



Voices

Issue 6
Winter 2018

listen • talk • share



Also in this Edition...

**Supporting
the Armed
Forces**

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**Tricia meets
the PM**

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**New builds
under way**

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Welcome to the winter edition of **Voices**

Another busy few months have passed, and although it still feels like we should be enjoying summer, Christmas is approaching fast. Time really does fly when you're having fun!

We've been inundated with stories across all regions and we have a jam-packed issue of business news to share as well. Thank you for sending through your stories. If you have anything you would like to be covered in future issues please email JJHTVoices@jjhousing.co.uk.

We want you to get involved and let us know what information matters to you the most. That way we can provide you with a publication that you value. 2019 marks our 50th anniversary year, we've some exciting plans in development and look forward to sharing these ideas with you, and also hearing some of yours in the New Year.

So for now, sit back, relax, and enjoy reading the wonderful news from yourselves and the business.

Tell us what sort of news you're most interested in. That way we can provide you with a magazine that you value.

Merry Christmas to you all!

From your Marketing and Communications Team



Christmas opening hours

Our Customer Service Hub will close at 5.30pm on Monday 24 December and reopen at 8.30am on Wednesday 2 January.

Any emergency repairs will still be covered by our Out of Hours service on 0345 305 5335. We aim to carry out emergency repairs* within 24 hours. Should any follow-up be required, or for all other repairs, we will arrange a mutually convenient appointment to complete the work.

*Examples are: fire, flood and serious electrical/gas failure, blocked toilets where premises contain one toilet only and a loss of heating at properties where an elderly person lives alone or families live with a child younger than 12 months.

Christmas gifts

We understand that many of you have wonderful relationships with our Independent Living Coordinators, Officers and Neighbourhood Housing Teams and that you are very appreciative when our staff have helped you or have gone the extra mile for you.

However we would like to kindly remind residents that JJH does not allow any staff members to receive gifts of appreciation at any time and in particular over the Christmas period. This is to ensure that our conduct, at all times, avoids any suggestion of influence by improper motives.



Welcome

Message from Chair of the Board, **Frances Street**

As a Board we are constantly checking that we are heading in the right direction to deliver our vision of 'Living Longer, Living Better'.



Our Astraline telecare services form an integral part of that vision and we are committed to continually improving them. That's why I am delighted to confirm that Astraline is expanding and as of the end of

October has taken on Peaks & Plains Housing Trust's private telecare customers. As a Macclesfield-based housing provider, Peaks & Plains has supported people across Cheshire East to live independently at home for 30 years. This has included a 24/7 emergency response, falls lifting service and falls prevention advice. As a result of this acquisition Astraline will now expand its services, meaning that we will be able to support even more people to live independently for longer.

I am also pleased to welcome two new members of the Board. Richard Shenton, Head of Customer Experience at Virgin Media Business, and non-executive committee member Naseer Patel, who is Finance Director of the Gunnercooke Group. I thank them both for their commitment to ensuring our continued success and contribution to our journey to Outstanding, both for their commitment to



Richard Shenton
Head of Customer Experience at Virgin Media Business



Naseer Patel
Non-Executive Committee Member

ensuring our continued success and contribution to our journey to Outstanding.

As always I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to those that get involved with us. We welcome more residents getting involved, we value your feedback, particularly the way it can help us shape our services both now and in the future. As we move into our 50th anniversary year it's more important than ever to continue to propel our vision and ensure we are achieving our ambition for all of our residents to view us as an outstanding housing provider.

Have a lovely Christmas and all the best for the New Year!

Frances Street
Chair of Johnnie Johnson Housing

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JJH helps Greater Manchester Housing Providers plan how to better support the military community

Along with other Greater Manchester Housing Providers, we have made a commitment to offer more support to former members of the armed forces and their families. By signing the Armed Forces Covenant in May 2018, we committed to setting a new standard for the support that is offered to members of the armed forces family.

This is not about advantaging those who have served, but it is ensuring that they:

- **are treated fairly**
- **should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of services**
- **are recognised for their military service and the sacrifice inherent in it.**

That's why our CEO, Yvonne Castle hosted the inaugural armed forces event to bring Greater Manchester Housing Providers together, alongside suppliers and support providers who typically work with the military community, to start the ball rolling on exactly how we can offer this support.

The event took place at the Imperial War Museum North and was attended by representatives of the 27 Greater Manchester Housing Providers and local authority armed forces champions. Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham gave the keynote speech, speaking passionately about his mission to

end rough sleeping in Manchester. After speaking personally to people on the street he says that too many are veterans. He believes that as a society we are failing them, which is shameful.

An important part of the event was about connecting housing providers with support workers – with the intention of building working relationships for the future. An exhibition that included stands by Help for Heroes and Walking with the Wounded started this journey.

At JJH we have asked two members of staff – Andrew Stevenson and Diane Slavinski – to act as our armed forces champions, and have empowered them to develop a robust strategy for what all of this means in practice.

We look forward to updating you further on this important initiative in future editions of Voices. In the meantime, we are also keen to find out which of our residents have connections to the armed forces. Please email JJHTVoices@jjhousing.co.uk



Our friends at the Imperial War Museum North are looking for volunteers. If you could spare some time to support them and at the same time meet new friends please email volunteer.north@iwm.org.uk or call **0161 836 4081**

Newsroom

Head of Independent Living Tricia Grierson was part of a team invited to present their idea to Prime Minister Theresa May

Tricia is currently seconded to the Adapting with Age project. This pioneering initiative is looking at how we can support people who – even though they may be growing older – don't want to be made to feel elderly by their surroundings.

What this means in a practical sense is that they are finding discreet and dignified ways to make minor adaptations to help people remain living independently at home.

So the 'invisible innovations' project will offer attractive home adaptations such as grab rails disguised as modern plant holders or house

numbers and toilet roll holders that are strong enough to help someone lean on as they stand up.

The team's presentation was warmly received by the PM as well as other housing organisations. And when they followed it up with a 'Dragon's Den' style pitch to housing specialists they once again received really positive feedback. One visitor to the summit summed the project up by tweeting: "they are products that have hidden accessible superpowers."

The team plans to refine and improve the range of prototypes and work with asset managers to understand how we can get them into the market.



Business News

allpay is live

A new, easier, more efficient way to make payments

We are currently in the process of introducing allpay as our secure internet payment provider.

It will give you more choice over how you make payments:

- ➔ **It's easy to arrange an any day direct debit** – a hassle-free solution to make sure bills are always paid on time, or set up a recurring debit card payment
- ➔ **Download the free allpay mobile app** – to make debit or credit card payments at your convenience, or use it to find a PayPoint
- ➔ **Use your payment card to pay at any PayPoint or Post Office** (with more than 1,400 PayPoints locations)



Contact our Customer Services Hub on **0345 305 5335** for more information.

Development update

Layden Drive has launched!

Eight new bungalow builds are well under way

We held a launch event last month where we showcased our building designs and plans for this exciting new development. We were joined by members of Doncaster Council along with members of the JJH development team.

JJH has worked closely with Doncaster Council and the project team to create a scheme that is sensitive to the existing street, ensuring the design echoes the style and appearance of similar bungalows in the area.



Pictured are Housing Programme Manager Ruth Winter, Cllr Pat Haith, Cabinet Member for Housing & Equalities Glyn Jones, JJH Board Member Steve Secker and JJH Assistant Director Development & Growth Lisa Johnson

In keeping with the JJH ethos of 'Living Longer, Living Better' the bungalows will support independent living. The properties will be available for over 55s and will provide new affordable homes for shared ownership. There will also be a bespoke bungalow for rent which has been designed to meet the needs of a household with family members suffering from an acute disability.

The scheme has been funded in partnership with Doncaster Council, Homes England and JJH Developments.

Work on site is already underway with our partner contractor Torpoint, with an expected completion date in spring 2019.

Spey House

Our remodelling works at Spey House in Reddish, Stockport, continue. Part of the lounge has now been reopened and the new communal kitchen has been plastered and new units have arrived on site.

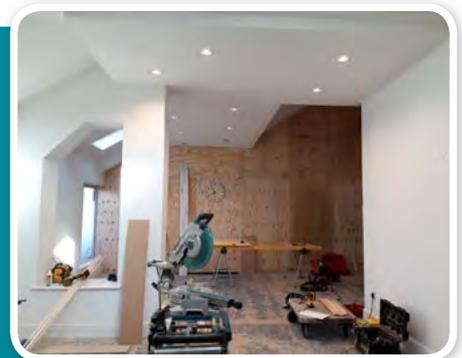
Work on a temporary walkway has been finished with the addition of heating and the fire doors have been fitted. We've had to give a temporary home to the laundry room and would like to take this opportunity to thank all the residents of Spey

House for their cooperation and understanding as these works have been taking place.

It's really exciting to watch the programme of works come together and we

can't wait to share the finished project with you all. Next jobs on the list include giving residents their new front doors and the commencement of the demolition of the main entrance.

Watch this space!



Welcome back to our **Leonard Street residents**

JJH purchased Leonard Street in Huddersfield when it was built in 1993. The scheme, however, has been leased to Sadeh Lok for the last 25 years. Positioned in a quiet cul-de-sac, the scheme consists of 21 properties including six 1 bedroom flats, eight 2 bedroom houses and seven disability-adapted bungalows.

Our team in the Yorkshire & Derbyshire region is delighted to have taken back the management of the properties at the beginning of October and we

would like to warmly welcome the residents of Leonard Street back to JJH.

Leanne Ray and Gail Bouskill held a meet and greet at the scheme on 27 October. The residents are pleased to report that they are happy to have an Independent Living Officer that they can directly contact when needed and they really appreciate the service they have received so far.



Independent Living Officer, Leanne Ray (centered) meeting with two residents

Lease extensions

If you are a Leaseholder or Shared Owner with JJH, this means that you effectively lease the property from us for a specified number of years. You own the right to occupy the property for this period of time but do not own the building itself. Each year your original lease term decreases.

Certain legislation allows you the statutory right to extend your lease by a further 90 years in addition to the existing time left on your current lease.

Generally:

- Properties with shorter leases are less valuable than ones with long leases (particularly true if leases are less than 80 years)
- It can be more difficult to arrange a mortgage for properties with shorter leases
- Properties with shorter leases can be more difficult to sell
- Extending the lease becomes more expensive year on year

By extending your lease it will protect your investment and make it easier to sell or remortgage.

As long as you have owned your property for two years or more you will qualify to extend your lease through what is known as a Statutory Lease Extension, and protect the value of your property. However, if you have not yet owned your property for two years, you may still be able to apply for a Voluntary Lease Extension, at the discretion of JJH.

We suggest you consider checking the remaining length of your lease, and if you are planning on selling or remortgaging the property, acting now could help you to protect your investment and keep lease extension costs to a minimum.

Some of our Leasehold schemes automatically grant a new lease therefore you may not be affected by this.

If you would like to discuss this with us, please contact our Customer Services Hub and ask to speak to your Leasehold Officer.

Accountability and service improvements

Earlier this year we were awarded the Association of Retirement Housing Managers (ARHM) Code of Practice.

ARHM is the only body that jointly represents both the private sector and registered social landlords, which is why they are now widely consulted on various matters by both the Government and other professional bodies.

Their mission is to continually raise the standards within the sector by promoting best practice and ethics amongst those managing retirement housing. They represent 55 member organisations who manage over 100,000 retirement properties in the UK.

We are pleased to be working in partnership with ARHM to further enhance the services we provide to Leaseholders.

Leaseholder Invoicing Reissue

What is it?

Service charges are made up of a number of different items which may include scheme staffing costs, communal heating and lighting, emergency alarm monitoring service, communal gardening, repairs, annual service contracts etc.

Leasehold accounts sent to residents in February/ March contain details of estimated costs as when we are preparing the accounts we don't have all the information on costs that will be incurred to the end of the financial year in March.

Example

A contractor carried out a repair in February but we didn't receive their invoice until the following month. Therefore when preparing the service charge we estimate what the contractor is likely to charge so we can estimate the service charge that needs to be paid from 1 April.

What happens next?

At the end of the financial year Leasehold Officers and Finance work together to collate information on the actual costs that were incurred. We may find that we have either over- or under-estimated, and a revised invoice is needed.

JJH has listened to your feedback, sought legal advice, and considered best practice from ARHM and other registered providers about how and when to issue revised invoices. Having taken these factors into account a decision has been made to re-invoice all leaseholders in September in future.



If you would like to ask any further questions please contact our Customer Services Team on **0345 305 5335**

One *Team*

JJH staff *lead the way!*

Leaders from across the business recently met at the Avro Heritage Museum in Woodford, Cheshire for a workshop which forms part of our JJH Leadership Development programme.

The programme started in September and will continue throughout 2019, providing our leaders with a tailored package of learning solutions to ensure they're equipped to lead the organisation and support colleagues to achieve our goal of being an Outstanding provider.

The event was held at the Avro Heritage museum near Head Office in Poynton. Not only is holding the meeting there supporting a great local business, but also keeps us rooted to our heritage with the

Airforce theme. Each colleague on the programme had the experience of sitting in the cockpit of a Vulcan plane and some even flew on a flight simulator programme. Jo Harrison, Finance Manager said on the day "it was a privilege to experience a connection to our heritage whilst also developing new skills".



Investors in People

Investors in People (IiP) defines the standard for leading, supporting, and managing people at work and we are proud to have been accredited by IiP with silver status since 2015.

This year we were pleased to retain our silver status and have been working on a robust action plan for the future. Our Joint Engagement Team (JET) has been asked to hold the Executive and Leadership Teams accountable in delivering our IiP responsibilities.

Annual Report – Our journey to **Outstanding**

Bringing homes and services together

This year we have brought homes and services together. Delivering value across these key departments is a vital driver in increasing customer satisfaction. We are placing an emphasis on the big areas that we know are important to you such as repairs, grounds maintenance and getting it right first time.

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce our new Asset Management Team. Some of these members of staff have been with the business for some time, others are newcomers to JJH.

The Asset Management Team care for things of value to our organisation. This includes physical assets (including buildings) as well as other financial assets and most importantly, our customers. The team work together developing, operating, maintaining, upgrading, and making cost-effective decisions, always with the objective of providing the best possible service.

Meet the New Assets Team



Assets Team L-R. Paul, Will, Lynn, Gareth, Sue, Farooq, Andrew

Paul Ryles - Asset Manager, my role is to look at the data for our future plans for our homes. From the data our investment programmes are delivered. This means our homes are looked after and are safe and secure for our residents to enjoy.

Will Velicka - Hi, I am the Data and Intelligence Officer, I collate all asset based information, perform data cleansing and provide analysis in the form of reports. I seek to find ways of using my analysis to support business improvement projects.

Lynn Smith - Hello, I am managing the Gardening Contract and the Cleaning contracts, I want to make sure that our customers are getting the best value for their money and ensuring our schemes and estates look tip top!



Gareth Basterfield - Compliance Manager, my role is to make sure that all our Health and Safety policies and procedures are best practice, I will be working closely with our resident scrutiny panel early next year on implementing their recommendations on the Scrutiny Review of Fire Safety.

Sue Newton - Hi, I am the Compliance Officer, what does that mean for customers? I look after all things Health and Safety in the schemes making sure you feel safe and secure, you may well see me out and about be sure to say Hello!

Farooq Rashid - Hi, I am the Contracts Officer for mechanical and electrical maintenance services. I also look after lighting, lifts and gas servicing throughout our homes. I really like making sure our residents are kept safe and our homes are maintained.

Andrew Houghton - Investment Programme Manager, my role is to manage and deliver planned maintenance programmes, for example kitchens and bathrooms. Making sure quality and value for money is achieved and that our residents are satisfied with the major improvements.

Nicola Pearson - Hi, I will be the new Repairs Manager, starting with JJH early December. My role is to manage our repairs contractors, ensuring JJH delivers an outstanding day to day repairs service.

You may get a chance to meet some of the new team soon, as they will be visiting some of our properties to assess any maintenance requirements. This will take place between December and March. If we are planning a visit to you, we'll be in touch to make arrangements.

Your view on 'Outstanding'

The feedback you give us will help us to review the service we offer and ensure we are providing you with an 'Outstanding' service.

We aim to have high levels of satisfaction and we will act where we do not meet your expectations. For example, because only 56% of those surveyed believe we provide a high quality service, we have:

- **Consulted with staff in each region about how we might improve the ILC service**
- **Improved our management of contractors to make sure they deliver to our requirements**
- **Consulted residents in forums and in schemes about Service Standards**
- **Designed a new approach to allow feedback on scheme standards by staff, residents and their families**

We surveyed 733 people in August, September and October and 181 people responded to tell us that:

81%
think we get it
right first time

87%
feel safe
and secure

56%
think JJH
provides a high
quality service

69%
would
recommend us

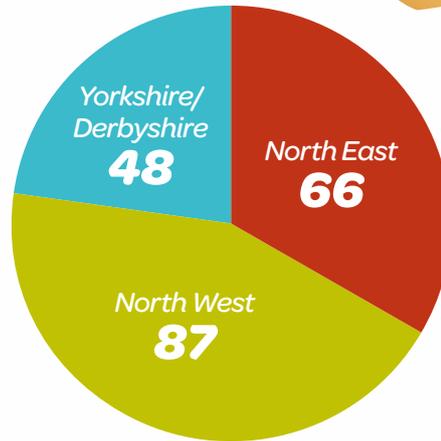
67%
feel we engage
with them

69%
think JJH
provides value
for money



Complaints and Compliments

Complaints by region (Oct 2017-Sep 2018)



Complaints by service area



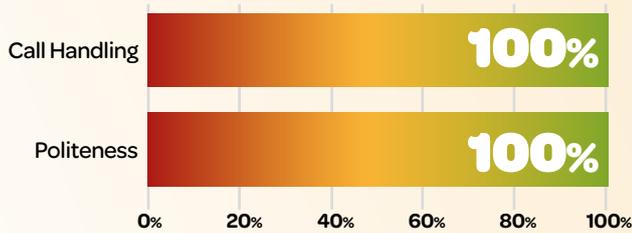
Confidential Complaint	7
Development	1
Health & Safety	2
Housing Management	42
Independent Living	13
Operations – Allocations	4
Operations – Customer Interactions	4
Operations – Income/Leasehold	17
Planned Maintenance	19
Responsive Repairs	103

The overall trend for complaints in the North East and Yorkshire & Derbyshire regions in September was an increase. This was due to a spike in complaints about responsive repairs and Kier. The issues relate to missed appointments, Kier not communicating with residents, and repairs being attended to but not completed. These performance issues are being monitored as they occur and also discussed with Kier management on a fortnightly basis. It's important to us that we resolve these problems, thank you for keeping us informed.

In the North West region in September, there was a significant decrease in complaints with more compliments being logged instead, in particular about the service received from staff.



Customer satisfaction with complaints



Our complaints satisfaction survey is now live on a tool called Housing Contact. It supplies a quicker, more efficient response allowing our Customer Service Hub to be more efficient in contacting dissatisfied customers.

Complaints response in time

(NB this figure covers April 2017 to September 2018)



Compliments



You Said, We Did

We want to deliver excellent customer service. We value complaints as an opportunity to put things right when they go wrong and to learn from customer feedback to improve services. We also value compliments to help us understand what is working well and acknowledge the efforts of staff who provide a good service.

Each month we assess complaints and compliments received to identify where we can change services or processes to ensure we avoid poor service reoccurring, and to share good practice that helps us deliver outstanding services.

Some examples of this include:

- *Utilising recorded calls to aid Customer Advisor training*
- *Improving communication between teams on current planned works to raise awareness*
- *Updating technology to enable advisors to access customer details more efficiently when you call us*
- *Addressing feedback on repairs and liaising with providers to ensure they are aware of feedback received*

We will continue to assess what our customers tell us to ensure we continue to improve our services, and we will report examples of learning in each edition of Voices ongoing.

Successes this year

Customer Services successes 2018

Here are a few of the highlights achieved by the team:

- *Improved our secure online payment tool by introducing allpay*
- *Delivered voids training to all three regions*
- *Delivered 8,203 calls for rent arrears and Universal Credit via Housing Contact*
- *Supported the Scrutiny Panel in delivery of fire safety scrutiny and delivery of Scrutiny Panel meetings*
- *Introduced the LIVE Hub ticketing pilot in all three regions*
- *Prevented an eviction by providing welfare/income support*
- *Successful appeal following challenge of benefit decision regarding Universal Credit*
- *Leasehold re-invoicing successfully completed (the first time we've done this)*
- *Created leasehold/shared ownership section on JJH website*
- *Created a lease extension policy and procedure and updated leasehold admin fees to maximise income*
- *Reduction of outbound calls to chase repairs*
- *Receipt of Customer Excellence Accreditation*
- *All rent statements sent out on time*

Help shape our planned works

Do you have a passion for helping us to improve the way we deliver our services to you? If yes, then we want to hear from you!

We want to ensure all our customers view us as 'Outstanding' by 2021. We want you to feel that we communicate with you about every aspect of homes and service delivery. We are on a journey to outstanding and we recognise that you are vital in helping us shape the way we work in the future.

We are looking for volunteers to work with us on the delivery of our planned works. Our planned works include things like replacing your kitchen or bathroom

or redecorating your communal lounge. As part of the group you will review our current offer of planned works, specifically looking at:

- **What's working well**
- **What's not working**
- **How can we improve**

Planned works covers a number of areas and we want to ensure that we deliver the same outstanding service regardless of the works being undertaken.

It's a fantastic opportunity to help us shape the future of planned works. If it sounds like something you're interested in please email JJHTVoices@jjhousing.co.uk.

Your views on Social Housing

In August the Government released a consultation paper on social housing, with a view to provoke discussion on a range of topics including fire safety, perceived stigma, and provider performance, and most importantly the customer's voice.

We wanted to ensure that our residents were given the opportunity to feed into our response. We raised the topics at our three regional forum meetings and annual independent living scheme meetings during September and October. We also carried out a telephone survey for residents who weren't able to attend meetings in person.

We were thrilled to have engaged more than 900 residents in our discussions. Thank you to everyone who provided us with their views, we really appreciate your feedback.

So, what's the general opinion?

- *You feel safe and secure in your own homes*
- *You like the neighbourhoods you live in*
- *You don't feel stigmatised living in social housing and feel that JJH homes are aspirational*
- *You are happy with the standard of property, (although we had a higher response from those of you who had recently had new bathrooms and kitchens and lower scores from those of you waiting to have work done)*

What do we need to work on?

- *Ensure we have a simple and clear complaints system that is publicised more widely*
- *Publicise the work of the regulator*
- *Look at the benefits of performance league tables across the housing sector*
- *Improve the ways in which we communicate with you, prioritising regular contact with independent living coordinators*
- *Publicise both new property developments and existing property investment*

Thanks again to everyone who contributed to the debate, our response has now been submitted to Government to help them progress their ideas for the next stage and JJH will also be using this valuable feedback towards developing our new standards that will be launched during our 50th Year.

Many of you across our schemes have already been surveyed about developing our JJH standards. For those of you that do not live in a scheme there is still time to have input as we move forward with the next steps and start to look at developing the JJH standards. Visit the Resident Hub section on our website or complete the attached survey and return in the free post envelope.

*All feedback we receive by the **30 December** will be entered into a prize draw to win a Huawei Tablet.*



Your *Involvement*

Silver Sunday

Residents at Sealand House in Prestwich enjoyed a Silver Sunday coffee morning and general knowledge quiz recently.

As part of the event our Independent Living Coordinator, Pat ran a nostalgia quiz where residents were asked to bring old pictures of themselves in an envelope and people had to guess who they were. Everyone really enjoyed this and many people asked when another session would be run.

Hopefully another session will be run soon, what a great idea Pat!



New Digital Coordinator

Meet **Phil Nicholls** our new Digital Coordinator. Phil will be promoting Digital Inclusion for both residents and staff. He will be visiting schemes to meet residents, find out what they use, and see where we can support them further.



Your *Fundraising*

JJH supports Macmillan

Cake, cake and more cake

A big well done to all the schemes that held Macmillan Coffee mornings, a wonderful effort from everyone involved!



Derwent Court raised £150

Derwent Court

Residents at **St Andrews Court** raised **£240.35** beating their collection last year. A huge thank you to Mrs Phillips, Mrs Petherick and Mrs Worthington who all planned and ran the morning.



St Andrews Court

Radford House raised **£300** from their coffee morning. A special thanks to Marjorie Purslow who organised the event.



Radford House

Your Fundraising

Boulmer Court



Boulmer Court raised
£226.51

Bader Court
raised
grand total of
£515.65

Bader Court



Leuchars Court raised
£120



Leuchars Court



Parkhouse and
Woodford Court
Residents

Sue Heathcote, one of our Leasehold residents from Alconbury Court in Tameside organised a recent fundraising event for their local Macmillan Unit at Tameside Hospital. Along with residents from nearby Park House and Woodford Court a staggering **£3,000** was raised! **Well done to Sue and her team of helpers!**

Your Fundraising

JJH and Astraline supporting Alzheimer's

We've already beaten our fundraising target for this financial year by raising **£8,038** so far, against our original target of **£5,000**. Some of our contributions came from:

- **Portland House** raised **£156.09** from their table top sale
- **Residents at Berkeley** also held a table top sale and raised **£590.46**
- Our **CEO Yvonne Castle** completed Tough Mudder and raised over **£1,300**



Yvonne Castle at Tough Mudder



Portland House

Dementia Song

Our Independent Living Coordinator, Donna Large from Portland House in Marple recently wrote a poem about Dementia and since then it has been turned into a song which has been recorded to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society. If anyone is interested to find out more then please contact donna.large@jjhousing.co.uk



Residents' activities

Supporting Manchester Blood Bikes

Portal Court's summer fayres raised a massive £1,470 for their charity, Manchester Blood Bikes. This is a charity set up in Greater Manchester that transports blood, plasma, platelets, and other urgently required medical items to hospitals 24/7.



Clifford Hilditch and Duxford Lodge out and about



Residents at these two schemes are teaming up to organise social activities. They recently took a trip out together to Wai Yin Society - it was a great success and everyone had a really lovely time. They have also been planning joint activities at Duxford Lodge. With a larger lounge it's a great space - and the residents from Clifford Hilditch can get involved too.

Bromley Park /Bluehills Lane

Bluehills Lane were awarded £500 from the walkabout fund towards the upkeep of their grounds. We're sure you'll agree the grounds are beautiful.



Bader's big tidy up!



Residents and staff in the North East came together recently to give our independent living scheme Bader Court a big tidy up.

A special thanks to our contractors Kier, Sodexo, and Regal Cleaning for helping out. A great day was had by all!

World Heart Rhythm Week



Derwent Court in Lancaster held a heart monitoring session and after testing 20 people were pleased that only one person needed to follow up for advice from their GP.

Rookie golf

Lancaster House in Cramlington invited residents from Blenheim Court in Gateshead to join them for a competition of 'rookie' golf. The residents had already done a taster session and were keen to put their skills to the test. Cramlington reigned victorious, and Blenheim anxiously wait for the rematch!



Birthdays/Celebrations



Happy birthday to Graham Lawson, a resident for almost 40 years at Coningsby House, Sheffield. Graham has just celebrated his 90th birthday.

Wellington House had a very special birthday towards the end of the summer and the residents hosted a surprise party for Gladys who turned 100! Gladys had an amazing time and felt overwhelmed, she said it would be a birthday she would never forget. Happy birthday Gladys, we're glad you had such a great time.



Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Smith who have celebrated 60 years of marriage. They had a lovely day and visited St James's Church, where they got married, and then had a drink at The Parks, the venue where they had held their reception 60 years ago to the day. They were then joined by their family for a lovely meal. Here they are on their wedding day and 60 years on.



We would like to wish Morris and Margaret Globe many happy returns as they celebrate their diamond wedding anniversary. Celebrations were held at Woodford Court along with their family, friends and neighbours!



Speaking of birthdays...

Our very special 50th Anniversary is coming up next year and we are planning a series of exciting events with residents and staff! Like our founder Johnnie Johnson we are passionate and committed to supporting our veterans and the military community and we would love to hear stories from your time spent serving in the forces. If you or your partner or any family member has a story to tell no matter how big or small then we would love to hear from you. Please contact us at JJHTVoices@jjhousing.co.uk.

Scrutiny Panel update

Since the panel's launch there have been two successful reviews looking into the handypersons' service and planned maintenance. The current review is looking at fire safety, with a focus on compliance and how safe residents feel in their homes.

How can residents who aren't on the panel keep up to date?

Residents are kept up to date through the delivery of reports and updates at the regional forums and in Voices. We are always looking for ways to improve how we communicate with you, please email JJHTVoices@jjhousing.co.uk to let us know if there is another way you would like us to keep you updated.

We're recruiting

We're on the lookout for residents to join our Scrutiny Panel. If you have a passion for improving the services delivered to residents, we want to hear from you!

What's involved?

The role of the panel is to carry out reviews on how services are delivered to residents and make recommendations for improvements. Following a service review, the panel compiles a report of findings which they then present to the Audit and Risk Committee who form part of the governance undertaken by the JJH Board. The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel also attends the Performance

Committee in order to then share performance information to the rest of the panel.

What's the application process?

Please contact JJHTVoices@jjhousing.co.uk for an application form. If your application is successful you will be invited to an interview and to meet the current team.

If you are successful after interview you will be invited onto the panel to serve a three year term. In addition you will also undertake a yearly appraisal.

We are interested in hearing from residents across all regions and tenures, in particular the North West and Yorkshire & Derbyshire. We look forward to hearing from you and your contribution to building on the success the panel has already achieved.

Paying your rent at Christmas

Christmas is fast approaching and we know that there can be a great deal of pressure to spend a lot on presents and entertaining over Christmas and New Year; however, rent payments must still be paid before, during and after the festive period.

Missing payments during December and January means that you may start the New Year with rent arrears and action may be taken against you.

Johnnie Johnson does provide help for people who may need budgeting advice or help with their utility bills. Please do not suffer in silence and risk court action or eviction.

If you are having difficulty paying your rent or reducing arrears call our Income Services Team on 0345 305 5335

Christmas budgeting

Before you start buying presents and planning parties, think carefully about how much you can spend and set yourself an affordable budget.

The average person spends £350 to £400 on Christmas gifts, but you should prioritise your rent and utility bills – having a home is more important than any gift.

- **Factor in all your expenses and decide how much money you can afford to spend.**
- **The later you leave your shopping, the more crowded the shops and the more likely you are to be stressed and buy anything in order to get out of there.**
- **Leave the debit or credit card at home when you go shopping, unless you can afford to pay it off in full before the due date.**
- **Expensive gifts aren't always the best, so decide who you are buying for, set limits and be creative.**
- **If it's your turn to host Christmas lunch or dinner this year, you could ask guests to bring food or a bottle of something.**

Christmas closures

It's also worth thinking about whether the way you usually make payments will be affected by our Christmas closures, as our offices will be shut from Monday 24 December at 5.30pm and will reopen at 8.30am on Wednesday 2 January. If you want to make a rent payment during this time, you can still pay online or call us on 0345 305 5335.

Next Year

To help cover the cost of Christmas next year you could start saving a few months in advance with your local Credit Union. Credit Unions offer savings accounts that are simple to use and let you save small amounts. To find out where your nearest credit union is please visit www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk

What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit (UC) is a new benefit for working age people that replaces a number of existing benefits and tax credits. It is designed to support people who have a low (or no) income with their basic living expenses and housing costs.

It is being rolled out across the UK in stages and replaces six previous means-tested benefits and tax credits, including Housing Benefit.

Moving to Universal Credit from Housing Benefit

Your monthly UC payment will include a housing costs element which will replace the help you currently get from Housing Benefit.

If you have your rent paid directly to your landlord at the moment, this will change under UC as you will receive one monthly UC payment and YOU will be responsible for using this money to pay your rent.

If you are concerned about receiving the UC payment please call our Customer Service Hub on **0345 305 5335** for advice.

There is more information on our website and also at www.gov.uk/universal-credit

UC *Universal Credit*



Debt help

worried about your water bills?

We've been working with utilities providers to provide you with information on keeping up to date with payments and other advice on who to speak to you if you're struggling. We've included details on how they can help, so please call them to make sure you receive the right support:

Back on track – if you're behind with your water bill payments and on benefits, they can provide an affordable bill depending on your circumstances.

Help to pay – if you receive Pension Credit and are struggling to make payments, you can apply to have your bills capped at an affordable amount, based on your income and outgoings, and this will include United Utilities looking at all possible ways of reducing your charges.

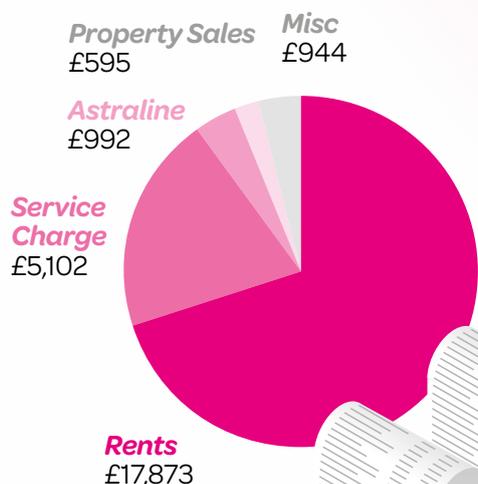
Payment matching plus – if you've built up a lot of debt, for every £1 you pay they'll match it with £1 too, and if you continue to make regular payments they'll clear any outstanding debt after two years.

Restart grant – if you're in real financial difficulty, you may qualify for a one-off payment from this trust fund to help clear your debts.

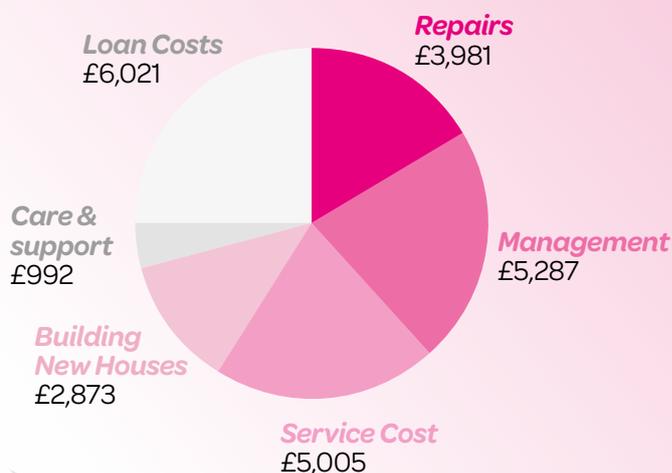
WaterSure – if you have a water meter, receive benefits and use a lot of water due to ill health or having a large family, they can cap your annual bill regardless of how much water you use.

Financial Accounts 2017-2018

Where the money comes from £'000s



Where the money is spent £'000s



Income and Expenditure Account

	2018 £'000	2017 £'000
Income	25,054	25,317
Cost of Properties Sold	(491)	(292)
Operating costs (Management repairs and running costs)	(18,092)	(19,062)
Surplus on sale of fixed assets – housing properties	(53)	96
Operating surplus	6,418	6,059
Interest receivable and other income	29	42
Interest payable and similar charges	(3,228)	(3,630)
Surplus on ordinary activities before taxation	3,219	2,471

Jargon Buster

Surplus / (deficit) is the difference between money received and money spent. Any surplus is reinvested in properties. Misc contains payments made from creditors and debtors throughout the year.

Astraline goes from strength to strength

Helping us to better support our customers



We are delighted to tell you about an exciting development for Astraline. We have completed a deal to buy the private payer part of 'TrustLink' – fellow housing provider Peaks & Plains' telecare business.

Astraline is one of our top three strategic priorities, helping us to support people to live independently for longer. It is going from strength to strength, as this acquisition proves. The reason we pursued it was because it allows us to enhance our current services in the Cheshire East region by introducing a mobile responder service. Our new 'Astraline Fleet' can already be spotted out and about in the region, responding to calls from

customers who need a little extra help at home. We hope to expand this service to other regions in the future.

We are also extending a warm welcome to 12 former members of the TrustLink team who have transferred to be employed at Astraline. Six have joined our own telecare team, and six first aid trained individuals have formed the Astraline mobile responder 'TEC Team'. 'TEC' stands for 'technology enabled care'.

Making this deal happen kept the Astraline team extremely busy as well as colleagues in Finance, People & OD, Marketing, and the Executive Team, who all worked together to make it successful. It's at times like this that our

#OneTeam philosophy is truly realised. Thank you to everyone who pulled out all the stops!

Our new members of the Astraline team:

Danielle Heapy
Andrea Whyllie
Alison Barlow
Lorraine Critoph
Hannah Cooper
Jane Cartledge
Keri Treanor
Jane Taylor
Angela Murdock
Veronica Wooley
Belinda Dewar
Jayne Mayers

How Telecare works

Choosing telecare from Astraline means that there is always someone available on the phone to help:

- ➔ *You have a device that you can use to summon help whenever you need it*
- ➔ *If you have a fall, feel unwell or need assistance for any reason, press the alarm button and you will be connected straight away to one of our team members.. They will organise the help you need – whether that's calling a relative or the emergency services, or simply offering reassurance*
- ➔ *Our services are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.*

Watch this space for more details about how our mobile responders will support you in the future

Who benefits from Telecare?

Telecare services are all about helping you stay independent and giving you confidence and reassurance. They are particularly designed to help elderly and disabled people. Telecare can help if you or your loved one:

- **Live alone** – particularly if relatives are not close by
- **Are worried about falling** – especially at night
- **Are recovering** after illness or a hospital stay
- **Have a degenerative illness** such as parkinsons or multiple sclerosis
- **Have dementia**

Astraline achieves enhanced accreditation

Quality standards are important in all industries, more so when the services and products being provided affect the lives of individuals.

Astraline has been an accredited TSA provider for over 15 years, being amongst the first five companies to gain accreditation back in 2002.

We have evolved over that time, as has the TSA, and we were excited to hear of its work to launch a new Quality Standards Framework (QSF). Developed as an independent audit and certification programme for the Technology Enabled Care industry, the framework ensures that as a service provider we have a way of demonstrating safety and quality.



Joe McLoughlin said "Astraline has always strived to deliver high quality services to all our customers and we've always fully supported the TSA's mission to ensure that providers within the sector are audited, certified and held accountable to the highest standards. We are absolutely delighted to be one of the first companies to achieve the new quality standards framework".

Astraline exhibition news

Astraline exhibited at the Telecare Services Association (TSA) conference. It was a valuable opportunity to connect with industry colleagues and to showcase our growing range of telecare products and services.

www.astraline.co.uk/shop



pictured are Alan Usher and Andrew Conroy

Astraline's Joe McLoughlin named on the Inside Housing Tech Leader List 2018

We are proud of Joe for this achievement. His work, along with colleagues Tricia Grierson, Suzanne Simons, Helen Thompson, and the Astraline team has been noted as making 'great strides in digital transformation for customers'.

Their work to use innovation, a 'smart home' approach, and Technology Enabled Care (TEC) as an enabler and value for money driver to support people 'living longer, living better' and reduce pressure on NHS services is integral to our strategic approach to deliver outstanding service to our customers.

In particular our joint project with GSPK Design and the Centre for Assistive Technology at the University of Sheffield to develop a prototype sensor to assess walking

speed, a primary indicator of frailty has been recognised.

This study potentially opens up a completely new way of managing the persistent problem of physical frailty in older people. By testing a sensor that can be placed in someone's home we can measure walking speed every time the person passes it.

This is because one of the principal indicators of frailty is walking speed in everyday life. When people start walking more slowly than usual this gives an indicator of the risk of developing frailty. Following laboratory tests, Astraline has been testing the sensor in real life with 18 older people living independently in an independent living scheme. We expect to report our findings soon.



Carbon monoxide safety in your home

Carbon monoxide is released when faulty appliances start leaking.

Carbon monoxide is often called the 'silent killer' as it is colourless, odourless and tasteless. It is toxic as it interferes with the way your body transports oxygen.

The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to flu symptoms, headaches, nausea, dizziness and feelings of extreme tiredness.

If your property has a carbon monoxide detector it will normally be located near to your boiler. You may also have one near to any solid fuel fire or appliance.

Your detector might go off because the batteries are running out or because the detector has picked up carbon monoxide.

Generally if you are feeling well and the beeping is intermittent with wide gaps between sounds, then it is likely that your battery needs changing. Please change your batteries. If the beeping continues please contact the JJH Customer Service Hub for advice.

If you are feeling unwell or if the beeping is continuous it is possible you have a carbon monoxide leak. In this case:

- **Open all windows and doors**
- **Turn off fuel burning appliances if it is safe to do so**
- **Do not switch on lights, smoke, or strike a match**
- **Seek medical advice if you feel unwell**
- **Call the emergency advice line on 0800 111 999**
- **Call the JJH Customer Service Hub to arrange for your appliance to be serviced**

Remember: to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide leaks JJH carries out annual gas safety checks, so please do allow us access when this is requested.



Stay safe this winter

The countdown to Christmas is officially on and whilst we love the run up to the festive season, we're not fans of the colder weather that sets in as winter approaches.

The safety of our residents is very important to us and we thought it would be beneficial to share our top tips to help you stay safe during the coldest months of the year.

Driving

Prepare your vehicle, plan your journey, and prepare yourself. Think about having an emergency kit in your car containing warm clothes, first aid kit, hazard warning triangle, and always remember to charge your mobile phone.

Don't drive if you're feeling unwell or if you have been advised not to due to adverse weather. If travel is absolutely necessary keep your fuel tank full, keep a safe distance between you and the car in front and avoid harsh breaking.

Avoiding slips and trips

Take it slow and allow yourself extra time to get from A to B, so you don't find yourself having to make a last minute dash to get to the bus etc. Wear sturdy footwear, with a good grip and keep an eye on what is underfoot.

Helping others

If you have neighbours who are unlikely to be able to get out and about easily, offer to pop to the shops for them or simply check that they are ok.

Safety in the home

- **Keep decorations and cards away from heat sources**
- **Don't leave candles unattended**
- **Turn Christmas lights off at night or when you leave the house**

Energy saving tips

Becoming more energy efficient is not only for those of us who want to save the environment. It can also really help your wallet. Regardless of your reasons, cutting back on your energy usage at home has many benefits.

Some energy efficiency changes are one-time investments. Others are small things you can do every day. Whether it is something as big as installing solar panels, or insulating your loft, to something as small as turning off the lights, when you're more energy conscious, you save money.

The average house uses 37% of its energy in the winter, compared to 13% in the summer; nearly three times as much. For example, if you spend £1000 per year on energy, this equates to approximately £28 per week in the winter months compared to £10 per week in the summer months.

There are also a number of sites that you can use to check your eligibility for grants:

Warm home discount

www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/eligibility

Disabled facilities grant

www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants/overview

Winter fuel payment

www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment

Cold weather payment

www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment

Pension credit

www.gov.uk/pension-credit

The British Gas Energy Trust

www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk

EDF Energy Trust

www.edfenergytrust.org.uk

Tips for using less energy:

- Shop around and switch your energy supplier
- Use appliances efficiently:
 - Wash full loads of clothes and dishes each time
 - Replace old appliances with low energy alternatives
 - Buy low energy light bulbs

Heating:

- Set your heating and water timer
- Close internal doors to retain heat in the rooms you are using
- Turn the central heating thermostat down to control room temperatures

Lighting:

- Open the blinds, turn the lights off and let some sunshine in. Lighting your house with sunlight is 100% FREE
- Save by switching to LED light bulbs or fitted spotlights. LEDs use 90% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs
- Fluorescent light bulbs last 8-12 times longer than incandescent bulbs



Your *Involvement*

Get in touch

We love to share our news and stories with you! Along with your copy of Voices did you know we have JJH accounts across most social media channels?

Please feel free to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and also keep a look out for stories and up to date information on our website jjhousing.co.uk



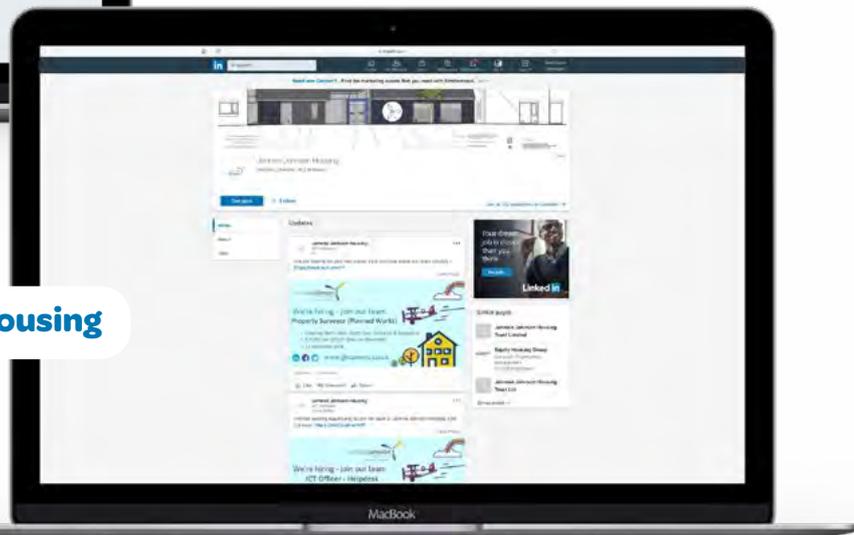
Johnnie Johnson Housing



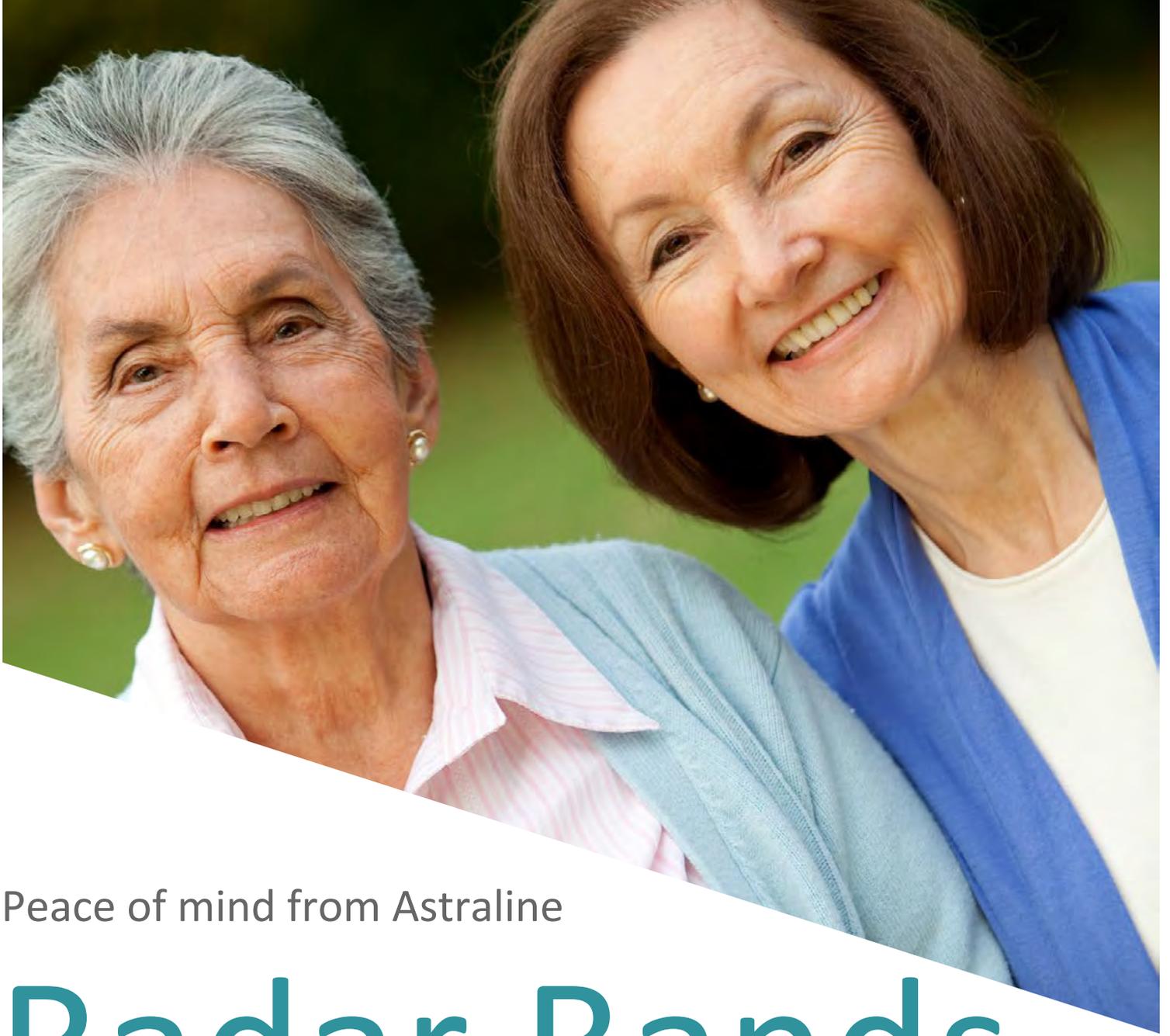
@JJHousingTrust



Johnnie Johnson Housing



***Privacy notice:** You are receiving this newsletter as you are a resident in a Johnnie Johnson property.



Peace of mind from Astraline

Radars Bands



A simple wristband designed for anyone at risk of becoming lost

- Reassurance
- Low cost solution
- 24 hour support

Part of our outstanding range of products and services to support independent living

www.astraline.co.uk



Code of Practice
Accredited Organisation





Message from **Yvonne Castle**, Chief Executive

I hope you enjoyed reading our winter issue of Voices, and all our latest news. You can tell that we've been busy and have lots to share with you.



You will see on page 4 that in May we signed the Armed Forces Covenant, which aims to support ex-service men and women and their families. We are proud to be the lead in this area for all the Housing Providers across Greater Manchester. I hope

you liked the front cover showcasing our successful event with providers across the region where we asked for organisations to pledge their support to provide a guaranteed offer to veterans and their families. As part of celebrating our 50th birthday next year I would love to come and hear your stories of being in the forces, or if you met our founder Mr Johnnie Johnson.

We also feature our Head of Independent Living, Tricia Grierson who secured one of only 20 places nationally for the National Housing Federation's (NHF) 'Greenhouse Project' with their 'invisible innovations'. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the adaptations survey, your feedback was valued and influenced a number of decisions within the project. Tricia is nearing the end of a secondment with Adapting with Age and has attended a meeting at No 10! This followed the team's presentation which was warmly received by the Prime Minister at the National Housing Summit in October.

You can see in the article that this pioneering initiative shows how we can support people who, even though they may be growing older, don't want to be made to feel elderly by their surroundings. These new, attractive home adaptations aim to do just that. We are trying to make these a success, and we are working with a manufacturer so that we can put these adaptations in our own homes.

I would love to take this opportunity, as promoted by Frances at the start of the magazine, to say a massive thank you to every single person who joins us at our Regional Forums, who engages with us through Voices, who comments on our literature through the Editorial Panel and a huge thank you to our Scrutiny Panel for all the hard work you do scrutinising our services. Just to add, there are Scrutiny places available in the North West and Yorkshire & Derbyshire if you are interested. Please do get in touch.

And to finish with, although a little early, I'd also like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas and I'll look forward to working with you all in the New Year.

Yvonne



Voices

listen • talk • share

Johnnie Johnson Housing

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