent crimes.

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[Click here to complete the feedback survey](#)

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