

Customer

connect

Keeping Platform Housing Customers in the know

In am really pleased to be able to welcome you to this the first edition of our Customer Connect magazine.

It gives us the opportunity to share with you all the ways in which our customers are working with us to improve both our services and your communities.

From the Customer Experience Panel to mystery shopping, we try to find ways to check out and learn how we can continue to support everyone across all the areas in which we operate.

We have continued throughout lockdown to invest in our homes, to look for ways to support our younger residents with life skills to improve their chances after Covid and to offer as many avenues of support we could to get those who needed a little more help through this pandemic.

We are though ever aware that life is going to continue to be difficult for some time to come and for that reason have formalised a sizeable wellbeing fund for the coming year. We have allocated money to the Community Chest, the allocation of which is controlled by our

Customer Experience Panel to allocate funding to community initiatives. I hope you enjoy reading about all the great things that have happened, despite it being such a difficult year, and ways in which you can be involved in our organisation and championing the cause of your local community and look forward to sharing more good stories in the future.

Wishing you all safe and well

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Froude.



Our Customer Experience Panel

Ensuring our customers are at the very heart of what we do is the reason that just over 12 months ago we set up a dedicated group called the Customer Experience Panel. The Panel's main aim is to drive improvement and satisfaction for all Platform customers, and is chaired by Market Harborough customer Ella Corbett.



Ella Corbett.



Lou Zonato.

Platform's Board member **Lou Zonato** who champions the customer experience, also sits on the Panel and gives the group direct access to the Board.

According to Ella - *"It is all about driving and influencing change, having open and honest conversations and recognising where improvements need to be made and then ensuring there are procedures in place to deliver*

any changes that are needed. Importantly, it also brings the customer into the heart of the organisation allowing our senior management team to understand what it is like to be a customer of Platform."

"Over the next couple of months, the Panel will be looking at the issue of domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour and the Platform wellbeing fund which is there to assist customers."

"Hearing directly from customers really does help shape future organisational plans, but we need you to get involved and have your say. I realise that you may not wish to commit lots of your time in this way, but Platform

have put in place lots of ways, from completing short surveys that take minutes to complete to joining specific focus groups and lots of ways in between.

We currently have vacancies on our more specific groups which are outlined on page 4-5, and all the other options for you to consider are on pages 6."

"It's only by customers working together with Platform that we can ensure the customer experience is the best it can possibly be for all Platform customers, so give it a try, get involved and be part of shaping the customer journey going forward."

Come and join us on **25th March at 1 pm** over Zoom for Tea with the CEP where our panel members will be talking about what this role means to them. To register for this informal 1-hour session please email us at involved@platformhg.com

Repairs & Maintenance



Last year Platform Property Care set off on its journey to expand the business and be the in house team delivering all maintenance, compliance and investment works across the Group.

This resulted in better quality and value for money services being delivered consistently across the whole group and a reduced reliance on sub-contractors.

January 2020	▶ Our responsive and void works were bought back in house in Lincolnshire and the West Midlands.
February 2020	▶ Created a new operational base in Market Harborough to deliver services in Harborough.
April 2020	▶ Expansion of our responsive and void services around Market Harborough and surrounding area.
September 2020	▶ Responsive and void works were fully brought back in house in the Derbyshire Dales.
January 2021	▶ Compliance works all bought back in house across the group.
February 2021	▶ Gas Servicing and repairs bought back in house across the group.

Whilst this last year has been extremely difficult for everyone due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Platform Property Care has, wherever possible, continued to deliver our services and compliance works whilst still investing in customers' homes.

Investment in our Existing Homes



During the course of the next 12 months we will continue to invest in our existing homes and will be undertaking the following planned improvement works:-

Kitchens	802
Bathrooms	445
Heating installations	687
Boilers	1,978
Doors	1,722 +26 communal entrance doors
Windows	472 +15 communal screens
Roofs	227
Lifts	4 replacement and 2 major upgrades
Electrical Testing	11,500
Independent Living Scheme Modernisations	6

NATIONAL HOUSING FEDERATION



Together with Tenants

Platform has committed to the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants campaign which is all about strengthening the relationship between us and you our customers.

It sets out clear terms what you can and should expect from us, regardless of where you live or what type of home you live in.

It sets out our **6 commitments** to you...

OUR RELATIONSHIP

We will treat you with respect in all interactions, we will be **open, honest and transparent**

OUR COMMUNICATION

The information you get from us will be **clear, accessible and timely**

It will be about things that matter to **YOU** including how we address problems, how we are run and how we perform

We Need You

– Opportunities Available Now!

Although like you we've been locked down for the most part of the last year, we've used the opportunity to develop a range of opportunities to engage with you our customers and our wider communities.

Customers are at the very heart of everything we do and that's why we've created roles for customers to get involved with us in a range of ways to provide feedback and shape how we deliver our service. We've also adapted some roles so they can now be carried out virtually, wherever you are and which fit around all the other commitments you may have.

We're also looking for customers to get involved in their local communities, whether that's in our rural locations in Herefordshire or Lincolnshire or cities like Worcester or Leicester- or somewhere in-between!

We recognise that our customers have a range of circumstances, time to spare and a variety of skills and interests and so we've developed our roles with this in mind to make sure there is something for everyone.

Diversity Champions

Here at Platform Housing Group, we are committed to making Equality, Diversity and Inclusion our key priority.

Do you want to make a genuine difference in your local community by helping us shape the way we deliver services for vulnerable people? Would you like to get involved with E&D projects you wouldn't normally hear about?



Gain valuable skills through free E&D training and take part in fun activities which make a serious local impact, then get on board and become one of Platform's Diversity Champions.

As a **Diversity Champion** you could get involved with:-

- An awareness campaign around an issue which you are passionate about, e.g., mental health, disability, LGBT, ethnic or religious diversity, Autism.
- An event celebrating different cultures and traditions.
- Start a group for people who may feel excluded.
- Support staff and residents in your chosen area of interest
- Make a difference by working with local charities on Equality & Diversity (E&D) issues.

Coming Soon – Our 2 Year Trainee Board Programme

This is a fantastic opportunity to shadow our Board Members alongside a formal training and development programme. You will gain a thorough insight into the work of our Board and develop your own skillset to equip you for future Board Member opportunities either at Platform or at other organisations.

Keep a look out on our website and social media channels for further information.

Diversity Champions Funding

Platform can offer small grants to support diversity projects in our communities (up to £400).

If you can make a difference in your community by highlighting its diversity, breaking down barriers, and including residents in activities please complete the form on our website at www.platformhg.com

If you feel that becoming a Platform Diversity Champion is for you, please visit our website www.platformhg.com for further information or you can call us on **0333 200 7304** and ask to speak to a member of our Equality and Diversity Team.



Community Champions

Do you care about where you live? Would you love the chance to support your local community & make a real difference to your community?

If the answer is “Yes” then you may be interested in our new **Community Champions role**. Launched this month the role gives you the opportunity to work with our teams and members of your community to help make where you live the best it can possibly be!

We’re looking for people who can be open-minded & objective about issues & are keen to help others & work with us to build a strong sense of community

The role includes:

- Being an active voice within your community.
- Helping ensure good communication between Platform Housing & your neighbours.
- Informing us of where we aren’t performing to the standard we say we will.
- Reporting, and supporting neighbours to report communal repairs through effective signposting.
- Informing us of anything that is a risk or nuisance within your neighbourhood, which may include issues like graffiti, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour. We’ll then work to identify where we can help to resolve these, where possible.



If you think this role would interest you then please visit the Get Involved pages of our website www.platform.com/get-involved to find out more, or you can call us on **0333 200 7304** & ask to speak to a member of the Customer Engagement Team.

Customer Experience Panel (CEP)

The Customer Experience Panel meet regularly with members of our Board and senior colleagues to oversee the delivery of our services delivered across Platform. The CEP ensure that the customer voice is represented at a strategic level.

As a member of the **Customer Experience Panel** you will get involved with:-

- Taking an active role in discussions and decision making that will shape the services we provide.
- Approving Platform Community Chest applications to support a range of improvements and initiatives across our communities.
- Taking an active role in feeding back on and overseeing the implementation of our strategies, our commitment to the Together with Tenants charter and our performance against our Customer Commitments.

If you’re passionate about ensuring the customer voice is heard and that we deliver services that meet the needs of our customers, we currently have vacancies on the panel and we’d love to hear from you!

Please visit the Get Involved pages of our website www.platform.com/get-involved to find out more, or you can call us on **0333 200 7304** & ask to speak to a member of the Customer Engagement Team

The Government’s White Paper

In the White Paper the Government have clearly set out what everyone living in social housing should expect.

There are 7 key areas as detailed below:

1. To be safe in your home. The Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
2. To know how your landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
3. To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
4. To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants.
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board. The Government will provide help, if you want it, to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

At Platform, we are currently completing a self-assessment against the requirements of both the Together with Tenants commitments and the 7 key elements of The White Paper to ensure we are fully complying with both these key documents. Where we identify that improvements are needed, we will be putting together an action plan to deliver these improvements. We will be talking to our customers more about these key publications and our action plans in due course.

Other Ways to Get Involved

Scrutiny Panel



Customers conduct in-depth investigations to scrutinise our services, focusing on a specific area of the organisation at a time. As part of scrutiny investigations, panel members are able to interrogate our services from a customer perspective, providing detailed reports to influence service improvements for all customers.

Mystery Shopping



Customers play a pivotal part in providing feedback on their experience of Platform services. Mystery shops are short exercises and can include tasks such as, calls to our contact centre following a script or reviewing our website to locate specific information. You'd then complete a short online form to feedback on your experience. Mystery Shoppers can opt in or out of each exercise (with many taking 15-30 minutes), at times to suit you. This role provides a really flexible way to get involved and provide valuable insight to influence the services you receive.

Customer Sounding Board



This online panel provide us with regular feedback on a range of documents to ensure that our communications with customers are clear and understood. This is a flexible role that can be carried out online. We would give you at least one week to carry out any task (which would take between 10-30 minutes) at a time to suit yourself and when you can fit in around your other commitments.

Software Testers



We're not looking for IT experts - in fact we want people with all levels of IT skills to make sure our services are accessible for everyone. This exciting role involves customers, testing our online and digital services. Projects undertaken by Software Testers range from short online exercises to more in-depth projects which provide tangible feedback to help shape the digital services we offer customers. With the option to opt in or out of each exercise this role offers a flexible way to influence our services.

One off Consultations



During the course of the year, we run a variety of one-off consultations and activities in order to get detailed customer feedback on specific topics. Last year we consulted and sought feedback from our customers which led to changes to policies such as Electrical Safety and Repairs and Maintenance. Changes were also made in the way we communicate with customers in respect of anti-social behaviour.

If you are interested in joining us on any of the involvement groups, please do contact us, your involvement really does make a difference to how Platform delivers its services and it is only with your help and working together that we can continually improve our services.



Kitchen Replacement programme -

Customers have their say on the Style and Design Options.

The kitchen is the heart of the home and we have been excited to gather customer views to shape the specification for our kitchen installation programme, focussing on kitchen styles and design options. We wanted to know what our customers in their kitchen as well as how it would look and feel.

We know we've not always got it right in the past, so this was a real opportunity for us to listen to our customers to make sure that in the future we do get it right.

The existing range of kitchens were originally developed using customer feedback but we want to modernise and gather your feedback to influence the next available choices of finish and designs available to customers. We had 477 customers complete our survey representing all our geographical areas and age ranges. 81% told us they wanted enhancements to the current design options. 74% wanted to remain with the mix and match option with customers having more say on all the available options.

We have listened to your feedback and have now put together a new future kitchen specification which is based around what customers would like to have installed in their homes.

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

What is it?

The **Housing Ombudsman Service** (HOS) have introduced a new Complaints Handling Code. The purpose of the Code is to enable us and other landlords to resolve complaints raised by customers quickly and to use the learning from complaints to drive service improvements.

The Code will act as a guide for customers setting out what they can and should expect from us when they complain. The requirements in the Code also provide customers with information about how to make a complaint and how to progress it through our internal complaints procedure.



The Code supports the regulatory approach to complaints ensuring our approach to complaints is clear simple and accessible and ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.

Please see Our Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code:

**Complaint Handling Code
- Platform Self Assessment
December 2020.pdf**

For more information about the Complaint Handling Code, click this [link](#) to this area on the Housing Ombudsman's website.

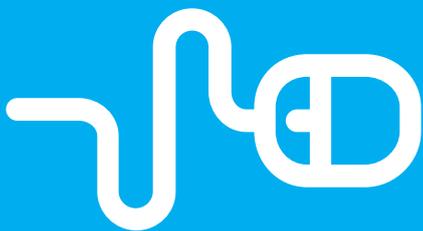
Compliments

If you think we are doing something well or that our colleagues are giving a great service then please do let us know. Compliments and comments tell us that we are on the right track and that our efforts have made a difference to you. All compliments will be passed directly to the people concerned.

Comments

We want you to have your say and there are lots of ways you can do this:-

- On our website.
- By e-mail customerfeedback@platformhg.com.
- By Phone **0333 200 7304**.
- In writing.
- In person (when any lockdown restrictions have been lifted).



Our New Customer Portal – Access our Services 24/7



Our new Customer Portal is now up and running!

By registering to use the portal, you will be able to:

- Check your rent balance and recent transactions.
- Make a payment or change a Direct Debit.
- Report a repair.
- Update personal information.

We already have over 1500 customers taking advantage of this new service which is available 24/7 and so you can access it at a time that is convenient to you.

To register to use this service, you will need:

- Your Tenancy Reference Number.
- Your Date of Birth.
- Your Email Address.

We are really keen to get your feedback on this new service and would like to know what new features you would like to see over the coming year. You can do this by filling in one of the surveys within the portal.

If you would like to get more involved in helping to test new features and shape the service going forward, please do drop us a line at involved@platformhg.com we would love to hear from you.

Wellbeing Fund

emerge better



The **New Platform Wellbeing Fund** is here to help.

On 1st April, 2021, Platform Housing will be launching a new Wellbeing Fund which is here to give fast and flexible support to individuals and families who need it during these challenging times. The Fund can help cover the cost of food, essential items such as school uniforms, energy and utility costs as well as helping to bridge the gap between any benefit application and a first payment.

Our Wellbeing Fund offers **ESSENTIAL SUPPORT** for



FOOD

If you are struggling to eat regularly and well or you're being caught out with the spiralling cost of home school and homework catering, we can help.



HOUSEHOLD ESSENTIALS

School uniform costs, new clothes, household cleaning items, washing powder, sanitary items all add up. We can help cover the cost of these, as well as the repair or replacement of your household white goods.



ENERGY AND UTILITY COSTS

We can help with high heating costs, high rate debt repayment meters and water costs. **Don't forget to tick the 'referral to the support team' box when you apply so we can help look for grants and other schemes to help you.**



NEW BENEFIT CLAIMS

The Benefits system is never easy to navigate and we know this may be the first time you may have had to use it. We can help bridge the gap between your first payment and any unplanned spend. Tick the 'referral to the support team' box when you apply so we can look for grants and other schemes to help you.

Make an application online today at <https://www.platformhmg.com/wellbeing-fund>.





Our Wellbeing Fund offers **SUPPORT PACKAGES** for



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

If you're looking for help with training or accreditation costs or need sponsorship for tuition or a course, we can help. We can also give practical help with travel costs or work wear to get started in a new job. We have also joined forces with Stay Nimble to offer FREE online career coaching.

Find out more at **Stay Nimble can help you find a new career at Platform Housing Group (platformhg.com).**



HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE/WHITE GOODS/FLOORING

Whether your white and kitchen goods are in need of repair or you've just moved in and need some help getting started, we can help.



DIGITAL INCLUSION

Whether it is help getting connected to stay in touch or easing the multiple device broadband pressure, we can help. Whatever your digital need, we can help with a device to get you online.

Tick the 'referral to the support team' box when you apply so we can look for grants and other schemes to help you.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Give your physical and mental health and wellbeing a much needed boost with support for classes, activities and groups.



Make an application online today at <https://www.platformhg.com/wellbeing-fund>

Domestic Abuse

Platform Housing has hundreds of domestic abuse incidents reported to us every year. In December, 2020, we launched an advice, guidance and reporting tab on our website and have had nearly 800 hits from people looking for advice in respect of their tenancy rights and looking for domestic abuse support agencies.

Domestic abuse has a dramatic impact on victims, survivors and their families as well as having a huge impact on individual communities and wider society. Platform Housing will not tolerate any form of domestic abuse against its customers and we are here to offer help, support and guidance on how to escape an abusive relationship.

Later this year Platform will be applying for accreditation from the **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)**.

DAHA's mission is to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse, through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and an accreditation process.

By gaining accreditation we will be able to continue to ensure that the best possible standards of advice and support services are consistently available to all of our customers.



We are here to help!

If you are a victim of domestic abuse or would like to report an incident of domestic abuse you have witnessed, please visit our website or call **0333 200 7304**.



daha

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

Virtual Surgeries

In order to ensure we can keep in touch with our customers, especially whilst we have all been in lockdown but also going forward, we are trialling Virtual Surgeries. These are where a group of customers and our Neighbourhood Officers 'meet' on line to talk about local neighbourhood issues.

Check out the dates and locations of the next Virtual surgeries:-



St. Marys View, Hucknall	▶ 1st March 2021	10.30 a.m.
Croft Close & Stonegate, Cowbit	▶ 1st March 2021	10.30 a.m.
Harvey's Lane & Stewton Lane, Louth	▶ 3rd March 2021	10.30 a.m.
Willoughby Road, Alford	▶ 4th March 2021	10.30 a.m.
Westcroft Close, Youlgreave	▶ 4th March 2021	10.30 a.m.
Gateway Court, Matlock	▶ 10th March 2021	10.30 a.m.
Primrose Place, Lincoln	▶ 10th March 2021	10.30 a.m.
Brun Balderston Close, Spilsby	▶ 11th March 2021	10.30 a.m.
East View Close & West View Close, Chapel St. Leonards	▶ 12th March 2021	10.30 a.m.
Shawcroft, Ashbourne	▶ 17th March 2021	10.30 a.m.
Harebell Gardens, Bingham	▶ 6th April 2021	10.30 a.m.

Keep a look out for more virtual surgeries happening in your area or contact your local Neighbourhood Officer if you feel that your area would like to hold one.

Make your Money Go Further -

We are Here to Help!

Platform Housing Group has its own team dedicated to helping you pay your rent.

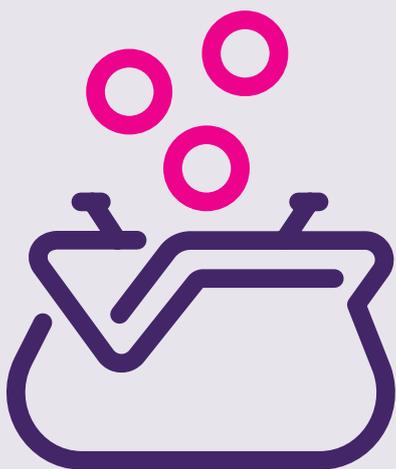
We can do a full benefit check to see if your income can be increased and run through a budget with you to look at reducing your outgoings. The Team also have localised knowledge about grants and schemes available to you.

With nearly 4,000 referrals, it's already been a busy year; and from supporting customers affected by the pandemic to those experiencing fuel poverty and needing help with making money go further, we are here to help.

If you have any questions or want to discuss anything in more detail:

Call: **0333 200 7304** and ask for the **Welfare Reform and Tenancy Sustainment Team**.

Email: welfarereform@platformhg.com and be sure to include your full name and address.



FREE Help with CV writing, job searching, interviewing skills



Platform Housing Group have partnered with Stay Nimble, a digital career coaching platform, to help get people into work.

2020 was a tough year for sure! We are hoping to reach out and provide some help for Platform customers that may be experiencing difficulties in their work life.

Are you searching for work or looking for a different direction? This could be the perfect tool for you! You would benefit from up to six months of **free access** to the Stay Nimble platform.

The Stay Nimble coaching service will help you to build your confidence and inspire belief in a brighter future. It can help you find rewarding career options matched to your skills and strengths and will introduce a wide range of career matches and job vacancies in your local areas.

To find out more about how we can help you please complete the web form on our website and we'll help you start your journey.

<https://www.platformhg.com/stay-nimble-on-line-coaching>

Alternatively, register your interest with us via email at welfarereform@platformhg.com with your name and address and we will get back to you.



Community Heroes



Through our work in communities we regularly come across individuals who give up their time to make a positive difference for their neighbours and community.

This has never been more apparent than the past 10 months with communities pulling together in the face of COVID-19. We want to recognise and celebrate those individuals to remind them how valuable they are, to do this we have developed Platform Community Heroes.

Do you know a Platform Community Hero who deserves recognition?

We'd love to hear about individuals and groups who have had a positive impact on their community. We'll feature their stories and make sure that they get the appreciation they deserve.

We'd love to receive your nominations about someone who deserves recognition for one or more of the following categories:

- **Exceptional Times:** Going the Extra Mile - People who have risen to the challenges of these times to help those around them.
- **Outstanding Contribution to Customer Involvement** - Involved Platform customers who have shown tremendous commitment to improving services.
- **Young Person Award** - Young people (under the age of 18) who have stepped up to make a difference for others in their community.
- **Communities Together** - Individuals or groups who have done great work to bring communities together, ensuring that no-one is excluded.
- **Outstanding Platform Volunteer** - Platform volunteers who have shown outstanding commitment to helping others.
- **Environmental Award** - Individuals or groups who have taken steps to improve the world around us, either focusing on immediate surroundings or tackling more global issues.
- **Positive Changes Award** - People who have taken brave steps to take their lives in a positive direction.
- **Digital Award** - People who have gone the extra mile in helping others to develop digital skills or individuals who have developed their own skills against the odds.
- **Street Award** - Communities that are proud of their street or block.

Please check that the individual or group is happy to be nominated and to have their stories shared before making nominations.

To find out more and to make a nomination, visit www.platformhmg.com/platform-community-heroes we would love to hear from you!

What do our new customers feel about their new homes?

As we continue to build around **1,500 new homes each year** we wanted to know how customers felt about the design and usability of their new home. **90%** were satisfied with their new home and **86%** would recommend a new build home from Platform to their family and friends.

90% thought their new home delivered value for money. We asked our new home customers 'if they were to design a new home for the future, what would be the most important things to add' - responses included the following themes:

- Renewable energy such as car charging points, solar panels, wildlife friendly, rainwater harvesting.
- Future proofing such as level access to property and garden.
- Technology including USB sockets, Smart technology for lights and heating.
- General issues for examples extra storage space, better parking provision, larger gardens, space for tumble dryer/dishwasher.



Breaches of Government Rules in Lockdown



Platform have been receiving reports from our Customers that people have been breaking the Government lockdown rules.

As a Landlord it is extremely limited what we can do, if anything at all.

The Police have the responsibility of enforcing any lockdown rules and if you have concerns whatsoever please report your concerns to your local Police team.

Platform Community Chest – Supporting Projects & Communities

Did you know that as a Platform customer you could apply for funding to help make a difference in your community?

Whether it's a new idea or help for an existing project, Platform Community Chest provides funding to support a range of improvements, activities and initiatives that promote:

- Community Cohesion.
- Community Safety.
- Health and Wellbeing.
- Digital Inclusion.
- Skills and employability.

This funding is available for community groups or organisations to apply for where initiatives benefit our customers and wider communities. The Customer Experience Panel review all the applications received and are responsible for either approving or rejecting the applications.

In the past few months Platform Community Chest has supported a number of valuable projects, including:

- Supporting the continued delivery of meals on wheels for isolated and vulnerable people.
- Working with a group of communal gardeners to install raised beds and seating areas to bring people together.
- Keeping the community spirit alive in challenging times by contributing to adapting Christmas displays during lockdown.
- Supporting the growth of a neighbourhood watch scheme to help the community feel safer.
- Supporting schools and colleges, to purchase laptops to help children with home schooling during lockdown.

If you have an idea that you think would benefit your community please visit <https://www.platformhg.com/community-funding> to find out more.



The difference being made to individual lives is reflective in their below comments:

“Working with Housing First, although still working with other agencies, has given me other opportunities that have never been offered before. I feel happy.”

“It’s amazing. No one has ever really helped me before.”

“Housing First has saved my life, haven’t got to sleep with one eye open anymore. Thanks for being firm but fair, it’s helped me a lot. It’s reassuring to know you see me 3 times a week, as I am lonely but know you will always be there.”

“The service is really good and you have been really helpful.”

“I’ve needed this for a long time. I feel privileged. It feels like my worker really cares and wants to help me.”

Housing First Pilots



It has been 12 months since Platform started supporting various **Housing First pilots** across the West Midlands.

Housing First is an approach which provides a stable, independent home to rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs, supporting them with intensive personalised support and case management.

We want to share with you the feedback we have received from the Worcestershire service. Thank you to everyone involved who has helped make the pilot a success.

The support that Housing First has received from Platform has been excellent. Through working together to provide housing and support to people that would not have been given this chance outside of Housing First, has been life changing.

In addition to providing accommodation, Platform donated their Show Home furniture, which was distributed across multiple tenancies.



Great News for our Young People's Services

Malvern Hills Foyer, at the foot of the Malvern Hills was built in 1999, to provide a home with support to help homeless young people in Worcestershire.

Now over 20 years old, The Foyer facilities need an upgrade and we are delighted to report that our Board approved a refurbishment programme to help us transform and update the now outdated communal spaces and provide 4 additional rooms, including an emergency room, bringing the total number of temporary homes to help up to 21 young people at a time who find themselves homeless.

We are also converting an existing room into a training flat to help fully prepare a young person with the lifeskills they need at the end of their time with us as they move on independently.

We are working in partnership with DJD Architects, internal colleagues from our Growth & Development and Assets Teams, along with our customers to create a more modern and fit for purpose range of spaces and facilities to encourage our young people to socialise, build relationships with one another and with our on site dedicated staffing team.

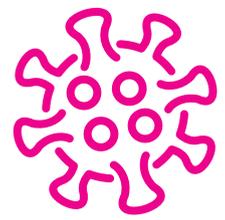
Customers are really looking forward to the prospect of having their own en-suite bathrooms ... and an end to having to share bathrooms and toilets. The staff team are looking forward to an end to discussions about how others leave the bathrooms and critically the toilet seats!

More updates to follow as the work progresses.

Malvern Hills Foyer Refurbishment.



Our Response to Covid-19 – Specialist Housing



No one could of predicted or planned for how our lives and the world would change due to the Covid-19/Coronavirus pandemic we've all faced with locked down and tiered restrictions to keep ourselves, our families and our communities safe.



Christmas Fun Christmas elf day.

Many of our elderly residents live alone and welcome interaction and support from our Specialist Housing Teams. During the lockdown and tiered restrictions we have provided regular telephone wellbeing checks as we understand how much a chat with a friendly voice is very much appreciated in these times.

We've assisted with shopping when those most vulnerable were self-isolating, organised social distancing events to keep spirits high.

We've socially distanced celebrating Birthdays, a number of which were 100 year celebrations! Organised Easter events, honoured the 75th anniversary of VE day and in November Remembrance Day.

We've delivered meals, planned activities to do at home. Organised competitions for the younger members of our surrounding communities to get involved, whilst being off school.

Although our community rooms have needed to be closed with lockdown we still managed some festive decoration to help bring a little joy.

All of our Specialist Housing residents received a Christmas card and on Christmas Day we telephoned some of our residents to wish them a Merry Christmas where we were aware they may not have contact from anyone else, these calls were very well received and a pleasure.

We have continued to do what we can to help keep our residents are safe. We continue to carry out in-depth risk assessments, building inspections, testing of equipment and enhanced cleaning to make homes across our Specialist Housing services as protected from Coronavirus as we can.

A huge thank-you to all our residents for how they have coped with the government restrictions and worked with us helping to keep themselves, the Specialist Housing Teams and our communities safe.



VE Day Trolley delivery at CPV with the catering team.

The Falls Response Service in Worcestershire

Since 2013 we have been engaged by the NHS to provide a truly worthwhile service to Worcestershire residents. The Falls Response service started with a small team of 4 Falls Responders across South Worcestershire and its success has seen it grow to a North and South team of 12 Responders who work across the whole of Worcestershire.

The service operates 24/7, 365 days a week and our dedicated, trained team of Falls Responders visit every call in pairs and are ably assisted to manoeuvre fallers who are often stuck in the tightest of spaces using their specialised lifting cushion and slip sheets.

The service quite simply helps to save lives, as it reduces calls to the Ambulance Service. In almost all cases, our Responders arrive within 30 minutes, carry out top to toe checks, carefully and professionally helping fallers back to their feet.

In the last year, the team responded to just over 4000 calls. Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, the service has continued and is busier than ever, in part due to people staying at home more.

We have so many comments and compliments from our customers:-

- Such a brilliant service! They are so friendly and treated me with respect.
- Talked me through the whole process and made me feel safe and secure.
- They checked that I had not injured myself before picking me up, and made me walk after a short rest, to ensure that I would not fall again.
- Wonderful service, I will not hesitate in calling them again. I liked that there were no flashing lights arriving at my house which always makes me nervous as I am frightened they will take me to hospital.

To find out more about the service or to find out how you or a family member could access the service, speak to one of our team who can provide details of the alarm monitoring centres who work with us – Amica24 and Redditch New Lifeline.

Tel: **0333 200 7304** or

Email: Jan.Daniel@platformhg.com or
Deborah.Russell@platformhg.com

