

My Home

Sheltered housing newsletter



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Issue 3 | June 2021

Plymouth
Community Homes



Feeling positive during
lockdown...
However grateful for
Walks and Art. U
maria stevenson

THIS TOO SHALL PASS



WELCOME

As we prepare this third issue of My Home sheltered housing newsletter, we are still in Step 3 of the Government's roadmap out of lockdown. Cafes and restaurants, pubs and cultural venues have reopened and we can finally meet family and friends indoors. Covid 19 restrictions are still in force guiding how we can meet – the rule of six indoors, social distancing applies, capacity of venues is lowered and more.

At PCH even though a few restrictions remain we're delighted that we can begin to see more of you face to face. Our Covid 19 update on page 4 tells you more about how we're returning our services, and how we're keeping you and our staff safe from Covid 19.

We're also delighted that the vaccination programme is going so well. If you haven't had your vaccination yet we've provided information about how you can book on page 5.

While we know that many of you have received vaccinations, we're aware of Government advice that this may not prevent transmission of Covid 19. Like other providers of sheltered housing, and based on Government guidance, we're taking a careful and steady approach to reopening communal lounges. Read more about what we're doing and how you can help us on page 4.

We hope you enjoy the other features in the newsletter. You'll see an update from Elder Tree about their services, and a lovely feature by Housing with Support officer Karen on page 7.

Thank you for reading My Home, and remember that we love to hear from you! Send your stories, poems, ideas and photos to housingwithsupport@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk

Helen Ryan,
Head of Communities and Housing with Support



Lockdown Quilt

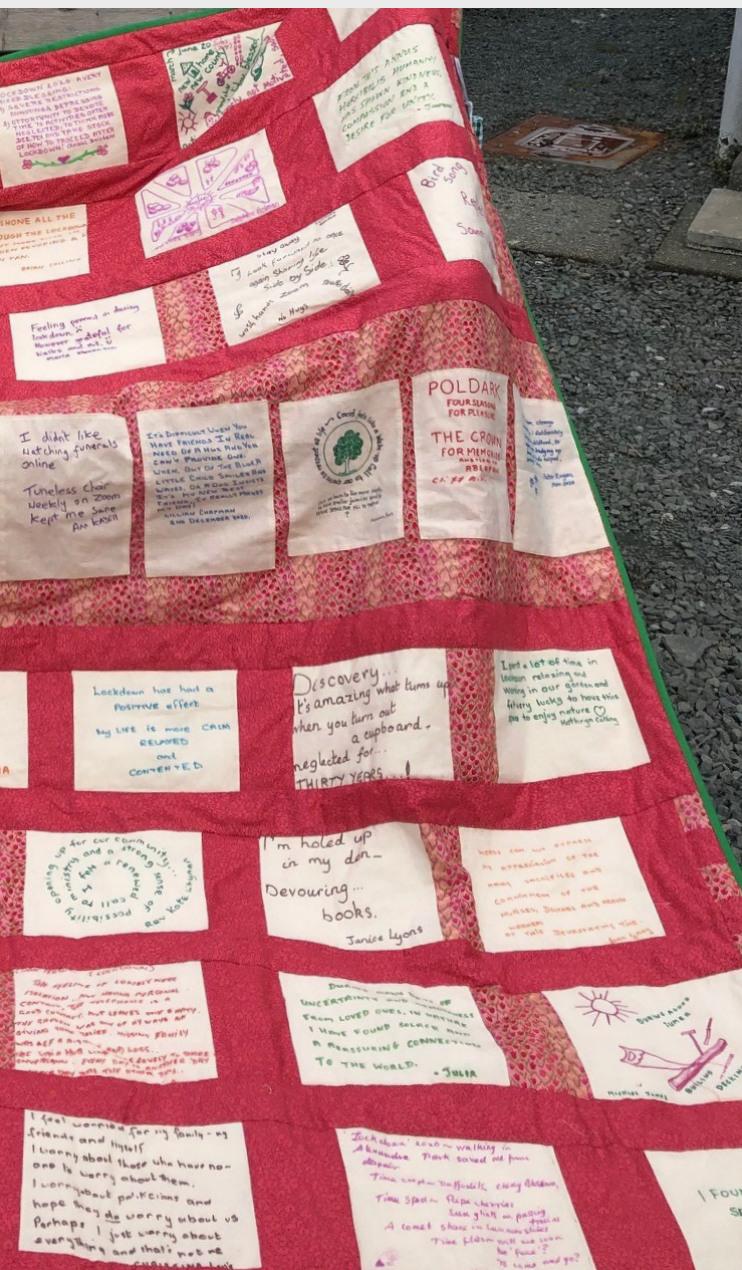
People's thoughts about lockdown will be forever remembered thanks to the handiwork of city centre residents.

Visitors to the Unitarian Church café in Notte Street – many of whom include PCH residents – have spent much of lockdown creating a quilt.

The cover features calico squares upon which people wrote down their thoughts – whether happy or sad.

Nearly 50 people sent their squares to organiser Ann Kader, and they were sewn together.

Ann said: "It's been a labour of love.



"This was a way of connecting Notte Street Community Cafe and the Unitarian Church communities during lockdown and for people to know they had not been forgotten.

"We were given a National Lottery Community grant to do this. Everyone was sent a rectangle of calico, pens, stamped addressed envelopes and instructions.

"They wrote on the calico how they were feeling. This was then made into a quilt by a few of us. It's very moving."

The quilt is now finished and will eventually be displayed in the café and the church and Ann is also hoping to take it to the Birmingham Quilt Festival.

Lockdown Legends

We know lockdown has been tough for people which is why we wanted to honour those who have helped make it a little easier for others.

Our Lockdown Legends competition was designed to recognise those residents who've gone the extra mile for their neighbours and community.

We've gone through all the nominations and are pleased to announce that four sheltered housing residents have been named as highly commended.

They are:

Janet at Helen Fox House – nominated by several of her neighbours in recognition for shopping and cooking for them during lockdown.

Sue at Ron King House – also nominated for her help shopping and cooking for others.

Erik at Brock House – for keeping the Janner Men's Shed group going on Facebook during lockdown.

Gaynor at Weston Mill – for successfully making the leap from face to face to online resident involvement during lockdown.

The four will all receive £20 shopping vouchers and certificates.

Covid 19 update

Government have announced that until 19 July at the earliest, we are still in Step 3 of their roadmap out of lockdown. This means that some limited indoor mixing can begin and some indoor services can resume.

Key Step 3 changes

- Up to six people can meet inside a home (or two households).
- Cafes, restaurants and pubs are open and can welcome people indoors in groups of up to six (or two households).
- Some other indoor venues are allowed to open, for example museums and cultural venues.
- Government guidance on social distancing, hand washing and face covering continues.
- Some limited indoor community and voluntary sector activities can start, within the rule of six. For example, Elder Tree are re-starting some of their activities.
- Communal lounges in sheltered schemes are just beginning to open to residents only. Some of them remain closed, while we work on making the adjustments to the rooms that are required in order to meet Government guidance.
- Government continues to urge us to meet with others outdoors if we can, and to keep indoor spaces where people mix well ventilated. Opening windows can help reduce the transmission of Coronavirus.

PCH services

- Routine repairs are taking place, and some other routine face to face services.
- Plumer House and our City Centre shop will open by appointment only.

- Housing with Support Officers will be on site more often and you will see more of them.
- When our staff visit you they'll be social distancing, wearing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and following other Government guidance to reduce the spread of coronavirus. Please continue to respect social distancing, avoid crowding or approaching staff, and tell us if you have symptoms or have tested positive for Covid 19.

Communal lounges

Communal lounges are beginning to reopen to residents only. Some remain closed and this is because we haven't yet completed the work we have to do to ensure they meet Government requirements for being Covid-safe.

We have completed risk assessments and started ordering the new supplies and work that needs to take place. You may see our staff and contractors as they:

- Install new hand sanitising stations
- Put up new signs
- Rearrange furniture
- Close off areas that cannot open yet
- And make other changes that will reduce the risk to you, and reduce transmission of Coronavirus.

Look out for a new residents' guide to safe use of the communal lounges. The guide will explain how you can use the lounges while keeping yourself, other residents, and our staff safe.

For example, it's safe to bring your own drinks from your home to the lounge, but there may be a risk of transmission of coronavirus from shared items like mugs and plates.

Activities

We're working with our partners, like Elder Tree, to bring back activities in communal lounges. We, and they, are not quite ready yet. We're aiming to open the lounges for residents first.

As soon as we're able to bring back activities in communal lounges we'll let you know, including about any new guidance, for example activities may be for a reduced maximum number of people initially.

Communal gardens

Gardens at our schemes are open to residents and you can meet in groups of up to six in outdoor spaces.

Please note that we want to make sure residents have access to gardens to safely meet with their neighbours and enjoy outdoor spaces, especially residents who might struggle to meet people outside of the scheme.

We ask that if you wish to meet with non-residents, please consider meeting them away from the scheme, for example in cafes, parks or pubs. This will mean more garden space is available for residents who cannot easily leave the scheme.

Covid 19 vaccination

It's great that the vaccination programme is going so well. We understand that more than 90% of those eligible have taken up the

opportunity to be vaccinated, and Government advises us that this is the best way to protect you, your neighbours, and our staff from serious illness.

If you haven't been able to take up your appointment yet you can book by calling 119 or book online. Go to www.nhs.uk and click on 'find out about Covid 19 vaccination'. If you need support with getting your vaccination please do speak to your Housing with Support Officer.

Important safety works in sheltered schemes

Now that our services are getting back to normal you may see more PCH staff and contractors working in schemes. Please be assured that they are working safely and in accordance with Covid 19 risk assessments and safe ways of working. They are required to wear face coverings when working in sheltered schemes.

There are some important safety works that we have to do in coming months. You might see or hear from us about work to doors and to lifts for example. If you have any questions or concerns about work happening in your scheme please do contact us.

Thank you

Nick Noonan is full of praise for the staff at Ron King House after they looked after his mum Patricia so well.

Patricia, known to everyone as Pat, lived at Ron King for four years until recently moving out to live with Nick due to failing health.

Nick said: "There's a great management team there. They would accommodate anything they could. It was kept nice and clean.

"It was great the building was all under one roof as I know some schemes are in separate blocks.

"Mum loved her flat. It was top floor which was just what she wanted when she moved in.

"My mum liked to go down and have a natter with people. She seemed to know everyone and would always speak to people in the hallway when she was passing."

TELLING US WHAT YOU THINK

We like to get your feedback about what you think of your home or the services we offer.

We carry out regular surveys when new residents move into their home.

Kevin Pethick filled out one of these surveys after he recently moved into Brock House and was happy to share his thoughts with us.

Kevin said: "It's a nice place to live. I have a walk-in shower. The Barbican is just a two-minute walk away. As soon as I walked in I fell in love. It's absolutely brilliant."





Karen Stone reflects on her 20 years of being a Housing with Support Officer

Warden, Sheltered Housing Officer, Court Manager, Housing with Support Officer..... all job titles I've had while working in Sheltered Housing, and all doing the same role!

Sheltered Housing 20 years ago was a lot different to how it is now. When I started working in sheltered schemes in 2001 with the local council in my home town, I lived on site in accommodation within the complex. I was the main port of call day and night for tenants if they had any problems or concerns, and was seen as more of a 'friendly neighbour' to many.

I would go on call through the night for medical emergencies, with many a broken night's sleep helping those in need and liaising with the emergency services, most of that while still in my dressing gown and slippers!

Sheltered Housing back then was seen as more of a stepping stone to residential or care homes, with many other professionals such as GPs and hospitals seeing it as that too. It wasn't seen as independent living with support like it is nowadays.

The warden was there to run coffee mornings, bingo sessions, arrange meals and entertainment. We would be expected to socialise with the tenants, sitting in the communal lounges for the afternoon chatting and making cups of tea for everyone.

I did enjoy those times, getting to know the tenants more, listening to their stories of being in the War, fighting for their country and living to tell the tale. What was missing though was us empowering tenants to be as independent as possible, encouraging them to take ownership of arranging and carrying out their own activities, and being able to see the fruits of their labour come to fruition, something they could be proud of doing.

Fast forward to 2021 and the Sheltered Housing of today. Tenants are arranging their own activities in the communal lounges and further afield, being involved in so much more and being encouraged and supported to stay as independent as they can.

Housing with Support Officers do as our title says, we support tenants. We still check on welfare, one of the fundamental parts of our job and something that has always been at the heart of sheltered housing, but we now do more in the way of supporting tenants to carry out their own tasks.

Covid has certainly had a huge impact in the way we've been able to support tenants, but we've adapted to a different way of working and supporting, primarily over the phone, but we're gradually getting back on site for certain tasks.

Our main priority has been to keep everyone safe and well, and we've done all we can to thankfully keep Covid at bay. We've been able to support with testing alarms and carrying out support plan reviews over the phone and helping with other tasks.

Many tenants have found a sense of achievement that they've been able to do things on their own that they didn't think they could do before the pandemic, which is great.

The HSO's have been able to put more focus on working with those who really need that extra support to stay as independent as possible. It's been challenging at times but we're hopeful for better times ahead.

Karen works in our schemes at Leypark Court, Southway, Brake Farm and Helen Fox House.

We know you have some amazing stories to tell about your years in sheltered housing. Would you like to tell your story? Contact us at housingwithsupport@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk

Learn for Free

Residents have been getting involved with various online courses, including: Makaton, Getting online, Creative writing, Running successful residents' groups, Food safety Level 2, Ancestry.



What's on?

Courses still available online to do at your own pace:

Food Safety Level 2 - A great qualification for safe storage, handling and cooking of food at home and in many workplaces, such as hospitality and catering.

Digital and computer skills - Learn My Way is a great resource with courses that cover many different subjects, from basic skills such as how to use a keyboard to how to use social media or online banking. There are also guides on job hunting and Universal Credit. To access the free training programmes from Learn My Way go to the website <https://www.learnmyway.com/> and sign up using our centre code: 8000268

Online courses

Tenancy skills - Great for first time and existing tenants! Learn the basics of finding accommodation, understanding tenancy agreements and your legal rights. Learn tips on managing finance and paying rent and other useful tips such as basic DIY skills.

Completing application forms (for jobs) - Learn about the different types of forms and the different information that you might need to provide. Become more confident in completing forms and checking them.

Mental health and wellbeing resource pack - Find out about different indicators of mental health; such as sleep, stress and work-life balance. Learn tips to improve your mental health. This course also covers looking after the mental health of employees, so this is a good course if you work or volunteer with others as well.

Confidence building tools - This quick course explores what confidence is, and provides useful techniques and resources for you to use.

Get moving, get healthy - Learn more about the benefits of physical activity, how much you should be doing, and tips on how you can incorporate exercise into your busy lifestyle.

PCH Connect

Check out the PCH Connect page on our website for the latest online groups and training you can get involved with: plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk/our-community/pch-connect/

Create and Craft - Friday 25th June at the Beacon, North Prospect, 10.30am - 12.30pm. Have a go at trying a new craft activity while meeting other people.

Positive People Confidence and Motivation - Tuesdays 14th September - 19th October 9.30am - 12pm.

More to follow... sign up to stay up to date with the latest courses on offer!

To sign up, book a place or ask for more information: call 0808 230 6500 and ask for Ashleigh Knowles or email learnforfree@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk.



PUZZLES PAGE

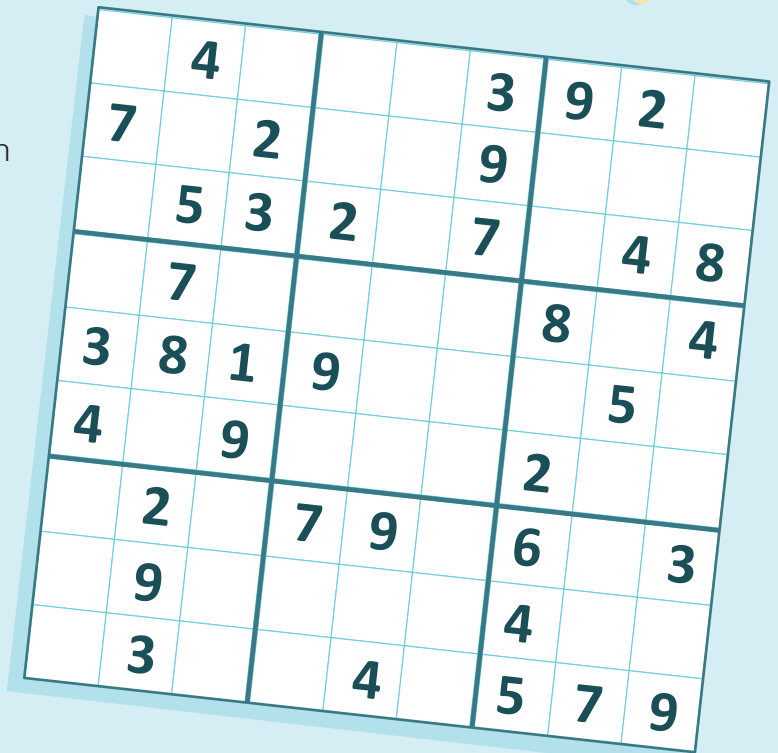


This is a zigzag word search puzzle. Words go left, right, up and down, not diagonally, and can bend at a right angle. There are no unused letters in the grid, every letter is used only once

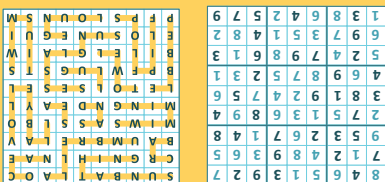
- CRAB
- SUNBATHING
- FLIP-FLOPS
- SUNGLASSES
- GULL
- SWIMMING
- LOUNGE
- SWIMSUIT
- OCEAN
- TOWEL
- PEBBLE
- UMBRELLA
- SAND
- VOLLEYBALL
- SEA



This is a sudoku puzzle. Fill in the 9x9 grid with digits so that each column, row, and 3x3 section contain the numbers between 1 to 9. Each row, column and 3x3 section must not contain more than one of the same number.



Answers:



Do you need help reading our website?



We want to make sure that the information we provide is easily accessible and inclusive of different needs.

That's why we've added BrowseAloud to our website - a free-to-use tool that reads aloud the content.

As well as providing speech, it can also translate text to another language with a choice of different reading speeds and highlighters to enhance understanding.

There's also the option to simplify the pages or convert content into audio versions for easy offline listening.

To use BrowseAloud, click on the orange headphone icon found in the Accessibility tab.

This can be accessed in the top navigation of the website when viewing on a desktop, or through the Menu button when viewing on a mobile device.

Hover over the text you want read aloud and BrowseAloud will read it to you. Other features can be accessed by clicking on the icons within the toolbar.

BrowseAloud joins more accessibility tools already on the website including options to change the text size, contrast and language. The new feature will also be added to MyPCH shortly.

Please contact us on 0808 230 6500 if you need help with BrowseAloud.

Scam Warning

We've had reports of someone fraudulently attempting to get into one of our city centre blocks by claiming to have a delivery.

If you live in a block and someone rings your flat on the door entry system, check they are genuine before letting them into the block.

If you have any concerns, refuse entry, call the police and let your Housing with Support Officer know.



As lockdown eases, the befriending service is starting up many of its services again.

We've worked in partnership with Elder Tree for a decade now, ever since we were set up in fact. In normal times, they deliver activities at four of our sheltered schemes – Brock House, Broadlands Gardens, Leypark Court and Ron King House.

They gradually began resuming some activities last month. For more information about what's going on, visit their website www.eldertreeplymouth.co.uk or call 01752 227447.

IN APRIL ALONE,
OUR HOUSING WITH
SUPPORT TEAM MADE
**3114 WELFARE AND
SUPPORT CALLS.**



TO REOPEN OUR
COMMUNAL LOUNGES
THE TEAM HAVE A LIST
OF **129 ACTIONS TO
COMPLETE THIS
MONTH.**

THAT INCLUDES
INSTALLING **22 NEW
HAND SANITISING
STATIONS.**



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Check and pay your rent, report a repair and update your details online from the comfort of your PCH home

mypch.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk

We're always keen to hear what you're up to, so if you'd like to tell us about something we can include in the newsletter, we'd love to hear it.

Email housingwithsupport@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk.

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Did you know you can recycle me?