

www.selwoodhousing.com

Winter 2018

# working

**wt**

# together

The magazine for tenants and residents

## Our annual report

How we did in 2017-18

### **7 We built 254 new homes**

Finalists in regional building award

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DIY SOS update

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We support the "Make a Stand" campaign

**selwood**  
HOUSING GROUP



On your doorstep



Kids' club



Get surfing



Make a difference



T: 01225 715 715

E: [info@selwoodhousing.com](mailto:info@selwoodhousing.com)

W: [www.selwoodhousing.com](http://www.selwoodhousing.com)

[facebook.com/selwoodhousing](https://facebook.com/selwoodhousing)

[twitter.com/selwoodhousing](https://twitter.com/selwoodhousing)

Bryer Ash Business Park,  
Bradford Road, Trowbridge,  
Wiltshire BA14 8RT

Office  
opening times

8.30am - 5.30pm Mon - Thurs

8.30am - 5pm Fri

Registered Charity No. 1141124

Repairs helpline

T: 01225 715 715 option 1

E: [repairs@selwoodhousing.com](mailto:repairs@selwoodhousing.com)

W: [www.selwoodhousing.com/  
report-a-repair](http://www.selwoodhousing.com/report-a-repair)

Out of hours emergencies

T: 01225 715 715, option 1

## Welcome to

After what was a pretty good summer by British standards, winter is now well and truly upon us. I hope that you're all wrapping up warm and following the hints and tips on our website, we'd love to hear more.

Homemade Christmas puds are traditionally made on Stir-up Sunday, which falls this weekend. Look out for our handy **Christmas Pudding recipe** on our website. Find out more about this tradition and **activities to keep the kid's entertained (p22)**, we also have some **pocket-friendly party recipes** for those last minute guests from our friends at Aldi (p23).

This issue also includes our **annual performance** report, a summary of where we've done well and what we need to improve on in the last financial year (April 2017- March 2018).

As it's the holiday season, our offices will be closed from **2.30pm on Monday 24 December** and will reopen on **2 January at 8.30am**. If you have an emergency during this time, you can contact our out of hours team on **01225 715 715**, select **option 1**.

Have a very merry Christmas from everyone at Selwood Housing Group. See you in 2019.

Amée Dewitt  
**Community engagement  
facilitator & guest editor**

T: 01225 715 908

E: [workingtogether@selwoodhousing.com](mailto:workingtogether@selwoodhousing.com)



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# It's good to talk!

We plan to build 1,000 homes for people in need and spend £33 million on our existing homes in the next five years. So every penny we spend matters.

We're looking for customers like you to tell us what you think about how we involve you and keep you up to date about our services.

### 1. Take part in the conversation about our services

Help us to make important decisions about:

- **What** things you would like us to tell you about
- **How** you would like to hear from us
- **What** you would like to **have a say** about
- **How** you would like to do this

**When?** In the New Year

**How?** You can take part online, through surveys or focus groups at our offices.

### 2. Test how easy it is to use our services

Whether it's paying your rent or contacting us about your tenancy or estate, help us test and improve our services, so we can:

- Make sure our services work well for our customers
- Make improvements
- Be honest about what we can and can't do
- Make sure our customers know what to expect from us

**When?** Spring 2019

**How?** There will be a range of ways to take part, from online surveys to telephone interviews and focus groups.

To get involved, email [makeadifference@selwoodhousing.com](mailto:makeadifference@selwoodhousing.com) or call **01225 715 715**

This won't take much of your time, but will help us a lot. ■

# Record breaking homes

Our development in West Ashton was shortlisted for a regional award.

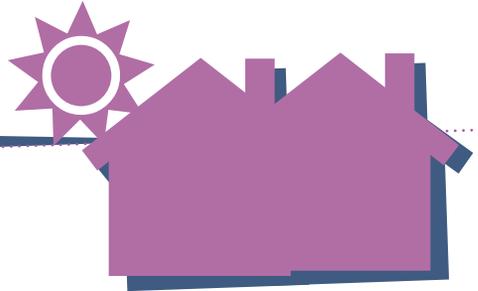
During the financial year of 2017/18 Selwood Housing built a record number of 254 affordable homes.

Selwood Housing was then shortlisted in the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) West of England Building Excellence Awards 2018. The East Town Road development in West Ashton, near Trowbridge, was shortlisted in two categories, 'best small new housing development' and 'best social or affordable new housing development'.

*"The development is part of Selwood Housing's much wider contribution to combatting the housing crisis in Wiltshire and surrounding counties."*

Paul Walsh, group development director at Selwood Housing commented, "We were delighted to be shortlisted for two awards in the LABC West of England Building Excellence Awards. Built last year, this development has been really well-received in the village of West Ashton, and provides much needed affordable homes in this rural community."

"The development is part of Selwood Housing's much wider contribution to combatting the housing crisis in Wiltshire and surrounding counties." ■



**Housing associations built 26% of new homes in England in 2017/18.**

Source: National Housing Federation's Home Truths Report.

The East Town Road development is built for performance and sustainability. Constructed from responsibly sourced materials the properties boast increased insulation and an internal membrane to provide low running costs.



Two beautiful new homes in West Ashton near Trowbridge



living in **254** new homes at full occupancy.



This includes **51** shared ownership homes helping families to get on the property ladder.



satisfied with **overall quality of your new build home**



**91%** happy with bathroom



**90%** happy with kitchen



**88%** happy with communal areas



We built a **record** number of **254** homes in one financial year, across Wiltshire, Mendip and Bath & North East Somerset.



**3,236** houses  
**1,228** apartments  
**281** bungalows  
**1,429** sheltered homes  
**226** other (care homes etc.)



Thanks to a Government decision to reverse cuts to grants used for building affordable homes, we plan to maximise the number of homes we build.



**Building Excellence AWARDS 2018**  
Regional Finalist



We were shortlisted for two LABC awards; **best small housing scheme** and **best social housing scheme**. This shows our commitment to continuing to invest in smaller, rural communities.



**difficult to let properties**  
now providing homes for new customers.

We have reviewed the way that we manage and record costs that relate to preparing empty homes for new tenants.

**The average cost for**



**against a target of**



Reflecting total material and labour costs.

**Against a target of 24 days**, the average time to get an empty property ready to let was **21.9 days**. This is higher than last year, but reflects an increase in works carried out at empty properties, including removal of asbestos, where possible.



of customers think our rent charge is **good value for money**



of customers are satisfied with our **allocations and lettings process**

**Average days to let an empty property**



(includes new builds)

**Current tenant arrears**



Starter tenancy arrears rose from



This figure was due to having more new homes (more starter tenancies overall) and some impact from the way Universal Credit is paid.



customers moved across to universal credit.

# Changing rooms

The Margaret Stancomb site development is part of our plan to provide more affordable homes in Wiltshire, Mendip and Bath and North East Somerset.

This site in the centre of Trowbridge, Wiltshire, has been derelict for over ten years, since the former school joined with Bellefield primary school.

In the Trowbridge area there are currently 346 households in need of a range of affordable rented homes, from one bedroom upwards. There are also 155 households registered for shared ownership.

Barry Hughes, Selwood Housing group chief executive said, "As a local housing association based in Trowbridge, we're delighted to have bought this brownfield site in order to deliver much-needed affordable homes. Our plans are to regenerate this site sympathetically, keeping



The Margaret Stancomb site is an impressive 19th century school building.

*...we're delighted to have bought this brownfield site in order to deliver much-needed affordable homes."*

the 19th Century main school building. We will build a range of affordable homes for shared ownership and social rent. The shared ownership homes will help local families get on to the housing ladder, and the homes for social rent will provide lower cost rented homes on a secure basis. We have consulted with the local community to get feedback on these plans."

Barry Hughes added, "As a local housing association, we understand the difficulties

many people face in finding affordable homes, especially with the cost of privately renting a home increasing. Selwood Housing's plans for the Margaret Stancomb site will provide homes for local people and families who couldn't afford to privately rent or buy a home."

Toby Sturgis, cabinet member for spatial planning, development management and property said, "Where possible we are keen for suitable development on brownfield sites. I look forward to hearing more detail on these proposals to provide affordable housing for Wiltshire."

To find out more about this development, visit [www.selwoodhousing.com](http://www.selwoodhousing.com) and search for 'Margaret Stancomb.' ■

# Man's best friend

With an estimated 54 million pets in the UK, it's clear that we are a nation of pet lovers, including us at Selwood Housing.

We are often asked questions about pet ownership so we've included some answers for you here.

## What are my responsibilities if I have a pet?

You're responsible for keeping your pets under control and appropriately cared for. They shouldn't roam unsupervised, be a nuisance to neighbours or foul on another property's grounds.



Pets can be a great source of companionship and enrich lives

## What kind of pet can I keep?

There are certain animals that we won't give you permission to keep, including some breeds of dog, as well as wild, farm and poisonous animals, or endangered species.

We'll treat guide, hearing and enabling dogs as special cases.

## Why's the scheme I live in 'pet free'?

Some of our schemes are 'pet free' for safety reasons, such as where there are shared corridors and in some of our schemes

for older people. Unfortunately, we can't give permission for you to have a pet in these properties.

## What happens if someone complains about my pet?

If we receive a justified complaint about your pet's welfare or the impact it has on others, we'll ask you to find an alternative home for it.

## What if I have a problem with a neighbour's pet?

Try to speak to your neighbour. Contact us if the problem continues. If it's a stray dog causing a nuisance, contact the dog warden at your local council.

## What do I do if I suspect an animal's being neglected?

If you suspect that a neighbour is guilty of cruelty or neglect towards an animal then you can report this to the RSPCA.

You can view our new pets and animals policy on our website for more information. ■

The RSPCA holds regular free Animal Action Days and we recently supported one of these fantastic events in Melksham. Read about Anne Sur's happy experience there on our letter's page (P31).

Check [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk) for upcoming dates in your area.



# Incredible Edible

Amelia, a Selwood Housing customer and professional gardener, invited working together to visit a local community garden project, known as “Incredible Edible”.

Amelia tells us more about the garden, “a neighbour within the community took care of this allotment and was utterly devoted to it for 40 years. When he passed away, I couldn’t see it go to waste and decided to take it on.

I had heard about the Todmorden garden in Yorkshire and wanted to get the community involved.

The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Community Payback team were great and spent four weekends getting the garden back into a workable plot. Now the garden has been running for six years, and has several fantastic volunteers involved, it’s a great success.”

## What sort of crops do you currently grow?

“There are herbs grown all year-round, salad crops, French and runner beans, leeks, sweetcorn, potatoes, chard, sprouting broccoli, onions and rhubarb to name a few.

All our crops are grown organically, which can be challenging at times as it does mean we have to be more thoughtful with what seeds we sow and when, however it’s more rewarding.”

## What happens with all the vegetables you grow?

“There’s a blackboard tied to the fence, where we list the vegetables that are ready to pick, then



Amelia is pictured on the right alongside Nicola who is a volunteer, working in the garden

people can come into the garden and pick the produce themselves.

Nothing ever goes to waste, it’s lovely. Although we would like to see more people coming to get a few beans for their stir fry or potatoes for their supper.”

## What’s your favourite thing about the Incredible Edible garden?

“So many people stop and admire the garden and all the hard work that’s gone into it. Gardening is just great for physical and mental health. It’s both a learning and a community thing and I love being a part of it.

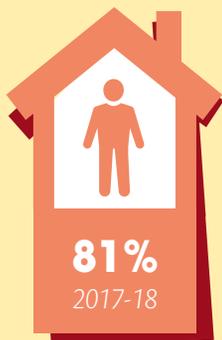
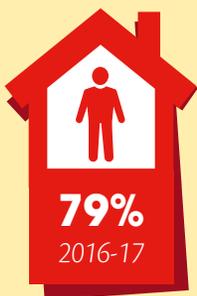
Read more about the project in the Your Community section on our website. ■



customers have had their say via **one-off meetings** or via **regular forums** and **groups**.

Some of the topics that were discussed included laundry provision, refurbishment works and developing our new website.

### Satisfied with opportunities to get involved



### Clean litter picks



Almost **400** customers were involved in our community spring and autumn **clean litter picks**, in Warminster, Trowbridge & Melksham.



We are making improvements to our **antisocial behaviour work** following recommendations from our **scrutiny team** review.



We ran our first ever 'make a difference' awards, attended by over **50** customers, recognising the achievement and work of our customers in supporting their neighbours and communities.



children from Selwood Housing communities attended **Junior Good Citizen events** in the summer, learning how to stay safe and be aware of their surroundings.



of you say Selwood Housing is **good at keeping you informed**.



# Get set to recycle

In Wiltshire, you can now recycle plastic pots, tubs and trays, drink and food cartons, cardboard and shredded paper in your blue bins, in addition to the usual plastic bottles and cardboard.

Bridget Wayman, Wiltshire Council's cabinet member for waste and Selwood Housing Group board member, said: "Recycling saves energy, costs less and frees up space in household waste bins.

"It also has less impact on the environment than burying it in landfill or burning it to generate energy, so the more we can recycle, the better it is for all of us. Residents will get an improved service without the confusion of changed collection days – so it's good news all round."

There have been changes to what can be recycled in many other areas too. If you are unsure what can and cannot be recycled use the tools on [www.recyclenow.com](http://www.recyclenow.com).

If you are having a clear out for Christmas and disposing of large items, please ensure these are taken to your local household recycling centre. Details can be found on your council's website.

Most councils can collect large items from outside your property for a charge, which is reduced if you receive a means tested benefit.

In some areas, you can donate your pre-loved furniture and electrical items to one of the four Dorothy House Furniture Stores in your area. So, have a clear out and donate to a good cause at the same time. ■

## Dorothy House Furniture Stores

Bath: 01225 314 428

Frome: 01373 471 989

Chippenham: 01249 658 820

Melksham: 01225 704 244

# Mayor's award

Back in the summer we attended the Trowbridge Town Gathering and Community Awards event hosted by the Mayor, Deborah Halik.

Amée Dewitt, our community engagement facilitator who attended the event told **working together:**

"I'm really pleased to say that all three nominations we put forward were picked by a panel of councillors and the mayor herself as worthy winners over some very tough competition."

"A big well done to the following groups that we've supported for the last few years: Longmeadow TARA for winning 'Club of the year' for its continued support of young people on the Longmeadow estate by running numerous free after school and

holiday active clubs.

Studley Green Primary School for winning 'Green Champion' for their community activity supporting green issues including an estate litter pick, the Fit and Fed school holiday initiative and their community garden.

Seymour Community Association 'Yuffies' group for winning 'Spirit of youth under 13' award for its after-school homework club for primary school children on the estate which has recently seen children running their own weekly estate litter picks and community planting projects." ■

## Fit and Fed

We have partnered again on the Fit and Fed programme at Studley Green Primary School in Trowbridge this year.

Children and their families were given the opportunity to take part in a free programme combining sport and food during the school holidays.

Trowbridge families with children aged five and over, were invited to come along and get involved in preparing and cooking a wholesome hot meal, hear advice on healthy eating and take part in fun games and sports activities, for free!



Fit and Fed combines sport and healthy eating

We are proud to be a part of this exciting programme, and want you to get involved too.

For more information, please email [sportsdevelopment@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:sportsdevelopment@wiltshire.gov.uk). ■

# All fired up

Selwood Housing Group has recently built and installed an outdoor pizza oven at Studley Green Primary School in Trowbridge.

The project was organised by Amée Dewitt, community engagement facilitator at Selwood Housing, working alongside school staff. Materials were donated by Silcoa, the repairs and maintenance arm of Selwood Housing Group, and the oven was built by Silcoa staff over a series of weekends in scorching weather this summer. The design was hand drawn by Studley Green Primary School's parent support advisor.

As well as pizza, the oven will be used to bake fresh bread, cook healthy one pot soups and



Verity Andriopoulou, Studley Green Primary School, with Amée Dewitt, community engagement facilitator and Dominic Walmsley, Silcoa supervisor, with the pizza oven

bake fruit, using the produce grown by the pupils in the community garden. The school will be able to use the new addition to teach children about growing and cooking food, healthy eating, reducing waste as well as creating low cost meal ideas to take home and try too. ■

## Celebrating age

Celebrating Age is a wonderful programme that delivers arts events for older people in their own community settings across Wiltshire.



Selwood Housing has been supporting the Wiltshire Partnership to deliver these events and they are completely free thanks to funding from the Arts Council.

The Celebrating Age events are run once a month. One of the highlights this year was a love themed concert at Florence Court for Valentine's with the talented Claudia & Antony singing old favourites with a classical twist which had everyone tapping their toes and singing along. We received comments such as "These events give me something to look forward to" and "an exhilarating performance which has set me up for the day, thank you so much."

Celebrating Age offers arts, culture and heritage activity for older people in their own community settings.

Find out about upcoming events on our website, including a Christmas tea party in December. ■



## Charity of the Year

Selwood Housing recently visited Julia's House Children's Hospice in Devizes, our 2017 charity of the year, to proudly present them with a cheque for £1039.91.



A wheelchair trampoline

Julia's House, provides practical and emotional support for families caring for children with a life-limiting condition. The money was raised by Selwood Housing Group staff events such as a quiz night, cake sales and from selling old office furniture.



An outside sensory space

Grace Hoskins, our digital and social marketing executive told **working together** "It truly was a remarkable and moving space."

"A big **thank you** to all involved. 100% of the money will go towards Julia's House's vital work." ■

## A friend in need

Storehouse Foodbank, our 2018 charity, has moved from its old base in Church Street, Trowbridge to its new much larger home in the Emmanuel Church Buildings, where it can now help even more people.

Foodbank Volunteer, Pam Telford said: "This is such a wonderful new place to move into. I want to thank everyone who made this possible."

Silcoa, the repairs and maintenance arm of Selwood Housing, installed a drinks and serving station for the foodbank clients.

Storehouse Foodbank commented: "What a nice bunch of chaps, and what a great job they did!"



In four months the foodbank has provided food and toiletries for 463 adults and children

The Foodbank supports families, couples and individuals in short term need of food and toiletries. The charity was established in 2006 in response to a growing need within the community, latest figures show that it serves an average of 1,700 people and provides 15,500 meals a year.

Storehouse Foodbank's opening hours are Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10am - 12.30pm

See [www.communityactionwestwilts.org](http://www.communityactionwestwilts.org) for more information. ■

# A helping hand

**Working together** talks to Matt, who's grateful to our floating support service for helping him find a new happy home

Matt was keen to move into independent living, and out of his family home (a Selwood Housing property) following his successful job appointment at the local Leekes store.

## Somebody to lean on

Matt, who has physical and learning disabilities, was initially offered support with applying for benefits.

*"The residents have been so friendly and caring. Matthew feels safe which is the most important thing for all of us. Many thanks for all your help and support."*

Anthony Oliver, an independent living advisor at Selwood Housing helped Matt to attend the medical assessment for his disability benefits in Swindon and advocated for him. Matt also worked closely with Louise Cowler, a lettings coordinator at Selwood Housing, where he was supported in registering with Homes4Wiltshire, and then to find a suitable property for his needs.

## A happy outcome

Matt was successful in getting the benefits he needs to live independently and in finding his new flat.

When asked about how he feels with his new-found independence Matt said, "I like having my own space. My parents were a little worried when



I first moved in but are more confident now that I'm settled. I've made friends here and it is very peaceful. I wouldn't change a thing about this flat."

Matt's parents commented: "Thank you Selwood for your support in the housing application and talking through the options with Matthew. He appreciated having other adults to talk to away from the family home."

"The studio flat is perfect for Matthew, it's a sheltered scheme with an alarm service and a secure front door to the building. The warden has popped in to introduce herself so he knows where to go for any queries he has." ■

The floating support service is fully funded by Wiltshire Council and helps people with learning difficulties to live independently and manage their own tenancy – from support managing finances and budgeting to practical help with personal goals. To find out more, call our support team on **01225 715 794**



# DIY SOS update

Local community celebrates new sensory room at Dramsdon care home in Shalbourne, Wiltshire.

The local community, staff, family members and supporters gather for the official opening in September

Back in 2017, we put out a request in **working together** magazine, to say that we were looking for projects to support under our DIY SOS initiative.

We were approached with a few suggestions, including one from our independent living manager, Jan Chivers, who was aware that Dramsdon care home was looking for support with a project to develop their own sensory room. Selwood Housing is the social landlord for Dramsdon and it was clear that this was a project that we could support.

Dramsdon is run by the White Horse Care Trust and provides residential care and support to five service users with complex learning and other disabilities. Until recently, accessing a therapeutic and sensory environment meant travelling to another facility 12 miles away. This involved a journey by mini bus, which can cause some distress and meant staff were away from Dramsdon for some time.

The individuals supported now benefit from having their own sensory room, which can be accessed whenever they need. The sensory environment provides a quiet, safe relaxing space that reduces anxiety, and can improve balance and movement while promoting physical and mental wellbeing.

Silcoa provided the foundations, erected the timber-frame building and installed electrics. This meant that the money the care home and local community raised, could be used to purely support the sensory equipment purchase. Silcoa's involvement also sped up the process, meaning residents could benefit from the facility sooner.



Bridget Barnett, Dramsdon manager and Carl Jackson, head of response at Silcoa officially open the new sensory room.

Operatives started work to prepare the grounds, with supervisor Dominic Walmsley managing the site. The project has also enabled our apprentices to gain valuable experience and to meet people with different needs.

Carl Jackson, head of response at Silcoa said, "It has been fantastic to play a part in bringing this new sensory room to Dramsdon care home. It's a great example of how we can support local community projects through volunteering our resources. It's also been a valuable experience for our operatives who've been involved."

The project has also seen tremendous support from the Shalbourne community and Parish Council, who have donated and participated in fundraising activities, raising over £4,000 to fund specialist equipment for the space.

*"The enthusiastic and generous support demonstrated by the local community and Silcoa in realising this fantastic new facility is truly humbling..."*

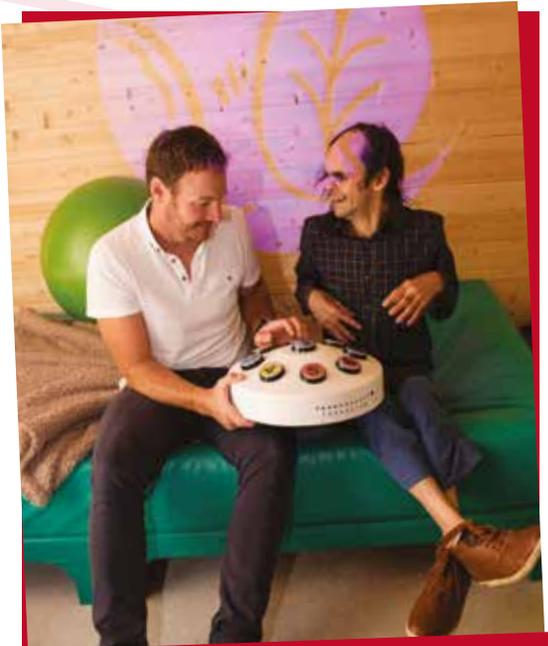
Bridget Barnett, Dramsdon manager shares, "As the home's manager I am very proud to have taken an active role in achieving this project. The individuals we support are going to get great pleasure from the sensory room on a daily basis and this will immensely improve their quality of life, providing a more holistic approach.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Silcoa for all their hard work and very kind donations throughout this project, as well as the donations from the community, as this would not have been possible without them."



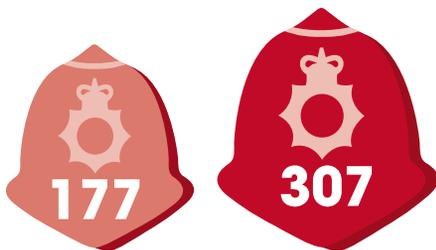
Dramsdon service user Shaun enjoying the moving light display

Marty Slade, CEO of the White Horse Care Trust, said "The enthusiastic and generous support demonstrated by the local community and Silcoa in realising this fantastic new facility is truly humbling. Our amazing staff team at Dramsdon who have been intimately involved in this project can't wait to introduce this stimulating new environment to our service users who will benefit enormously from having this bespoke facility on their doorstep". ■



Dramsdon deputy manager Mark Bowden playing a sensory game with Peter

### New cases of ASB



2016-17

2017-18

We have taken steps to make it easier to report ASB, including via our website. We have also made improvements to the service, via staff training and a scrutiny review.



of customers that reported ASB to us, rated the service they received between **8 and 10, out of 10.**



of our customers are satisfied with the **quality of their new home**



of customers are satisfied with their **neighbourhood as a place to live**

### Home improvements

£5.5 million spent on planned maintenance including:



**210 Kitchens** replaced



**51 Bathrooms** replaced



**159 Boilers and fuel switch upgrades**

### Money owed by evicted tenants



We take money owed to us very seriously, as this money is needed to invest in our homes. We use a variety of ways to recover this money, including credit reference agencies, county court judgements and making deductions from wages.

### Number of evictions

Most evictions relate to unpaid rent, but two also concerned ASB and property condition.



2016-17



2017-18

Our tenancy sustainment team offers help and advice to tenants who are at risk of losing their home.



**satisfied** overall with Selwood Housing's services.

**8 apprenticeships** at Selwood Housing and Silcoa



(from administrators to electricians) due to join the Selwood Housing Group in 2018-19

## Learning from complaints

Selwood Housing is currently reviewing the claims, goodwill and statutory payments policy, as a direct response from feedback received from our customers who have made a complaint.

## Did you know?

Learnings from complaints are discussed at team meetings. This includes Silcoa operatives who have regular toolbox talks which include any learnings from customers who have made a complaint.

## In-house training



as part of changes to our IT systems.

**40** customers attended formal training courses, with some receiving accredited qualifications.





# Keeping warm in winter

Staying warm can help prevent colds, flu and other serious health conditions. Here are some tips that might help:

- You can use a hot water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm in bed – but don't use both at the same time
- Make sure you have hot drinks and eat at regular intervals
- Check on older neighbours or relatives to make sure they're safe and well and have stocks of food and medicines so they don't need to go out in the cold.

## Every little helps

If you were born on or before 5 November 1953 you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a Winter Fuel Payment and it is usually paid automatically if you are eligible. If you're eligible but do not get paid automatically, you will need to make a claim. Visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) for more information.

The Energy Saving Trust (EST) has advice on how to reduce bills and make your home

more energy efficient. They can also advise on grants and schemes available. Find out more online from the EST website or call 0300 123 1234.

## Universal Credit help

Come along to one of our drop-in services:

**Warminster Central car park,**  
Wednesday 9:30am-4:00pm

**Bradford on Avon, The Hub@BA15**  
Thursday 10:00am-12:00pm

We also regularly have sheltered housing drop ins. You can also come to our main office and ask to speak to an account manager at any time. ■

# WIN a week's FREE rent

Selwood Housing can collect your rent every month via Direct Debit so you won't have to think about when your rent is due. Another advantage is that we hold a prize draw every month and three lucky customers from each draw will WIN a week's FREE rent! Entry is automatic\*

Recent winners told us:

"I felt delighted at being told the news. It made my day." Mr Williams

Call us on 01225 715 715 option 2 or visit [www.selwoodhousing.com](http://www.selwoodhousing.com) and set up your direct debit today. ■

\*Conditions apply. Not eligible if you owe over £500 in rent



## Arrears collected from former tenants



We use credit reference agencies to trace debtors and took 15 former tenants to court last year.

By **reducing overheads** and doing more **work in-house** Silcoa made a



which will be **gifted back** to Selwood Housing Group.

## Procurement process

Through our procurement processes we saved over:



with the largest individual saving coming from our **sewerage maintenance contract** (£70k)



Our tenancy sustainment team helped tenants **claim back almost £53,000** in lost benefits and reduced the rent debt owed to us by over £7,500.



Annual Performance - VALUE FOR MONEY

## Last year for every £1 we spent



# The holidays are coming

These easy-to-make marshmallow snowmen float in a mug of hot cocoa for an adorable and tasty winter treat.



### You will need:

- Marshmallows
- Pretzel sticks
- Orange wine gums
- Mini chocolate chips
- Cocktail stick

**Step 1** Stick three marshmallows together by pushing a pretzel stick up through the middle, cut off any excess.

**Step 2** Use the cocktail stick to poke holes for the arms, legs, and nose, and then push pretzels and a piece of an orange wine gum in the snowman to create arms, legs and a nose.

**Step 3** Place a few mini chocolate chips in a bowl over a pan of boiling water and melt on a low heat, then use a cocktail stick to draw the eyes, mouth and buttons on the snowmen. ■

## What is Stir-up Sunday?

It is a tradition that harks back to Victorian times when the family would gather together to stir the Christmas pudding five weeks before Christmas.

Adding coins, originally charms, to the pud was said to bring luck if you found them in your portion on Christmas Day. The traditional lucky charms were a silver coin for wealth, a wishbone for luck, a thimble for thrift, a ring for marriage, and an anchor for safe harbour.

So, this Sunday, 25 November 2018 make sure you're prepared to make your best Christmas pudding ever. We have a recipe on our website, search for "Christmas pudding." ■





# Festive feast

These quick and easy to prepare festive bites from Aldi are perfect for last minute entertaining. They're pocket friendly too.



## Christmas carrot koftas

### Method

- Trim, wash and chop the spring onions finely.
- Peel and finely chop the garlic.
- Roughly chop the coriander.
- Chop up the bread into small pieces.
- Put all the above into a food processor.
- Add the cranberries, curry powder, yogurt and chilli flakes.
- Chop the carrots roughly and boil in some salted water for 5 minutes, until just cooked, then drain well.
- Add these whilst still hot to the rest of the ingredients in the food processor.
- Season with salt and black pepper.
- Blitz until you have a smoothish mix.
- Transfer to a bowl to allow to rest for 10 minutes.
- Divide the mixture into 10 balls – approx. 50g each.
- Shape into croquettes, then fry in the rapeseed oil until browned.
- Serve alongside some yogurt and mango chutney.

### Preparation time:

10 minutes

### Cooking time:

15 minutes

### Ingredients: (serves 5)

350g carrots, peeled  
 70g fresh or frozen cranberries  
 2 spring onions  
 1 large garlic clove  
 15g fresh coriander  
 50g Brooklea Greek yogurt  
 2 tsp Stonemill curry powder

1 tsp Stonemill chilli flakes  
 2 slices white bread (80g)  
 Salt and black pepper  
 Rapeseed oil to fry

### To serve

Extra Greek yogurt  
 Bilash mango chutney



## Bruschetta Christmas Trees

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 5 minutes

### Ingredients: (serves 12)

400g tin chopped tomatoes with herbs, drained  
 ½ jar antipasti grilled peppers, drained and finely chopped  
 12 slices white bread  
 20ml olive oil  
 6 green or black olives, halved  
 Fresh basil Leaves  
 Black pepper

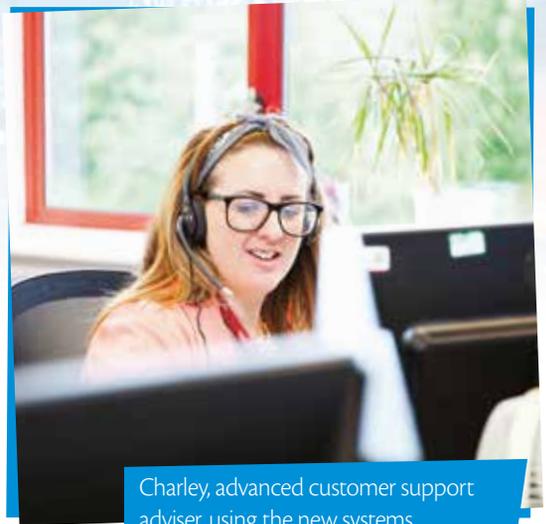
### Method

- Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
- Using a Christmas tree cutter, cut each slice of bread.
- Put them onto a lightly oiled baking tray and brush with olive oil.
- Bake in the oven for approx. 5 minutes until crisp and slightly browned.
- Mix the chopped tomatoes and peppers together, then season with some black pepper.
- Divide the tomato mixture between the trees and top each tree with half an olive.
- Tear some basil leaves and decorate the trees, then serve.

# Project firefly lands

We've been going through some 'behind the scenes' changes to our IT systems.

These changes under the name "project firefly" will ensure we continue to deliver a cost-effective service for our customers now, and into the future. A large number of our staff are out in the community visiting customers, properties and neighbourhoods. Our IT changes mean that these staff now have secure access to all of our systems and information 'on the go', meaning we can respond more quickly and effectively. These improvements have been a significant investment however we will see savings and efficiencies as a result, giving us value for money.



Charley, advanced customer support adviser, using the new systems



The marketing and communications team: left to right, Frances Ginn, senior marketing and communications executive, Rachel Pearson, group marketing and communications manager and Grace Hoskins, digital and social marketing executive

One of these improvements is that we can use video more widely, so next time you have a repair, why not send us a video of the issue via Facebook Messenger, which may help us to identify the problem. Similarly, if something needs attention in your neighbourhood, you can send us a photo or video of the issue in the same way.

## The future looks bright

We want to give our customers more choice, by providing access to more services online and developing new ways to keep you up to date.

If you would like to get involved and support work in this area, the communications team would love to hear from you. Email [communications@selwoodhousing.com](mailto:communications@selwoodhousing.com) or call Grace Hoskins on: 01225 715 908 ■

# Our repairs service

We know it's important to you, our customers, to understand what services we offer.

We're working hard to make sure we're clear about the services we offer to our customers and how we make sure the money our customers spend with us is used carefully.

## Changes to our repairs service

There will be some changes to our repairs service next year, to make sure that we can provide the best and most consistent service possible.

Here are answers to some of the questions we're often asked.

### What will happen after I report a repair?

When you report a repair, there are three options:

1. **Emergency repairs** – we will respond to genuine emergency repairs within 24 hours.
2. **Day to day repairs** – an appointment will be made for an operative to attend. Depending on the type of repair, this may need two visits; first to inspect and measure, so materials can be ordered, then to carry out the work.
3. **Surveyor inspection** – for some repairs, such as reports of damp, one of our surveyors will need to visit. After this, we will tell you what the next steps will be.

### Why does a repair sometimes require two visits?

Some repairs will need two visits. For example, if you report a glazing repair:

1. An operative will come to inspect and measure. The correct parts will then be ordered.
2. An operative will come to carry out the repair.

### What does the out of hours service cover?

This is for emergencies only. If there is an immediate danger to your safety, or that of your property, we will respond to this as a priority. Non-emergency repairs will be processed the next working day.



We are making information about our repairs service clearer

### What will change next year?

To make it easier to find the information you need about repairs, we will add more information to our website, such as:

- Handy guides to help you see what action to take
- Videos to show you how to do things like re-pressurise your boiler

We will also make sure that customers who don't use the internet have access to the information they need. ■

## Did you know?

- 96% of customers rate our workmanship as good or excellent
- 85% of customers rated their last repair as good or excellent

### Average repair time



2016-17



2017-18

(not including emergency repairs which are completed within 24 hours)



**85%** of customers are **satisfied with their last repair**



**96%** of customers are **satisfied with workmanship**



**94%** of customers are **satisfied with quality of material/parts**

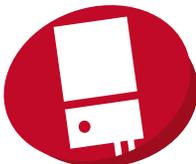
### Emergency repairs completed on time



2016-17



2017-18



We continued with our boiler replacement programme, **increasing the energy efficiency of 159 homes**, and helping customers to reduce energy costs.



to maintain our neighbourhoods



### Average repairs cost



**3.7** jobs completed per operative in one day.



of customers thought we got the repair **right first time**.

### You think our operatives are





# Make your voice count

## Do you want to examine our performance and service delivery?

We are inviting customers to join our scrutiny team. The team provides customers with an opportunity to examine and challenge the way we deliver our services.

Every few months the scrutiny team complete a review of one of our services, pulling together all sorts of information from benchmarking data to shadowing staff. The scrutiny team has recently completed a report on planned maintenance. This was taken to our board and an action plan will be developed. The team is currently reviewing how we manage the ending of tenancies.

*"I am a great believer of giving back something of yourself. Being on scrutiny means I can help Selwood make decisions..."*

Members of our Scrutiny team: Left to right: Kate Tivney, Donna Broomham, chair, Ian Brereton and Norman Trapp.

Our scrutiny chair, Donna Broomham, told **working together** why she loves being part of the team, "I am a great believer of giving back something of yourself. Being on scrutiny means I can help Selwood Housing make decisions from a tenant's perspective and build better practices for all our futures."

If you're passionate about customers having a voice and you can work as part of a team, then we would love to hear from you.

Want to find out more? Call a member of the involvement and improvement team on **01225 715 715**, email [makeadifference@selwoodhousing.com](mailto:makeadifference@selwoodhousing.com) or visit: [www.selwoodhousing.com](http://www.selwoodhousing.com) and search 'scrutiny'. ■



# Make a Stand

Selwood Housing joins national campaign to tackle domestic abuse.

Many of us see the festive period as a chance to spend quality time with our favourite people. But for thousands of people, it will only offer more of what they endure all year round; domestic violence and abuse.

Selwood Housing has signed up to a new national campaign to help tackle domestic abuse.

The Make a Stand campaign centres around a pledge which has been developed by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) in partnership with Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA).

It consists of four commitments which social housing organisations can make to support people that live and work in housing who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Alison Inman, CIH president, said:

“Domestic abuse is one of the biggest problems we face today. Millions of people are affected and two women a week are being killed by their partner or ex-partner.

*“By signing the Make a Stand pledge Selwood Housing has committed to supporting people in its communities and it is no exaggeration to say that this could save a life.”*

To support the commitments of the pledge, we have ensured that our anti-social behaviour policy includes domestic abuse.

Our group people director, Ria Bristow is championing the campaign and ensuring Selwood Housing is doing all it can to support victims of domestic abuse. For more information visit [www.cih.org/makeastand](http://www.cih.org/makeastand)

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, you can call the 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline on **0808 2000 247**.

# Support your mental health

Although we love our phones, scrolling through insta-perfect images can impact on our self-esteem, especially during the holidays where everyone appears to be living their most perfect life!

It got us thinking...how can we stop technology being a source of anxiety or stress and get it to work with us? There are lots of apps out there designed to help us manage our mental health, turning our phones into handy, self-care tools.

Here are a few we really like and best of all they are free!

## SuperBetter

Mental illness is not a game, but the app SuperBetter tastefully takes a gaming approach to managing depression, anxiety, chronic illness and post-traumatic stress disorder. Players earn rewards for completing real-life exercises that help them build positive behaviours like resilience and optimism.

## Headspace

If you have never meditated before or find it difficult, Headspace is a great place to start. The app leads you through guided meditations and mindfulness techniques to help establish calm and wellness in your life.

## Moodpath

Moodpath, which bills itself as “your mental health companion”, screens users for depressive behaviour via daily questions designed to increase their awareness of their thoughts and emotions. After 14 days, the app will generate a report about your condition that you can bring to a mental health professional for discussion.



## 7 Cups

Feeling isolated? Connect instantly with one of 160,000 trained volunteer listeners and licensed therapists with 7 Cups. The app engages users in anonymous, free, confidential conversations so you can vent about your day or simply hear a human voice.

## Pacifica

When anxiety has you tight in its clutches, it can feel like your world is going to end. But Pacifica helps users find a place of peace via psychologist-designed tools. Based on CBT, mood and health tracking, relaxation and mindfulness meditation, the app targets the on-going cycles of negative thoughts that lead to anxiety, stress and depression.

While these apps can help us help ourselves, no app is a replacement for medical help. If you're struggling, getting support from a GP or mental health team should always be your first priority. ■



**82,361** calls answered  
**91%** answered first time

**When you call about a repair**



feel we are polite



think our staff are knowledgeable



felt we explained what would happen next

**Compliments received**



Key themes from the compliments received were that staff are **polite** and **friendly**, **operatives were clean and tidy** when working in our homes and **staff were knowledgeable** and dealt quickly with the customer's query.

**Number of complaints**



**108** about service received from staff



**95** about a repair



**63** about the quality of our repairs



**30** about our repair timescales



**29** about service received from contractors (not Silcoa)



**23** about failure to attend/ make an appointment



**18** about a policy



**15** other

**Average time taken to deal with a complaint**



2016-17



2017-18

Star letter and winner of this issue's £20 shopping voucher



## Happy days!

Dear Selwood Housing  
I would like to say thank you for arranging the RSPCA event in Melksham. I was very impressed with your ability to reach out to residents with such useful events. I was very worried about how I would be able to pay for my Tom cat to be neutered, as when I took him in, I was told he was in fact a she. At the RSPCA event, I was able to get him microchipped, vaccinated against flu, wormed and also picked up a voucher to help with the costs of the operation. I was so pleased, although I'm not sure my cat was! 10/10 to Selwood Housing.

Anne Surs ■

## Caring for children

Imane Essoufi and Teresa Mould, both Selwood Housing customers, have recently achieved their Level 1 qualification in childcare which we were happy to sponsor.

The course is the first of its kind to support such intensive learning over a short 10 week time period.

Both customers have been on quite a journey, overcoming personal challenges and obstacles to attend the course and achieve their dream. Congratulations to you both from all at Selwood Housing! ■



**Q** Do I need to have contents insurance? I am worried I will not be able to afford it.

**a** It is important to have home contents insurance so that if anything happens, like something being stolen or your washing machine overflowing, you won't need to worry about the cost of buying new things.

**My Home contents insurance** offers peace of mind to housing association residents, knowing that your furniture and belongings are insured. This covers things like theft, lost or stolen keys and damage caused by storm, flood, fire or leaks. It is affordable and flexible and payments are made with your rent. To find out more, give us a call on **01225 715 715** or visit [www.selwoodhousing.com](http://www.selwoodhousing.com) and search for 'insurance'. ■



Coffee break

WIN a £20 shopping voucher!

## Festive fun

Rearrange the letters to find 10 words associated with the holidays.

1. Miss Chatterer

2. Wolf Snakes

3. Yeti Dual

4. Totems Lie

5. Coordinates

6. Station Pie

7. Starfish Rematch

8. Tossing Eagerness

9. Boot Gang

10. Ole Ugly

## Christmas word search

Can you find the words hidden in the grid? They may be hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forward or backward.

S	L	L	E	B	H	O	P	A	S	W	Z	G	V	S
O	S	O	H	J	K	V	C	T	U	R	Y	O	F	A
F	I	P	I	Y	T	F	E	X	I	E	B	B	B	N
B	E	N	C	E	R	G	S	S	R	A	A	E	W	T
C	Y	I	O	Z	E	H	I	E	E	T	A	I	T	A
H	A	S	V	R	E	U	P	W	W	H	O	P	B	T
I	D	N	S	V	T	I	M	L	S	J	I	V	S	I
Z	U	U	D	H	O	H	N	G	O	P	O	U	A	I
L	I	I	R	L	O	I	P	I	C	D	M	Y	M	C
G	O	C	A	P	E	K	H	O	I	E	U	H	T	U
N	I	E	C	O	F	S	I	U	L	I	A	R	S	N
I	K	T	W	O	S	Y	F	M	I	E	C	C	I	P
V	S	N	O	E	L	C	E	L	V	E	S	S	R	Y
I	C	N	H	I	M	B	A	U	F	T	D	K	H	O
G	N	I	K	C	O	T	S	F	G	R	W	F	C	K

Bells	Cape	Joy
Candles	Christmas	Northpole
Santa	Cards	Elves
Tree	Stocking	Noel
Wreath	Rudolph	Giving

## TWO £20 shopping vouchers to WIN!

Return your completed entry and reply slip by **1 February 2019** Two lucky entrants (one for each competition) will be chosen at random to **WIN a £20 shopping voucher.**\*

*\*Please note that you will not be eligible to win these competitions if in rent arrears.*

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone	

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