

Hometalk

New Forest District Council's magazine for tenants and leaseholders

WINTER 2023



In this edition of Hometalk

- p3** Housing update
- p4-5** Help and support
- p6-7** Reduce your food shopping bill
- p8** Information offices
- p9** Universal Credit
- p9** Pension Credit
- p10** We need your help!
- p11** Priority Services Register
- p12** You said, we listened
- p13** Citizen Lab
- p14-15** Staying warm, staying safe
- p16-17** Extra Care Housing
- p18** Damp and mould
- p19** Donate it or dump it
- p20-21** Christmas collections
- p22** Christmas tree recycling
- p23** Make it right
- p24** Caring for your dog
- p25** Adders
- p26** Elections in the New Forest
- p27** Homeswapper
- p28** Wordsearch
- p29** Gas safety checks
- p29** Save time, do it online
- p29** Making an appointment
- p30-31** Information directory
- p32** Useful contacts

Editorial contributions from

Tenant Representatives and
Hometalk Editorial Panel Home Participants

Get in touch

If you have any ideas for future articles please contact the Tenant Engagement Team:

Email: RI@nfdc.gov.uk

Post: Tenant Engagement Team

New Forest District Council, Appletree Court,
Lyndhurst. SO43 7PA

Hometalk can also be viewed on our website:
newforest.gov.uk/hometalk

Editor Joy Stainer, Tenant Engagement Officer

Design H&W Creative

Printing Pure Graphics Ltd

The information contained in this magazine is for general information purposes only. New Forest District Council assumes no responsibility for tenants signing up to or volunteering in respect of any independent organisations appearing in this magazine. All information contained within this edition is correct at the time of going to print.

 Sign up to residents emails at
newforest.gov.uk/emails

Follow the New Forest code

The New Forest is a unique place with rare wildlife and free-roaming livestock. Thank you for helping us care for this special place by following the simple New Forest code:



Keep your distance from the animals – don't feed or touch them*



Keep dogs under control. Don't let dogs approach or chase any animals



Stick to the permitted cycle tracks



Take home litter and dog waste



Park only in car parks



Drive with care – animals on the road!



No fires or barbecues*



No wild camping



Help wildlife by keeping to the main tracks

*Failure to comply may result in a fixed penalty of £100 or being taken to court and a fine of up to £1,000.














Housing update

Since the summer edition, the Social Housing Regulation Bill has now become an Act, and as a result the Regulator of Social Housing has proposed a new set of consumer standards.

This is a big step forward in terms of making sure tenants are at the heart of their housing services. Alongside the proposed consumer standards, we're also well on the way to collecting this year's Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and a big thank you to the 300 tenants who have taken the tenant perception survey so far.

Further surveys are being conducted over the winter months, so if you receive a call from TLF Research (who are undertaking these surveys on our behalf) please do take part. After April 2024, the results will be shared with tenants and the regulator.

We're also pleased to let you know that our new Tenant Engagement Strategy has been produced to really focus on how we listen to your views, put you at the heart of our services, and make sure you're kept informed about the things that you've told us are important to you.

As Hometalk goes to press, our consultation on the strategy will have closed. We'd like to thank everyone who took part in the consultation and we anticipate having the strategy agreed by the Council in the new year. We'll keep you updated, so keep an eye out on our website, our new digital platform (see page 13), or the next edition of Hometalk.

Finally, we'd like to know, what does being a New Forest District Council Tenant mean to you?

Sometimes called 'the lived experience' we'd like you to tell us how you feel about your home, and the services we provide.

We'd like to use these examples in future Hometalk publications – so if you'd like your story published, email this to us at:

RI@nfdc.gov.uk

or post to: **Tenant Engagement Team
New Forest District Council, Appletree Court,
Lyndhurst. SO43 7PA**

Help and support available to New Forest residents

1. Council Support Schemes

People on low incomes may be eligible for Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Payments and Council Tax Support from New Forest District Council. This will depend on your current circumstances.

[newforest.gov.uk/benefits](https://www.newforest.gov.uk/benefits)

As part of the Cost of Living government support package there are small grants available from New Forest District Council to support those experiencing exceptional financial hardship with their cost of living. [newforest.gov.uk/householdsupportfund](https://www.newforest.gov.uk/householdsupportfund)

2. Speak to a Trained Advisor

Anyone who is struggling financially can get a benefit check and speak to an advisor for free and confidential advice.

A benefit check can ensure that you are receiving all the money you're entitled to, especially if your circumstances have changed recently. Speaking to an advisor could also help you find cheaper deals on things like utility bills and make sure you can access any local support. There are some great projects to help with school uniforms, household goods and hardship grants. Many of these initiatives need a referral from a local agency such as Citizens Advice.

Visit [newforestcab.org.uk](https://www.newforestcab.org.uk) to find all the details of the opening times of Citizens Advice offices in Totton, Hythe, Lymington, New Milton & Ringwood.

Tel. 0808 278 7860

3. Debt Advice

Debt can happen to anyone, 'don't ignore it'.

Free advice and support can help you find ways to manage your debts and reduce how much you pay each month. Citizens Advice New Forest have a specialist debt team.

Tel. 0808 278 7860 to book a free debt appointment

Other New Forest based organisations who can help

Step Up Safe Space

This organisation collects donated used school uniforms, clothes and toys to pass on to its members.

Visit: stepupsafespace.com

Acts 4 Sharing

Collects and distributes donated household goods.

Visit: acts4sharing.org

Dibden Allotments Fund

Helps people in Hythe, Dibden, Marchwood and Fawley who are in hardship.

Visit: daf-hythe.org.uk

Cost of living information from NFDC

Check New Forest District Council's website [newforest.gov.uk](https://www.newforest.gov.uk) for up-to-date information

- If you have a prepayment meter
- For heating, electricity and other energy advice
- For help with food
- If you are having difficulty with paying council tax
- For the location of warm spaces within the District
- Community Hubs

Water companies

There are three water companies covering the New Forest area, check your water & waste water bills to see which ones cover your area. They all have schemes for people who are struggling to pay their bills:

Southern Water

Tel. 0800 027 0800

Wessex Water

Tel. 0345 600 3600

Bournemouth Water

Tel. 01202 590059

Energy

Contact Citizens Advice New Forest for help with energy bills. Tel. 0808 278 7860

They will advise on eligibility for any current energy help schemes.

Warm Home Discount Scheme (WHD)

You could get £150 off your electricity bill for winter 2023/24 under the Warm Home Discount scheme. You can get this discount if you:

- Get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit - known as the 'core group'
- On a low income and meet your energy suppliers' criteria for the scheme 'known as the 'broader group'

Warmer Homes Programme

The Warmer Homes Programme offers a variety of energy efficiency measures within the home, including: insulation, solar panels and heat pumps. You may qualify for the funding if your home has a EPC rating of E,F or G and either you have a total household income of £30,000 or less, or you receive means tested benefit. Apply online at: warmerhomes.org.uk/apply-lad-programme

Help to reduce your food shopping bills

The New Forest Food Larders

FareShare food larders visit sites across the New Forest with supplies of dried, fresh and chilled food available to FareShare members. It is free to become a member and you only pay a small fee each week for up to 25 food items (dried, fresh and chilled). Bring your own bags.

1 person household £2.50 per week
2 person household £3.50 per week
4 person household £5.00 per week



Monday

Where: Marchwood
Marchwood Village Hall,
Marchwood Village Centre SO40
4SX **Open:** 12:30pm - 1:30pm

Tuesday

Where: New Milton
Ashley Baptist Church,
New Milton BH25 5AA
Open: 9.30am - 10.30am

Where:

Hythe
St Anne's Neighbourhood
Centre, Warrys Close SO45 3QR
Open: 1.00pm - 2.00pm

Wednesday

Where: Totton
Testwood Baptist Church, 283a
Salisbury Road SO40 3LZ
Open: 9.30am - 11.30am

Where:

New Milton
Nedderman Centre, Marryat
Road, New Milton BH25 5NY
Open: 9.30am - 10.30am

Thursday

Where: Blackfield

Queen Elizabeth Recreation
Centre, Thornbury Avenue,
Blackfield SO45 1YP
Open: 9:30am-10:30am

Where:

Calshot
St Georges Hall, 11 Tristan Close
SO45 1BN
Open: 12.30pm - 1.30pm

Where:

Pennington
St Marks Community Hall, The
Square, Pennington SO41 8QN
Open: 1.15pm - 2.30pm

Friday

Where: Bransgore
St Mary the Virgin Church,
Ringwood Road, Bransgore
BH23 8JH
Open: 9.30am - 10.30am

Where:

Ringwood
Ringwood Leisure Centre,
Ringwood BH24 1PX
Open: 1.30pm - 2.30pm

Where:

Fordingbridge
St Mary's Church, Fordingbridge
SP6 1BB **Open:** 1.30pm - 2.30pm

Community Fridges

Community Fridges are publicly available fridges which store unwanted fresh food from the local area, so it can be passed on to those who can make use of it.

You don't need a voucher or referral, anyone can use it, but please only take what you need.

If you want to find your nearest fridge or set up a Community Fridge in your community visit

hubbub.org.uk/the-community-fridge

Ringwood Community Fridge

Where: Ringwood
Library,
Christchurch
Road BH24 1DW

Open: Tuesday,
Wednesday,
Thursday:
9.30am - 5.00pm
Friday:
11.00am - 1.00pm
Saturday:
9.30am - 1.30pm
Sunday:
4.30pm - 5.30pm

Fordingbridge Greener Living Community Fridge

Where:
Fordingbridge
Library, Roundhill
SP6 1AQ

Open: Tuesday:
9.30am - 3.00pm
Wednesday:
10.00am - 5.00pm
Friday:
10.00am - 5.00pm
Saturday:
10.00am - 1.00pm

New Forest Food Banks

All areas of the New Forest are covered by Food Banks. They provide food and other essentials for people in an emergency situation. All food banks require a referral from an agency such as Citizens Advice. **Tel. 0808 278 7860.**

The South

New Forest Basics Bank - basicsbank.org.uk - **Tel. 01590 610008**

The West

Ringwood Foodbank - ringwood.foodbank.org.uk - **Tel. 01425 600134**

The Waterside

Waterside Foodbank - waterside.foodbank.org.uk

Food Apps

Too Good to go

Many restaurants, cafes, supermarkets and food brands have partnered with Too Good to Go and provide a "magic bag" of unsold food to users at the end of the working day. It is a scheme to reduce food waste, but also offers food packages at a discounted price. It's like a goody bag - the items in the bags are always different. Tasty brands include: Greggs, Costa, Morrisons, Starbucks.

Kitche

Keeps track of the foods you purchased from the supermarket and will suggest recipes and warn you when items are getting close to their sell by date.

No Waste

Lets you scan your food and organise it by expiry date, name or category. Makes it easier to monitor what you need to buy in your next food shop so you don't buy things you don't need.

Olio

Are you going on a diet or did you over order items in your latest shop? This app lets you share unwanted items of food for free among your neighbourhood.

Information Offices

More than just reception

Did you know that you can visit any of our information offices for direct access to council services, support, and information?



They provide a walk-in service and can help with many different types of enquiries - here are just a few to give you an idea:

Advice and assistance on:

- Cost of living
- Housing Benefits
- Homelessness and Housing
- Elections and Voter ID
- Licensing applications
- Planning applications
- Beach hut enquiries
- Radar Keys
- Blue badge applications
- Bus pass applications
- First Aid

Paying for:

- Council Tax
- Rent
- Fines
- Garden Waste collections
- Bulky Waste collections

Buying:

- Parking Clocks
- Black and Clear Refuse Sacks
- Safety equipment
- Dog Waste bags

The team can also assist with advice on services provided by Hampshire County Council as well as town and parish councils in the local area.

The team take pride in being the face of the Council and will always endeavour to find the answer for you or signpost to the relevant team – and they are always happy to help, with a smile.

For more information please pop in to any one of our eight local information offices:

Fawley, Jubilee Hall

Opening times: 9.00am - 3.00pm
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

Fordingbridge, Kings Yard, Salisbury Street

Opening times: 10.00am - 4.00pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Hythe, The Grove, St Johns Street

Opening times: 9.30am - 4.00pm (closed between 12.30pm - 1.30pm)
Monday and Tuesday. 9.30am - 1.30pm Wednesday

New Milton, Town Hall, 2 Ashley Road

Opening times: 9.00am - 4.00pm Monday to Friday

Lymington, Town Hall, Avenue Road

Opening times: 9.00am - 4.00pm Monday to Friday

Lyndhurst (main office), Appletree Court, Beaulieu Road

Opening times: 9.00am - 4.00pm Monday to Friday

Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong

Opening times: 9.00am - 4.00pm
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

Totton and Eling, Civic Centre

Opening times: 9.00am - 4.30pm Monday to Thursday.
9.00am - 4.00pm Friday

The migration from “legacy benefits” to Universal Credit has started from September 2023. This only affects households who get just Tax Credits.



You will receive a Migration Notice from the Department for Work and Pensions explaining what you need to do, and by when. To find out more visit:

newforest.gov.uk/benefits

Your Tax Credits will stop if you do not claim Universal Credit within three months of receiving your Managed Migration Notice so it is important you claim Universal Credit by the deadline date, otherwise you will lose out on money you are entitled to.

If you get Housing Benefit, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseekers Allowance, or any of these benefits along with Tax Credits, you will not be moving to Universal Credit until after April 2024. You will receive your Managed Migration Notice nearer the time.

Citizens Advice can help you with making a claim for Universal Credit, please call the national advice line on **0800 144 8444**. If you would like to speak to a member of the Benefits team, call **01590 646121** between 8.45am and 1.00pm Monday to Friday.

Pension Credit

Could you be entitled to some extra help?

We have already helped many households claim Pension Credit with extra income of £75.00 a week on average.

Pension Credit gives extra money to those on a low income to help with living costs and household bills. It is separate from your State Pension and does not affect any amounts of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support you get. If you get Pension Credit you can also get other help, such as:

- help with your heating costs through the Warm Home Discount Scheme
- a free TV licence if you are aged 75 or over
- help with NHS dental treatment, glasses and transport costs for hospital appointments

Who can claim?

If your weekly income is below these amounts, you can claim

Pension Credit:

£201.05 if you are single

£306.85 if you have a partner

What information do you need to make a claim for Pension Credit?

To claim Pension Credit you will need the following information about you and your partner if you have one:

- your National Insurance number
- information about your income and savings
- your bank account details that you want the payments to go to

How to claim

Don't miss out on this extra support you could be entitled to.

For more information and details on how to apply, visit: gov.uk/pension-credit or you can apply by phone on **0800 99 1234** (calls are free).

A friend or family member can call and make your claim for you, or you can request a paper application form to fill in and return.

There is help locally. We are working with Citizens Advice New Forest and Age Concern New Forest who have trained advisers who can assist you with making your application. Their contact details are:

CITIZENS ADVICE NEW FOREST

Visit one of their local offices at Lymington, Hythe, New Milton, Ringwood or Totton.

T: 0808 278 7860

W: newforestcab.org.uk

AGE CONCERN NEW FOREST

Age Concern New Forest, Southward House, Beaulieu Road, Dibden Purlieu. SO45 4PT

T: 023 80841199

E: info@ageconcernnewforest.org.uk



We need your help!

New Forest District Council will shortly be undertaking a data collection project to help us understand more about our tenants and their needs.

We know who our tenants are. But in some cases, we don't know enough about you, or how our services need to change or adapt to your personal needs.

Providing you with an outstanding and, where possible, a personalised service is really important to us. We are looking for your help to update our records about you, and your family/ household.

Over the coming months, we will initially be asking all our tenants to update their records with us. This will likely be a mix of self-service online or completing a paper return. We'll be asking you to update your personal details, and

also confirm who is living in your home with you. We will ask you to let us know about any specific needs you or your family have, and this will help shape our housing services in the future.

Please help us by providing this data. It's not only important to us, but the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman have been clear that we need to have clear and up to date information about our tenants and their household.

Your privacy and data protection is really important to us, and you can review our approach to this at: newforest.gov.uk/privacy

Thanks in advance for your support with this.



Priority Services Register What's it all about?

Have you heard of the Priority Services Register?

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free service that ensures energy suppliers offer extra help to vulnerable people.

As well as receiving priority support in the event of an emergency, customers listed on the Priority Services Register could also receive advance notice of power cuts, priority support when calling their network operator, help with accessing prepayment meters and access to communications in large print or braille if needed.

If you meet any of the criteria listed below, you might be eligible for joining your energy supplier's Priority Services Register:

- Have reached state pension age
- Are disabled or have a long-term medical condition
- Are recovering from an injury
- Have a hearing or sight condition
- Have a mental health condition

- Are pregnant or have young children
- Have extra communication needs
- Need to use medical equipment that requires a power supply
- Have poor or no sense of smell
- Would struggle to answer the door to get help in an emergency

There might be additional criteria not listed above that would also qualify you for registering.

If you're not already registered and you think you qualify, contact your energy supplier to request access to these services.

Find out more

More information can be found at:
www.environmentcentre.com/blog-articles/priority-services-register-whats-it-all-about/

Or call **0800 804 8601**

You said, we listened



We wanted to let you know about how your voice continues to influence changes in our housing services. This can be through individual feedback, feedback from groups of tenants (including existing actively involved tenants) and complaints.

We're always listening and looking at how, working in partnership with our tenants, we can improve services, or learn from each experience. Sometimes changes can be made as a wider service improvement for all tenants, and other times, these changes will affect tenants on a local level. In every case, we aim to clearly explain how your suggestion has been considered and any improvement made. Sometimes, we can't make the changes tenants want or desire, but in this case we will listen and explain why – or discuss any other appropriate options with you.

Bottom line, your voice matters and we want to hear from you and enable you to help shape our services.

You told us:	So we:
We need to enable more ways for tenants to get involved.	Have launched a new online platform for you to participate (Citizen Lab - opposite page). We have also made this a clear priority in our proposed tenant engagement strategy.
Our communication needs to be better, from you being able to find out about things that affect your home and community, to information about specific repairs in your home.	Have made this a priority in our proposed tenant engagement strategy. We are also in the process of improving the information that is available to you digitally, onsite in blocks of flats, and recording your feedback to improve our services.
A group of residents at Howard Oliver House told their Tenancy Management Officer they needed a notice board.	Working more collaboratively between our teams, have installed a new 'residents notice board' in this scheme.

Find out more

If you have any suggestions on how our housing services can be improved, please email: RI@nfdc.gov.uk, call **023 8028 5222** or simply speak to one of the housing team when we're out and about.

Citizen Lab

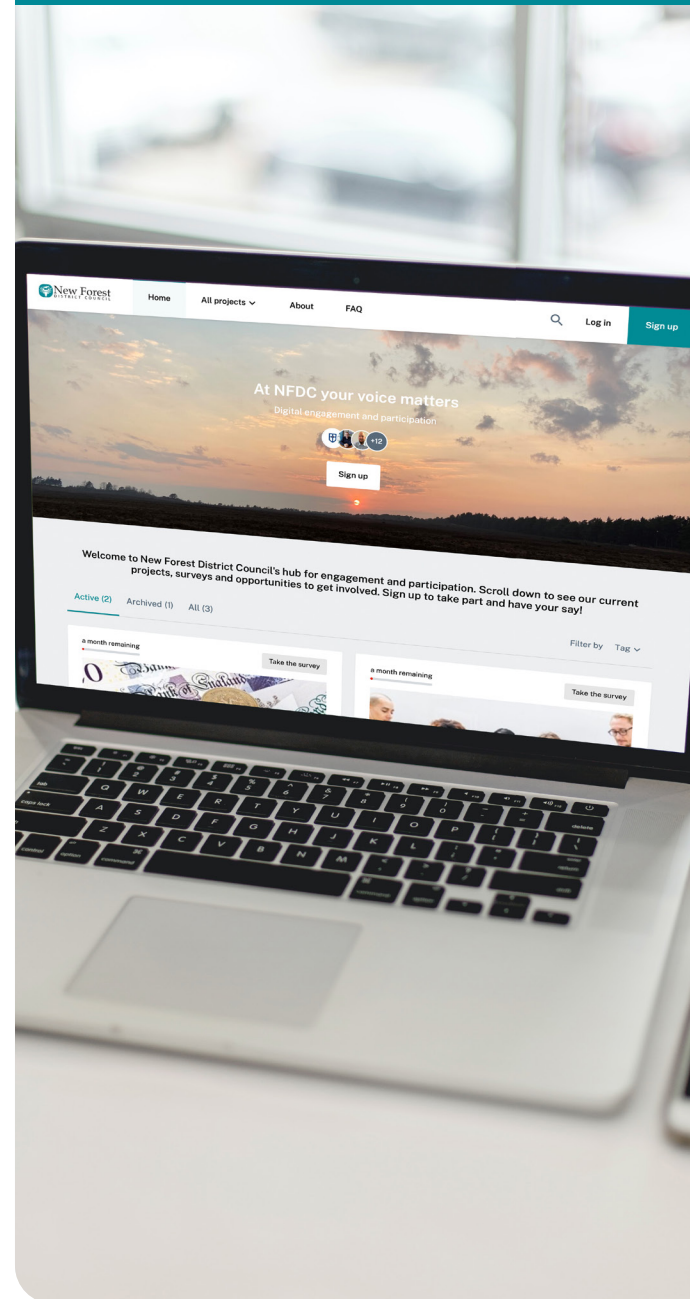
In October, we launched a new digital participation platform to expand the ways you can get involved in shaping our housing services and hold us to account.

This platform is hosted by Citizen Lab on behalf of New Forest District Council and enables a wide variety of digital participation that we've not been able to offer before. From simple surveys and polls to online forums where tenants and residents can have their say and suggest service ideas. There are a wide range of ways that you can get involved in shaping our Housing Services.

You can visit the platform at: www.newforest.citizenlab.co - and you'll also find a link to the platform on our website. You may also receive an email from us asking you to specifically take part in a project that affects you. Take a look - you'll find projects and consultations, past and present and see how we're using this tool to enable engagement and scrutiny.

Over the next 6-8 months we're hoping to get more projects set up where you can have your say and keep up to date with what's going on with our housing services. So, keep popping back to see what's live.

Sign up is simple, all you need to do is go to the platform and register using your email and first line of your address, you'll then be able to view and participate in the projects that are important to you.



Staying warm, staying safe

The cost of energy is still high, so you might have already done so or be considering some changes to how you heat your home.

But could those changes make your home less safe? Follow our advice to prevent any issues.



Portable heaters and gas fires

Electrical heaters - know the risks

Electrical heaters can be a great way to keep warm – especially if you only want to warm up one room. However, they should be used with care.

1. London Fire Brigade figures show that over the past five years, more than 800 fires were caused by electrical heaters.
2. Tragically, a third of electrical fires that resulted in a fatality involved heaters.



Why are heaters such a concern?

There are many reasons fires start, but fires involving heaters seem to have a particularly high fatality rate. This might be because of the circumstances they start in:

1. Fires typically start when bedding, blankets or clothes are placed too close to heaters.
2. People with mobility issues are especially at risk of tripping or falling onto a heater – placing them at a safe distance is all the more important.
3. Some kinds of heater also present a carbon monoxide risk which can be fatal. It can make you drowsy and less able to escape. That's why New Forest District Council always fit a carbon monoxide alarm in rooms with gas appliances.

Tips for using heaters safely

All heaters

- Make sure heaters are well maintained and in good working order.
- Check that your heater isn't on a recall list – there have been many fires in the past year connected to heaters that have been recalled. www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk
- Don't take risks with old heaters – if it's electrical and getting older, get it tested by a qualified electrician or buy a new one.
- Keep heaters well away from clothes, curtains and furniture and never use them for drying clothes.
- Always sit at least one metre away from a heater as it could set light to your clothes or chair.
- Before attempting to move your heater, turn it off and allow it to cool first.



Candles

Planning to use more candles? Keep lit candles away from curtains and bedding and be sure to blow them out when you leave the room.

Online home fire safety check

This easy-to-follow home fire safety check has been developed through a partnership between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Fire Kills and Safelincs. It will take you through your home one room at a time and the simple questions will help you spot fire risks as you go around your home. **HFSC (safelincs.co.uk)**

Extra Care Housing



Extra Care housing is designed for people who need some extra help to look after themselves but want to continue to live independently with the reassurance that staff are on-site 24/7 to respond to any emergencies.

Extra Care provides:

- Your own flat, with your own kitchen, bedroom, living room, bathroom and front door.
- Qualified staff on-site to respond quickly to a variety of personal care and other support needs (planned and in emergency situations).
- A safe and supportive environment in buildings close to local facilities.
- Shared facilities, such as a laundry, communal lounges and gardens.
- Organised social activities.

How can you get Extra Care housing in a NFDC Scheme?

If you haven't already had a recent assessment of your care needs, then you will need to contact Hampshire County Council's Adults' Health and Care department (telephone number: **0300 555 1386**) to request one.

The following schemes are open to people who are eligible for council commissioned Extra Care in the New Forest.

Barfields

Emsworth Road, Lymington, SO41 9GW

Gore Grange

Jowitt Drive, Gore Road, New Milton, BH25 6SB

Winfrid House

Boniface Close, Totton, Southampton, SO40 3SJ

Wooldridge View (due to open 2024)

Forest Pines, New Milton, BH25 5WD

Find out more

Hampshire County Council have an online tool to check whether you have care needs which are eligible for Extra Care housing, visit needschecker.hants.gov.uk

If you have any queries, or would like further information about schemes in your area or the application process, please email: extracare@nfdc.gov.uk or call the Housing Options team on: **023 8028 5222** (option 3) Monday and Wednesday 2.00pm - 5.15pm and Friday 2.00pm - 4.45pm.



Totton - Winfrid House
Boniface Close SO40 3SJ



Lymington - Barfields Court
Emsworth Road SO41 9GN



New Milton - Gore Grange
Jowitt Drive, Gore Road BH25 6SB

Keep your heating at a constant temperature of around 19°C - 21°C. It's cheaper to set the heating for lower temperatures for longer, than higher temperatures for shorter.

Close internal doors when you're cooking and showering - but keep them open at other times to allow airflow through your home.

Keep windows open when you can to allow good ventilation in your home. Keep window trickle vents open and clean.

Condensation is the most common cause of mould. This is when moisture in your home, created by day-to-day activities, condenses on cold surfaces.

Keep your home free from damp and mould



Wipe condensation from windowsills each morning. The removal of condensation to walls and internal windows is your responsibility.

Dry clothes outdoors or in a dryer. If this isn't possible, use an airer and open your windows whilst doing this.

If you have mould, you can treat this yourself. However, you can't just paint over it without killing it first. **Using a designated mould cleaner that contains a biocide will be effective in this case.** Make sure you follow any safety guidance.

Where damp is caused by a problem with the structure of your home or outstanding repair, then it is our responsibility to fix it, and it is important that you let us know about the problem as soon as possible.

To report a repair, or for more information visit newforest.gov.uk or call 023 8028 5222.

Donate it or dump it?

Where is the best place for my bulky waste?

It can be difficult to dispose of large household items, especially if you are unable to get them to your local tip easily.

Well, we have a specialist crew that can collect items from your address for a small charge.

But, before you book a bulky waste collection, we would always recommend that you consider:

- Can the item be reused or recycled?
- Can a voluntary group or charity reuse the item? (they may even be able to collect)

You can find out more on our web page: newforest.gov.uk/bulkywaste

If re-using or recycling your item is not an option and you need to book a bulky waste collection, the collection of one item will cost £39 and any additional items will be at a cost of £10.50 per item.

If you are in receipt of certain benefits, you may be entitled to one free collection of up to three items in any one financial year (April to March).

Please call customer services on **023 8028 5000** for more information.

For lots more tips and useful advice on doing your bit to reduce waste and protect the environment take a look at: www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/smartliving/inthehome



Flytipping is illegal

Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of any waste, no matter how large or small, onto any land, or at any site that doesn't have a licence to accept the waste.

If you see waste that has been fly-tipped, report it to us on our web page: newforest.gov.uk/article/1018/Fly-tipping

Alternatively, send an email to customer.services@nfdc.gov.uk or call Customer Services on **023 8028 5000**. Please give details of the items tipped along with exact location details if possible.

What3Words.com is an excellent way of identifying a specific location and, if you can email a photograph of the waste that has been fly-tipped, that will help as well.

Christmas & New Year recycling and rubbish collections 2023/24

BLACK AND CLEAR SACKS

If your normal collection day is: **Your changed collection day will be:**

Monday 25 December 2023 Tuesday 2 January 2024

Tuesday 26 December 2023 Wednesday 3 January 2024

Monday 1 January 2024 Tuesday 2 January 2024

Tuesday 2 January 2024 Wednesday 3 January 2024

Wednesday 3 January 2024 Thursday 4 January 2024

Thursday 4 January 2024 Friday 5 January 2024

Friday 5 January 2024 Saturday 6 January 2024

**Check your
collection day:**
[newforest.gov.uk/
findyourcollection](https://newforest.gov.uk/findyourcollection)

GLASS BOX

If your normal collection day is: **Your changed collection day will be:**

Monday 25 December 2023 Saturday 30 December 2023

Tuesday 26 December 2023 Saturday 6 January 2024

Monday 1 January 2024 Saturday 13 January 2024

As usual, garden waste collections will be paused for two weeks from late December. This will be from Monday 25 December 2023 to Sunday 7 January 2024. Garden waste collections will resume from Monday 8 January 2024

All other collection days will stay the same.

Festive recycling tips

- Reuse greeting cards to create gift tags for next year, or recycle, but please remove any decorations like ribbons first.
- Reuse festive sweet and biscuit containers, we can recycle tins made from metal.
- Recycle all types of empty plastic bottles, including milk, toiletries and cleaning bottles.
- Remember to remove food and drink from items before recycling, and check they are clean and dry.
- Recycle plain brown gift paper in your clear sack or please add all other gift wrap to general waste. Most gift wrap contains some plastic and foil and can't currently be recycled in Hampshire.

Remember, these six items can be recycled using your clear recycling sack:

Empty aerosols, plastic bottles, tins, cans, paper, and card

Recycle using your glass collection box or communal bin:

Empty jars and bottles, all colours and sizes

For more tips on recycling and reducing waste over the Christmas and New Year bank holidays, please visit newforest.gov.uk/christmasrecycling

Recycle your real Christmas tree

Take your real Christmas tree to one of our drop-off points across the district, and we will recycle it.

Our teams will recycle your tree by chipping it to create mulch. The mulch will be used locally to help keep moisture around plant roots, and to prevent weeds from growing.

Drop-off points will be open at the following locations from Sunday 31 December 2023 to Sunday 14 January 2024:

Blackfield

Gang Warily community centre car park
SO45 1GA

Brockenhurst

Brookley Road, SO42 7RA

Burley

Coach park BH24 4AA

Fordingbridge

A338 slip road car park, SP6 1AW

Hythe

New Road car park SO45 6BP

Lymington

Bath Road car park, SO41 3SE

Lyndhurst

Village centre car park, SO43 7BF3

Milford on Sea

Hurst Road East overflow car park
(by Sturt Pond) SO41 0PY

New Milton

Crossmead Avenue car park BH25 6NF

Ringwood

The Furlong long stay car park - follow signs to designated area
BH24 1AT

Totton

Rumbridge Street
car park SO40 9EA

Please only drop off real Christmas trees and remove any decorations first, such as lights or wreaths. Place trees as far back as possible in the fenced bay.

Last year, we recycled over 6,500 of residents' real Christmas trees. Thank you to everyone who dropped off their trees, it all makes a difference.

Any trees left in car parks not on this list, or by litter bins, will be treated as fly-tipping.

Make it right



Everyone deserves a home that is safe, secure and well maintained.

This is why the Government has launched the 'Make things right' campaign to ensure those living in social housing know their rights, know how to complain, and feel empowered that their voice will be heard.

If you live in social housing and you have an issue with your home or your landlord, there are ways to make things right.

How do I get an issue sorted?

To get an issue sorted you can:

1. Report it to us via the Housing Support Hub (contact details are on the back page)
2. Complain to us via the Feedback, comments and complaints page of the NFDC website (or ask the Housing

Support Hub for assistance if you need it)

3. Escalate to the Housing Ombudsman.

You can take these steps where you have contacted the Council and are not happy with our response to issues such as:

- mould or damp
- poor insulation
- broken doors or windows
- leaking pipes
- other repairs
- anti-social behaviour
- access problems
- poor service

Find out more

Go to: socialhousingcomplaints.campaign.gov.uk

Caring for your dog

Owning a dog is great fun and immensely rewarding. But dogs have complex needs, so you may need to get expert advice to ensure your dog is healthy and happy – please enquire at your local vet for more information about looking after your dog.

Microchipping

There is a legal requirement for all dogs aged 8 weeks and over to be microchipped and the owners' details will be recorded on an approved database - it usually costs between £10 - £30. Some vets include a microchip in their health plans, and some charities offer them for a reduced cost or for free - you could face a fine of up to £500 on conviction if your dog isn't microchipped.

Tenancy Conditions

New Forest District Council (NFDC) tenants are responsible for any animal living in or visiting their home.

Animals must be kept in a responsible manner and under control - they must not be allowed to cause annoyance, nuisance or disturbance.

When outside of the property, dogs must be accompanied by a responsible person and should be kept on a lead in residential areas.

You need to ensure your pet is kept in accordance with animal welfare legislation - if you are not a responsible pet owner, or if the animal is causing a nuisance permission to keep animals in a council property can be withdrawn.

Please be a responsible owner

All dog owners are expected to clear up after their dog, so make sure you always have poo bags handy. Use a public dog waste bin or public litter bin to dispose of your dog's waste or, if you take it home, please double-bag and put it in your black rubbish sack.

Dog fouling is an offence. The council can issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £50 to anyone who fails to clear up after their dog. The law states that being unaware a dog has fouled or not having a suitable bag is not a reasonable excuse.

For more advice about dog ownership refer to:

rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/dog

Dogtrust.org.uk

For advice on:

- Training
- Understanding your dog
- Life with your dog
- Health and wellbeing
- Getting a dog

NATURAL NEW FOREST

The New Forest is renowned for the ponies, donkeys and cattle that freely graze and help to keep the patchwork of different habitats intact. Deeper in the forest, wild deer meander beneath canopies of mighty oak and beech – natural scenes unchanged by the modern world.

In this edition of Hometalk, we focus on the Adder (*Vipera berus*)

The open heathland of the New Forest National Park is an ideal warm weather basking ground for adders and grass snakes, and the many pools dotted around make great conditions for frogs, toads, lizards, newts and other reptiles.

Shy but full of surprises, the adder is the UK's only venomous snake. It spends its days in woodland, soaking up the sun and swallowing its prey whole. While it's more common than you might think, a loss of suitable habitat is threatening this unique species.



What do adders look like?

Male adders usually have silvery-grey colouration, while females can be copper or brown. Both have a distinctive, black zig-zag pattern along their backs. Fully black adders can be seen in some areas too.

Once fully grown, adders usually measure between 60 and 80cm in length. Young are almost perfect replicas of adults and measure around 17cm in length at birth.

What do adders eat?

Adders feed primarily on small mammals, such as voles and mice, and lizards. They will also eat frogs, newts and small birds and their chicks. They are active during the day and use their venomous bite to subdue their prey.

How do adders breed?

Adders mate after emerging from hibernation in spring, when males engage in elaborate 'dances' as they fight each other for access to females.

Unlike some snakes, adders do not lay eggs and instead give birth to up to 20 live young in late summer. The species has been known to live for more than ten years, although it can sometimes fall victim to other predators, such as birds of prey, crows and even pheasants, especially when young.

Do adders hibernate?

Adders hibernate through the coldest part of the year. From around October to March they sleep in sheltered, dry spots such as old rodent burrows or within fallen trees.

Where do adders live?

Adders are found across Britain and they are associated with open habitats such as heathland, moorland and woodland edges.

The adder is the most northerly-occurring snake species in the world and has been recorded within the Arctic Circle.

Signs and spotting tips

Your best chance of seeing an adder is in spring, when they are emerging from hibernation and spend the early part of the day basking in sunlight. They are sensitive to vibration and quick to slip away when they feel footsteps approaching.

These snakes are shy creatures that will naturally retreat from humans. It is rare for adders to bite people, but this can happen if humans try to handle them or accidentally step on them. Adder bites are rarely fatal but can be very painful.

Threats and conservation

The UK's adder population is in decline. Habitat loss is thought to be the leading factor in this worrying trend, with intensive agriculture destroying suitable habitat and causing adder populations to become fragmented and isolated. The species is fully protected by law.

Find out more

woodlandtrust.org.uk

Elections in the New Forest

Your vote matters - don't lose it



**You can register to vote online at:
[gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)**

- The process takes less than five minutes.
- You will need your national insurance number.
- You only need to register once unless you move house or change your name.

Police and Crime Commissioner Election in May 2024

The next scheduled election in the New Forest will be to elect the new Police and Crime Commissioner and will take place on Thursday 2 May 2024.

There are 41 Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales, and they are elected to make sure local police forces meet the needs of the community. New Forest is part of the Hampshire Police Area.

The Police and Crime Commissioner holds their post for a term of four years.

Have your say in electing the person who will be responsible for:

- how your area is policed
- the police budget
- the amount of Council Tax charged for policing

- the information you get about what local police are doing
- the chief constable who is the most senior police officer for the area

You must be registered to vote in the Police and Crime Commissioner election. We will send you a poll card/letter shortly before polling day which will be in an envelope addressed to you. You do not need to bring your poll card/letter to the polling station to vote but it may speed up the process if you do.

Voter ID

Don't forget to vote at the polling station you will need to provide an accepted form of photographic ID. For more information and what to do if you don't have ID, please see our website at: [newforest.gov.uk/voterID](https://www.newforest.gov.uk/voterID)

Want to move home?

HomeSwapper is the quick and easy way to find the right home for you.



Visit our website and find a home to suit all your needs – with the UK's biggest and best home swap service.



www.homeswapper.co.uk

When the weather has turned and the temperature has dropped, why not have a go at our winter wordsearch competition. It will be a fun indoor activity for you to do during the chilly and cold days of winter.

Can you find the 16 words in the wordsearch puzzle below?

Words can go in any direction and can share letters as they cross over each other.

Send us your answers to be in with a chance of winning!

1st prize - £20 shopping voucher

2nd prize - £10 shopping voucher

Summer edition winners

1st prize: Ms C, Ringwood

2nd prize: Ms Z, Lymington



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

- | | |
|----------|------------|
| BLIZZARD | GLOVES |
| COLD | ICICLE |
| FROZEN | SNOWFLAKES |
| ICE | COAT |
| SNOW | FROSTY |
| WINTER | HAT |
| CHILLY | SCARF |
| FREEZING | SNOWMAN |

If you would like to enter the competition, mark around the words clearly with a black pen, complete the entry form and send it to:

Tenant Engagement Team
New Forest District Council
 Appletree Court, Beaulieu Road,
 Lyndhurst. Hampshire SO43 7PA

Entry form

Full name

Telephone

Address

Closing date for entries is Friday 26 April 2024. Terms and Conditions apply. This information will only be used by our Housing team for the purposes of the wordsearch competition prize draw, and will not be used for any other purpose or shared elsewhere. Further information about your information rights can be found at nfdc.gov.uk or by emailing our Data Protection Officer won data.protection@nfdc.gov.uk.

Gas safety checks

We have a legal requirement to inspect all gas appliances annually in council properties.

We require all tenants to allow our engineers access to their properties to make these checks. We can take court action against any tenants who refuse access for gas safety checks.

If tenants repeatedly miss appointments the property may be visited by a Gas Supervisor who will leave a notice on the front door notifying the tenant that they must contact the gas team and, if necessary, we will apply to the court for an injunction to enable us to gain access and, if appropriate, authorise us to use force. The council will seek the costs of having to make an injunction application from the tenant.

Please ensure you help the gas team to keep tenants safe and warm in their homes by allowing access to carry out safety checks!

If you think you can smell gas in your home or in the event of an emergency:

- Extinguish all naked flames and do not smoke.
- Do not operate electrical switches.
- Turn off the emergency gas control valve at the gas meter.
- Get into fresh air immediately, open all doors and windows to ventilate area.
- Do not turn on the gas supply until it has been checked by a gas safe registered engineer.
- If you are feeling unwell, visit your GP or hospital immediately and let them know you may have been exposed to carbon monoxide.
- Also report the gas leak to NFDC.

If you think you can smell gas in your home and you feel there is an Emergency Situation call The National Grid UK immediately on 0800 111 999 any time, day or night.



Save time, do it online

Why not use our online services to save yourself some time - visit newforest.gov.uk. Some of the things you can report include:

- Repairs needed
- Benefit fraud or change in circumstances
- Dog fouling
- Flytipping
- Graffiti
- Household rubbish and recycling enquiries
- Street cleaning issues
- Abandoned vehicles

You can also:

- Apply to the Housing Register

You can make online payments for:

- Rent
- Council tax
- Parking clocks
- Garden waste
- Parking fines



Making an appointment

Please make an appointment if you wish to see any of the following officers:

- Homelessness and housing advice
- Allocations
- Tenancy Management
- Housing income

For contact details, please see information on the back page.



Information directory

Home safety

Things I can do myself

- Smoke detectors - make sure batteries are working properly and test them regularly.
- Key safes and mobility aids can be purchased in high street stores.

If I need help or advice

Free home security visits from Blue Lamp Trust

0300 777 0157

bluelamptrust.org.uk

Household emergency

Things I can do myself

Water - find out where the mains supply / stopcock is. Switch off mains if necessary.

Gas - turn off gas at the meter, open doors and windows, don't use naked flames or electrical switches.

Electric -turn off mains power to the house.

Smell gas?

Call **0800 111 999** (National Grid) and let the Housing Support Hub know.

Consumer advice including benefits, housing, finances and legal concerns

Things I can do myself

Keep all relevant paperwork/bills etc. stored safely for reference. Don't ignore final bills or letters that concern you.

If I need help or advice

Housing Support Hub (see back page)

Citizens Advice Hampshire

citizensadvicecab.org.uk

New Forest Advice Line

0808 278 7860

Rogue traders, scams and doorstep crime

If I need help or advice

Report an issue to Hampshire Trading Standards

0808 223 1133 • tsadvice@hants.gov.uk
hants.gov.uk/business/tradingstandards

Preparing for winter

Things I can do myself

Consider lining curtains and draught proofing rooms. For some DIY tips on energy saving solutions please visit environmentcentre.com

If I need help or advice

Hampshire based advice line for practical and financial support Hitting the Cold Spots
0800 8048 601

Keeping healthy

Healthy eating

nhs.uk/change4life

Solent Mind

Advice and support for anyone with a mental health problem. Help if you feel low, worried or anxious and need to talk.

023 8202 7810

Weekdays: 9am-7pm, Weekends 10am-2pm

info@solentmind.org.uk

Inclusion

Specialist NHS Wellbeing and Change Services

Inclusion is a national organisation that works with individuals, families and communities who are affected by addiction, crime, mental health or need treatment for their sexual health. Whilst providing comprehensive and inclusive support and treatment we work with patients and our staff teams to achieve the best outcomes we can.

inclusionhants.org

Reducing social isolation

Things I can do myself

Do something new either for yourself or for others. Discover a new talent, go back to something you used to enjoy, connect with people. Get to know your neighbours and your local community.

If I need help or advice

Your local voluntary service will have details on all sorts of clubs and groups as well as transport solutions that can help.

To find details of your local voluntary service please visit hampshirecvcs.org.uk

The Silverline Helpline for older people

0800 470 8090

Bereavement

bereavementadvice.org

0800 634 9494 - Monday - Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm

Cruse bereavement care

cruse.org.uk

0808 808 1677

Supporting carers

Things I can do myself

Think Carers! If you are a carer yourself, you are entitled to a carer's assessment to help identify your support needs and offer advice.

If you know someone who is a carer, make time to see them and make sure that they are aware of support available to them.

If I need help or advice

Princess Royal Trust for Carers

carercentre.com • **01264 835246**

Carers Together

carerstogether.org.uk • **01642 488977**

Carers UK

carersuk.org

Safe and well

Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service carry out free home fire safety visits to support vulnerable members of the community to ensure they are protected from fire risks

hantsfire.gov.uk/safety/safe-and-well

Community safety team

023 8062 6751 (weekdays 9am – 5pm)

community.firesafety@hantsfire.gov.uk

Bus services in the New Forest

Blue Star bus services

bluestarbus.co.uk

01202 338421



Useful contacts and information

Housing Support Hub

- Web chat is quick and easy to use.
Go to newforest.gov.uk and click on the 'Live Chat' option at the bottom of the page.
- Email the support hub team to discuss or raise a variety of housing related queries
housing.supporthub@nfdc.gov.uk
- To report a repair you can use one of our online forms 24 hours a day at newforest.gov.uk/maintenance
- Call **023 8028 5222** - listen to the options for all housing related enquiries. Alternatively, you can call **023 8028 5000** - option 4 for Customer Services (all general, non-housing related enquiries).
- **Contacting us in an emergency**
If you need to report an emergency outside of our office hours, at weekends or on public holidays, call **023 8028 5250** or if the land line is unavailable, call our emergency mobile **07771 259098**

Housing options

1. Homesearch vacancies / Housing waiting list

For queries relating to Homesearch (the housing waiting list) contact housing.options@nfdc.gov.uk

If you need to speak with us about social housing, call **023 8028 5222** (option 3), Monday and Wednesday 2.00pm - 5.15pm, and Friday 2.00pm - 4.45pm.

2. Homeless and housing advice

For homeless / housing advice queries contact homeless@nfdc.gov.uk

If you are homeless or at risk of homelessness you can refer yourself to the Housing Options team <https://hpa2.org/refer/NEWF> or if you are homeless today call **023 8028 5222** (option 3) during these times:

Monday: 9.00am - 12.30pm and 1.30pm - 5.00pm

Tuesday: 1.00pm - 5.00pm

Wednesday: 9.00am - 12.30pm and 1.30pm - 5.00pm

Thursday: 9.00am - 12.30pm and 1.30pm - 5.00pm

Friday: 9.00am - 12.30pm and 1.30pm - 4.45pm

Or you can advise Streetlink of a rough sleeper via a 24 hour, seven days a week free phone line **0300 500 0914** or visit streetlink.org.uk

If you need emergency assistance outside of normal office hours, call **023 8028 5250**



3. Rent account advice

For enquiries about your rent payments or help with debt management contact rents@nfdc.gov.uk or call **023 8028 5222** (option 2)

4. Estate management

For enquiries about your tenancy or to report tenancy related issues and anti-social behaviour contact estatemangement@nfdc.gov.uk or call **023 8028 5222** (option 5)

Council Customer Services - For non-housing queries

- Web chat is quick and easy to use.
Go to newforest.gov.uk and click on the 'Live Chat' option at the bottom of the page.
- Email customer.services@nfdc.gov.uk
- Use one of our online forms at newforest.gov.uk
- Use our In Touch app if you're out and about and spot something that needs reporting. Visit mycouncilservices.com for more information and to download.
- Get in touch on X or Facebook where you can post or message us with your enquiry
 (formerly known as Twitter) [@nfdc_updates](https://twitter.com/nfdc_updates)
 [@newforestgov](https://facebook.com/newforestgov)
- Call **023 8028 5000** - option 4 for Customer Services (all general, non-housing related enquiries). If you are not sure who you want to speak to, just hold and you will be connected to the Customer Service team who will assist you.

Appletree Careline

Our lifeline pendant service uses a two-way speech system linked to our team in the emergency control room, where trained operators will answer your call quickly, professionally and efficiently, to ensure that any help you need is arranged.

appletree.careline@nfdc.gov.uk

or call **023 8028 5523** 24 hours a day

Other useful numbers

Street lights at Hampshire County Council

Report road problems, including potholes, pavements, roadside plants, drainage problems etc. You can log a report direct to Hampshire County Council's website hants.gov.uk/roadproblems or call **0300 555 1375**

Alternative formats

If you would like this information on audio CD, audio tape, braille, large print, any other format or interpreted into a language other than English, please contact the Tenant Engagement Team on **023 8028 5119** or email RI@nfdc.gov.uk.