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Welcome from Kirsty Ellis

Hello everyone,

Over the past six months, there has been lots of activity taking place in your schemes. It is important to us that we listen to what you value, which is reflected by recent surveys we have conducted (see below and page 10). We know that times are challenging for people, and we have really welcomed the opportunity to work with independent provider, Life & Progress, to launch our new support and wellbeing online and telephone service (see opposite).

We would encourage you to make use of this free service if you feel you need a little more help and support at the moment. Our fantastic independent living coordinators are here to help too.

Kirsty Ellis
Head of Operations
(Homes and Opportunities).



Having your say



We invited you to tell us what you thought of our services in August last year. The survey helped us to understand how happy our tenants are in their independent living homes and with our services. The table below shows us what is important to tenants and areas for improvement.

The majority of tenants told us we provide good value for money and they are happy with their home, facilities, services and the provisions that are provided.

However, there were some areas where we could improve:

You would like to see more Progress Housing Group colleagues on site or know when they have been



You want us to be more inclusive and consider people's disabilities and individual needs when organising activities



You want more communication and information around upcoming events



You want us to get better at improving our services, such as gardening and repairs



What next?

We are going to work on the themes above to make improvements to those service areas, and provide updates in your house meetings.



Tenant support and wellbeing service

We have launched a new 12-month pilot partnership with mental health provider Life & Progress, to deliver a free independent 24/7 tenant support and wellbeing service.

The new service offers access to fully confidential support, guidance, professional advice and in-the-moment counselling.

You can get support and information on a wide range of work, family and personal issues, including, but not limited to:

- ◆ Mental health and wellbeing
- ◆ Tackling stress and anxiety
- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ Family matters
- ◆ Managing debt

- ◆ Your rights as a consumer
- ◆ Power of Attorney, wills and consumer rights.

This 12-month pilot service is run independently by Life & Progress and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You don't have to give any personal details and we will not know that you have used the service, or what you have used it for.

To access the service:

- ◆ Call **0330 094 8845**
- ◆ Visit **www.lifeandprogress.co.uk** and log in using the following username and password.
Username: progressgroup
Password: tenant

How we deal with damp and mould



We know it can be worrying if you are experiencing problems with damp, mould or condensation in your home. We take any reports of damp and mould seriously and will take steps to deal with any issues that may be causing it.

What causes damp and mould?

Damp and mould are usually caused when there's too much moisture in the air from normal day-to-day activity such as cooking, drying washing inside or having a shower. They can also happen if a home is not well-ventilated, or the inside temperature frequently drops below 16°C.

The age and condition of a property, whether it is located in an exposed area or even the way that your home has been built, can also contribute to damp and mould.

What can I do to help prevent damp and mould?

Here are our top ten tips for helping to stop the build-up of moisture in your home and keep it damp and mould free:

1. Use your home's ventilation system, such as extractor fans in your bathroom and kitchen, when showering or cooking. If these are not in good working order, let us know.
2. Make sure air bricks or vents are not blocked. They help fresh air circulate in your property and remove higher levels of moisture which can cause damp and mould. If you think your airbrick or vent is allowing cold air to access the property constantly, please contact us to make an appointment for an inspector to attend.
3. If you can, try to keep internal doors shut

when cooking, showering or running taps. This can help keep the warmth in and can also help reduce energy bills.

4. Use lids on pans when cooking.
5. Wipe down any condensation on your window using a tissue and dispose of it down your toilet.
6. Dry clothes outside or on a clothes horse in a well-ventilated room if you can't.
7. Air rooms regularly, especially in the morning, to let out moisture.
8. If you don't live in a scheme with controlled heating, try to keep your home warm at a minimum of 16°C, which will help reduce the risk of damp and mould. We understand that with the rising cost of energy bills that you might be worried about using your heating. If you are worried about the cost of heating your home, we have lots of helpful information on our website, www.progressgroup.org.uk/support.
9. Check your radiators and ensure they are consistently warm from top to bottom. If they feel cold at the top, your radiator may require bleeding. Bleeding your radiators can make your home warmer and reduce the cost of your energy bills by removing air pockets.
10. Keep your windows open during and after showering to let steam out and assist with ventilation.

What should I do if I have damp or black mould in my home?

If you have concerns at all about damp or mould, please contact us by live chat, call us on **0333 320 4555** or speak to your independent living coordinator.



Important safety information for tenants in independent living schemes with communal areas. We have updated our fire door safety guidance, which you will find on the notice boards in your communal lounges. Please make sure that you make yourself familiar with it.



Fire door information for tenants



Your flat main entrance door is a fire door and is essential to the safety of yourself, your household and your neighbours.

The door is an integral part of the fire compartmentation of your home and will resist fire, heat and smoke passing through the door frame when it is closed.



Keep your fire door shut

Your fire door

- Your fire door has components that have been specifically tested for your door type.
- A fire door closer is fitted to ensure that it fully closes the door unaided to a closed position.
- Intumescent strips and cold smoke seals are fitted around the door or frame to create a seal between the frame and the door. They expand to prevent smoke and fire from passing through the door.
- Fire-resistant hinges are fitted; these should not be adjusted or replaced with a different type of hinge.
- Intumescent material is fitted within the door's components, such as letter plates and viewers.
- Your fire door must be kept closed, as it will not perform its function if it is propped open or damaged.

You must not modify your door in any way



- Don't add any additional locks or ironmongery.
- Don't drill or cut holes into the door or remove seals.
- Don't dislodge the door closer or any other component fitted to the door.

Some simple checks you can carry out to ensure your door provides appropriate protection



- The door fully closes - fire doors need to close automatically. Open the door halfway, let it go and allow it to close. It should close firmly without sticking to the floor or the frame.
- Door frame condition - door frames must be firmly attached to the wall and free from damage.
- Seals are in place - fire doors must be fitted with intumescent strips and cold smoke seals. Ensure these are well attached inside the groove in the frame or door leaf, continuous around the frame, and free from damage.
- Door closer works correctly - fire doors must have a door closer to ensure they shut automatically. Make sure this is correctly attached and free from damage.



If your door is damaged, or you notice a defect or the door is not closing properly, you must raise this immediately by contacting repairs.



Customer Contact Centre
Tel **0333 320 4555**

Email enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk
or live chat on www.progressgroup.org.uk



Complaints and compliments

We love hearing from you, whether it is good or bad, as we look at all feedback as an opportunity to learn and improve our services.

From April to December 2022, we received

368

complaints – two of which were from independent living tenants

We received

114

compliments – four of which were from independent living tenants

We responded to

93.5%

of the closed complaints within the overall target timescales.

We are a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme and we carry out an annual self-assessment against their Complaints Handling Code.

You can find further information on the Housing Ombudsman and their code on their website, www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Further details of our self-assessment along with other information about how we are performing can be found on our website, www.progressgroup.org.uk/corporate/how-we-are-performing/performance/

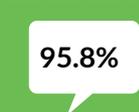
How to make a complaint or provide a compliment

- ◆ Contact us via your online tenant account – sign up or log in on our website – www.progressgroup.org.uk
- ◆ Live chat on our website – www.progressgroup.org.uk
- ◆ Email us – enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk
- ◆ Call us on **0333 320 4555**
- ◆ Write to us at Sumner House, 21 King Street, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 2LW
- ◆ Visit our offices in person



How are we performing?

Progress Housing Group figures from April 2022 to December 2022.

 Housing Management	Target	Result	Target met	Trend	Median peer*
We aim to re-let empty general needs properties within 24 days	24 days	 15.4		Worse than last quarter	26.7 days
We aim to have less than 5 properties out of every 100 vacant and available to let at any time	5	 4.9		Worse than last quarter	1 out of 100
We aim for current tenant rent arrears to be less than £5.20 of every £100 of rent due	£5.20	 £6.20		Worse than last quarter	£2.80 of every £100
We aim for current tenant rent arrears, excluding that owed by Housing Benefit, to be less than £5.00 of every £100 of rent due	£5.00	 £5.10		Same as last quarter	£2.80 of every £100
 Repairs	Target	Result	Target met	Trend	Median peer*
We aim to complete responsive repairs within 6.5 days	6.5 days	 16.8 days		Worse than last quarter	6.5 days
We aim to keep 94.5 out of every 100 responsive repairs appointments made	94.5%	 93.8%		Better than last quarter	95.8%
We aim to complete 2,866 planned component works from April to March	2,866	 2,109		Worse than last quarter	Not available
We aim for 100 out of every 100 gas appliances to have been serviced in the last 12 months	100%	 100%		Same as last quarter	100 out of 100
 Tenant Satisfaction	Target	Result	Target met	Trend	Median peer*
We aim to keep 93 tenants out of every 100 satisfied with the service provided to new tenants	93.0%	 95.8%		Worse than last quarter	95.8 out of 100
We aim to keep 85 tenants out of every 100 satisfied with the service provided regarding arrears management	85.0%	 52.9%		Better than last quarter	Not available
We aim to keep 89 tenants out of every 100 satisfied with the overall quality of a responsive repair	89.0%	 82.5%		Worse than last quarter	89 out of 100
We aim to keep 85 tenants out of every 100 satisfied that the repair has been completed right first time	85.0%	 77.7%		Worse than last quarter	Not available

*This column shows the performance figures of the median performing housing associations across England & Wales. We aim to be within the top quarter of all housing associations.



Tenants at Orchard Grange enjoying the festivities

Your festive round-up

Christmas seems a long way away now, but it was certainly filled with plenty of activities:

- ◆ Tenants from Tuson House, Ashwood Court, Old Mill Court, Orchard Grange, and Lowerfield, donated toys to The JJ Effect CIC to distribute to families in need at Christmas.



- ◆ Children from St Oswald's Catholic Primary School visited Ashwood Court in Longton to perform their annual carol concert. Tenants also enjoyed a Christmas fayre, raising almost £400. They donated £100 to Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, and £100 to Rosemere Cancer Foundation, which were both match funded by our Charity Fund.

- ◆ Tenants at Bolton Croft in Leyland held a Christmas fayre, raising £180 for Rosemere Cancer Foundation, which was also match funded by our Charity Fund.



- ◆ Tenants at Orchard Grange in Penwortham held a Christmas party, which saw Santa on a scooter!

- ◆ Members of Northeast Producers Travelling Theatre Company performed Puss in Boots at Croft Court in Freckleton, and Oliver at Greenwood Court in Leyland.

Sue Broster, Progress Activities Coordinator, highlighted the importance of activities like these to increase social inclusion amongst isolated tenants.

She said: "Some of these schemes have struggled to get people back using the communal lounges, so seeing tenants sitting and enjoying the performances and also singing along to some of the songs was lovely."



Spotlight on: Fundraising and community activities at Old Mill Court



Wilma (centre) raised £122.22 for Breast Cancer Now

Tenants at Old Mill Court independent living scheme in Walmer Bridge have been very busy over the past few months, raising money for charities and even winning an award for their gardening skills.

- ◆ Wilma organised a coffee morning, raising £122.22 for Breast Cancer Now. We match funded this through our Charity Fund, to take the final total to £244.44.

Wilma said: “This was the fifth year of me doing this. I have supported a few friends through breast cancer so this was my way of doing something positive. I am really pleased people have turned up to support the fundraising and buy cakes and raffle tickets.”

- ◆ Tenants organised two table top sales to raise money for projects and activities across the scheme.

They donated half the money raised to North West Air Ambulance Service (NWAAS) and applied for match funding through our Charity Fund, taking the final total to £344.

- ◆ Tenants held a Lancashire Day celebration, with a quiz and local food. They raised £200.50 for St Michael’s and All Angels Church in Hoole, which was match funded to £401. This money will go towards a new church lodge.
- ◆ Tenants collected items to donate to Smalls for All, a charity that collects underwear for people in Africa and the UK.

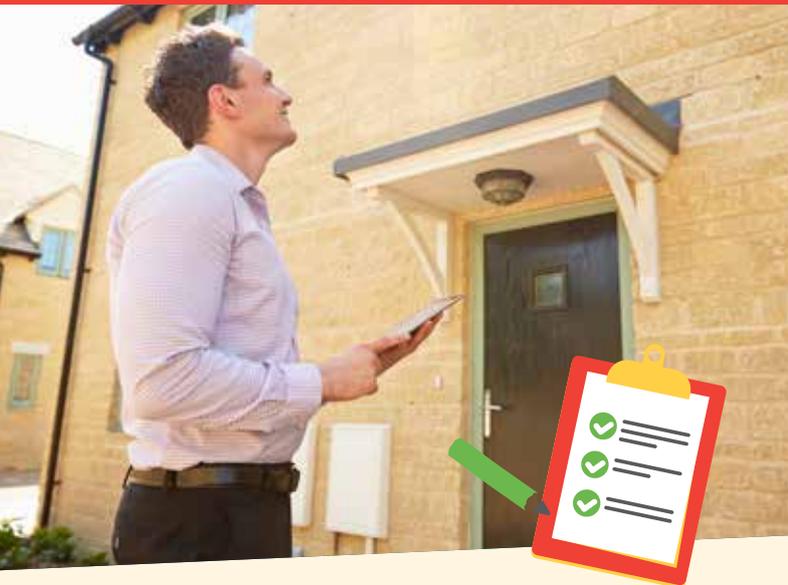
- ◆ Old Mill Court has won Western Parishes in Bloom for their excellent work in looking after gardening areas across the whole scheme.

Their prize was a £25 gardening voucher, which The Mill Pond Gardener Group has put towards buying a water butt for the patio area.

Antonietta, an Old Mill Court tenant and a member of The Mill Pond Gardeners group, (pictured holding the certificate), said: “People take pride in their gardens and they are absolutely beautiful in the height of summer. Everyone has a different task and makes their garden areas look different. This award is very well deserved. We have a nice little community here.”



If anyone is raising money for charity and would like some help, please contact the Progress Involvement Team via our Customer Contact Centre on **0333 320 4555**, or email **community@progressgroup.org.uk**.



The Regulator of Social Housing survey

We value your opinions and want to know how happy you are with what we are doing, and how we can do better.

To help us do that, we worked with an independent survey company called Acuity Research & Practice Limited, to invite tenants by email, text or phone call to tell us what they think.

The Regulator of Social Housing has created a set of measures to look at how satisfied you are with the services we provide. These are called Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

The survey consisted of 16 questions and six comment boxes for you to write down anything else you wanted to tell us.

This will help us understand what we may need to change or what not to change. We will share the results with you in the summer.

If you have any questions about this survey, you can email us via bianalyst@progressgroup.org.uk.

What's new?

We have been having fun planning events and activities, with some schemes trying out a lunch club which has been a welcome new addition.

Our trips are proving popular, with tenants enjoying a visit to Boundary Mill in January and Skipton Market in March.

The trip to Bury Market in May is now full and other trips are getting towards being full.

Lowerhouse Community Centre in Leyland is becoming a hive of activity with chair fitness classes every Monday, from 3pm until 4pm; and a community cafe every Friday morning from 8.45am until 10.30am. Everyone is welcome to join in.

Can you knit blankets for Tippy Toes?

We are asking tenants to help us support Tippy Toes Baby Bank and knit blankets for local babies and international areas of need. So far, tenants at Lostock Court, Stanner Lodge, Lowerhouse, Old Mill Court, and Tuson House have been knitting blankets.

If you would like to help, please call Sue on **07811 351787**. We can supply wool and instructions for blanket sizes.



Coming up...

- ◆ Easter party at St Gerards, Lostock Hall.
- ◆ Easter competition at some schemes - painting a clay pot and planting a sunflower seed.
- ◆ Parties to celebrate the King's Coronation in May.

If anyone is interested in taking part, contact Sue on the number above.



Dave (left), from Age UK, with tenant Geoff, during a digital workshop at Northbrook Gardens

Getting in the know

Following feedback on important issues some of our independent living tenants are facing, our activities coordinator organised a series of digital workshops, scam, and fire safety information sessions.

- ◆ Wendy and Paula from Age UK visited Ancenis Court in Kirkham, and Lowerhouse in Leyland, to discuss different types of scams to be aware of and what benefits and financial support the tenants could be entitled to.
- ◆ Dave from Age UK delivered a digital workshop at Northbrook Gardens in Leyland, to offer simple tips and advice on how to use mobile phones, iPads, tablets and laptops. This was part of a digital inclusion project, funded through our Community Investment Fund.
- ◆ Two members of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) visited Amounderness Court and Croft Court in Kirkham to talk about the dangers around unsafe appliances and practices in the home.

Tenants told us they found the session useful, with one person saying: “Although a lot of fire safety is common sense, I enjoyed having someone there to talk through any concerns, especially for anyone who has issues around deafness and blindness.”

Sue Broster, Progress Activities Coordinator, said: “Tenants really appreciated the advice given and some would like Age UK and the fire service to return next year.”

If anyone is interested in any of these sessions, please contact Sue Broster on **07811 351787** or email **sbroster@progressgroup.org.uk**.



Contact us

 **Manage your rent and repairs at any time online at:**
www.progressgroup.org.uk/sign-up-for-your-tenant-account/

 **Live chat (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)**
www.progressgroup.org.uk

 **Email**
enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk

 **Phone (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm)**
0333 320 4555

 **In-person (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm) or write to us**
Sumner House
21 King Street
Leyland
Lancashire
PR25 2LW

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ONEPOST



Independent Times



Olga turns 100

Happy 100th birthday to one of our tenants Olga.

She celebrated with family and fellow tenants during a party at Ashwood Court in Longton.

Olga, who previously worked in engineering, moved to the UK from Russia 20 years ago and has been living in Ashwood Court for five years.



Happy 80th birthday

Ann celebrated her 80th birthday with a party with family and friends at Ancenis Court in Kirkham.



Congratulations to Dennis and Margaret who celebrated their silver wedding anniversary at Lowerhouse Community Centre in Leyland.