

WHAt'sUp!



Welcome to the Summer 2025 edition of WHAt'sUp

I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year. Winter seems like a distant memory now, particularly as at the time of writing we're basking in some very welcome wall-to-wall sunshine and temperatures of nearly 20 degrees.

The advent of spring and leading into the summer is many people's favourite time of year. The new growth that appears as outdoor areas burst into life can bring a renewed sense of optimism.

Here at WHA, we're confident that our new growth as an organisation means the services we provide to you will continue to improve. The **Hot off the press** section on page 2 will bring you bang up to date with how we keep you safe, aim to improve energy efficiency and find out what you think of our services.

I'm sure it will come as no surprise that most of our contact with residents is to do with property repairs and maintenance. With this in mind, the features on pages 3, 4 and 5 will give you more information about what our property services team does and who they are.

As the days grow longer and the weather continues to improve (fingers crossed on that front!), reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) can rise. Pages 6 and 7 show how we support residents who are victims of ASB and describe some of the ways we can help resolve these issues.

Finally, and very importantly, on the back page you'll see that we're inviting more input from you. Whether through our new digital forum or additional tenant board members, it's vital for our future success that you have a

strong voice and continue to influence how we operate.

Best wishes,
Adrian

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE
02

Hot off the press

PAGE
03

Repairs and maintenance:
meet the team and find out what they do.

PAGE
06

How we help tackle
anti-social behaviour

PAGE
07

Restorative Gloucestershire

PAGE
08

Join our **tenant involvement** projects



Hot off the press: a round-up of our latest news



Injunctions sought for electrical safety inspections

Your safety is our number one priority. It's also a legal requirement. As a result, we're currently seeking county court injunctions in cases where residents have refused us access to complete essential electrical safety checks.

If granted, the injunctions will allow us to force entry

so we can complete this vital safety work. We'll then recharge the residents the costs we incur, which may run into hundreds of pounds.

Therefore, when we contact you, please allow us access to your home. It's one of your responsibilities under your tenancy agreement. It will also help to keep you, your family and your property safe – and could save you a considerable sum of money.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) survey

An EPC is a report that assesses the overall energy efficiency of a property. It considers things such as heating, insulation, and lighting.

An EPC gives a current and potential energy rating, similar to those on fridge freezers, cookers and washing machines. It also recommends how to improve the property's energy efficiency and estimates annual costs for heating, lighting and hot water.

We're currently updating our properties' EPCs. This will help us find out how we can improve their energy efficiency.

We've appointed a local company, Forest Energy Assessors, to carry out the EPC checks. If your home needs an updated EPC, they'll contact you over the next 12 months to arrange an appointment for an assessor to visit your home.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey

As always, we'd love to hear how you feel about the services we provide. Your feedback helps us understand what we do well and what we can improve. We're also required by the Housing Regulator to complete a tenant perception survey every two years and publish the results.

The last survey was carried out in the summer of 2023 so we're running another this year. A company called Acuity is carrying out the survey on our behalf. They'll contact you later this summer to ask how you think we're doing.

We'll publish the full results on our website and a summary in the Autumn Winter 2025 edition of WHAT'sUp!



Follow us on Facebook to keep up to date with what's happening in your area and share your views





Repairs and maintenance: your frequently asked questions

Do you provide a shower?

No. It's your responsibility to install a shower if you'd like one. You'll need our permission first, and if we grant it, the shower will need to be installed by a professional. If there's already a shower in the property, you're responsible for its maintenance.

Do you provide floor coverings?

We provide floor covering in the bathroom and kitchen and repair or replace it if it's worn due to fair wear and tear. You need to provide your own floor coverings for the rest of the property.

What do I do if there's mould in my home?

If a small amount of black mould appears during the winter, clean it off with bleach as soon as you spot it. For other types of mould, please contact us straight away. We'll look into what caused it and how to resolve it.

Do you do garden clearance?

No. It's your responsibility to look after your garden. However, if you're struggling let us know as we may be



able to put you in touch with agencies that can help.

Can we paint our hallway?

Yes, you can paint and decorate your property.

Can I mount my TV on my wall?

You'll need our permission first, and if we grant it, a professional will need to mount the TV.

Do you install outside taps?

No. If you'd like an outside tap please get in touch as you'll need our permission.

Can you recommend a tradesperson?

No. We do not recommend

tradespeople as we cannot guarantee the quality of their work.


Who's responsible for damage to my possessions if my home is flooded?

You're responsible for protecting your belongings. We insure the building, but you need to insure its contents.

Can I put up a fence in the front garden?

You need to ask for permission as local planning rules may prevent it. Many of our estates were designed to be open-plan and have planning constraints to ensure they stay that way.





A week in the life of a property services officer

Anthony Berrow joined us in March 2022, after running his own property maintenance company and working as a senior quality engineer. In this article, he tells us what he does in a typical week.

Monday

I like to arrive a little early every morning and make a hot drink for myself and the housing services officers who are in the office opposite me. They're always pleased to find it there when they arrive!

I log into a weblink which shows any out-of-hours calls our contact centre took over the weekend when the office is closed. It allows me to make sure that any emergency repairs that were reported have been dealt with promptly and to raise other repairs for routine maintenance.

I spend a lot of the morning replying to emails from agencies, contractors, colleagues and residents. I research a property's repairs history, look up best practice and share my knowledge of a building.

One message is from a resident who'd like to fit a walk-in shower. We've spoken on the phone and they agreed to email me their proposal. I review the request and grant permission, subject to our usual terms and

conditions. We're always pleased when residents want to improve their home.

In the afternoon I take part in training with The Housing Ombudsman on good practice in dealing with damp and mould.

Tuesday

Our gas contractor emailed me five Landlord Safety Certificates from the boiler inspections they did yesterday. I check them to make sure there are no major issues and then update our records. Gas safety is absolutely vital, and keeping our residents safe is our number one priority.

Unfortunately, one of the boilers was declared BER - beyond economical repair so I raise an order for an emergency water boiler and temporary heaters to be delivered to the resident and source a replacement. I call the resident to let them know what's happening and how long it's likely to take.

In the afternoon, I accompany a



housing services officer on a visit to a vulnerable resident. There are some problems with accumulation and condition of the property. I was able to say how we can support the resident by helping with repairs and general maintenance.

Wednesday

I start the morning catching up on emails, then have a very intensive day of number crunching and data checking. We're moving to a new housing management software system, which will improve our IT capabilities. I upload all our gas,





electrical and fire safety data to a spreadsheet, ready for the new system to go live.

We have a meeting every Wednesday afternoon where we discuss our empty properties. This week we're joined by some of our contractors who are working on these properties. It was great to catch up and find out what's a problem, what's going well and when the properties will be ready to let.

Thursday

After checking my emails, I lead a meeting on damp and mould, giving

feedback from the training I did on Monday. We record each case of damp and mould on a spreadsheet to help us manage them and to give us vital information on what may have caused it and what's worked to resolve it. For example, it helped me identify that the age of heating systems was an issue for some of our electric-only properties. I logged these for an upgrade as part of our major installation program.

Friday

I visited a resident today who had handed in their four-week notice. A lovely person with a beautiful home,

who had decided the property was too big and they needed to downsize. We discussed what they'd need to do in terms of clearing and cleaning the property before handing back the keys. It also gave me a chance find out if there were any repairs we could carry out during the notice period. This is really important, as the less time a property is empty the quicker we can let it again.

I then had an appointment with our contractors to inspect the ongoing work at an empty property. Unfortunately, it had not been left in good condition and needed substantial repairs.

Once back at the office, I advised the housing services officer on the condition of the empty property and when I felt it would be ready for a prospective resident to view. I then entered this information on the tracker, ready for next Wednesday's meeting.

The week ended with our regular Friday afternoon property services meeting, where we review the week's work and plan for the week and month to come.





Anti-social behaviour: what it is and how we can help

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is any activity that impacts on other people in a negative way, interfering with their right to live peacefully in their home and community.

There are many different types of ASB, such as noise nuisance, damage to property, one-off parties and events, aggressive dogs, intimidation or harassment. Although only some are legally defined as criminal, they can all harm people's quality of life. ASB can happen at any time but often increases in the summer when the nights are longer.

The impact of ASB

Sometimes ASB can seriously affect a person's quality of life and cause them to change the way they live to try and avoid incidents or the people who are involved. This can include staying indoors, taking a different route when they go out, avoiding certain places and even trying to move house.

All this can cause people affected by anti-social behaviour to feel anxious, stressed, nervous or scared. These are all normal feelings and there is help available.

How WHA can help

If you're the victim of ASB please contact us. We'll carry out a risk assessment and then agree with you what we can do to help resolve the issue. For example, recently we have:

- Carried out joint visits with the police where we've spoken to residents involved in neighbour nuisance.
- Taken possession of a property following evidence of drug dealing.
- Worked with the community mental health team and the police to

resolve a noisy neighbour case.

- Worked with Forest of Dean District Council to resolve a case involving nuisance pets.

Resolve

We've recently joined Resolve, the UK's leading community safety experts. Resolve has worked with the government and civil service for over 27 years, developing best practice and national policy around ASB.

They help local authorities, housing providers and police forces across the country respond to ASB issues confidently and in a way that ensures more positive outcomes for the communities they serve.

One of the ways we help resolve incidents of anti-social behaviour



is through a referral to Restorative Gloucestershire.

What is restorative mediation?

Conflict is normal. We can come into conflict with other people for lots of reasons. For example, we could have different lifestyles, expectations or cultures. We may disagree about things like noise, boundaries, parking, dog fouling, rubbish or other things we find antisocial.

Restorative Gloucestershire's restorative mediation service is voluntary and, at the start, involves meeting with each person individually. In the first meeting the mediator will ask about the problem, what you want to change and what you think needs to happen to improve the

situation. After this, if everyone is willing, both parties come together in a neutral location where the mediator facilitates a conversation about what's been happening, how everyone has been affected and what needs to happen next.

Why does restorative mediation work?

Restorative mediation provides a private and supportive framework that can make difficult conversations easier. It takes the issues people raise seriously and gives both parties a chance to share their feelings and ask for what they need.

By the end an outcome agreement should be in place. The outcome agreement lists the actions that

have been agreed to resolve the conflict. It's not legally binding, but it is a positive statement of intent between all the parties involved and can significantly reduce subsequent friction and misunderstandings, even if the conflict is not fully resolved.

How long does it take?

Restorative mediation usually starts with one or two meetings with each party, followed by a 45-minute to 90-minute facilitated mediation session.

Who makes the referral?

If you're willing to take part, we'll complete the referral forms.





We're growing our tenant involvement and need your help

We're looking for volunteers who'd like to help us improve our services. Could you...

Review and scrutinise our policies and be a sounding board for new ideas?

We'd like to set up a digital group we can work with to develop and review our policies and improve our services.

Be a resident board member?

The WHA board leads our work and holds our staff team to account. They meet four times a year at our offices in Coleford.

Each board member has a responsibility to:

- Promote and uphold our values
- Develop our long-term strategy
- Monitor how we perform
- Make sure we treat our tenants fairly and maintain safe homes
- Make sure we comply with all relevant laws, regulations and obligations
- Make sure we manage our finances well and make the best use of our resources

To find out more or become involved, please email Barry Rees at barryr@wyedean.org or call him on **01594 838 000**.

Struggling to pay your rent? We're here to help.

If you're having financial difficulties and finding it hard to pay your rent, please call **01594 838 000** or email office@wyedean.org.uk. We'll do all we can to help you.

You can also get free, independent help from Citizens Advice. Call them on **0300 330 9006**.

Unhappy with our service?

Please let us know if you have a complaint. We'll listen to you and do our best to resolve the problem quickly.

If you're not happy with our response, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman:

Call **0300 111 3000**

Email info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Website www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk



Out-of-hours emergency repairs

Call **01594 838 000** and follow the out-of-hours instructions
For all other emergencies, call **999**

