a place to call home:

Housing Support Team

November 2021 Newsletter



Housing Support Team - a new name but still providing the best help to our residents in the District



The Housing Support Team now brings together several specialisms through the single team. This provides a wide range of help and support through a 1 stop shop approach which will make it much easier for Residents to access help across a range of issues.

Available help includes:

1. Free, impartial money and debt help to homeowners through the Mortgage Breathing Space project. This includes help to pay your mortgage and clear arrears.
2. Multi stranded help to tenants and owners through the Money Smart project giving support on energy switching, tariffs and energy projects, benefit checks, money and debt advice and help to increase skills
3. Advice on energy efficiency and grants to provide boilers, heating and insulation through our numerous energy projects.
4. Help if you live close to an empty home that is causing a problem or support if you own an empty property to help you bring it back into use. We can even help to link you to interested investors if you want to sell.
5. Free and impartial advice to homeowners about repairs that you think you need, advice on tradespeople and thinking ahead about changes to your home to help you continue to live at home in the future.
6. Help for tenants where they have concerns or issues with the condition of their home, flats and shared houses including help and advice around repair, amenities and fire safety.
7. Help and advice to existing landlords or those starting out on their legal responsibilities and to help them provide the best housing conditions for their tenants.
8. Interest free loans and an equity release loan to home owners on low incomes to carry out essential repairs and energy efficiency improvements.

Get in touch with any questions at the contact information below and we'll be happy to try and help.

We have new leaflets plus information on our social media pages. Please get in touch if you would like some leaflets, to refer a client or to arrange for us to visit and talk about our schemes

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Getting ready for Winter ... it's that time again but help is available



After the storms and recent snow, there's no doubt that Winter is upon us once again. For our more vulnerable residents it's important to stay warm at home. For some there is the added worry of rising energy (and other) costs as well as Christmas. This might make some start to choose between heating and eating.

The Housing Support Team are ready with a range of help to tackle energy bills, cold homes and money and debt worries:

FUEL POVERTY FUND - help for the most vulnerable if heating breaks down or you don't have any. If you qualify all work is free of charge.

BIG BOILER SCHEME - a grant to replace your old, inefficient, faulty or broken boiler. You don't have to be on benefit to qualify. Open to households with income under £30,000.

MEGA SOLAR SCHEME - free solar panels on your home. Any energy they produce is yours and anything you don't use can be sold back into the National Energy Grid, giving extra income.



ENERGY DEBT FUND - grant help for residents with energy debt with their current supplier. Help to clear your debt.

BIG HEATER AMNESTY PROJECT - in Partnership with West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Groundwork Green Doctor, aimed at residents using portable heaters as their main form of heating.

MONEY SMART PROJECT - Help to get your money and debt under control and working for you, especially in the run up to Christmas and beyond.



Don't forget to apply for your Winter Fuel payment! If you were born on or before 26 September 1955 you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. You only have to apply once and it's automatic after then. The deadline for claims for 2021/22 is 31 March 2022.

Keep an eye on the thermometer! The Cold Weather Payment is a DWP scheme that runs from 1 November to 31 March each year. A payment of £25 is sent for every seven-day period in which the temperature is below zero.

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Money Smart Project - stretching money further and managing debt



The Home Support Team have never been busier helping residents with their finances. Requests for help are up by more than 40% on last year as many of the pandemic effects bite. The team has dealt with almost £250,000 of debt since April to reduce the squeeze that many are facing. Money Smart provides free, impartial and no blame help to residents who are struggling. For some residents small changes make big differences whilst others get transformational results. Here's a couple of examples:

A client we recently worked with moved to be nearer his parents. He had energy arrears which had increased whilst he was receiving treatment and his energy provider was deducting money from his benefits. This reduced his income by £136 a month and he was struggling to manage. He couldn't afford the bus fares to see and care for his elderly parents and was using foodbanks. We gave him a grant through our Energy Debt fund which cleared his arrears in full. This increased his income and the the direct deduction from his benefit was cancelled. He now has enough money to live each month, and has set up a direct debit as he can afford his ongoing energy payments.

Another client we worked with was struggling with his money as a result of becoming unemployed. He was actively looking for work and things were looking quite promising. He had a car on finance and told us he would need this when he got back into work, so did not want to sell it. We negotiated a payment break on his car finance and also recommended that the car be taken off the road temporarily. This meant he would not have to insure the car until he needed it again. By doing this, the client saved £350 a month as a short term measure meaning he can pay his essential living expenses without getting into debt. Once he is back at work, he will be able to start his finance and vehicle insurance once again.

Energy projects - 2000 enquiries received since April and counting ...



The Energy Team has continued to deliver maximum help to our residents, having dealt with more than 2000 enquiries for help since 1 April. With multiple energy projects currently delivering, don't miss out on the chance to fix that broken heating system, replace the faulty boiler or reduce your energy bills by installing solar panels. Get in touch today to see if you qualify.

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