

Benefit Changes and Universal Credit

This year has seen the introduction of Universal Credit into the Arun District. At the moment the only people affected are single people claiming Job Seekers Allowance – when they have a change in circumstances they switch to Universal Credit. As a Housing Association we are able to receive email alerts and updates in order we can try to assist our tenants with their Universal Credit claim.

From April 2016 most social housing rents have applied a 1% reduction which will continue to be applied annual until 2020. Most of our properties have avoided this requirement as we provide Supported Housing services to most tenants. Where-ever possible the Society has absorbed these costs. April also saw the Government introducing the 'Benefit Freeze' – Benefits for people of working age are frozen for four years and there will be no annual increases.

It is expected that in Autumn 2016 the government will introduce the 'Benefits Cap' and so the total amount of allowed benefits a household can claim will reduce.

As always we will continue to keep up to date with any changes and any impact they may have on our tenants.

A few changes we have made at LRHS

As you will all be aware we moved into our lovely new office accommodation in August 2015. Louise Moore was promoted to Deputy Housing Manager in November 2015, when she also increased her hours to full time.

We employed another full time maintenance technician in February 2016 so just to remind everyone the estate staff consist of: Sally Morris - Housing Manager, Louise Moore – Deputy Housing Manager, Colin Hills and Kim Gick - Assistant Housing Managers, John Bodsworth, Shaun Lamb, Mick Stone and Stephen Greening Maintenance Technicians.

In order to assist our tenants with rent payments we signed up to WorldPay and we are now able to take card payments either over the telephone or in person at the estate office.

We currently manage a total of 252 tenancies over 82 offsite properties and 87 sheltered housing.

The major works programme at Rustington Hall was completed in January 2016 and we are now registered for 62 modern nursing and residential care rooms.

A new gardening contractor at our main Oakhurst Gardens site commenced in April 2016, with the whole estate now looking truly magnificent. At time of writing we have just been judged for our sixth annual entry to South & South East in Bloom with the judges commenting on how superb the gardens are. They even said they had to write an 'ideas for improvement' and they had no idea what they were going to write as they couldn't think of anything more we could do!! We will be attending the award ceremony in Fareham in September to find out how well we have scored.

Thank you for your continued support from all the estate team.