

# CBHnews

WINTER 2022/23



Join us in celebrating  
Sue's success

Keep talking to us

Our newest recruits

**FREEPHONE** 0800 408 0000  
**VISIT** [cbh.org](https://www.cbh.org)







# BUILDING OUR REPAIRS TEAM

**You told us you want repairs done as quickly as possible. We listened and, as a result, we're busy building our repairs team so we can get more fixes done quickly.**

We've welcomed several new faces to the team. They're settling in well but please bear with us as it is a busy time of the year and they are still learning.

## Who's Who?

In the last issue of CBHnews we welcomed two new electrical apprentices - Wilson and Jack. They're now four months into their training and loving life at CBH.

We've since been joined by two experienced electricians (Zuzana and Daniel), as well as a trainee, Lewis, and new labourer, Matthew.

Matthew says he's enjoying the range of work and the team spirit. "It's great to be part of a big team, all doing different things - it's not something you usually experience as a labourer. I'm really enjoying getting out and helping people and seeing how small fixes can make a big difference. You see more of the whole picture in this role, not just the bit of the job you're working on."



**COVER PHOTO:** Read about Sue and her time with our Hesters Way Work Club (see page 4).



# HOW YOUR COMPLAINTS SHAPE THE WAY WE DO THINGS

We are always looking for ways we can improve and your feedback is an important part of that. Your complaints, comments and compliments help us understand what's working and what's not.



There are several ways you can contact us with your complaint, comment or compliment:

- Through our website at **cbh.org**
- Via your MyCBH account at **portal.cbh.org**
- Email us at **housing.cbh.org**
- Call us on **0800 408 0000**

If you feel you need to make a complaint we will write to you within three working days so you know we've received it. All complaints are investigated thoroughly. We aim to resolve them within ten working days and will send you a letter to update you. Find out more at **www.cbh.org/contact-us/making-a-complaint/**

## HAVE YOU SIGNED UP TO YOUR 'MYCBH' YET?

This is an easy way to check your rent statement, make a payment, tell us how we're doing and much, much more.

If you haven't signed up yet, it doesn't take long. All you need is your tenancy number (this can be found on your rent statement), your email address and date of birth.

For more information go to **cbh.org** or contact us at **housing@cbh.org** or call **0800 408 0000**.





# JOIN US IN CELEBRATING SUE'S SUCCESS

**Sue has been attending the Work Club at Hesters Way. Here she's been growing her confidence and getting support to help get back into paid work.**



With the skills and knowledge gained from taking part in Employability Skills Development training, which includes sessions on application forms and interviews, she's nailed it.

CBH colleagues in Training and Employment Support (TES) were so proud when Sue told us she has been successful in securing temporary, part time employment with a local retailer. Even though she's back in work, she still makes time to come to Work Club and we are working together to find her permanent work in 2023.

Sue adds: "I am very grateful for the support I get from CBH's employment team. I am really enjoying working. I have started applying for permanent jobs and been invited to interview, fingers crossed..."

To find out more about our work clubs, email [tes@cbh.org](mailto:tes@cbh.org), call 0800 408 0000 or go to [www.cbh.org/services/help-support/employment-support-and-advice/](http://www.cbh.org/services/help-support/employment-support-and-advice/)

# DEALING WITH DAMP AND MOULD

## A message from Steve Slater, CBH chief executive

"We were all shocked and saddened by the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, and this has rightly set in motion a series of important events and reviews which we fully support. Social housing providers are being challenged by the Regulator of Social Housing and others about the condition of their properties, their reporting and complaints procedures, and their ability to respond in an appropriate and timely manner and we are responding to this as quickly as we can.

"Damp and mould is a top priority for us. We have several channels for customers to report issues, we have skilled colleagues acting as our eyes and ears throughout the homes we manage, and we have strong processes in place to deal with cases as they arise. The current situation is a stark reminder of why it's so important for all landlords to listen to tenants, act on their feedback, and manage properties well.

"We are taking absolutely nothing for granted and are now taking the time to review our processes and priorities against the findings



from the inquest, so that we can identify any areas where improvements can be made."

Please tell us as soon as you spot damp or mould so we can take steps to sort it out for you.

If you are concerned about damp and mould in your home, please:

- Contact us through your **MyCBH** account
- Call **0800 408 0000**
- See our website for more information: [www.cbh.org/help-with-damp-and-mould/](http://www.cbh.org/help-with-damp-and-mould/)

# WE WELCOME ARTHUR TO THE CBH FAMILY

**It's been an exciting time as we welcome Athur Dzido, our new executive director of finance and resources to the CBH family.**

He brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience and has also worked in housing before. Here's what he had to say about joining us:

"I'm passionate about helping CBH to deliver on its promises so we can provide the excellent services you and your family need. That means working hard to have a positive impact for you and your local area, and helping to make Cheltenham an even better place to live.

"I'll be out and about, looking at homes and speaking to you to find out about your experiences and challenges, so I hope we'll meet soon."

We fired some quick questions at Arthur in a quest to find out a bit more about the face behind the finances. Here's what he said:

## **What do you do in your spare time?**

I like to be outside doing things. So ideally, I'll be exploring the countryside on my motorcycle at the weekend. I love to cook as well.

## **Who do you cook for?**

I'm married and I have a seven year old, so they are the guinea pigs that sample my dishes!



## **How did you feel on your first few days at CBH?**

I was both nervous and excited. But the nerves quickly went because everyone has made me feel so welcome.

## **What have you most enjoyed?**

Chatting to everyone and finding out more. I've been listening to colleagues and customers to help me understand what everyone needs.



# STAY SAFE WHILE YOU KEEP WARM

With the colder months here, many of us will be switching on electric devices to help us keep warm.

Here are some handy tips to keep you and your family safe this winter.



Check electric blankets, portable electric heaters and other devices regularly between uses. If they have hot spots or only work some of the time, they could be a fire risk and need replacing.



Look for a safety mark. Electrical devices should have a BSI Kite or CE mark on them which shows they meet high safety standards.



Read the instructions and only use electrical devices as they are meant to be used. Some appliances overheat if they're left on longer than intended and become a fire risk.



Remember to switch electrical devices off if you're going to be out of the room for any longer than a few moments (especially things like heaters). It's a waste of money to leave them running but it could also be dangerous, especially if you have young children.



Try not to use things like tumble dryers at night when you're not around to keep an eye on them. It can be more economical to put them on in the evening when electricity is cheaper (depending on your tariff). If that's the case for you, then be extra cautious and remember to check and clean the lint filter regularly.



Charge battery-powered devices during the day. They can cause fires and so it's always safer to be around while they are charging, just to be on the safe side.



Check your smoke detectors weekly and close all the doors before you go to bed.



If you are struggling to afford your rent or manage your bills, we can help. Message us at [bma@cbh.org](mailto:bma@cbh.org) or call **0800 408 0000**.

If you have any concerns about fire detectors (or any other fire safety equipment) in your home - including fire doors - please contact us as soon as possible so that we can come and fix them.

Let us know if you would like more information about ways you, your family, friends, neighbours and pets can stay safe from fire. We can arrange for Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service to visit and carry out a Safe and Well Check (free of charge).

# YOU SAID, WE DID

**You may have been called by a company called Acuity Research asking for your views about our homes, communities, colleagues and services. We employ them to do this for us several times each year. Your responses help us change the way we do things.**

The next issue of CBHnews will include a review of what you told us in 2022 and what we're doing differently as a result.

**Repairs:** you told us you want our repairs service to be faster and for us to be clearer about when things will be done. So, we're recruiting more people to our repairs team. You can read more on page 2.

**ASB:** you told us about an issue at Hanna Court, so we consulted residents about how we could help. As a result, we carried out work to improve security (like gated access) and we're improving the outdoor communal space.

You can read about this and other projects like it on page 13.

**Building works:** you told us building work at one of our sheltered schemes had negatively impacted you. One of our housing support officers held a meeting for residents to share their views and help us understand how we could have managed the situation better so future work has less impact on you.

There are lots of other ways you can share your views with us. See page 3 to find out more.

## MULTIPLY YOUR MATHS SKILLS



Many of us find maths scary. Some people are put off at school, others think their brains just don't work that way. But good numeracy skills can lead to a new job or higher wages. They also mean you can help children with homework or plan your spending more effectively.

**We're offering free informal and relaxed sessions for anyone wanting to improve their maths, this includes:**

- improving skills and confidence with numbers
- planning weekly household costs and bills
- understanding Universal Credit and what it means for you
- working out 'better off in work' calculations (so you can figure out the impact of different jobs and wages)

It's all part of a new government-funded programme called Multiply, which aims to help adults improve their numeracy skills. This funding will help us run numeracy courses for around two years. So please get in touch with Gayna or Janine if you're interested in finding out more or want to know when and where you can join.



tes@cbh.org



0800 408 0000



<https://skillsforlife.campaign.gov.uk/courses/multiply/>







# HOMES OF THE FUTURE

**We're always on the lookout for opportunities to build new houses so we can offer more affordable homes to more people in Cheltenham. Thanks to our partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council, there is an investment of £180m to bring new affordable homes to the town.**

Last year we were granted planning permission to build 24 affordable homes on a site at 320 Swindon Road. You may have seen the site if it's on your regular route to work or on your school run. We're in the process of appointing a contractor to build the houses for us and we hope work will start on site in the spring. We think it will take about a year before the new homes are ready.

These homes are exciting for us as they will be packed with environmental features making them more efficient and cheaper to run for their new tenants. They'll have excellent

insulation, so they retain as much heat as possible, and they'll also have solar panels and heat pumps (which generate power) to help bring the cost of energy bills right down.

We are also working to deliver homes on two other sites in 2023: Shurdington Road (where we're working with Kendrick Homes) and Kidnappers Lane (where we're working with Newland Homes).

Watch this space for more news or keep an eye on the CBH website for updates here:  
[www.cbh.org/about-us/our-projects/](http://www.cbh.org/about-us/our-projects/)

# MEET NAZIR, CBH HOUSING SUPPORT OFFICER

## What's in a day's work?

"I work with customers who live in our sheltered accommodation. I like nothing better than getting out, visiting people and talking face to face. My day always begins with phone calls, checking on customers. But once that's done, I might pop to see some of the people I've spoken to and help them fix a problem with their TV or phone, or maybe help them read and respond to letters."

"We want customers to feel safe and relaxed in their homes and we work with our older customers so they can live independently for as long as possible."

Nazir joined us in 2019. He'd previously worked for another local housing provider, arranging accommodation for young people with high support needs, and as a support worker, helping people with autism.

## What do you enjoy about your job?

"I love that it's about creating relationships and helping people. And I love the fact that I am always meeting customers and never quite know what the day will bring! Some of my customers really look forward to their daily phone call or weekly visits, and they love to chat. But so do I, so that's all good."

## What gets you out of bed in the morning?

"Knowing that I'm supporting my customers keeps me coming back for more. There are some things about my job that I've found harder than I expected but I've learnt with help from colleagues."



**"We want customers to feel safe and relaxed in their homes and we work with our older customers so they can live independently for as long as possible."**

## Any standout moments?

"Stand out things are the people I work with - customers and colleagues. I'm friendly, chatty and patient in my personal life, and they're skills I use every day. Offering the best possible customer service is what we're aiming for all the time, so the way that I am helps me."

## What will we find you doing at the end of the working day?

"Away from work, you'll find me walking, swimming and then enjoying some tasty home cooked food and a good movie."

# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING: COMMUNITY UPDATE



Our colleagues and customers have come together once again to support their communities, care for one another, work and relax together, and celebrate.

Ellen Pollicott, community investment manager says: "It's always great to see people supporting one another and benefitting from each other's company. Social time is important for our wellbeing - we all need to be able to offload our worries, have a good old chat and occasionally let our hair down. It's lovely to see customers of all ages - young and old alike - enjoying activities together."

## CHRISTMAS PARTIES

Our Christmas parties kicked off the festive season in fine form. We hosted nine parties across our sheltered home schemes, expertly organised by our team member Louisa and her wonderful colleagues. Thanks to everyone who came along - it wouldn't be the same without you!



## MORE FESTIVE FUN

We lined up some festive fun for children aged 5-17, thanks to funding from the government's holiday activities and food programme.

We worked with partners across Cheltenham to bring crafting, street dance, hot drinks and hot food to children in Oakley, St Paul's and The Moors.

You can find out more about the scheme: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme)

But keep your eyes peeled for more information on our social channels. We run free activity sessions across Cheltenham over the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays every year.





# YOUNG ARTISTS



It seems a long time ago now... but in October half term over 60 children, their families and other CBH customers spent time with artists from The Wilson (an art gallery and museum in Clarence Street). They worked together with the gallery's creative team to make beautiful paper and willow lanterns.

Ellen Pollicott, community manager, says: "We all had such a great time, chatting and laughing together while we made our lanterns. Thanks so much to the Cheltenham Trust team: who organised this exciting activity. A good time was had by all."

The Wilson is open on Tuesday-Saturday (10am to 6pm) and on Sunday (10am-4pm). Admission is free.

**You can find out more about the Lifelines Exhibition here: [www.cheltenhammuseum.org.uk/event/lifelines-exhibition/](http://www.cheltenhammuseum.org.uk/event/lifelines-exhibition/)**

# PARK RUN: FREE, FRIENDLY AND FUN



**If one of your ambitions for 2023 is to exercise more, have you thought about taking part in parkrun? It's free, fun and friendly... and you don't even have to run! You can walk, jog or sprint - the choice is yours.**

Why not pop along and cheer from the side-lines, grab a tea or coffee after (from the Leisure Centre café at Pittville or in the Saracens clubhouse at King George V Playing Fields) and chat to parkrunners, or volunteer to help and get a taste of what it's all about.

It's a sociable and relaxed community get-together, suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels, and it's completely free. All you need to do is register.

**Join us:** Saturdays, 9am at King George V Playing Field, (Behind Edinburgh Place) or Pittville Park (Opposite the Prince of Wales Stadium)

**Find out more:** [www.parkrun.org.uk/kinggeorgevplayingfield/](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/kinggeorgevplayingfield/)

Or [www.parkrun.org.uk/cheltenham/](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/cheltenham/)

**Email:** [kinggeorgevplayingfield@parkrun.com](mailto:kinggeorgevplayingfield@parkrun.com) or [cheltenham@parkrun.com](mailto:cheltenham@parkrun.com) if you'd like to help.

# CARING FOR YOUR HOME

**Vicky Day is in charge of maintaining CBH homes. Here she explains a little of what she and her team have been busy doing in the last few months.**

Depending on where you live, you may have spotted work taking place in and around your community. Here at CBH we are always doing maintenance work to help keep homes and their communal areas up to scratch.

We call it a 'rolling programme' because work is always going on somewhere in our communities. There's always painting, roofing and other work (like upgrading kitchens) taking place. If we need to come to your home to make improvements, we'll be in touch in advance so that we can schedule the work at a suitable time.

**Here are a just a few of the things we've been working on in the last few months:**



**Hanna Court:** as part of our neighbourhood improvement scheme we've been improving security measures and upgrading car parking areas.

**Monkscroft:** this is our next scheme for improvement and we're currently talking to customers about what they'd like us to do to make the area around their homes a better place to be.

**Sheltered schemes:** we're replacing all the warden call systems to keep customers safe in their homes with easy access to help should they need it. This work will be completed across all our sheltered schemes by the end of 2023.

**Pope's Close and Cooper's Court:** we've redecorated the communal areas, including new paint work, flooring, furniture and decorations to make them more comfortable and homely for our customers. We've also installed wifi in communal lounges and supplied a terminal for people that don't have access to a device. We've improved garden areas too, installing raised beds and more, so residents can enjoy doing some gardening. We have similar work planned for Cumming Court and Goldfoot House in 2023.

We try and prioritise according to need but if there's something you think is important for your community, please let us know. We're working to make your home and your community the best they can be.

**For more information contact**  
**housing@cbh.org or call 0800 408 0000**

# WOULD YOU RECOGNISE DOMESTIC ABUSE?

**It can happen to anyone and it's not always easy to spot in your own relationship, let alone other people's.**

Domestic abuse is not just violent behaviour. It can be psychological, economic, emotional, sexual or coercive. It might be name-calling, stopping you from seeing friends or family, or making you feel guilty, worthless or scared.

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing domestic abuse, it's important to tell someone.



## DID YOU KNOW...

There are lots of charities offering help and support. Here are just a few:

**Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS)**, 01452 726570  
or [support@GDASS.org.uk](mailto:support@GDASS.org.uk)  
[www.gdass.org.uk/](http://www.gdass.org.uk/)

**National Domestic Abuse Helpline**,  
0808 200 0247  
[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/)

**Mankind Initiative (for Male Victims of Domestic Abuse)**, 01823 334244  
[www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims/](http://www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims/)

# YOU'RE NOT ALONE

**Amanda our safeguarding colleague can help. The support we offer includes:**



chatting in a safe and secure place to find out how we can look after you and your family



dealing with your situation sensitively, confidentially and without judgement



making sure you and your family are safe in your home



working closely with local partners to help you access help



providing one point of contact so you don't have to share your experience more than once



offering advice on benefits and money management to help you live independently

To get in touch with Amanda email [safeguarding@cbh.org](mailto:safeguarding@cbh.org), call **0800 408 0000** Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) or use your MyCBH account at [portal.cbh.org](http://portal.cbh.org) (it's an easy way to get in touch if English isn't your first language).

For more information visit [cbh.org/domestic-abuse-support/](http://cbh.org/domestic-abuse-support/) (the page has a safety exit button so you can leave the site quickly and it won't show in your search history).

You can also speak to someone outside of office hours through Victim Support's 24 hour helpline (**0808 1689 111**).



# NEED TO REPORT A REPAIR?



## You can report a repair by:

- **Calling 0800 408 0000**  
(including for out of hours repairs)
- **Contacting us through the MyCBH portal**  
(if you're not yet registered or are unable to access MyCBH, visit <https://portal.cbh.org/>)
- **Talking to your Housing Support Officer**  
(if you live in a sheltered scheme)

## What will we need from you?

When you report a repair, please:

- Tell as much as you can about the repair
- Explain what has happened as a result of the problem
- Let us know when we are able to visit your home
- Give us your daytime phone number

**We will prioritise your repair according to its urgency and you will be offered an appointment to suit you (either a morning or afternoon slot).**



**LOVE YOUR APPLIANCE?  
MAKE IT OFFICIAL!**

**REGISTER YOUR  
APPLIANCE FOR A  
SAFER HOME!**

**REGISTER  
MACHINES  
BOUGHT IN  
THE LAST 12  
YEARS**

**ENSURE  
MANUFACTURERS  
CAN CONTACT  
YOU FOR SAFETY  
REPAIRS**

**UPDATE  
YOUR DETAILS  
IF YOU OR YOUR  
APPLIANCE  
MOVE**



**GO TO REGISTERMYAPPLIANCE.ORG.UK**



**Register** ✓  
**my appliance**

**AMDEA**

The Association of Manufacturers  
of Domestic Appliances

The Register my appliance website is provided by The Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliance (AMDEA) and is backed by the Home Office and NFCC national fire safety campaign.