

Issue 15 - spring 2015

Open Door

The DCH magazine for our Cornwall customers



2015 Garden competition

enter now

Your local news

what's happening in your area?

Tell us what you think about how we communicate with you and

win big!

ServiceWatch

find out more about who they are and what they do

plus

Staying safe in your home

Fire safety information

Universal Credit update

Welcome to the spring edition of Open Door

Welcome to the spring edition of Open Door, we hope everyone had a lovely Easter. This edition of Open Door looks at subjects around health and wellbeing and highlights some of the work we've been doing across our communities to help improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

We are also really pleased to be launching our garden competition for 2015 in this edition (page three). There were lots of great entries last year and we hope lots of you will want to enter again this year.

We strive to make Open Door a newsletter that is of interest to all our residents and we hope you enjoy reading it. We want to know what you think about all the ways that we communicate with you, so in this edition you will find a short survey. By completing and returning the survey by 5 June, you will be entered into a free prize draw for the chance to win either a Hudl2 tablet or an equal amount of shopping vouchers.

Cornwall Media Group

Competition winners!

We would like to congratulate

Amber Lloyd from St Ives for her winning colouring competition entry and

K T Peppin from Falmouth for winning the wordsearch competition.

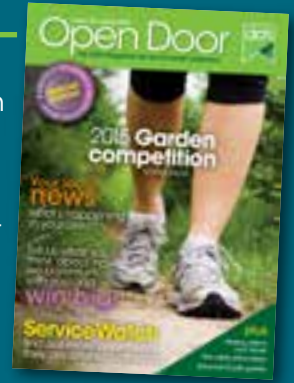
Well done - we hope that you enjoy spending your £20 Love2Shop vouchers!

Don't forget the competitions
in this edition:

- ▶ **Colouring and spot the difference - page 21**
- ▶ **Wordsearch - page 24**

Cover story

The 2015 garden competition has been launched; see page three for details on how to enter. And make sure to read our news roundup pages for lots of examples of how we can support you in improving your health and wellbeing.



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Open Door is produced by a media group, staff and residents of DCH. Our competitions are only open to DCH residents and exclude resident members of the media group and staff. Competition winners may be featured in Open Door. Information is correct at the time of going to print.

Follow us on twitter  [@DCHvoice](#) and [@DCHnews](#) for all the latest news, events and updates.

This newsletter is also available in Braille, large print, audio, DAISY, or in another language. It can also be viewed on our website:

 www.dchgroup.com

To receive a different format or copies via email only, please contact us on:

 **01392 814 422**

Please send contributions and article ideas for the next issue by 5 June 2015:

Freeport RTEE-KYLY-XGZR, 72 Paris Street, Exeter, EX1 2ZR

 comms@dchgroup.com

Other contact methods are on the back page.

Cornwall garden competition 2015

Following the huge success of last year's competition we are thrilled to be launching the DCH Garden Competition 2015! Enter yourself or encourage other DCH customers to get involved before **19 June**. Our judges will be out and about in July, so green fingers at the ready and get growing!



We have garden centre voucher prizes for the following categories and there will be an extra prize for the overall winner:

- **Under 18's** • **Hanging baskets and containers**
- **Effective use of space** • **Over 65's** • **Scheme/communal** • **Floral** • **Vegetable** • **New gardens** (those who have been in their home less than 12 months)

Entering is easy! Fill in and send us the entry form below, or contact us by phone  **0300 123 8080** or email  **debbie.sims@dchgroup.com** making sure you supply us with the following details:

Name of gardener: _____

Address of garden: _____

Category: _____

Contact number: _____

Email address: _____

This data is only being collected for the purpose of the garden competition and your name, address and telephone number may be disclosed to the judges. These judges include other residents who sit on the Media Group.




Fighting fit

at Carn Brea Foyer

DCH were pleased to be able to support one of the residents of Carn Brea Foyer in Redruth in developing his passion for fitness and boxing. Luke Church was awarded £250 to help pay for a gym membership and boxing equipment.

Luke has an ongoing interest in fitness and the funding from DCH has allowed him to continue to build his confidence using the boxing tutor training he has undertaken. He is now passing his passion on to other young people by helping out at Liskeard, Bodmin and Carn Brea foyers with weight lifting and boxing training.

If you would like to apply for an individual award up to £250 to help with self-development courses or learning opportunities please speak to your housing officer, community development worker or call

 **0300 123 8080**



Cracking Christmas across Cornwall



Residents in sheltered scheme, Vivian Court in Truro thoroughly enjoyed their Christmas meal thanks to a small grant from DCH and a lot of hard work from the chair of the residents association and her family.

Those who were ill or have mobility issues still got to enjoy the meal in their flat.



Treneere Team Spirit, a DCH recognised residents' association, organised an outing for the older residents of the estate just before Christmas. The group enjoyed a fish supper at the local community building, the Col-Coombe Centre, before venturing off on a minibus to visit St Just Chapel to see the Christmas Tree exhibition and enjoying a cup of tea and mince pie. From there, the minibus took them through local towns and villages to enjoy the Christmas lights displays and once back at Treneere, they were presented with a Christmas goody bag by the residents' association.

Making a splash

Louise Gore was awarded £250 from DCH last year to help fund her place on a Level 2 ASA swimming teacher qualification.

Louise was required to fund the course independently and the DCH award helped make this possible.

Congratulations to Louise who successfully qualified as a Level 2 ASA swimming teacher and has taken her new found skills out into her local community.



She has been volunteering at the local surf lifesaving club assisting the youth section with their swim training.

She has also set up group lessons at a Newquay pool and offers swimming lessons for children from pre-school age (three years and above) in addition to one to one lessons for adults. If anyone would like further information or to discuss booking lessons with Louise please feel free to contact her direct on **07980 096 052**. To apply for an individual award or community grant please call **0300 123 8080** and speak to Sam Church, Keri Millar or Mai Evans.

Free NHS health checks

We all tend to splurge over the holidays and turn our thoughts to getting fit and healthy in the spring. To help you with this why not take advantage of a free health check from the NHS?

The check is a free midlife 'MOT' for adults aged from 40 to 74 who don't have an existing cardiovascular condition. The check takes 20 to 30 minutes and involves a few simple questions and some straightforward tests to calculate your risk of developing serious but preventable illnesses.

DCH will be supporting health checks across Cornwall and these will be advertised on local notice boards. If you would like to find out about health checks in your area or have a group or residents association who would like to host a health check day locally please contact DCH on **0300 123 8080**.



Neighbourhood Watch scheme grows thanks to DCH grant



Make a positive change!

Mary Shead (pictured above) is a familiar face who works hard across a number of areas in Cornwall setting up neighbourhood watch schemes which benefit many DCH residents. Recent areas that are either being surveyed for interest or are having schemes set up include Trenoweth, Lansdowne, Barlanwick, Barwick, Trerew and Cardinnis. When a new scheme is set up, part of the process is providing street

signs that tell people that area is now under a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. DCH are pleased to have provided £150 to help fund these signs so Mary can work with DCH residents to set up even more schemes.

If you would like more information on setting up a scheme in your area please contact Mary on

07982 307 985

Walking for health

We all know that exercise is good for us and we know our health is important. But it can be easy to find excuses for not actually getting out there and doing it.



Join a new group!

Lead the way

If you find it difficult to get active, why not start walking? It's really easy to start, you don't need any special equipment - and it counts towards your recommended amount of physical activity. A good pair of shoes is the most important thing - and you probably have those anyway. Something comfortable, with good support for your feet, is just right.

Walking can improve your health, your happiness and, if you join one of the walking groups across the county, it will give you the chance to explore the outdoors, get to know your local area and meet new people.

- ▶ **1 Penwith Walkers** penwithwalkers@aol.com
07889 923 654 / 07941 518 148

- ▶ **2 Penzance Local Walks**
i.herbert@tcv.org.uk 01209 610 100

- ▶ **3 Redruth Walks**
helen.page@cornwall.nhs.uk 01209 310 066

- ▶ **4 Newquay Healthy Walkers**
jon.holroyd@cornwall.nhs.uk 07825 365 469

- ▶ **5 Bude Walk and Talk**
michael.heryet@talk21.com 01288 356 628 /
chris.wood@cornwall.nhs.uk 01209 310 062

- ▶ **6 Tamar Valley Walk and Talk**
01752 318 380 / 01822 832 364

- ▶ **7 Caradon Monthly Walks**
mansfield@clara.co.uk 01579 371 243

- ▶ **8 Bodmin Stroll Back the Years** rongoodgame@fiscali.
co.uk/chris.wood@cornwall.nhs.uk 01209 310 062

- ▶ **9 Bodmin Walking Group**
claire@cn4c.org.uk 01209 310 610

- ▶ **10 St Austell and Clay Country Stroll Back the Years**
Ashley.cundy@hotmail.co.uk

- ▶ **11 Truro Stroll Back the Years**
diane.taylor31@btinternet.com 01872 240 783

- ▶ **12 Truro Short Walks Group**
claire@cn4c.org.uk 01209 310 610

- ▶ **13 Falmouth Health Walks**
mylor2009@hotmail.co.uk 01326 375 737

- ▶ **14 Helston Step Free** 01326 565 565

Could you claim Personal Independence Payment?

From 23 February 2015, those living in areas with a postcode starting EX or PL who currently claim Disability Living Allowance (DLA), may have been or may be invited to claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

PIP helps with some of the extra costs caused by long term ill health or a disability if you're aged 16 to 64. The rate depends on how your condition affects you, not the condition itself.

PIP cannot be backdated, so it is important that you make a claim as soon as you are invited to do so. If you do not claim PIP when invited

to do so, your claim for Housing Benefit may be affected and non-dependant deductions may be charged where applicable.

Most DLA claimants with an indefinite or long-term award will not be affected until October 2015 or later. Further information can be found at:

 www.gov.uk/pip/overview



Direct Debits Switch and pay the easy way

We offer a choice of ways for you to pay your rent and service charges but the easiest and quickest way to pay is by Direct Debit.

It's safe and guaranteed

the Direct Debit Guarantee protects you against errors

It's quick

no more queuing, writing cheques or forgetting to pay

It's flexible

choose to pay monthly, four weekly, fortnightly or weekly

All customers who pay us by Direct Debit will be entered into a quarterly prize draw to win £25 Love2Shop vouchers. *Terms and conditions apply.*

 www.dchgroup.com



We can set up Direct Debits over the phone - call our income team on  **0300 123 8080**. Or for more details and a Direct Debit form give us a call

Winners so far have included Mrs Wright from Exeter; Mr Thomas from Penzance and Mr Davis from Kingsbridge.



Universal Credit update

Residents of pensionable age **will not** be affected by these changes.

At the end of last year the government announced that the introduction of Universal Credit would happen faster than first thought and rolled out to all job centres and local authorities across the country from February 2015.

Universal Credit will roll out to new claims from single people (who would otherwise have been eligible for Job Seeker's Allowance) including those with existing Housing Benefit and Working Tax Credit claims as follows:

- ▶ between February and April 2015 for those within the Taunton Deane local authority area
- ▶ between May and July 2015 for those within the Cornwall Council local authority area
- ▶ from November 2015 for Devon local authority area.

Universal Credit will be introduced at first for new claims from single jobseekers but will then be expanded over time to all claimants.

Universal Credit will simplify the benefits system by bringing together the following benefits into a single payment:

- ▶ income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- ▶ income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- ▶ Income Support
- ▶ Child Tax Credits
- ▶ Working Tax Credits
- ▶ Housing Benefit.

The main difference for affected residents is that Housing Benefit which previously was paid directly to DCH, will, in future be paid to residents. It will then be up to residents to pay their full rent, including any service charges, to DCH themselves.

Affected residents will probably become aware of any changes to how their benefit is paid to them before DCH, but in the meantime, if you have any questions, you should ring the DCH Income team on

 **0300 123 8080**

Easy and convenient ways to pay your bills



We have the following payment methods for you to pay your rent and other service charges.

Direct Debit - see advert on page seven for details.

Online - pay your rent and other charges including service charge, court costs, utility bills, and ground rent, plus more online. You will need your 15 character account reference and your debit or credit card details.

Telephone - if you have a debit or credit card, you can pay over the phone. You will be asked for your rent payment card number so have this card with you.

Text - to make a payment by text you will need to register for the service at  www.allpayments.net

Pay at a PayPoint - pay your rent anywhere you see the PayPoint logo, including local shops, garages, newsagents and at post offices. You will need to take your payment card with you to make a payment.

The allpay App - easily make a payment wherever you are, at the touch of a button on your Apple or Android Smartphone. The mobile App is free to download from your App store.

If you have any questions about paying your rent and other charges visit our website or contact the Income team on  **0300 123 8080**

Locate your new shared ownership home...

dch



Contact us now on **01752 856 037**
or sales@dchgroup.com

DEVON

Alston Gate, Marlborough TQ7 3BT
2 & 3 bedroom houses.
Prices starting from £76,000
for a 40% share

Cranbrook, Exeter EX5 7DR
2 & 3 bedroom houses.
Prices starting from £72,000
for a 40% share

Hillside Gardens, Pinhoe EX1 3UY
2 & 3 bedroom houses.
Prices starting from £74,000
for a 40% share

Saltram Meadow, Plymstock PL9 7LJ
2 & 3 bedroom houses.
Prices starting from £72,000
for a 40% share

The Dock, Plymouth PL1 3DN
2 bedroom apartments and one 3
bedroom town house.
Prices starting from £70,000 for a
40% share of an apartment

CORNWALL

Penn an Dre, Truro TR1 3LF
2 & 3 bedroom houses.
Prices starting from £74,000
for a 40% share

TAUNTON

Langford Mead, Taunton TA2 6FA
2 & 3 bedroom houses.
Prices starting from £64,000
for a 40% share

COMING SOON!

- ▶ Trelawny Gardens, Plymouth
- ▶ Greenacres, Exeter
- ▶ Dobwalls, Liskeard

Subject to availability. Prices subject to change. Eligibility and T & C's apply. Speak to a Sales Adviser for details.

... it's closer than you think!



Did you know that staircasing is as easy as 1, 2, 3?

Buying more shares in your home is called staircasing. Your lease will confirm when you are able to do this. In most cases you will be allowed to purchase up to 100% and acquire the freehold of the property.

If you decide to staircase please speak to a member of the Sales Team, and we will be on hand to answer your questions, assist with your sale and confirm the charges payable when selling your home.

1.

Get some financial advice

Speak to an independent financial advisor who will give you free advice on whether or not you can arrange additional mortgage finance. Alternatively you could use savings or a family gift to help with your purchase.

2.

Get your home valued

Contact us to let us know that you're thinking about buying more shares and we can provide you with details of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) who are qualified to value your home. We'll help you to arrange the valuation and report back to you once the report has been published so that you know how much the additional shares will be.

3.

Get a solicitor to deal with your purchase

You will need to use a solicitor when you staircase as your lease will change to incorporate the additional shares. There will be fees involved as this is a legal process. We can provide you with a list of solicitors who are experienced in dealing with the purchase of additional shares.

If you decide to staircase call the Resales Team on **01752 856 037** or **sales@dchgroup.com**

Pull out
and keep



Service Watch

In every edition of Open Door the members of ServiceWatch present our performance information. But what is ServiceWatch, who are the members and what do they do?

ServiceWatch – who, what, why?

ServiceWatch is a group of independent volunteer residents that work together to scrutinise our performance and improve the services that you receive. Members have around eight meetings each year, a typical meeting will include scrutiny of performance information, working on reviews in order to make recommendations for improvements and monitoring the progress of recommendations made. They also scrutinise board decisions that may have an impact on services.

Recent review areas have included responsive repairs, complaints and income management. Upcoming reviews include

rechargeable repairs, shared ownership satisfaction and anti-social behaviour. To highlight the work undertaken in these reviews and the recommendations made from them, we will feature a review in each upcoming edition of Open Door.

ServiceWatch have also been recognised as a good practice example by the Housing Quality Network (HQN) and have recently been shortlisted for a Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) National award. One member has kindly shared their story of being part of ServiceWatch.

Introducing Ken Gilbert

I have been part of ServiceWatch since the beginning, following my involvement in a number of focus groups and meetings held by DCH. I realised straight away that I was in a scrutiny role with the opportunity to positively influence decisions that directly impact on the welfare of other residents and this has given me a great deal of satisfaction over the last few years.

As a member of the group I visited Tilburg, Holland two years ago to see how a similar housing association to DCH conducted their business. I have also presented a repairs and maintenance review to the main DCH board. I am gaining in confidence in my role on ServiceWatch, developing skills and learning new ones.



Ken tells us of his experiences with ServiceWatch

ServiceWatch want to find out what you think? Have you any comments to make on the reviews carried out so far or the work planned for this year? Would you like to observe a meeting or are you interested in joining? Please contact Hazel La Bode, tel 0300 123 8080 or email hazel.labode@dchgroup.com

Spring 2015

How are we doing?

These pages show how we are doing against targets that are set each April

We aim to be in the **top 25%** of housing associations



Letting empty homes



96.2% new tenants satisfied with the service (target 95%)

£0.73% rent loss due to empty homes (target 0.63%)

27.2 days on average to re-let a home (target 23 days)

Customer care and satisfaction



82.4% of calls were answered on time (target 80%)

91.5% of customers are satisfied that calls are dealt with quickly and efficiently (target 95%)

77.3% of customers feel that we listen to their views (target 80%)



68.5% of customers satisfied with the way we handle anti-social behaviour (target 80%)
Our ASB teams are working hard to improve this performance

44.4% of customers satisfied with how we dealt with their complaint (target 76%)
We are now using a new complaints procedure and are expecting this result to improve

88.6% are satisfied with our services (target 90%)



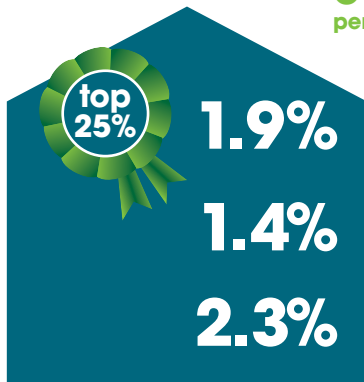
A green tick means we are on target
 An amber tick means that we are close
 A red cross means that we are some way below target



Our overall performance in each service area is shown with our red, amber and green house graphic with an arrow indicating how well we are doing

Wherever we are below target, detailed plans are in place to put things right

Collecting rent



rented homes rent arrears (target 2.03)



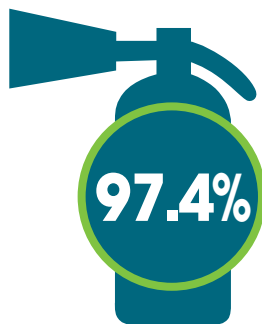
former tenants rent arrears (target 1.30%)



shared ownership rent arrears (target 1.64%)



Repairs and maintenance



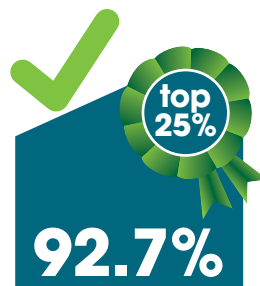
homes with serviced fire detection equipment and completed fire risk assessments (target 100%)



satisfaction with last repair (target 97%)



of emergency repairs completed on time (target 99.7%)



satisfied with the neighbourhood (target 90%)



of up-to-date gas servicing (target 100%)



Customer feedback

89.23% of customers are satisfied that their rent provides value for money – this puts us in the top **25%** of housing associations!



Complaints

Last September we launched our new complaints process to provide a better service and the figures below relate to the new service since September.

We have received, on average:

144 complaints a month and each complaint has a manager assigned to lead on the response.

Over 60% of complaints related to the repairs service and **63%** of customer compliments recorded relate to repairs and maintenance.

87% of complaints are responded to within ten working days.

After a complaint we measured how satisfied complainants were with the way we handled their case. We've already spoken to 150 residents and seen satisfaction rise to **54%** since September, compared to 44.4% overall for the full year.


We are still learning and need to improve the speed of our response, make sure we deliver what we promise, and communicate clearly with the customer.

Other feedback from our customers

 **98.7%** satisfaction with newly built homes

 **97.7%** of customers moving into one of our homes were satisfied with the helpfulness and politeness of our staff during their move

 **87.1%** satisfaction with the overall quality of our homes

 **97.1%** of customers have been happy with the attitude of the work person who came to do their repair, with **95.47%** happy with the quality of the work.

When dealing with anti-social behaviour, most people said the officer who dealt with the issue was helpful (78.2%) and would be willing to report anti-social behaviour to us in the future.

Contacting us: it's as simple as

1 2 3

We want to make it as simple as possible for you to contact us and access our services. Following an internal review of the ways you can contact us we have made it even easier, you can contact us in 3 simple ways:



- ▶ by phone on **0300 123 8080**
– no matter what you want to talk to us about



- ▶ by email on **contact@dchgroup.com** for general enquiries or **repairs@dchgroup.com** to ask about an existing repair or report a new repair (more information on repairs reporting below).



- ▶ by visiting our website **www.dchgroup.com** and completing the online contact form. Our website is full of useful information, from community grants to buying a home, from reporting a repair to paying your rent.

Emergencies

Outside our normal office opening hours, you can report emergencies on our usual day time number

0300 123 8080

Our repairs service for you

Our Repairs team carry out more than **4,700** repairs each month and our repairs engineers want to provide you with the best possible service. Wherever possible we offer appointments at times to suit you and over the past quarter have attended over **98.9%** of repairs on time.

How you can report a repair

Non-emergency repairs

- ▶ call us on **0300 123 8080**
- ▶ email us **repairs@dchgroup.com** at any time for less urgent repairs
- ▶ visit our offices in person during working hours. Our offices are open 9am - 5pm
- ▶ write to us (office addresses can be found on the back cover)
- ▶ report your non-urgent repair at **www.dchgroup.com**

Emergency repairs

- ▶ call us on **0300 123 8080**. You can use this number to report a repair 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Let's celebrate **we are one**

After many months of consultation with customers and stakeholders our boards and The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have approved the merger of DCH and West Devon Homes. So now it is official let's celebrate. Thank you for your feedback during consultation; it has helped shape our future.

We understand you may still have some questions so please find below a quick Q&A to help answer some of them. Also with this edition of Open Door you will have received a letter with information about your tenancy following the merger.

What will the benefits be?

- ▶ improved repairs and maintenance whilst working hard to keep services high and charges low for over 22,000 homes
- ▶ continued financial savings to reinvest in affordable homes, local services and communities
- ▶ find new ways for future funding so we can be stronger and more efficient.

What we are achieving already!

- ▶ **£500k** of actual savings so far by joining our services together
- ▶ creating joint teams to ensure we provide great customer services for everyone
- ▶ looking at ways to improve how we communicate with you and save money – make sure you complete our survey in this edition!

Will my landlord change?

The letter you have received with this magazine tells you about the changes to your landlord.

Will the date of my rent change because of the merger?

No, the date you pay your rent will not change as a result of the merger.

Will my rent go up because of the merger?

No. We work out rent levels using social housing landlord rules that are set by the government.

Will my service charge change because of the merger?

No, your service charge will not change as a result of the merger.

Will the number I call change?

You should continue to contact our teams on the usual number or call us on

 **0300 123 8080**

For information on how to report non-emergency and emergency repairs please see the article on page 15. Still got questions about the merger? Why not ask a member of our team or give us a call on **0300 123 8080**. You can find out more about our services and support at www.dchgroup.com

Homes for Britain campaign



Truro

Paul Crawford, DCH Chief Executive and Martyn Gimber, North Devon Homes Chief Executive

DCH add their voice to the Homes for Britain campaign

The Homes for Britain campaign launched last year to highlight the need for the next government to come up with a long-term plan to tackle the housing crisis. DCH were involved from day one and were pleased to be part of the exciting relay to the Homes for Britain rally in Westminster. Starting at Lands' End the relay to the rally saw buses, bikes, running shoes and walking boots hit the road and carry the Homes for Britain giant key to Westminster in time for the Homes for Britain rally on 17 March.

DCH held events in both Truro and Exeter to highlight the campaign, get people to sign the campaign petition and encourage them to vote in the general election. Also part of the events was Betsy, the Homes for Britain bus, who drew lots of attention at both locations.

Paul Crawford, Group Chief Executive at DCH said:

“As the leading provider and developer of affordable homes in the south west, DCH is supporting the Homes for Britain campaign to 'end the housing crisis within a generation.' Over the next five years DCH has a pipeline development plan of a total of 3,500 homes for affordable rent, shared ownership and outright sale. In a region where house prices are around 12 times average incomes; new affordable homes are as crucial as ever.



Energy switching getting the right price

Are you getting the best price for your energy supply?

We want to help our residents save money and get the best price. The best place to start is to look at switching suppliers. If you have not switched your energy supplier in the last 12 months you are probably paying too much and could save over £100 a year. Finding a better deal and switching supplier is easy using one of the online comparison sites. To see a list of sites that are recommended by Ofgem, the energy watchdog, visit [goenergysshopping.co.uk](https://www.goenergysshopping.co.uk)

Home heat helpline


This is a free national helpline run by the six main energy suppliers. If you are having difficulties paying your fuel bills, it offers specialist advice on benefits, grants for free

home insulation, reduced tariffs and special payment options that energy suppliers provide. The helpline is open 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday and is free to call from a landline

 **0800 336 699** or visit www.homeheathelpline.org.uk

Cold home

If you find your home is difficult or expensive to heat or you don't know how to use your heating system please contact us and ask to speak to your Neighbourhood team

 **0300 123 8080**

Want to complain about your energy company?

Call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline to get information or advice about your energy bills or how to make a complaint

 **08454 040 506** or visit www.adviceguide.org.uk

Get connected with a DCH digital bundle

So much is available online these days and people that have regular access to the internet have more opportunities to get advice, access services, apply for jobs and save money.

We recognise that not everyone has the skills or can afford to get online. So in an exciting new project we have partnered with Hackit, an IT social enterprise company, to offer 10 DCH residents a 'digital bundle' including the following:

- ▶ Google Chromebook laptop
- ▶ up to six months basic mobile connectivity
- ▶ the provision of a training start up package with each laptop
- ▶ mentoring for one month from Hackit with telephone helpline
- ▶ monthly contact with DCH over the six months
- ▶ cover of the cost of local introductory computer training.



10 Free laptops to lucky residents
Apply NOW to see if it could be you!

Try something new!

To apply for a 'digital bundle' you need to meet the following criteria:

- ▶ be living on a low income (household income of £16k and under)
- ▶ be unemployed or working part time and actively seeking further employment
- ▶ don't have internet access at home or free access locally
- ▶ lack confidence in using a computer or tablet but really keen to learn
- ▶ be willing to use the MyWorkSearch job search website.

To find out more and apply (closing date for applications is Friday 22 May 2015) please contact Keri Millar ☎ **01736 334 936** or email @ keri.millar@dchgroup.com. For more information on Hackit visit: www.hackitoday.co.uk

Looking for a fresh start?

Are you interested in a career in painting and decorating?
Are you reliable and committed to learning a new skill?
If you are then DCH and Dulux Decorator Centre would love to hear from you!

We have a number of sponsorship opportunities for people from DCH households to gain a qualification in painting and decorating and gain some valuable work experience in a local Dulux Decorator Centre.

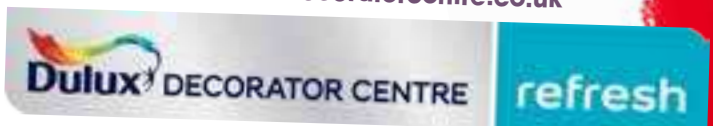
You will attend a local college on a one year part time course where you will learn basic painting and decorating skills. Dulux Decorator Centres will provide you with all you need for your course including safety shoes, overalls, tools, stationary and college books.

You will also spend time getting work experience in your local Dulux Decorator Centre where you will have an opportunity to work with and meet

professional decorators who could become a future employer. You will also get the chance to gain retail and customer service skills.

If you are interested then please contact Jackie Blight, DCH community development worker, @ Jackie.blight@dchgroup.com, ☎ **0300 123 8080**, for more details or to apply.

Find out more about Dulux Decorator Centre by visiting us at www.duluxdecoratorcentre.co.uk



Walking the talk

Question: Where can you go to discuss a wide range of topics, make friends and make a difference?

Answer: DCHvoice.

DCHvoice is our resident involvement network made up of residents of all ages and backgrounds. They work with us to improve our housing services for everyone. Over the last four months through meetings, telephone calls, email and paper surveys over 250 residents have helped us:

- ▶ **agree a set of standards on how estates are managed looking at grounds maintenance and caretaking resulting in a clear thumbs up to the standard and an increased role for residents in monitoring these services**
- ▶ **discuss our approach to succession - the ability for a tenancy to be passed on to a family member, partner or carer. This highlighted the need for housing staff to be able to show discretion as one size does not fit all circumstances**
- ▶ **review the content of our pets policy - outcome is not known yet but we will update you in the next edition of Open Door.**

A newly involved resident said:

“All sessions were very well explained, good responses to questions from the group.”



More opportunities to make a difference coming soon to every home

Last year DCH and West Devon Homes staff and residents on the Customer Engagement Working Group organised a wide range of activities to talk to you about the best way to involve residents in our organisation. What you told us fed into our new resident involvement strategy. Its focus is on partnership working with residents, investing in communities and offering more local opportunities to make a difference.

To make this happen we are bringing together community development and resident involvement staff into one team led by Paul Marshall our new Director of Community Engagement.

Paul is busy putting this team together to deliver our community investment and resident involvement strategies.

“We’ve made some great progress so far in bringing all of our good work with communities together so that we can build on our strong foundations. Over the coming months residents will begin to see some of the targeted things we are doing as we put even more of our plans into practice. We want residents to be part of this and we will be providing opportunities for people to build their skills, develop projects and get active where they live.”



What's on offer in 2015?

- ★ more volunteer and apprenticeship opportunities
- ★ more access and support to take training including achieving recognised qualifications
- ★ bigger role for residents to monitor local services and act as a local link to signpost others to community services and help
- ★ network events for active residents to share good practice, learn more and meet with staff and community partners
- ★ planned programme of consultation events looking at how we deliver services and involvement in choosing quality contractors.

To find out more about the exciting opportunities on offer and discuss how you would like to get involved, please contact:

📞 0300 123 8080 @ involvecornwall@dchgroup.com



Foyer focus



New young people's accommodation service launched at 'Advantaged Thinking' event

DCH were thrilled to launch their new young people's accommodation service in December at an 'Advantaged Thinking' event at their Plymouth foyer.

DCH have invested £140k to refurbish the foyer to meet the needs of young people. The way they work with young people has also changed, the focus now is firmly on unlocking young people's strengths and skills. Throughout they are coached by the highly committed DCH team to nurture their talents, allowing them to realise their potential and take control of their lives.

Paul Crawford, DCH Group Chief Executive said:

“““ *Our new service for young people offers flexibility and choice allowing them to focus on their talents and aspirations for the future.*

The launch event was attended by guests from a wide range of organisations including DCH, local councils, the Foyer Federation and voluntary and community organisations. Those who attended heard direct from young people and staff about the difference the work at the foyer makes, they toured the new facilities and watched the first ever showing of the DCH young people's accommodation services film. The film can be viewed on the DCH website.



DCH residents celebrate 'then and now' intergenerational project

DCH residents of all ages from across Plymouth came together for a finale event at the end of 2014 to celebrate the completion of their six week 'then and now' project which focused on reflecting on what life was like in the 50's and now.

The project, funded by Wiser Wonga, a young people's financial confidence project in Plymouth, had a theme of financial awareness running through it. DCH's younger persons project 'New Start' at West Hoe, Plymouth Foyer and residents from Devonport Views, DCH's extra care housing scheme for older people, met regularly with each other to discuss what life was like in the 50's with a focus on money management.

Martin Jackson, Choice Coordinator at DCH's Plymouth Foyer said:

“““ *It was really inspiring to see the young people work so well with the residents of Devonport Views.”*

Under 16's

Spring colouring and spot the difference competition

Win
£20
VOUCHERS



Circle the 10 differences in the pictures of the boy and girl taking a spring walk, then colour them in for your chance to **win £20** Love2shop vouchers.

Fill in your details below and send this page to the address on page two before **5 June 2015**.

Good luck!

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Age:

Telephone fraud

Within the last few months there have been a number of reports of telephone scams in Devon and Cornwall. We all need to be aware of these scams and help raise awareness of those in our communities who may be targets.

The scams involve the potential victim getting a phone call and the fraudster pretending to be a police officer. They either say they are investigating a fraud on their bank account and have made an arrest, or they might claim to be from the victim's bank. They may ask the potential victim to give their PIN number or security information or to withdraw money from the account.



“““ *This is a particularly cruel crime as it exploits people's fear of exactly this sort of thing, and can result in huge losses from accounts. The thing to remember is **your bank will never contact you out of the blue and advise you to transfer all your money into some new account.** If you have doubts, just hang up and ring your bank from a different phone line and **never give your PIN or bank details to anyone.** Call 101 to report suspicious calls.*



Fire safety

We all hope it never happens to us but if there was a fire in your home would you know what to do? One of the simplest things to do is plan your escape route if there was a fire, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue have these tips to help you plan your escape:

- the best escape route is the normal way in and out of your home
- think of any difficulties you may have getting out, e.g. at night you may need to have a torch to light your way
- choose a second escape route, in case the first one is blocked
- keep all exits clear of obstructions, like bicycles
- if there are children, older or disabled people or pets, plan how you will get them out
- make sure everyone in the house knows the plan.

Did you know that The Fire and Rescue Service will in some cases do free home safety visits to check and advise you on fire alarms and the safe use of electric sockets etc. To see if you eligible for a free Home Safety Visit please contact them on Freephone 0800 7311 822, or visit www.dsfire.gov.uk for more information.

Doorstep safety

Cold calling

'Cold calling' means calling at your home without an appointment. It does not include regular calls from your local businesses, for example your newspaper delivery person.

Doorstep selling includes everything such as double glazing, kitchenware, electricity/ gas salespeople (but NOT meter readers), roofing repairs, gardening services, etc.

Before you let anyone you do not know into your home you should check their identity, ask to see their identification card. Close the door and double check using a phone number from the phone book or a relevant bill, not the one on the card.

All DCH staff and contractors will be carrying an identification card if they call at your home.

If in doubt, keep them out (particularly if you're on your own). Ask them to make an appointment or come back later when someone else is around. Genuine callers won't mind.

For more information on staying safe in your home and crime prevention visit

www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/crime-prevention/

CUSTOMER RECIPE



Banana loaf

This yummy recipe for banana loaf was submitted by Shiniya Davidson and as she says it's perfect to have with a cuppa.

Ingredients

140g butter, softened (plus a little extra to line the tin)

140g caster sugar

2 large eggs

140g self-raising flour

1 tsp baking powder

2 very ripe bananas, mashed

50g icing sugar

- 1 pre heat oven 180c/160C/ gas mark 4. Butter a 2lb loaf tin and line with baking paper
- 2 cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy; slowly add eggs with a little flour, folding each time until combined. Add the remaining flour, banana, and baking powder, folding together until well combined
- 3 pour into the tin and bake for 30-35 mins. Check the cake with a skewer, it is ready when it comes out clean. Let the cake cool in the tin for 10 minutes, and then remove onto a wire rack
- 4 mix the icing sugar with 2-3 tsp water to make the icing runny in consistency. When the cake is cooled, drizzle the icing across the top.

If you have a recipe you think our residents would like please send them to comms@dchgroup.com
 Thanks to Shiniya Davidson for submitting this yummy recipe.



Pet ownership amnesty

A new approach to managing pets will begin on 1 July 2015.

Before this, we are offering an amnesty for those pet owners that are required to ask our permission to keep a pet but to date have not done so.

If you own a pet and have not yet asked for permission, this is your opportunity to obtain an application form. Application forms can be downloaded from the website, collected from our offices or posted to you.

The amnesty will start 1 April 2015 and end 30 June 2015. For further information please contact your housing officer.

Renewable Heat Incentive scheme

DCH are busy investigating a number of projects for 2015 around the retro-fitting of Air Source Heat Pump installations in homes in Cornwall. These projects will specifically target the improvement of homes in off-gas areas that are at the lower end of the energy performance scale. We hope to be able to use funding from the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme introduced by the government in April 2014.

The RHI pays participants of the scheme that generate and use renewable energy to heat

their buildings. By increasing the generation of heat from renewable energy sources (instead of fossil fuels), the RHI helps the UK reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet targets for reducing the effects of climate change.

Work undertaken as part of these possible projects will reduce energy bills for residents; improve comfort levels and help reduce carbon emissions.

Look out for more information in upcoming editions of Open Door.

Spring Wordsearch

Win £20 worth of Love2shop vouchers in our wordsearch

Search through this maze for the 10 words that appear in the list below. The words are written forwards, backwards, diagonally, up and down. When you have circled all of them, cut along the dotted line and send it to the head office (address opposite) or to the address on page two before 5 June. You could be the lucky winner of £20 vouchers. Good luck!!

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SPRING | <input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DAFFODILS | <input type="checkbox"/> SEASON |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BLOSSOM | <input type="checkbox"/> SWIMMING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GRASS | <input type="checkbox"/> RAINBOW |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WALKING | <input type="checkbox"/> THAW |

Open to
all ages!

Win
£20
VOUCHERS

Z W R U C J Y O T W U K
M A C W V O B M E A Q L
E L D A F F O D I L S F
M K O H Q B K E N R P Z
L I N T B A N F G D R O
B N A G X L U D N A I S
W G S O N K O V H R N T
O S D T A I W S P V G A
B V B M H C M G S U O P
N A G A F M L M K O T G
I H T L A E H K I F M R
A W P Q I V N G O W T A
R J O T R N O S A E S S
F A D K U N W P V I F S



Customer services team

0300 123 8080

(in and out of office hours)

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Text enquiries:

07797 800 079

Report ASB:

(for reporting ASB
out of office hours):

0300 123 8080

TypeTalk:

18001-01736 331 799

Customers featured in Open Door

DCH would like to assure all our residents that everyone featured in Open Door in any article or photo has given their permission to appear.

Name:

Address:

Postcode: Age (if under 18):

