

# Mid Devon Housing News

April 2023  
Issue 3



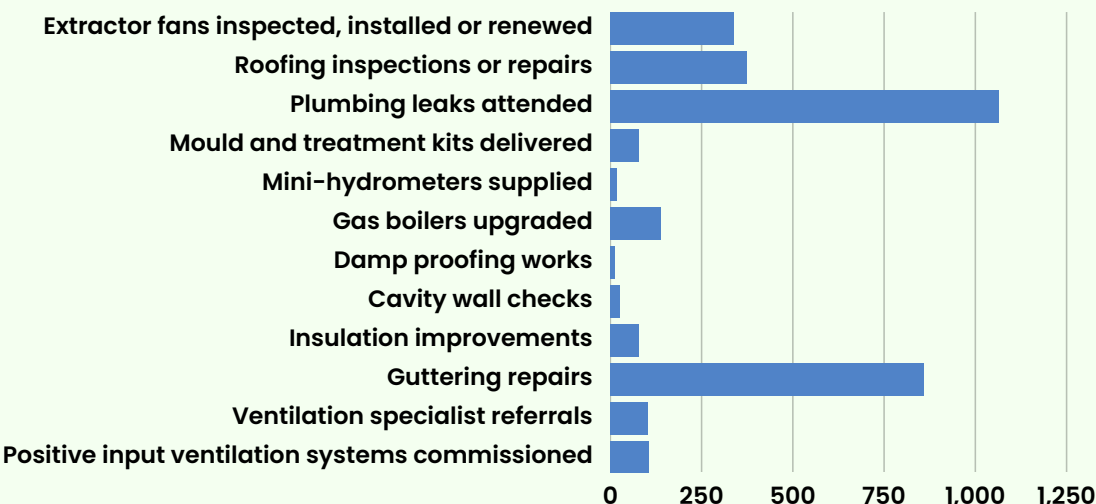
@MidDevonHousing

## Spring has sprung!

I am sure we are all in agreement that at last spring is here! It feels like it has been a long and cold winter but the flowers are blooming, we can start enjoying the outdoors more and before we know it, it will be summer.

Lots has been happening here at MDH, the neighbourhood officers are nearing the end of their walkabouts, we are getting ready for the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures which are effective as of April 2023, we are organising a damp and mould focus group (contact us if you would like to be involved, see page 3), the Winter Warmth Club has been rebranded to Community Cuppa and is launching at the Crediton and Cullompton leisure centres from May! Turn to page 3 for more info.

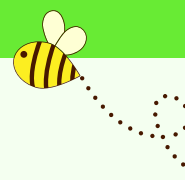
The responsive repairs team have also been busy dealing with damp and mould. Here's some stats for 1st April 2022 - 30th March 2023. We have received around 233 inspection or repair requests relating to damp and mould. In the same period, we have:



## TEAM OF THE YEAR AWARD

### 2023 Resolve ASB Awards

We are delighted to announce that Mid Devon Housing has been awarded Team of the Year by Resolve ASB! We take great pride in the work we do around anti social behaviour on our estates and we couldn't have done this without working so closely with our tenants, leaseholders and residents living on Mid Devon Housing estates, so thank you! Before the winners were announced, the team attended a seminar to hear about the government's ASB action plan and also participated in a round table event with the Regulator of Social Housing to discuss the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. We are looking forward to continuing our work on tackling ASB and further supporting our communities.



Turn to page 3 to enter our gardening competition for your chance to win Love to Shop vouchers!

### Complaints Officer

Did you know we have a dedicated Complaints Officer who is able to look into any issues you may have in connection with MDH services? If you are dissatisfied about any aspect of our service, please email: [housingcomplaints@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:housingcomplaints@middevon.gov.uk). You can also view our complaints and feedback policy here: [www.middevon.gov.uk/media/353715/complaints-and-feedback-policy2021.pdf](http://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/353715/complaints-and-feedback-policy2021.pdf)



## Cost of Living Spotlight



Did you miss March's spotlight of the month on Facebook and Twitter? We covered a range of topics from local help to what to do if you are in rent arrears. Did you know that if you are struggling to pay for white goods or basic furniture ReFURNISH have just opened a new store in Tiverton. They sell furniture and appliances at low cost to people on low incomes. You will also find a store in Cridton.

**£100**

**The amount you could save a year by turning your combi boiler flow temperature down to 60c**

CHAT has partnered with Exeter Community Energy and are offering free energy and money saving advice calls for Mid Devon and surrounding areas. You're eligible for free advice if you have any one of the following: a low income, receive tax credits, housing benefits, income or disability related benefits or you have a long term illness or disability. They can help with energy and water saving advice, help with changing a supplier or tariff, applying for discounts, referral for help with benefits and debt and much more. You can contact their website or you can call, email or complete a referral form online.

**The amount you could save a year by turning appliances off at the socket**

**£70**

## UC Universal Credit

### What happens when universal credit claimants reach pension age?

Your entitlement for universal credit ends when a single person or younger member of a couple reaches the state pension age. From this point you can then claim pension age income benefits. The pension age is currently 66. If you are approaching this age we encourage you to claim state retirement pension and if you are eligible, pension credit. Pension credit claims can be made up to four months before a person reaches 66. If you receive universal credit for housing costs, a new claim will be needed for housing benefit. This can be made up to seventeen weeks before a person reaches state pension age.

### Mid Devon Housing (MDH) has been recognised for its work on raising awareness of the dangers of using loan sharks, with a national award from The England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT).



### MDH has been working alongside Newton Environmental Wellbeing Group to create a community fruit orchard.

On 22nd March we held an opening ceremony for the fruit orchard which was planted by NEW group and their volunteers in February. Offering a variety of apples and pears for the local community to enjoy.



The IMLT, which investigates and prosecutes illegal money lenders while supporting those who have borrowed money from a loan shark, has awarded MDH Partner Recognition accreditation for their initiatives in raising awareness of illegal money lenders and making communities safer. MDH are the first council to receive this recognition.

MDH has carried out regular communications and campaigns with the Neighbourhood Policing Team to raise awareness of loan sharks and how to report them, as well as taking part in IMLT led training sessions with the police. This has helped the team to recognise when a tenant may have fallen victim to an illegal money lender, how to report and how to support our tenants.





# Upcoming Events



## Community Cuppa

Our Winter Warmth Club is expanding and rebranding! We will continue every week at Westfield Common Room in Tiverton. And after suggestions from you from our recent survey, on the first Wednesday of every month from May we will now host a Community Cuppa at Lord Meadow and Culm Valley Leisure Centres. All Community Cuppas will be from 10.30am until 12pm. See you on the 3rd May Crediton and Cullompton!



## Annual Report 2022-2023

Our Annual report is in progress and is due to be with you in June. The annual report provides performance data and news on the housing service throughout the financial year of 2022/2023



## Local Elections

Town/Parish and District Council Elections will take place across Mid Devon on 4 May 2023. For the first time all voters will need to bring a valid form of photo ID with them to the polling station, make sure to bring yours.



## Mid Devon in Bloom 2023

It's time to grab your gardening gloves because Mid Devon in Bloom is here! This is your chance to showcase your talents and win a £25 Love2Shop voucher. Closing date 31/07/23. Categories below:

- Best Garden**
- Best wildlife or sustainable garden**
- Best Young Gardener (5-16 years)**
- Community Corner**
- Baskets and containers**
- Over 65s**

Send at least 3 photos to us via Facebook, Twitter or email [tenantinvolvement@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantinvolvement@middevon.gov.uk). Please head to our website to see the terms and conditions before entering. The competition can be found under Housing News on the MDH web page.



## Damp and Mould Focus Group

We are in the process of setting up a tenant led damp and mould focus group. This is an opportunity for our tenants to meet and discuss their own experiences they've faced with damp and mould, to hear your thoughts on our policy and how we can improve our service. We would also welcome your feedback on a new damp and mould leaflet we have recently produced. Want to get involved? Message us on Facebook or Twitter, email us on [tenantinvolvement@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantinvolvement@middevon.gov.uk) or call us on 01884 255255



# Help and Advice

## Ask your Income Neighbourhood Officer for help

Ask your Income Neighbourhood Officer for advice on options in relation to the cost of living increases which we are aware are currently impacting all of our customers, we aim to see how we can help every individual. We work with the following agencies in order to help:

- CHAT – Churches Housing Action Team - Housing, debt and money advice [www.chatmid.org](http://www.chatmid.org) - 01884 255606 or 0800 0590104
- Navigate - Money and Debt Services in Somerset and Devon [www.navigatecharity.org.uk](http://www.navigatecharity.org.uk) 01823 299050
- Citizens Advice Bureau - [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) 0800 144 8848
- AGEUK – nationally - Age UK [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk) 0800 678 1602
- National Debt line, who offer free advice [www.nationaldebtline.org](http://www.nationaldebtline.org) 0808 808 4000



Our focus is to help you to achieve a better financial position, whether that is making an affordable arrangement on outstanding rent or charges, or working with our colleagues within Mid Devon to ensure that we negotiate affordable payments for debts across our various service, this helps our customers to make one payment to be distributed amongst our services.

## Help in the Community: What is available in your area?

**Bradninch:** St Disens hall Warm Welcome – every Wednesday 9am-3pm. Hot drinks and home baking, free to all. The Baptist Church, Millway open every Thursday for breakfasts and lunches.

**Crediton:** There are a number of warm spaces on offer in Crediton. Lots provide warm drinks and some provide food. View the locations and days of the week here: [www.crediton.gov.uk/Facilities/Crediton-Warm-Spaces.uk](http://www.crediton.gov.uk/Facilities/Crediton-Warm-Spaces.uk)

**Cullompton:** Cullompton Community Centre - Women's craft morning, craft materials, hot drinks and lunch provided (free). Mondays 10-12.30pm. Cullompton Community Centre - Silver tops, over 60s tea coffee and games. Second and forth Monday of the month 2-4pm.

**Tiverton:** Sunningmead Community Centre offer free lunch on the go every Friday 11am-1pm.

**Uffculme:** Uffculme Warm Spaces – Fridays from 10am at Square Corner. A warm and friendly space where you can save on heating at home, enjoy freshly made soup and rolls as well as tea and coffee. All free.

Uffculme Community Fridge – You can find this at Uffculme Surgery. The aim is to prevent food waste and also enable people facing hardship to have access to fresh food. Anyone can put food in and anyone can take food out.



## Get help to lower your energy bills

Exeter Community Energy is offering free impartial energy advice in Mid Devon.

Contact ECOE by email on [healthyhomes@ecoe.org.uk](mailto:healthyhomes@ecoe.org.uk) or by telephone on 08007 723617, to book a free energy and money saving advice call.

[www.ecoe.org.uk/healthy-homes-wellbeing](http://www.ecoe.org.uk/healthy-homes-wellbeing)



If you have borrowed from a loan shark or are worried about someone else, please get in touch with Stop Loan Sharks:

24/7 Helpline - 0300 555 2222  
(Callers Remain Anonymous)

Website: [www.stoploansharks.co.uk](http://www.stoploansharks.co.uk)

Mobile Phone App - Stop Loan Sharks

Text - 07860 022116



## Mind - Help with Mental Health

When you're living with a mental health problem, or supporting someone who is, having access to the right information is vital. [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)