

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

All the latest Updates and News for our customers



A welcome from your Housing Manager, Temi Awolaja



Hello and welcome to the Autumn edition of our newsletter!

We know that times are pretty tough for many families right now and so we are here to support all our residents at this time. Thank you to all our residents for all they are doing to make sure the most vulnerable in their communities are looked after. As ever, if you are concerned about a neighbour then please do let us know.

With furlough changing, and the real risk of a second wave of illness, the coming months may be challenging for you practically and financially. We want you to know that we are here to help - whether you are worried about rent or other bills or are just finding it difficult to cope with being isolated. Please let us know if you are struggling as we can only help if you let us know.

Warm wishes,

Temi

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**POLICY
CONSULTATIONS - WE
WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!**

Resident Feedback Group - Volunteers Needed!

Do you want to have more control over your housing? Do you have opinions about how we can improve our service? We want to hear from you!

We are creating a resident feedback group with residents from all CDS estates to help us improve our service. This group will be used to review our new policies, scrutinise our performance, and give feedback on changes to our service. The group will meet quarterly with our Senior Management Team and will be able to feedback directly on what they think CDS are doing well and where they think we could improve. There will also be an opportunity to suggest new ideas.

Involvement is flexible and signing up is not a commitment to endless meetings and admin. Instead, there will be a range of ways that you can get involved as and when you want to.

Your opinion matters to us. No one knows our service better than our residents – you are the experts. We want to listen to you, to learn from you, and, crucially, we want to work together so that we can make our homes better places to live for everyone.



Want to volunteer or just find out more about the Resident Group? Get in touch today!

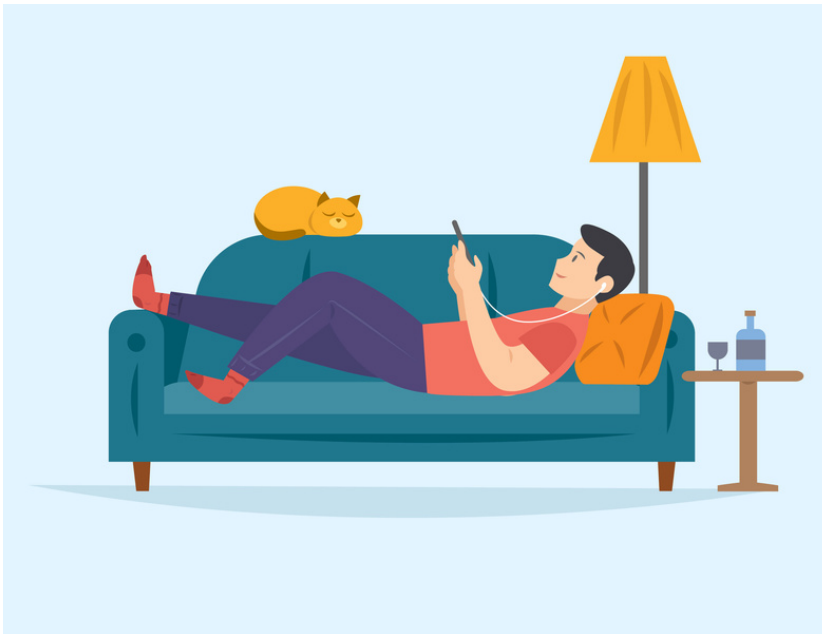
If you are interested signing up for the Resident Group, or just want to learn more, then get in touch today. Remember, there is no obligation or commitment and there are plenty of easy ways of getting involved.

To signup, or find out more, contact our Engagement Officer, Sara Bell by 01.11.20 sara.bell@cds.coop.

Helping You To Look After Your Mental Health This Autumn

We know that we are all finding things a bit tough at the moment. With the uncertainty of changing Coronavirus restrictions, spiralling numbers of cases across the country, and changes to the furlough scheme, it feels like there is a lot to worry. On top of all of this life, with its stresses, strains and difficulties, continues. Now, more than ever, therefore, it is important to ensure that we are taking time to consider and look after our mental wellbeing.

We have put together some helpful tips and resources to help you look after your mental health, and check in with those around you, in the coming weeks and months. For a complete list, have a look at our website.



Avoid Speculation – the news can be overwhelming at the moment.

Remember to take breaks and only get your news from trusted sources.

Look After Your Physical Health – your mind and body are one after all!

Reach Out and Ask for Help – if you are not sure where to turn then have a look at this list of free, confidential services.

Create a Daily Routine – whatever your circumstances, finding a reliable routine will help you create a sense of normality.

ARE YOU LONELY, ISOLATED OR GRIEVING?

This year has been hard and a lot of people may have struggled through it alone, with limited support, or may have lost loved ones over the past few months. There are always groups on hand who can help connect you with local networks and support.

Give them a ring today:

AGE UK support line (designed for the over 60s): 0800 678 1602

Support Line Campaign to End Loneliness and Bereavement Support: 01708 765200

Are You Worried About Paying Your Rent? We Can Help!

Did you know that we have our own in-house Benefit and Welfare Support Service? From benefits advice, to budgeting, bills, and debt, we are here to help you. The service is free of charge and you can access support as often as you like.

We spoke to some of our residents who have used our Welfare and Benefits Support Service in recent months to find out more. Jane* fell into substantial rent arrears after being furloughed:

"An arrears officer phoned me and I explained that I had been furloughed and was failing into substantial rent arrears as a result. We didn't think there would be any help available for people like us. We didn't know where to turn or who to ask. A few days later Maureen (CDS' Welfare and Benefits Adviser, pictured below) got in contact. She was brilliant! She looked into my benefits history for me and discovered that for two years I had not been getting what I was due. She also uncovered that I had wrongly been



paying the Bedroom Tax and so I got a repayment for that too. I would never have known about any of it if it wasn't for the service. The team always rang and kept me informed. It was nice to know I wasn't alone through it all. I could ring and they were there to help. It was a scary time for us but thanks to the support we received we are back on track."

" We didn't think there would be any help available for people like us. We didn't know where to turn or who to ask."

Our service also offers support to those who have never accessed the benefit system before and are difficult to navigate.

Helen* accessed the service after losing her job just before the lockdown:

"I lost my job and could not pay my rent or all my other bills. It was unusual for me to be in financial difficulty and I was very worried.

Maureen offered to help me apply online for Universal Credit. I am so grateful to her for her moral and practical support at that time. I was so stressed and she talked to me kindly, and calmly – she was very approachable and made it all so easy. If I had not been referred to CDS' Support service I don't think I could have done it all alone. I am not very good online and it's complicated. I hope one day to meet the team in person to say a big thank you for helping me when I needed it the most!"

If you are worried about not being able to pay your rent in the coming months then please get in touch as soon as possible.

There is help and support we can offer but we cannot help unless we know there is a problem.

Ring us today on 03333 21 30 30

Our service is all encompassing, and we can help you to navigate the benefit system, provide support with bills and budgeting and help you get on the right track with your finances. This is a free service offered to all CDS resident.

We have expanded this service in recent months as we know that with Coronavirus, furlough and the uncertainty that accompanies it, there are lots of people who are understandably concerned about their finances. To get support today contact our Welfare and Benefits Adviser, Maureen Bello, on 07818 017830.

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Take 15 minutes, get a cup of coffee, have a break, and get your brain ticking. You deserve it!

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Have Your Voice Heard! Shape Our Policy Today...

Listening to our residents is one of the key ways we can improve our service and our homes. Help us to do better by feeding back on our new policies:

- [our Lettable Standard](#),
- [our new Domestic Abuse Policy](#),
- [our new Safeguarding Policy](#).

Help us to make our homes better, safer places to live by contributing your thoughts today.

Lettable Standard

The lettable standard sets out the minimum standard our properties will meet when a tenant moves in. Getting involved and letting us know what you think will therefore have an impact on every property we let in the future, making sure our homes reflect a standard you would deem acceptable for your own family.



Safeguarding Policy

[The Safeguarding Policy](#) sets out how our teams will work with other agencies to try to prevent abuse and neglect of children, young people or vulnerable adults. The Policy sets out our commitment to working with relevant agencies, how alleged or suspected safeguarding concerns should be responded to and reported, and our staffs' responsibilities with regards to safeguarding.

How Can I Take Part?

Have a look on [our website](#) for further details of the policies and how to take part.

Please send any feedback to consultation@cds.coop by 29th October at the latest.

If you want to take part, but are unsure of how best to contribute then please speak to our Housing Services Manager, Temi Awolaja. T:07818 017837.

Domestic Abuse Policy

Our new Domestic Abuse Policy sets out our approach to dealing with Domestic Abuse of all forms. It details how we will help residents and the legal tools we will employ to tackle Domestic Violence to ensure we are doing what we can to support and protect people caught in abusive situations. It also includes details of how we will work in partnership with relevant agencies to ensure we are doing all we can to protect you and your families.

We welcome your feedback!