



Christmas Light Safety

Don't

- Use lights that are damaged.
- Leave lights on when you go out or when you go to sleep.
- Replace bulbs when the lights are connected to the mains.
- Plug adaptors into one another as you risk overloading the socket.
- Use indoor lights outside (outdoor lights must have the correct IP rating and be specifically designed for outdoor use).
- Run cables across escape routes or thoroughfares.
- Hang external lights in wet or windy weather.
- Put lights on flammable decorations or materials.

Candles are one of the common causes of home fires, please refrain from using them.

We need your help

The Stepping Stones Newsletter is called the tenants' newsletter, not just because it is for tenants' information, but also because tenants and other residents contribute to it.

We need your input:

- Suggestions of items to include
- Feedback on content and format
- Written contributions
 - is there something you would like to write about?
- Photos of our homes and communities

Top tips to stay safe in the dark

- Plan your journey – make sure you know where you are going and how you are going to get there. Keep to well-lit and busy areas, avoiding short cuts through dark areas such as parks.
- It is important to be seen – when you are out, if it is dark make sure you have something that is high-visibility on and if it is cold make sure you wear something that will keep you warm.
- Make sure you have important numbers on your phone should you need to call anyone. Remember to take your mobile phone with you and make sure it is fully charged.
- Make sure you tell someone you know where you are going and when you are expecting to arrive and return.
- Keep all your valuables safe and out of sight.
- Make sure you only talk to people you know.

Report a repair

Phone: 0800 183 0044 during office and out-of-office hours

Contacts

Trudy Welch, Support Worker: 07528 630059

Louise Worrall, Support Worker: 07528 630058

Fiona Hewetson, Support Worker: 07528 630057

Police/Fire/Ambulance (emergencies only): 999

Police (non emergencies): 101

Repair Contact Centre: 08001 830 044 (open 24 hours)

Tamworth Borough Council: 01827 709 709

Alternative formats

If you require this document in an alternative format or language please contact the Tenant Participation team on: 01827 709709 or email: tenantparticipation@tamworth.gov.uk

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

STEPPING STONES

Winter 2020

The Newsletter for Supported Accommodation

Welcome to your winter edition of Stepping Stones



This newsletter comes from our Housing family, to yours. Like families everywhere, we've been doing things differently and finding new ways to keep in touch during the pandemic.

For us, our priority was to protect services that are essential for customers. I'm very pleased that we have been able to maintain our telephone enquiries facility, offer crucial advice for people worried about money, carry out emergency repairs and normal safety checks and provide reassurance, care and support for our tenants.

We have also been making memories and we want to share some of those with you over the coming months. We would like to start by thanking Demi, a former tenant, for sharing her inspirational story in this edition.

I hope you enjoy reading this special edition of our magazine. Our next publication will be with you in the new year.

Demi's story

Demi was living in supported accommodation for just over a year before moving into her apartment. She didn't know what to expect, everything was unknown! As much as she was reassured that everything would be fine she still felt uncertain, worried and not comfortable about the whole situation, but it was something she had to go through.

Demi would like to reassure people out there that it's not what you assume and it's the best thing that she could have done! The women who help and support you with everything are amazing and she has become friends with them. Whatever support you need they are just a phone call away

or even just to speak to someone if you don't want to turn to family or friends.

She has now moved into her own permanent property, which she says "still to this day cannot believe, I ended up in my dream home!" She has friends and their little ones around her who she meets up with, and goes for walks with on the fields nearby. Demi says "I will be forever grateful for where I am today and it wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the ladies who work with people in supported accommodation to help you get where you need to be."



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Don't let loan sharks take a bite over Christmas

Christmas can be financially stretching for many people and over this period, or when January statements and bills arrive, people may be tempted to take money from unlicensed lenders.

These lenders charge extortionate amounts of interest and have been known to use threatening language, intimidation and even violence when demanding payments from their desperate victims, so please be careful over the festive period.

If you or someone you know is involved with a loan shark you can safely and confidentially report an illegal money lender to the Illegal Money Lending Team on 0300 555 2222 or fill out a form online at www.stoploansharks.co.uk.



Happy Christmas

Via Children's Services we have had hampers donated to us, from Scolmore International Limited, Tamworth and will be delivered to your door step.

We have also managed through Children's service to secure 15 Argos vouchers, each worth £10 for the team to purchase gifts for the children.

A sincere thank you both companies for their generosity and best wishes.



Affected by anti-social behaviour

During the covid pandemic we have seen that our support service has become ever more important, people have struggled with isolation, managing their mental health and wellbeing, had had new money worries, and for some drink & drug issues

Through the national lockdowns and now tier system we maintained the service throughout.

- We have ensure safety without exposing the team and you our residents to the risk in contracting the coronavirus
- Made telephone calls for support
- Made referrals for extensive support for you.



Repairs

When you report any repair issues they are assessed on a case by case basis – however essential repairs and visits to our most vulnerable customers will continue to be our priority.

Emergency Repairs are classed as anything causing immediate risk to health, safety and security of our residents or causing immediate damage to a property's structure, fixtures and/or fittings.

We continue to carry out all health and safety related works such as: fire risk assessments and remedial works that arise from these assessments; gas safety checks; water hygiene assessments; communal electrical checks.

All other repairs that are reported will be carried out as and when possible under government guidance.

Please continue to report all repairs. Emergency repairs will be completed within **???** Days, and the remainder will be completed as soon as possible until we are able to operate more normally again. Please report repairs on 0800 183 0044.

This does mean that some of our planned repairs may be postponed until further notice. You will be kept updated on this, and thank you for your patience.

Staying safe during repairs

It is appreciated that sometimes tenants will want to offer a drink to contractors attending your property to complete repairs, Tamworth Borough Council advise all tenants to refrain from doing so as this could put tenants and contractors at risk of Covid.

As part of our response to the pandemic, we have introduced an eight-point plan that is followed when contractor's visit your home.

After letting you know they have arrived, the operative will stand at least two metres from your door. Everyone in your household will be then asked to move to a separate room while the inspection and work is carried out.

Operatives are also equipped with appropriate PPE, including gloves and they will point out any surfaces they've touched, to enable easy cleaning. All the tools that they use are thoroughly cleaned between visits to different properties and operatives clean their hands in their vans by using hand sanitiser.

This thorough approach is to provide additional peace of mind for customers.

The sensible steps taken for our home visits have certainly been well received.

Ellerbeck office closed



Contacting us

Staff continue to work mainly remotely during the Covid-19 distancing period. Phone calls to the office are being diverted to a phone held by a staff member. We are grateful for your understanding!

There may also be slight delays in replying to physical letters - please contact us by email or phone if you can.

Make sure we can contact you

During the Covid-19 period we are aiming wherever possible to send information to tenants by email and text. If you haven't had an email or a text from the staff recently, we may not have your up to date details.

Please contact a staff member so we can ensure we have your email address (don't forget to include your name and your mobile number).