

Home Matters

SUMMER 2017

www.circle.org.uk

Fire Safety

What you need to know

Leeds Credit Union

The new name for
Circle Housing Money

**Circle
Housing™**

Enhancing Life Chances

IN THIS ISSUE

- Page 3
Ensuring your voice is heard and Housing Association merger update
- Page 4
Fire Safety - what you need to know
- Page 6
The Grace Awards
- Page 7
Illegal subletting
- Page 8
Met Police 'Safer Walking Campaign'
- Page 10
Moving is easy with House Exchange
- Page 12
Leeds Credit Union

WELCOME

to your summer edition of Home Matters.

The sun is high in the sky and the days are brighter for longer! Whether you're heading away for a holiday this summer, or relaxing with family and friends, we've got your property needs covered.

Read on for important information about fire safety and what we are doing to ensure your protection. Leeds Credit Union (the new name for Circle Housing Money) celebrates 30 years. And we're getting closer to the Grace Awards deadline, so don't forget to nominate that special someone from your community on our website to tell us why they deserve to win, find out more on page 6.

Have a fun filled summer!

Got a question about your home, rent account or local area? Or need assistance with who to contact for advice?

Visit our website www.circle.org.uk for information on a range of topics from understanding your rent statement, to setting up a secure, Direct Debit and paying your rent online.

You can enter your postcode and find information on services specific to you and the area you live, including local news and events. You'll also find advice and support on energy saving services and tips to reduce your bills, plus much more.

Ensuring your voice is heard

During the past year, 4,500 of you have been involved in helping us improve the services we deliver to you. So far we have improved the following:



- **Development Design Guide:** You told us what we should consider when developing new homes. So we updated the design and content of the guide used by our developers and architects to reflect this.
- **Policy and strategy:** Residents reviewed and gave feedback on the Circle Housing complaints policy, resident communications and the resident involvement strategy.
- **Repairs and maintenance:** Residents have continued their involvement with staff and contractors at a contractual and strategic level.
- **Simplified our corporate structure and merger:** We consulted with you on simplifying our corporate structure from nine registered providers into one and the merger with Affinity Sutton.
- **Circle Voice:** Our online digital platform launched in May 2016 and now has almost 1000 actively involved members. You can still register to get involved at www.circlevoice.org.uk

Housing Association merger update

Conversations are continuing for Circle 33 and Affinity Sutton Homes to come together as one housing association. Keep your eye on the website over the summer for further consultation details.



FIRE SAFETY

What you need to know

Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, we want to reassure residents that we take fire safety seriously and that your wellbeing and protection remains our priority.

We have appropriate measures in place to ensure the safety of all our properties and continue to work closely with Fire Authorities. We are currently undertaking detailed inspections and reviews of all related fire safety arrangements and high rise blocks.

What can you do to keep safe?

Ensure you have a working smoke alarm and remember to regularly check its working: we're currently offering free, battery operated smoke detectors to residents who don't have them. Contact **0300 500 8000** to request one.

Know your evacuation plan and discuss it with members of your household: further information will be issued to you soon. In the meantime visit the London Fire Brigade website for advice depending on if you live in a flat, maisonette or house at www.london-fire.gov.uk.

Make sure your front door is self-closing, and don't fit security grilles: these can delay evacuation.

Some simple do's and don'ts:

- **Do** keep escape routes clear - don't discard bulky items in communal areas or bin sheds: if exit routes are blocked, your means of escape are reduced and the spread of fire intensifies posing a serious threat to your home and your life.
Make sure you arrange for items to be collected. Your local council or the British Heart Foundation can offer free collections in certain areas, visit www.bhf.org.uk.
- **Don't** have barbeques on balconies or in small spaces: we know in the nice weather it's tempting, but you really must be outdoors in a large space to avoid any risk of flames or inhaling carbon monoxide gases.
- **Don't** leave candles unattended: from birthday cakes to scented - flames, they are dangerous.

Remember if you smell smoke or see fire: alert others nearby, evacuate if your escape route is clear. If it is not clear it may be safer to stay in your home until the fire brigade arrives. Call 999.

You can also find useful information and updates on our website www.circle.org.uk/firesafety

The Grace Awards

The Grace Awards are your chance to nominate a role model in your community. We're leaving it down to you to decide exactly what you mean by 'role model' but we're looking for something special, someone who constantly strives to help others and provides for the area or community in which you live.



There's still time left to vote online via the website if you haven't already.

Maybe it's someone who gives up their time to talk to you over a cup of tea, creates events, sets up meetings or is the key messenger who contacts us to talk about solving issues in the area? Or perhaps they are a digital champion, helping you with your online experiences or paying your bills on time?

Winners will be selected based on the level of contribution assessed*, so we're not necessarily looking for the person with the most votes, but the detail in the work they provide and numbers of lives touched.

Winning prizes include:

- £1,000 for a charity of your choice (subject to approval by Clarion Housing Group)
- £100 in Love2Shop vouchers for your enjoyment
- A Resident Role Model Certificate
- An invitation to a Resident Engagement Day event

For nominating you will also be entered into a prize draw to win £50 Love2Shop vouchers.

*For competition terms & conditions please see the Circle website.

Illegal subletting

If you or a neighbour are subletting your home without our permission, you could be committing a criminal offence and be in breach of your tenancy agreement.

Illegal subletting is a serious offence, one which could put you at risk of being prosecuted under criminal law or face losing your home for breaking terms in your tenancy agreement.

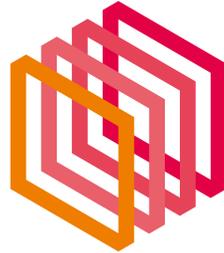
We could also obtain an unlawful profit order, which means you would be required to pay us back any profit you've made from the subletting.

We have a dedicated team who investigate all enquiries received over suspicion of illegal subletting.

If you suspect a neighbour or someone near by is subletting their home illegally, please let us know by calling our fraud hotline on **0208 285 4322**, so we can investigate accordingly.



We're supporting The Met Police, 'Safer Walking Campaign'



Centra

When a person with dementia gets lost, it causes anxiety and fear for both the missing person and their family. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has launched its 'Safer Walking Campaign' to promote GPS tracking technology to help families, police and support services in locating people with dementia.

MET Police Chief Superintendent, Steve Wallace quotes:

“As well as offering peace of mind, these products assist the police and other agencies to locate lost individuals. The use of this technology may also increase independence, allowing an individual more freedom and reduce the need for restrictive measures, such as locking doors.”

Centra have a range of GPS devices that can be used to keep loved ones with dementia safe. Small, battery powered devices use a combination of GPS (satellite) and GPRS (phone)

signals to give an accurate location and provide a safe, secure and independent way for people to look out for their loved ones.

For example, going out for walks has proven to offer both physical and psychological benefits for people with dementia.

**Call our friendly team today
0300 333 2012**

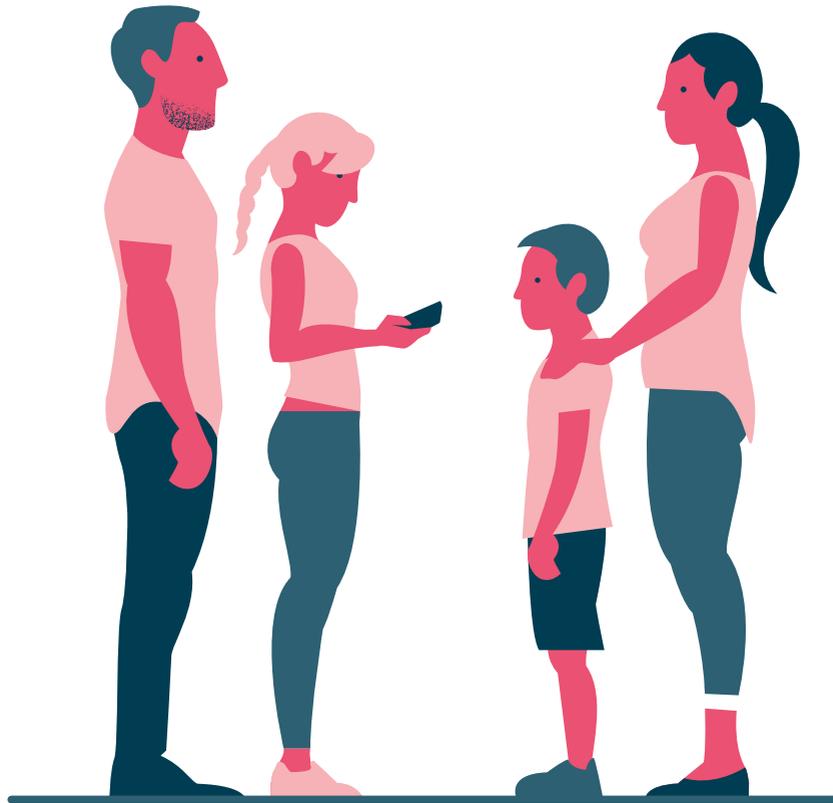
Visit www.centragroup.org.uk to find out more about GPS and other personal alarms available today.





**Room going to waste
or need more space?**

**Moving is easy with
House Exchange.**



There are plenty of reasons you may want to move home. A growing family or an empty nest may mean you need a bigger place, or a lot less space. So if you're ready to make a move but you're not sure how to go about it, let House Exchange help.

We have a brand new look but our trusted service will continue to help people like you move home.

Through our simple and easy to understand website, you will be able to see the latest listings as soon as they're available. With House Exchange we can help you find the perfect home and as your landlord is already a member, this great service is **FREE** for you to use.

Register today!
www.houseexchange.org.uk



**House
Exchange**

Leeds Credit Union

The new brand name for your Circle Housing Money account.

We'd like to congratulate Leeds Credit Union (LCU) on their 30th anniversary of putting people before profit. Following consultation, LCU is now our national banking partner, replacing the brand name Circle Housing Money that you may have been familiar with.

With over 37,000 members, including 2,000 of our residents and staff already receiving benefits from its services, LCU prides itself on providing members with the most appropriate services based on their personal circumstances.

A survey of resident members found that:

- 95% of members who have borrowed from LCU would recommend it to others
- 83% said that LCU provide good value products and services
- 53% joined to gain access to a low cost loan



If you would like to join Leeds Credit Union and start benefiting from their services, visit the website www.leedscreditunion.co.uk or call **0113 242 3343**.

If you were an existing Circle Housing Money customer, please note all the services available to you haven't changed; only future correspondence will now be branded as Leeds Credit Union.

Contact information

For all Circle Housing residents including Circle Housing Russet and Circle Housing Old Ford:

Tel 0300 500 8000

Email customerservices@circle.org.uk

Website www.circle.org.uk



Enhancing Life Chances