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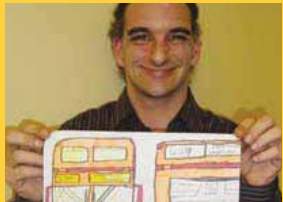
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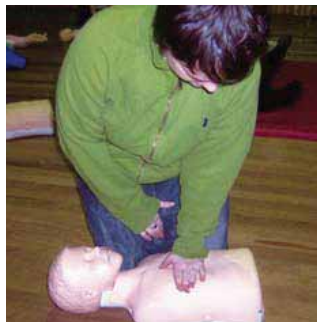


## Doing my bit

*Helen Blanksby has been a volunteer for St John Ambulance for nearly two years.*

St John Ambulance is a charity that trains volunteers from all over the country. They provide first aid support at large events. Helen, from Derbyshire, said she has learnt many new skills since joining: "We have learnt about first aid and how to handle people on a stretcher. We have also had talks about homelessness and the Samaritans. I really like learning new things, this is one of the reasons I joined St John Ambulance."

Helen is on duty at events where there are likely to be lots of people, such as rugby and football matches and firework displays. She said: "I enjoy going to the events because I like meeting people. I have not seen any serious accidents, it is mostly treating people with cuts and bruises." She added: "It keeps me out of mischief, and the uniform is quite cool too!"



## Your newsletter

**Tenants from Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire attended the Newsletter Panel meeting to give their views about the December edition of 'Progress People' newsletter.**

They told us that they liked the December edition of the newsletter, in particular 'Pets Corner', 'Work, Rest and Play' and the story about cooking.

They thought it might be good to have a regular article about music-based stories for tenants who play an instrument or get involved in music classes. If you have a music story you want to share with us why not send it in?

Competitions are still a favourite.

One idea that was suggested was 'spot the animals' in a word or picture search throughout the newsletter.

It was a lively meeting and the tenants said they will send in stories for the next edition. We would love to know what you

think about the newsletter so don't forget to fill in and return the feedback questionnaire that is included in every issue. All returned questionnaires are entered into a prize draw for £20 worth of high street shopping vouchers.

Tenants meet to discuss the newsletter (left to right): Hayley Woodhouse, Roger Parker, Jennifer Shephard and Helen Blanksby



## Competition

There is a £10 shopping voucher up for grabs in our new Easter competition!

How many of these Easter eggs can you find in the newsletter? Count how many (including the ones pictured here), then fill in the form below with your name and address. Cut it out and return it to Alan Robinson-Greig at the address on the back page. Closing date for entries is 1 May 2009.



I found  Easter eggs

Name

Address

Tel No.

Well done to Alfie Fitch of Norfolk who won the Christmas competition in our last newsletter.

# Get set for digital television

Between now and 2012 the present way of sending out television signals is changing to what is called a 'digital signal'. If you do nothing you will not be able to watch your present TV after your switchover date (see map).

Digital UK, a not-for-profit organisation, has been set up to help people during this switchover process. They have a 'switchover help scheme' to help you to alter your TV to receive digital signals.

### Am I eligible?

They can help you if you:

- Are aged 75 or over or
- Have lived in a care home for six months or more or get (or could get):
  - Disability Living Allowance
  - Attendance or Constant Attendance Allowance
  - Mobility Supplement
- Are registered blind or partially sighted

### Will I have to pay?

The service is free for the standard offer if you get:

- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance

Otherwise you will be asked to pay £40

The standard offer includes:

- Easy-to-use equipment that meets your needs
- Help with installing the equipment

- Fitting a new dish or aerial, where possible, if it's needed to make the new equipment work
- A demonstration and someone you can call for help while you're getting used to things

### What do I do now?

If you are eligible for the switchover help scheme Digital UK will write to you in plenty of time to ask if you want their help. Make sure you reply to their letter if you do. You must also have a current TV licence (free if you are over 75) to get help.



For more information or advice on the Switchover help scheme:

Ring: 0800 40 85 900

Visit the website: [www.helpscheme.co.uk](http://www.helpscheme.co.uk)

For more information or advice on the Digital switchover

Ring Digital UK: 08456 50 50 50

Visit their website: [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk)

digital

## Change to your benefit payday

The Department for Work and Pensions is changing the way it pays some benefits. These changes will take place over two years and start on 6 April 2009.

The changes will, for example, affect those people who get:

- Income Support
- Incapacity Benefit
- Severe Disablement Allowance

They will **NOT** affect those getting:

- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living allowance
- Carer's Allowance

If you receive your benefit weekly then in future you will be paid at the end of every two weeks (fortnightly).

- The actual day you get your benefit may also change. Jobcentre Plus will write and tell you about the changes four weeks before they happen
- If the first change from weekly to fortnightly payments will cause you a problem then

the Department for Work and Pensions can offer you an interest-free loan

- The loan can cover all or part of the missing payment
- You will need to apply for this
- You will not get it unless you ask
- The letter you get from Jobcentre Plus will also include a loan form
- The amount of any loan you get will have to be paid back by you

- Six equal amounts will be taken out of your fortnightly benefit

More information about the changes can be found on the Jobcentre Plus website [jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

You can also contact your local Social Services department. Your Support Provider may be able to help you with this.



# We got involved



Tenant David Robinson presents to the Progress Care Housing budget panel, left to right: Lynda Mason, Housing Services Manager, David Robinson, Debbie Atherton, Head of Finance and Andy Speer, Group Director of Finance

## Tenant helps set budget

**For the first time, a Progress Care Housing tenant has been involved in the budget setting process.**

David Robinson made a speech to the budget panel in support of Progress Care Housing's tenant participation budget for 2009/10. As part of the process, staff in charge of budgets must present a case to the budget panel. David attended the panel

along with Lynda Mason, Progress Care Housing's Housing Services Manager, to explain the importance and impact of tenant involvement activities.

David, who is a member of Progress Care Housing's Lancashire Tenants' Forum, was extremely proud to be the first tenant to participate in such a way. At the meeting, he described how

important tenant involvement is to him and his fellow tenants. He gave the panel a practical example of this partnership in the form of a checklist for reporting a repair that the Tenants' Forum had made up for tenants to use. David was determined not to disappoint his Forum colleagues so he practiced his speech every night before the panel meeting took place.

Andy Speer, Group Director of Finance, said: "I think David's involvement helps make the value of the work of tenant involvement real for staff who don't meet customers. He was the ideal 'expert witness' to make the case for tenant participation."

## Recognising achievement

**Members of the Lancashire Tenants' Forum were presented with a certificate by Alan Johnson of Progress Care Housing Association in recognition of their work with the tenant involvement team.**

The Tenants' Forum was set up two years ago and since then has met 17 times. They have explored topics such as tenants' rights, anti-social behaviour and how to make a complaint. They also looked at how Progress Care Housing can

improve its information to tenants, for example, the Tenants' Forum produced an 'Information checklist for reporting a repair' and 'How to be a good tenant' poster. They also suggested improvements to the Progress Care Housing website.



Progress Care Managing Director Alan Johnson said: "It's a great achievement that the tenants have come to regular monthly meetings and learnt a lot. Their continued involvement helps Progress Care Housing improve its services and look at different ways of presenting important information for tenants."

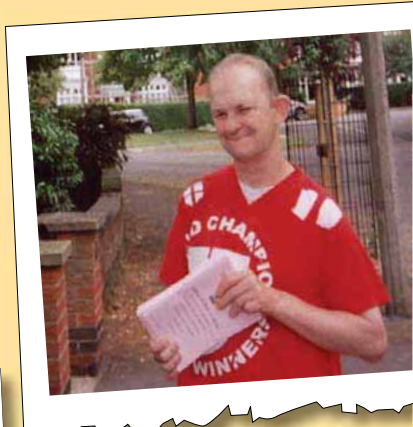


The Lancashire Tenants' Forum receive their certificates: front row, left to right: David Robinson, Clare Cowell, Tracy Lord, Elka (Tracy's support worker), Anthony Kay and Ian Howarth; back row, Alan Robinson Greig, Tenant Involvement Co-ordinator; Alan Johnson, Managing Director and Barry Johnson, Tenant Services Manager.

# Work, rest and play

Here are more photos of our tenants' activities.

If you have a job, hobby or sport you like doing, we would love to see a photo of it. Send your photo to the address on the back page, along with your name, address and telephone number and a short description of what you are doing in the photo. Your support worker may help you with this. You might see yourself in the newsletter!



Julie Kearney of Greater Manchester had the holiday of a lifetime when she visited Gracelands, the former home of her idol Elvis Presley, in Memphis, USA. She said: "It was a dream come true, seeing his home, his cars, his recording studio and lots of his personal possessions. I made lots of friends on this trip and think about it constantly."



Jeremy Slade of Devon is a co-presenter on Barnstaple's hospital radio programme once a month. He told us: "I take a selection of CDs and play my choice of tracks from them, as well as requests from patients and their relatives. In between the music I chat about local news and weather."



Dennis McGrellis of Dumfries, is a life-long fan of Celtic FC, so his visit to Celtic Park in August was a dream come true. He was given a guided tour of the stadium and enjoyed buying souvenirs from the Club shop. Dennis sent in this photo of himself proudly standing beside the European Cup of 1966.



Jennifer Duncombe of Leicestershire loves to paint and draw. She sent in this photo of herself with a painting she did following a visit to Edinburgh.

Stephen Thistlethwaite of Lancaster, sent this picture of himself at the 'Watching Our Weight club'. He told us he joined it as he wanted to lose weight and learn more about healthy eating. He said: "I like the club because I have the opportunity to cook different types of food. I bring recipes home from the club, cook them and report back on how it tasted."



Yvonne Twigg of Greater Manchester sent us this photo of herself in her pretty bedroom. She sent us a long letter about her experience of moving from her mother's into a Progress Care house. She told us that it took her a while to get used to it, but she is so glad she stuck it out as she now feels the house is her home.

Jamie Smith of Lancashire sent in this photo of himself and his friends with a customized motorbike. They were at the 'Caveman Millennium Bash Biker Weekend held at the Grasshoppers Ground in Preston. He said: "We had a great weekend camping with over 1,000 other bikers. We went to discos and watched all the competitions. We are hoping to go again this year as it was great fun!". Pictured left to right: John Rogers, Robert Slater, Jamie Smith and James Gillbanks.



Timothy Whiteman of Lincolnshire has delivered the local Parish Church magazine for the last four years. He said he likes being out in the community, and is getting to know the people he delivers to. He said: "One lady gives me a box of sweets at Christmas and Easter."



# Healthy eating tastes good!

**"My name is Natalie and I am on a diet! I used to consider 'diet' a bad word but I am starting to change my mind. As my New Year's resolution I have decided to 'fight the flab!'.**

I have struggled with my weight throughout my adult life and have now realised that I need to do something about it. With the help of the staff in my house – who encourage and support (and nag) me I am beginning to enjoy a healthier life style.

Some of the staff take me swimming or to the gym, and do keep fit exercises in the house with me. I have been trying to keep active and do some sort of exercise 3-4 times a week, but just for 30-40 minutes at a time until I get used to it.

Alongside the exercise I am trying to follow a healthy eating plan and I would like to share one of the recipes with you – pork casserole (see 'My favourite recipe below) - it tastes great! I have been really surprised by all of the different and tasty meals that I can make and eat. The best thing is I can still have some of the foods I love like chocolate,



pasta and cake.

My house mates are also supporting me in my quest to lose weight as they are all eating the same meals and snacks as I am. We often go swimming as a group as well. They love the new recipes, and no one feels left out by having to eat a different dinner.

Healthy eating is fun and pretty easy, it only takes a little thought and effort. With lots of support and encouragement I feel that I

**"Healthy eating is fun and pretty easy, it only takes a little thought and effort"**

can achieve my goal, and I'll be letting you all know how I get on later in the year.



## My favourite recipe

### Ingredients

- 600g of lean cubed shoulder of pork
- 25g of plain flour
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
- 2 crushed cloves of garlic
- 12 halved shallots
- 2 chopped celery sticks
- 2 medium eating apples, cored and chopped but not peeled
- 450ml of hot chicken stock
- 900g of potatoes
- 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk
- 3 tablespoons of chopped fresh parsley



## Pork casserole with parsley mash



### Method

- Preheat oven to gas mark 4/180°C/350°F
- Roll 600g of lean cubed shoulder of pork in 25g of plain flour, 2 teaspoons of dried thyme and salt and pepper
- Heat 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil in a large flameproof casserole dish
- Add the garlic, shallots, celery and apples
- Add the pork and cook over a medium heat for 3-4 minutes until browned
- Add the hot chicken stock
- Put in the preheated oven for one hour
- Meanwhile, boil 900g of potatoes until tender
- Drain and mash, adding skimmed milk and parsley
- Season and serve with the pork casserole (serves 4).



# Pet's corner

Here are more photos of our tenants and their pets.

If you have a pet why not send us a photo of you both? Send a short description along with your name, address and telephone number to the address on the back page. You might see your photo in the next newsletter!



## Rita Connor of Norfolk

Rita has been riding at a local riding school for some years and has become quite attached to Josh the pony. She has learned how to care for him as well as how to ride. Rita said: "I like horse riding, it is fun."

## Lillias Richardson of Dumfries

Lillias has had her cat Jose since he was a kitten. She said he can usually be found sleeping on her bed, as he does not like going outside. "Jose is good company for me, he is a big part of my life and I am so pleased he is mine."



## John Luker of Leicestershire

John goes to a riding school where they have special horse-drawn carriages that enable people in wheelchairs to experience the joys of riding. His wheelchair is strapped into the cart and the horse takes them around a course. John loves the ride.



# My favourite room

## My bedroom

"My bedroom is one of my favourite places to be. I love to chill out on my bed and watch my disco ball."



I am a Liverpool Football Club supporter - I have red Liverpool duvet covers on my bed and I like to watch them play on TV."

Hani Khoury of Norfolk



# All about re

Progress Care Housing Association charges its tenants money so they can live in their homes.

**This money is called rent and also includes service charges. Service charges pay for services provided at a property or scheme.**

Here we answer some commonly asked questions about rent and service charges.

### How often does the rent change?

The rent will change once a year at the beginning of April.



### How will I know the new amount to pay?

We will write to you in February each year and give you at least one month's notice that your rent and/or service charges are changing.

### What does my rent pay for?

- Progress Care Housing Association's staff
- Repairs to your home
- Insurance for the property

- Minor aids and adaptations to your home
- Building up funds to replace certain large and expensive items, like kitchens and roofs.

### Does my rent pay for the support I need to live in my home?

No. Your support is paid for quite separately.

### How do you decide by how much to change my rent?

We increase rents each year by an amount that allows for the increase in our costs. This increase is approved by our governing body, the Tenant Services Authority.

### What do my service charges pay for?

The services provided at each property are different. They might include things like washing machines, window cleaning or gardening. The ones you pay



# On the buses

**Colin Maguire of Lancashire loves to draw buses, the brighter the better!**

Colin told us one of the reasons is because his dad used to drive different buses and coaches. He said: "I have been drawing since the age of 16. My favourite bus is the 'Leyland Leopard', it is a single decker bus that has 33 seats. I like going on bus trips myself and I also like to watch them as they pass my house."



# rent and service charges

for are listed in your tenancy agreement.

### How do you decide by how much to change my service charges?

We talk to your support provider and look at how much it costs to provide each service for you in the year before. Different service charges may go up, down or even stay the same. For some services, like renewing expensive furnishings, we have to save up money from year to year.

### Can I get help with paying my rent?

You might get some housing benefit from your local council to pay all, or some of, your rent. This will depend on your income and savings. You will need to fill in an application form



and send it to the housing benefit office. Your support worker should be able to help you with this or you can ask one of our housing officers.

### Can I have my housing benefit paid directly to Progress Care Housing?

Yes. You can agree to this on the housing benefit application form. We will also have to sign part of your form agreeing to this.

### Do I need to tell the housing benefit department that my rent has changed?

Yes, it is important you always tell your local housing benefit office of any changes to either your rent or your personal circumstances. We will also write to your housing benefit department to tell them the new rent.

### Tenants from Lancashire believe it is important to understand more about service charges for their homes.

Paul Eddlestone, Alex Rowe, James Colley and Jason Bray attended a local tenant meeting that included an information session about service charges. When they got home they asked

questions about how the service charges for their particular property work.

Paul, Alex, James, Jason said: "It is important to know what the rent pays for as there is money within our rent for different services in our house. We want to make sure that if there is money, it is used to keep our house in good shape."



Tenants from Lancashire met to find out more about service charges. Left to right: Paul Eddlestone, Alex Rowe, James Colley and Jason Bray

**If you wish to discuss anything about your rent and service charges please contact your housing officer on 01772 450888 or write to Progress Care Housing Association, Unit 9, King's Court, King Street, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2LE, or email us at: enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk**



## Useful Addresses and Telephone Numbers

### HEAD OFFICE

Progress Care Housing Association  
Unit 9, Kings Court, King Street,  
Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2LE

Tel. 01772 450888  
Fax No. 01772 426173  
Web: [www.progresscare.org.uk](http://www.progresscare.org.uk)  
Email: [enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk)

### REPAIRS

#### Property Repairs Hotline

Monday - Friday

8.00 am - 6.00 pm

Note: The hotline is usually very busy from 9.30 - 11.00 a.m. If your repair is non-urgent please try phoning outside these times.

Tel. 01772 642199

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#### Out-of-above-hours (Emergency repairs only)

Tel. 01772 436756

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Repairs to furnishings,  
kitchen or laundry equipment  
Monday - Thursday 9.00am - 5.15pm  
Friday 9.00am - 4.45pm

Tel. 01772 450888



This newsletter is available on either audio tape or CD. If you do not already get a copy, then either phone 01772 450890 or write to Alan Robinson-Greig at our head office address above, or you may e-mail him at [arobinson-greig@progressgroup.org.uk](mailto:arobinson-greig@progressgroup.org.uk)

If you need the newsletter in another format, like large print or Braille, or an alternative language, or want additional copies, please let Alan know.

# Tenant Status Survey

In 2008 Progress Care Housing was selected to take part in a national survey to find out what tenants thought of the service provided by their landlord.

175 tenants throughout the country were visited by Progress Care Housing staff who completed a questionnaire. These are some of the results which were published in October 2008. The survey said that of the 175 tenants:

- 154 tenants are very or fairly satisfied with the services Progress Care Housing provides
- 137 tenants are very or fairly satisfied with the way Progress Care Housing deals with repairs and maintenance
- 145 tenants are very or fairly satisfied that their views are being taken into account by Progress Care Housing

■ 155 tenants feel that Progress Care Housing is good at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a tenant.

■ However 67 tenants felt that their rent is not good value for money. We intend to look into how we can improve the way we tell tenants how we use their rent money. 73 tenants said they are fairly or very dissatisfied with how their enquiries were dealt with. So, later this year, we are introducing a new computer programme that will closely monitor and improve how we deal with customer enquiries and complaints in Progress Care Housing. This system is already being used when you report a repair.



## WINNERS' CORNER

Here are the names of the lucky tenants who have won prizes since the last newsletter.

#### Newsletter feedback questionnaire £20 vouchers:

Rita Connors of Norfolk

#### Repairs reply form £20 vouchers:

November: Gavin Curran, Gavin Maule and Dalip Bedi of Dumfries

December: Mary Lewis and Raymond Mills of Lancashire

January: Susan Jackson, Angela Bailey, Collete Fay and Michelle Ingham of Greater Manchester

#### White goods and furnishing repairs questionnaire £25 vouchers:

Ronnie Pagan, James Jardine, Margaret Jardine and Robert Agnew of Dumfries

## JOKES

Send us your jokes for the next newsletter!



How does the Easter Bunny keep fit?

EGG-xercise and HARE-robics!

What books do rabbits like?  
Ones with hoppy endings.

'Progress People' is published by Progress Care Housing Association and sent to our supported housing tenants, support agency partners, service commissioners and tenants' relatives. If you have anything to say about the newsletter or our service, or a subject you think would make a good article, please get in touch.

You can write to:  
**Alan Robinson Greig, Tenant Involvement Co-ordinator,  
Progress Care Housing Association,  
Unit 9, Kings Court, King Street,  
Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2LE.**  
You can email Alan at:  
[arobinson-greig@progressgroup.org.uk](mailto:arobinson-greig@progressgroup.org.uk)  
or telephone him on **01772 450890.**

