



MY TENANCY
The online way to check your rent account. Log onto www.rfha.org.uk and enter your password

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It's text time!

From the end of August, RFHA will be introducing a new text messaging service! We will be able to text you:

- To send appointment reminders
- If you have some arrears
- When you need to fill out a satisfaction form
- To tell you when important events are coming up

The idea to introduce a texting service came from the consultations that we carried out in the first three months of 2011 with residents who came to the Tenant Talkback event in January, the "Question of the Week" in RFHA's reception and the Challenge Group.

A text messaging code of conduct has been developed with residents; it was agreed that:

- You are happy to receive text messages from us 7 days a week
- We will only send messages between 9am and 6pm
- We will send you no more than 5 messages in a week about overdue debt
- We will respond to a text message sent to us within 2 days.



Residents who came to the Talkback in January told us that text message reminders would be a good idea.

This code is included in our new Customer Service Standards which were sent to you in May. The text messaging service is also one of our seven Local Offers, which were also suggested and approved by residents.

If you would like more information about any aspect of the service, please contact us on 01933 411400.

Did you know?

More than 72% of mobile phone users either send or receive text messages. Lol !?

This month's VALUE FOR MONEY investigation

This month, we ask you about....online repairs reporting.

Our online repairs reporting software is due for renewal this year, so we asked those of you have reported a repair this way over the past year your opinion about it. Is it value for money? We also asked our email group, the Sounding Board, their views about repairs reporting. For 90% of those asked, the number one preferred method to report repairs is by telephone. Email was the next preferred method, at 60%. 40% said the website was their 3rd preferred method.

Reasons for preferring to use the telephone include:

- I like to speak to someone in person, as I know that

the report has been actioned and the staff are nice and cheery, always helpful

- It is better to explain the repair that needs to be attended to
- Easier to do this as I don't always have on line access

For 70% of you, the biggest priority when reporting a repair was knowing when it would be done. Online repairs reporting was only used by 23 residents last year and it costs £1000 for the software. We asked 'Do you think that we should continue to offer reporting a repair through our website considering the cost?' 80% said no.... "I was



not aware you could report through the website, however I do not think that this is necessary, when everyone has a phone, and you are already paying the cost of the admin staff who answer it".

Thank you to all for your help with this VALUE FOR MONEY investigation. We will be saving £1000 a year by removing this method of reporting repairs.

We will concentrate on repairs reporting by telephone (01933 411400) and by email (repairs@rfha.org.uk)

East Midlands Tenant Participation Forum

This month, the Challenge Group would like to tell you about the East Midlands Tenant Participation Forum.

This is an organisation which holds regular conferences, training days and advice for residents. RFHA pays for an annual membership which means the services of the EMTPF is available to all RFHA residents.

Mr Cade – “Brilliant - Very informative and interesting. A very well put together day.”

In the afternoon there were a number of bite-sized sessions on a wide variety of housing subjects – so by the end of the day our residents came away with lots of new knowledge

and had a very enjoyable day out – not to mention full from the lovely buffet lunch!

In April two members of the group attended the spring seminar at Melton Mowbray. They attended workshops on:

- Housing Benefit Reform
- The future of the Tenant Services Authority
- Housing for older people

The Challenge Group would like to welcome all residents to attend an event as they rate it as highly enjoyable! (please note travel expenses are paid).

Ms Alexander – “This was a great insight into what other groups do and a chance to learn from their experiences. I really enjoyed the day.”



Members of the Challenge Group.

The next event will be on 18th August in Lincolnshire. Please contact Caroline for more details about the next event – 01933 415156.

Financial Health check



Whatever the situation with your finances, it's good to know where you stand and that you are making the most of what you have. The health check, a new online money adviser from the Money Advice Service, is for everyone.

The Money Advice Service is an independent advice organisation, here to help everyone understand and manage their money better.

Taking just 10 minutes to answer some straightforward questions on the health check will give you a personalised action plan to help you sort out your money priorities now, and plan for the future – whatever your goals may be. Best of all - it's free and it's unbiased.

Log onto RFHA's website, www.rfha.org.uk and click on the link on the front page for YOUR free health check.

Getting to know you

Over the past year we have sent out profiling surveys called 'About you and your household'.

The surveys were sent out to all residents but unfortunately we didn't receive all of the information back, which meant RFHA sending them out again. Even then there was still information outstanding, so recently we have been completing surveys with our residents via phone or face to face. The customer profiling surveys are important to us as the information helps us to improve our service and offers to you. They also let us know that the current details we have about our residents are correct as in some cases if a resident reports a repair and we don't have the correct contact number, we cannot resolve this for them.

Did you know?

- 71% of our heads of household are women
- 83% of you have a mobile phone

We would like to say a big thank you to all of our residents who have returned this survey.

Getting To Know You and Your Needs

At RFHA, we want to provide you with the best possible service. We can do this better if we know more about our customers. Please help us to help you and how we work in your community by taking a few minutes to check the information that we currently hold about the people who live in your home on a permanent basis and answer any additional questions.

If any of the information in the form is incorrect, please change it and we will update our records when you return the form to us.

Your answers will be strictly confidential and only used by RFHA or where appropriate passed to contractors working on our behalf in providing a direct service to you eg repairs.

Your feedback will help us deliver services that take account of your needs. By helping us, we can help you.

We have tried to keep the questions clear and concise. If you would like a member of our team to help you with filling it in, please contact Customer Services on 01933 411400 and we will be happy to help you.

All the questions are voluntary but please answer as many as you can.

We will check the accuracy of this information with you every 3 years and ask that you let us know of any changes.

Thank you.

Heidi Williams
Customer Services Manager



Wanted. Mystery Shoppers!

The New Way to Check our Services

Wanted. New Mystery Shoppers but with a difference.

We are looking for a number of residents who will complete a report form every time they contact RFHA.

Over six months we would ask that every time you find a need to contact RFHA you pull out your report forms and complete the questions at the end of the call. After six months we will invite

you in with your reports to discuss your findings. We will also pay you £20 in high street vouchers as a thank you.

Full training and support will be given to assist you throughout the project.

So if you would like to become a Mystery Shopper by experience please call Caroline on 01933 415156.

The Kitchen and Bathroom programmes

Well... the new financial year is upon us and once again the kitchen and bathroom replacement programmes will be starting.

Residents who will be having new kitchens or bathrooms in 2011 have already been selected as they have passed the preliminary checks and inspections. We are sure they are very excited and can't wait for the programmes to start.

The kitchen programme has been given to the company New Life for the second year running. This follows on from the positive satisfaction checks that were carried out following their works last year. Residents will again have choices of kitchens to choose from including a couple of new options.

The bathroom programme has been given to MAW Services- this is the fifth consecutive year that they have won the tender for this programme. We would like to congratulate Mark Weston for his continued high quality of service.

We recently spoke to Hazel Oldfield of Thrapston who has been a resident of RFHA for a number of years and she was delighted with her new bathroom which was fitted towards the end of 2010 by MAW Services.



Miss Oldfield from Thrapston



Miss Oldfield said that she was able to make choices about her new bathroom, such as a choice of bath, one which was contoured and one which was more contemporary. She also had a number of choices about the flooring and the tiles. Miss Oldfield was given a starting date for the bathroom to be fitted and it was completed within 5 working days. Miss Oldfield confirmed that she was "over the moon" with her new bathroom. She found MAW Services to be very friendly and polite and she could not fault the work. The whole experience was enjoyable and she was given a brand new bathroom which has since made all the difference to her and her family.



MAW Services - the 5th year that they have won the contract for the bathroom programme.

Unfortunately due to the current economic climate and the budgets available to RFHA in the forthcoming year, the number of kitchens and bathrooms to be fitted in 2011/2012 has had to be reduced. However we hope that once the economy picks up and costs become more affordable then we may be able to increase these numbers again in the future.

We would like to thank Hazel Oldfield for her comments and help with this article-it is very much appreciated.

Thank you.



Time costs money



Due to the growing number of missed appointments for our handyman service, we have had to introduce a charge of £30 for missed appointments.

There is a lot of demand for the handyman and it is shame when a morning's work is wasted when another resident also needs repairs carrying out.

We hope that by advising you of the charge for missed appointments it will encourage residents to call the office on 01933 411400 to cancel the appointment if something unexpected comes up.

The 'End of Tenancy' reward scheme returns

In the last issue we notified you of the end of the End of Tenancy Reward Scheme.

This is where the Association gives the leaving

resident £200 if they leave the property in a good standard of repair. RFHA has looked at this again, by request and has decided to bring this back.

New homes in Kettering & Wellingborough

During the Summer and Autumn we will be refurbishing 6 properties and they should all be ready to let, providing new homes for people before Christmas.

We would like to thank Kettering Borough Council for supporting this project with grant funding. As a result of the grant we were able to buy one property that was semi derelict and causing lots of problems for neighbours, because it attracted anti-social behaviour and was a real eyesore. This will now be transformed into a comfortable home, which will be a big benefit for the new tenants and their neighbours.

Keep a look out in a future edition of the newsletter for 'before' and 'after' photos of the houses which will show how they have been transformed!

August 2011



Top tips for Summer!

We all look forward to the summer, with barbeques, splashing in a paddling pool and parties. Please remember your neighbours and be considerate when you're in the garden.

Think about the weather when you start a bonfire or BBQ – is it windy? Ash and smoke can blow a long way and may seriously affect other people. They may have washing on the line!

Music and general noise should be kept to a sociable level. After dark, it should be turned down further, so that other people's sleep isn't disturbed.



Speak to your neighbour if you are trimming hedges at the boundary, so that if any cuttings should fall into their garden, they know you will clear them up.



Your heating should be switched on (only briefly!) at least once a month, just to check it's working. It's better to get it repaired now, rather than in the winter when you'll really need it!

Are you going away this summer? We all think the worst won't happen, but if it does, can you afford to replace everything? Low cost, pay weekly contents insurance is available. Please call to ask for an information pack.



Gas Safety

We would like to remind you about how important it is to have your home tested every year for gas safety.

Wheldon's will be carrying out gas safety checks for RFHA this year, so please be sure to let them know if the appointment they offer you is not convenient so that they can rearrange it.



Potato & Pepper Frittatas



Feed your family for a fiver!

- Serves: 6
- Prep time: 10 minutes
- Cooking time: 40 minutes

Ingredients

3 large potatoes, unpeeled.
1tbsp olive oil.
2 onions, peeled and chopped.
1 red pepper, deseeded & chopped.
6 large eggs.
Salt & freshly ground black pepper.
Handful of wild rocket, to serve (optional).
6 x 10cm (4in) Yorkshire pudding tins, greased and base-lined with baking parchment.

Tip: add small chunks of chorizo sausage for added flavour

Method

1. Pierce the potatoes several times with a fork, then microwave on High for 10 minutes.
2. Set the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
3. Peel away the potato skin and cut the potatoes into 1cm (1/2in) cubes. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and fry onions for a few minutes to soften, then add the potatoes, cook for 5 mins without stirring, to brown them. Add the red pepper to the pan and cook over a medium heat for 5 more minutes.
4. Break eggs into a bowl and beat lightly with a fork. Season well. Divide potato and onion mixture between tins, then carefully pour in the beaten egg.
5. Bake for 20 minutes, until puffed up and golden. Leave to cool for a few minutes, then run a knife around each one and lift them out.

Has your estate recently been inspected?

You can now look up the results and action points from recent estate inspections on our website www.rfha.org.uk. Please look on the 'Get Involved' section and then it is under 'Estates'

Just for fun!

G	R	V	A	N	O	E	A	B	X	G	W	M	Z	Z	H
T	S	U	M	M	E	R	Q	A	G	B	J	P	O	O	L
Z	A	A	F	P	H	G	S	R	W	Y	B	A	S	U	L
Q	N	G	J	K	F	E	E	B	Y	K	G	R	U	T	W
F	D	D	O	G	A	R	D	E	N	G	C	T	N	S	E
P	C	F	E	B	L	H	Y	Q	D	V	Y	Y	S	I	P
W	A	C	B	J	I	T	D	U	N	E	I	R	S	D	K
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G	R	J	I	C	V	Y	L	Y	F	D	Y	I	N	N	S
F	E	A	N	M	L	H	E	S	V	J	G	D	G	M	I
B	R	I	G	H	T	P	G	W	S	B	J	F	E	D	V

Words to find are:

SUMMER SWIMMING SANDCASTLE
BRIGHT FLOWERS SUNNY
BARBEQUE CAMPING GARDEN
BIKINI BEACH HOLIDAY
POOL OUTSIDE PARTY

All words run left to right, top to bottom and diagonally.

Contact Us

You are able to contact us in the following ways:

By telephone: 01933 411400

We will ring you back within 24 hours if you leave a message (unless advised otherwise)

By post: RFHA, St. Peters House, 101 Wellingborough Road, Rushden, NN10 9YL

We will reply to you within 7 days if you write to us

By e-mail: info@rfha.org.uk

We will reply to you within 2 days if you email us

To register to use My Tenancy: tp@rfha.org.uk



The Government Standard

