

Home Matters

SPRING 2017

www.circle.org.uk

Struggling with debt?

It's OK to ask for help

Considering moving home?

Sign up to House Exchange

Circle
Housing™

Enhancing Life Chances

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WELCOME

to the spring issue of Home Matters.

Inside you can find out about StepChange our free debt advice charity who can help you get back on track with your money worries. We're also looking for digital champions to help teach residents how to gain more skills online with our digital inclusion campaign.

Been thinking of moving home? Have you joined House Exchange yet? They have over 100,000 people ready to swap and one could be with you. Check it out on page 4.

We also have a competition for you to win tickets to the Alzheimer's Show 2017 where Centra will be showcasing the latest in personal alarms.

Longer days and sunshine lay ahead, have a great spring!

Wordsearch Winners

Congratulations to the winners of January's competition. The missing word was SAND.

- Laura Jones
- Molly Whiffen
- Sally Carr
- J Malcom
- Alex Crawford
- Michelle McMaster
- J Burchnall
- Lynne Sandford
- B Harrison

Merger update

Now that Circle Housing is part of Clarion Housing Group after merging with Affinity Sutton, at the end of 2016 we are working hard to improve services for residents. Being part of a new Group means we are making changes to ensure our teams deliver consistently good services. This won't happen overnight, but we hope that residents will notice the improvements soon.

We are also continuing to make good progress with bringing all individual housing associations into one single landlord - known simply as Circle Housing. Five individual landlords have already transferred into Circle Housing (Circle Housing Circle 33, Circle Housing Mercian, Circle Housing Wherry, Circle Housing South Anglia and Circle Housing Roddons) and we are continuing discussions with the remaining four (Circle Housing Mole Valley, Circle Housing Merton Priory, Circle Housing Russet and Circle Housing Old Ford).

Gas safety

We have a legal responsibility to ensure that all gas appliances in our tenants' properties are checked every year by qualified gas engineers. Why? Faulty gas appliances can produce poisonous carbon monoxide gas that cannot be seen or smelt, but can kill.

If you smell gas, think you may have a gas leak, or are worried that fumes containing carbon monoxide are escaping from an appliance, call the Gas Emergency Services line free on **0800 111 999**.

Smell Gas?

- Open all doors and windows to ventilate your property
- Do not turn any electrical switches on or off
- Extinguish all naked flames, do not smoke, strike matches or do anything to cause an ignition
- Open any electric doors manually.

Be Smart

- Circle Housing's gas engineers are registered and work for Keepmoat, Robert Heath and Smith & Byford. Always ask for I.D when someone knocks on the door.
- If we don't manage to visit your property after several attempts, legal action will be taken to carry out the required services which may be recharged to you, so plan ahead.

Spring in to action and move this summer!

Been thinking about moving home for some time? It could be for a new job, a bigger place for your family or simply to be closer to loved ones. Whatever the reason, House Exchange can help you. The service is designed to bring people together who are interested in swapping their homes. Currently over 100,000 people are looking to swap their properties around the UK, so your ideal home could be only a few clicks away.



Enter your details at www.houseexchange.org.uk and the site will match you up with other would-be-swappers. There's also a free app, so now you can search on the move too.

Important things to consider:

Add photos: You can have up to five photos of your property on your advert. This increases your chances of finding a swap, so make sure each room looks its best in the pictures.

Include a description: We've introduced a fantastic tool that allows you to create a description by selecting options that apply to your home. You can find this in the 'edit my advert' area.

Get in touch: Once you're registered start messaging the properties you're interested in. Arranging viewings is a great first step in your House Exchange journey.



**House
Exchange**



Are you struggling with debt?

It's okay to ask for help.

In fact it's really important to take that first step towards sorting things out by seeking the correct advice. We have a national partnership with 'StepChange' the UK's leading, independent debt charity and their advice is free, impartial and confidential. They will tailor their advice to your personal situation and provide a range of helpful debt solutions that will support you every step of the way. Their team of debt experts help over 500,000 people a year across the UK overcome their debt problems and get their lives back on track.

To talk to someone for some free and confidential debt advice call StepChange today on **0800 138 1111**. Or if you prefer, visit them online and use their Debt Remedy tool at www.stepchange.org

Debt Remedy uses details of your debts and budget to create a free personal action plan to help you deal with your debts.

Struggling with debt is nothing to be ashamed of. Remember you are not alone and with the right help you will be able to get things back on track.

Get online

Would you like to be more of an internet pro? Or perhaps you need some help getting set up online?

Here at Circle Housing we provide a flexible and comprehensive support package tailored to help you do just that.



What we offer:

- Basic digital skills training – this can range from group based sessions in your local community or one-to-one sessions in your home if you're unable to get out and about.
- Low cost connectivity kit and broadband options – you can call **03333 444 754** to find out more about the best deals available.
- Digital Champions – would you like to volunteer your time to become a Digital Champion? It's a great way to make a difference to other people's lives. You don't have to be an IT whizz, you just need a bit of spare time and enthusiasm to support others using digital technology. You will receive free training and support with self-study courses and teaching resources. You can also meet and work with other Digital Champions in your community.

To find out more about our offers please contact Jo Coxford:



Tel: 07827 882802 / 0203 7844719 or



email: getonline@circle.org.uk

Personal Alarms

First port of call, not a last resort

If you or a loved one live alone it's natural to worry about safety and emergency situations. A personal alarm from Centra offers peace of mind at the touch of a button with 24/7 connection to trained, friendly staff for the assistance you need.

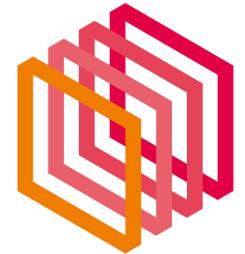
Cognitive impairments like dementia get lots of media coverage, so it's reassuring to learn that with the right support many people with dementia continue to maintain an independent lifestyle.

Find out about Centra options at www.centragroup.org.uk/alzheimersshow or call **0300 456 3548**

Win tickets to The Alzheimer's Show 2017

Centra will be showcasing personal alarms at this year's Alzheimer's Show in London; a national event for living with and caring for those with dementia.

www.alzheimersshow.co.uk



Centra



To win a pair of tickets to the show,* answer the question below.

Q - Where is The Alzheimer's Show being held this year?

A -

Name:

Address:

Contact details:

.....

.....

Please return your entries to – Centra, 32 Tower View, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4UY.

Would you like more information on Centra's personal alarm service? **Yes [] No []**

Your voice counts

We have over 900 residents registered with Circle Voice our online customer platform where your views are actively helping us to shape our services.

We'd like to thank you for your recent involvement addressing savings. Over 350 of you helped us better understand how we can motivate customers to save for unexpected bills and manage your money more confidently.

If you haven't already, register now at www.circlevoice.org.uk for your chance to win £50 Love2Shop vouchers.



Tim, 52 thinks it's a good idea:

"I joined Circle Voice because I wanted to know more and get involved with my community. I really care about the relationships me and my neighbours have built. I think all residents should get involved with Circle Voice, after all it's our community."

Contact information

For all Circle Housing residents including Circle Housing Mole Valley, Circle Housing Merton Priory, 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