TENANT TALK

WINTER 2025/SPRING 2026

bcha

Tackling Homelessness Locally with Lloyds Bank and Homewards, Page 6

How One Customer is Bettering Mental Health Across Devon, Page 11

Recipe: Veggie Peneer Masala, Page 19

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Please stay connected and join us:
We want to hear your views and you can do this by joining our Residents Facebook page.

There are many ways to stay up to date with BCHA news and events including following our social media channels.

@bcha.org.uk @bcha9962 @bcha.news @BCHA

Welcome

I'm delighted to introduce this latest edition of Tenant Talk. As always, it's full of updates from across our services, inspiring customer stories, and useful information we hope you'll find helpful.

Many of the features in this issue have been shaped by our customers, and I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who has shared their experiences. Your voices are an important part of BCHA.

At BCHA, staying connected with you, our customers, continues to be a priority. Tenant Talk is just one of the ways we keep that conversation going, alongside house meetings, customer groups and the many day-to-day interactions with our teams. We are always keen to hear your thoughts, so please do keep sharing your feedback and helping us shape the services we provide.

So, whether you're dipping in between busy moments or sitting down with a cuppa, I hope you enjoy this edition.

Lorraine Mealings, Chief Executive

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Gabriel House Makeover

Exeter's Gabriel House has had a makeover, with thanks to a very generous legacy donation. The donation of over £5,000 allowed for the Gabriel House team and customers to redecorate making it a Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE). Some of the money went on redecorating and refreshing the communal areas of Gabriel House, including the reception area, basement dining area and top floor, which is now a recreational space.

Customers were involved in carefully choosing the PIE colours and also helped the team paint the areas. Michelle Makin, Senior Practitioner for Gabriel House, said "*I was really pleased that the customers wanted to help decorate. Every time I see our painting it really makes me happy to know we could come together and better their home.*"

The reception area was also kitted out with new furniture giving a homely feel to those in Gabriel House. The team were also able to purchase an additional emergency bed, so during periods of extreme weather Gabriel House can accommodate someone who may be rough sleeping.

The top floor has become a recreational space with the donation covering the purchase of two new televisions, a PlayStation, a football table and equipment for the existing pool table. The team hope this will encourage customers to come out of their rooms and spend time together, developing relationships and building confidence during their stay at Gabriel House.

In addition to the gaming equipment the donation covered a communal laptop. Michelle said "*I was really pushing for a laptop – some of our customers don't have a smartphone or access to their own computer, which can make accessing their benefit accounts difficult. The laptop has also been used for learning opportunities; we have customers currently undertaking childcare and mental health awareness courses.*

"*Matt, who runs a support group at Gabriel House, has also found the communal laptop useful, using it to create posters, leaflets and flyers to advertise his group and his gaming club.*" You can read more about Matt and his support group on page 14.

The team have also ensured there is enough of the donation left to renovate the courtyard space. The courtyard is used regularly by customers for a safe, outdoor space to meet, share a coffee or work on their bikes. BCHA and its customers benefit greatly from all legacy gifts, whether large or small. The renovation of Gabriel House is a perfect example of what can be achieved thanks to the contributions of our supporters.

For more information about leaving a legacy to BCHA, please contact **fundraising@bcha.org.uk.**

BCHA Customers Driving Change

In 2025, BCHA customers shared their views, ideas, and experiences, directly shaping real change. Through 1:1 conversations, house meetings, customer panels, and the Customer Steering Group itself, customers influenced how services are delivered and the organisation's future direction. This year also marked Phase 2 of our Customer Engagement Strategy, focusing on turning feedback into action.

New Consumer Standards for social landlords, introduced in 2024, emphasised safe, well-maintained homes and fair treatment for customers. BCHA achieved a C2 rating in 2025, meeting these standards while identifying areas for improvement based on customer input.

Impact of Customer Feedback

The creation of a **Repairs Reference Panel** to enable discussions with the Repairs Team. Reporting repairs is now streamlined through Customer Services, with staff trained on software to log and book jobs directly. Feedback from customers about their experience of out-of-hours incidents, such as fire alarms, has ensured better response and attitude from contractors.

The new **General Needs Tenant Handbook**, launched in 2025, clarifies tenants' responsibilities, key processes, and provides guidance on issues such as damp and mould. EPC certificates are provided at move-in and are accessible online or via Customer Services for energy discount eligibility. Plans are also underway to improve the reporting and escalation of anti-social behaviour (ASB), including a website feedback form and the formation of an **ASB Customer Focus Group**.

Customers raised concerns about moving between homes or services, prompting the creation of a **Transition Strategy Task & Finish Group**. Customers are now helping shape a Transition Strategy to address this.

Customers also strongly influenced the wider **Housing Transformation programme** being rolled out which reshapes how our housing department operates.

WE NEED YOU!!

There are many opportunities for involvement which include ALL of the above!!

YOU can improve or even implement the services BCHA provides.
By listening, engaging and acting we can together make a difference.

Please contact our Customer Engagement Manager to join any of the above:

chrisshaw@bcha.org.uk or Tel: **01202 410500**

More meetings, clearer updates, and direct access to the executive team through regular reference panels and the Customer Steering Group make it easier to get involved. "**People's Voice**" meetings in Plymouth provide a local reference panel for customers in the Southwest to raise issues and track progress.

Customer engagement is now included in the staff Induction Week, ensuring new colleagues understand BCHA's approach to communication and respectful collaboration with customers from day one.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, BCHA will focus on improving how feedback is recorded and acted upon, ensuring customers can see the impact of their voices.

Seal of Approval

In September, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) announced the gradings to indicate BCHA's compliance with consumer standards, governance and financial viability. We have been awarded C2, G1 and V2.

This announcement confirms BCHA is well governed and maintains our grade for financial viability illustrating we manage our risks to deliver effective services for our customers. The areas for consumer standard improvements were limited to further enhancements to tenant scrutiny, anti-social behaviour reporting and complaints management.

"These great regulatory gradings are a testament to the tremendous colleagues and Board Members we have across our BCHA team. Everyone's commitment and hard work has helped us to continually improve.

The members in our Customer Steering Group have been a vital part of this process and we thank them for their constructive involvement in the inspection as well as their hard work over the last few years."

Lorraine Mealings, CEO

The 2025 Festive Appeal

BCHA want to extend a huge thank you to everyone who supported our 2025 Festive Appeal. Raising over £1,000 in monetary and physical donations, BCHA were able to provide festive celebrations across all of our services over the south west.

Michelle Makin, Senior Practitioner at Gabriel House, said *"Christmas can be a particularly difficult time for many of our customers. A lot of residents have complicated or strained relationships with their families and for some the festive period can be very isolating. Many of our residents spend much of their time alone and do not usually socialise with others.*

"The Festive Appeal allowed us to bring people together, support those most in need, and spread kindness beyond our walls. It was a reminder of the power of community, especially at Christmas time."

Celebrating our Long-Service Colleagues

In November, BCHA had the pleasure of recognising the dedication, passion, and loyalty of our colleagues who have each given 15 years or more helping BCHA achieve its mission: ensuring everyone has a home and the opportunity to thrive.

"I absolutely loved the afternoon and spending time with some of our long-service colleagues. What a credit they all are to BCHA and we thank you for your continued commitment, passion and expertise. I can't believe we had 170 years' worth of dedication sat around the table - incredible!"

Lorraine Mealings, CEO

To mark this amazing milestone, our long-service colleagues were invited to a special afternoon tea with BCHA's CEO, Lorraine Mealings, at the Hilton Hotel in Bournemouth. The afternoon was filled with conversation, laughter, and heartfelt reflections on the invaluable contributions each colleague has made throughout their distinguished careers with BCHA.

Over the years, BCHA has evolved - from expanding our services across the South West to launching our 2024 Strategic Plan - and our colleagues have consistently responded to the changing needs of our communities and our customers with a clear commitment to BCHA and our mission.

"20 years, I can't even believe it's been 20 years! I've seen almost everything and seeing people be able to move forward after my time with them as a coach is positive. I could write a book about my time."

Michael, Daily Living Coach

BCHA extends a heartfelt congratulations and a huge thank you to all our long-service colleagues. The dedication and loyalty shown in the collective 170 years of service inspires us all.

Tackling Homelessness Locally with Lloyds Bank and Homewards

BCHA is pleased to share that we have secured £10 million in funding from Lloyds Bank, working in partnership with Homewards, a programme delivered by The Royal Foundation of the Prince and Princess of Wales.

This funding will help us build more affordable homes for people who have experienced, or are at risk of, homelessness. Work is already underway on plans for around 30 new self-contained homes in the Bournemouth area, giving people a safe, stable place to live at a time when homelessness is rising across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

These homes will offer more than a roof over someone's head. Alongside a secure home, people will be able to access the support they need including help with their mental health and support to stay housed so they can move forward with confidence.

Homewards is a five-year programme bringing partners together to show that homelessness can be ended. BCHA works as a partner in one of six areas taking part, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, where we are already seeing the difference this collaboration can make.

Image courtesy © Kensington Palace

Free Courses and New Skills

bcha learn

DORSET

BCHA Learn offers free courses to help you build confidence, learn new skills, and take positive steps towards work, further learning, or everyday independence.

If you enjoy getting outdoors and learning by doing, you might love **Practical Horticulture**. These City & Guilds-accredited courses take place at BCHA's New Leaf allotment and are available at Level 1 for beginners and Level 2 if you already have some experience. You'll gain hands-on growing skills while working towards a recognised qualification.

The **Food For Life** course is perfect if you want to feel more confident in the kitchen. Over four weeks, you'll learn how to use kitchen equipment safely, cook simple, healthy meals, and make your food budget go further – all in a friendly, supportive setting.

If you're interested in a career move into care or support roles, the **Essential Support Work Skills** course is a great starting point. Over 10 weeks, you'll build confidence and learn key skills like communication, managing stress, emotional intelligence, professional boundaries, and equality and diversity – all things that really matter when supporting others.

If your goal is to get into work or take your next step, the **Skills For Work** course can help. This five-week course focuses on building confidence, improving interview skills, spotting your strengths, setting goals, and gaining a qualification to support your job search.

Digital Discovery offers courses at different levels, delivered with Boscombe Digital Skills Hub, on improving digital confidence. Whether you're just getting started or want to build on what you already know, you can learn practical digital skills like emailing, online safety, video calls, creative tools, and using AI.

The importance of your wellbeing can't be understated, and the **All Being Well** course is all about looking after yourself. Over five weeks, you'll learn ways to manage stress, build confidence, improve your health, strengthen relationships, and make your money stretch further.

If you might benefit from greater confidence and independence in managing your home, the **Right At Home** course can support you. This four-week course helps you understand your tenancy, keep on top of household tasks, manage bills, and live well with others.

BCHA Learn courses provide free learning and training opportunities for those 19 and over in Dorset. Whether you want to try something new, feel more confident, or prepare for your next move, BCHA Learn's free courses are designed to support you every step of the way.

Find out more, including the upcoming courses calendar, at **www.bcha.org.uk/our-services/bcha-learn**

DORSET

Refurbished Playroom at Poole Refuge

In August of 2025, Neil Duncan-Jordan, MP for Poole, officially opened a newly refurbished children's playroom at Poole Refuge, run by BCHA. The celebration included moving speeches and poems from residents past and present, the BCHA domestic abuse team and the team at Bright Horizons.

The project was funded by the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children in memory of their colleague Sam Manuel, who sadly passed away three years ago. The playroom now stands as a lasting tribute to her and will provide a safe, welcoming space for children living at the Refuge after fleeing domestic abuse.

The opening took place on Starts at Home Day, a national campaign by the NHF (National Housing Federation) celebrating the positive impact of supported housing. The campaign highlights the importance of funding and investment in safe, supportive accommodation for people in need.

BCHA Chief Executive, Lorraine Mealings, highlighted the wider importance:

"*We've already seen the playroom full of children and laughter. Safe spaces like this playroom change lives, and we need to make sure services like ours continue to be properly funded through initiatives such as the 'Starts at Home' campaign.*"

"Today reminds us of the critical importance of supported housing. The Refuge in Poole is a place of safety, care and recovery and projects like this refurbished playroom show the transformative power of community and partnership working. I am proud to celebrate this with BCHA, Bright Horizons and everyone involved."

Neil Duncan-Jordan, MP

More Brains, No Chains: Liberty Project Hosts Quiz

In December, the Liberty Project team held a fundraising quiz at The Factory in Poole, raising funds to go towards refurbishing the children's playroom at BCHA's safehouse accommodation. The event raised an impressive £1,427, with all proceeds going directly towards supporting victims and survivors of modern slavery.

Poppy, Business Manager for BCHA's Modern Slavery & Domestic Abuse Services, said: "*We are delighted at how generous our attendees were at our quiz night. The fundraising night came at a perfect time, raising funds and awareness for victims and survivors of modern slavery in recognition of 10 years of the UK's Modern Day Slavery Act.*"

She added: "*All proceeds are going towards refurbishing the children's playroom at the accommodation for survivors of modern slavery.*"

Alongside the quiz, there was a very popular raffle, with prizes generously donated by local businesses across the BCP area.

"Alder Hills Academics" claim the Liberty Quiz Trophy and well-earned bragging rights.

DORSET

Two Years of Access Wellbeing

Since the first Access Wellbeing hub opened two years ago, the service has grown across Dorset, now offering more than 30 spaces, including hubs and community drop-ins. In that time, Access Wellbeing has supported over 6,000 people and welcomed more than 10,000 visits, giving people early help before problems get too big.

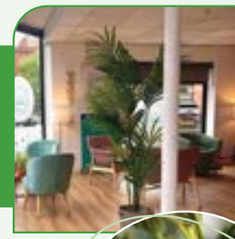
Access Wellbeing is here for anyone aged 18 and over who might need a bit of extra support. That could be for your mental health, but it might also be worries about money, work, housing, benefits, or feeling isolated. You don't need a referral, diagnosis, or appointment – you can just drop in and have a chat.

Each hub and drop-in space is run by friendly wellbeing coordinators who take the time to listen and understand what's going on for you. They won't rush you, and they'll work with you to help you find the right support, advice or local services that fit your situation.

Getting support early can make a big difference. By talking things through sooner rather than later, problems are less likely to build up or reach a crisis point, helping you feel more in control of your wellbeing and your future.

With three main Access Wellbeing hubs in Poole, Boscombe, and Weymouth open weekdays, and over 25 regular drop-in spaces across Dorset, support is never far away.

Access Wellbeing is all about offering the right support, at the right time, in the right way. It's designed to make getting help feel simpler, more human, and easier to navigate, so no one has to face things on their own.



Find your closest Access Wellbeing service online at **https://www.dorsetaccesswellbeing.co.uk/access-wellbeing-hubs/**

Community Front Rooms Near You

Dorchester becomes the latest Dorset town to welcome a Community Front Room (CFR), giving adults a welcoming place to access mental health support — with no referral, no diagnosis and no appointment needed. Staff, partner services and the local community came together for the launch of the new hub in January to celebrate its opening.

Community Front Rooms are designed for people who may be feeling overwhelmed, distressed, or approaching a mental health crisis. Visitors can simply drop in and get support on their own terms.

"*The Community Front Room is a warm, welcoming, non-clinical space. If somebody is approaching or in mental health crisis, we're there on hand.*" Shelley Hamon, Business Manager for BCHA's Mental Health Services across Dorset.

Unlike traditional services, Community Front Rooms are designed to feel informal and comfortable — like a front room, not a clinic.

Tasha, Senior Practitioner at the Dorchester Community Front Room, explained "*It's designed to feel relaxed and welcoming. It's a drop-in mental health service for people who need support.*"

The service is particularly aimed at supporting people who may be reaching crisis point but haven't quite got there yet, helping to prevent situations from escalating.

How to access support

Adults aged 18 and over can:

- Drop in to their local Community Front Room
- Use the Attend Anywhere virtual drop-in service if attending in person isn't possible

Community Front Rooms are delivered through a partnership between Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust, BCHA, Hope Charity and Burrough Harmony, working together to provide support across Dorset.

Support for students: University Front Room

Arts University Bournemouth and Bournemouth University students can also access the same support on the Talbot campus, in the University Front Room (formerly the University Retreat). The service recently celebrated 3 years of supporting students, with more than 5,652 support visits.

Find out more

To find out more about Community Front Rooms, visit the Dorset Healthcare Website

DORSET

Welcoming New Customers to Sturminster Newton

We're delighted to welcome new customers to eight recently completed homes in Sturminster Newton.

The homes include four one-bedroom flats and four two-bedroom flats, all part of a wider new development delivered in partnership with Wyatt Homes. These brand new properties are already being turned into welcoming homes by the customers who now live there.

One of the first families to move into their new home said:

"Myself and my little boy couldn't be happier in our new home. It's more than we could have ever asked for, and we love it! A massive thank you to BCHA. We're beyond grateful for everything they've done for us."

The new properties are home to a real mix of people, including younger and older single residents as well as young families, helping to create a vibrant and balanced community. Having access to high quality, modern housing can make a huge difference, and it's been lovely to see customers settling in and making the spaces their own.

Derick Hitchings, who joined BCHA as a Housing Officer in October, supported customers moving into the new homes. He said:

"This was my first piece of work when I started the job, and it's been incredibly rewarding. Seeing how happy customers are and how well they're settling into their new homes has been a great way to begin my role at BCHA."

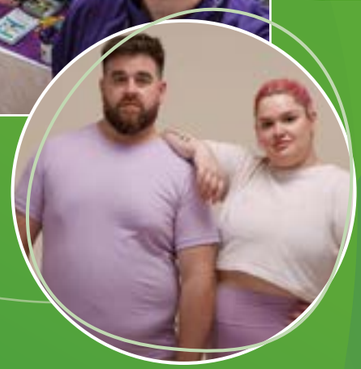
These homes are part of our wider commitment to providing safe, comfortable and affordable housing across the region, helping people put down roots and build a positive future

LiveWell Dorset

LiveWell Dorset Bus is Coming Near You!

LiveWell Dorset are coming in their mobile unit to BCHA areas over March providing free support for our customers to live well. The team at LiveWell Dorset can provide support on stopping smoking, weight management and mental health as well as targeted NHS health checks to help residents find out if you are at risk of cardiovascular disease and identify what lifestyle changes you can make to reduce risk.

Find out more and come and chat with them!



Where to find LiveWell in your area:
https://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/team-events/

DEVON

How One Customer is Bettering Mental Health Across Devon

After a traumatic break up, Matt lost his job as an Events Co-ordinator when his mental health went into decline. Seeking help from his community, Matt attended an event in Exeter hosted by Andy's Man Club, where he met people facing similar struggles that helped him work through his trauma.

"I lost my job due to my mental health struggles and moved into Gabriel House. Andy's Man Club was really supportive of me and I wanted to bring something like it to Gabriel House. People who live here don't always feel confident enough or feel a bit nervous to go to other support groups so why not bring it here?

"I've named my support group M & M, which stands for Matt & Mike. Mike works as a Co-Production Development Worker at BCHA. I make my own resources like posters which I really like doing.

"I try and run my sessions at M & M in a similar way to Andy's Man Club. I try and provide refreshments like tea, coffee and biscuits to try and get people through the door. From my own experience I've found that's the hardest part – walking through the door shows that you're admitting you need support or help, which can be tough to recognise.

"Each session I give people a list of five questions to give the meetings some structure. Two of the questions change each week, and we have a quickfire round to just lighten the mood before people go back to reality. I've got a stress ball that we use as the talking point – if you've got the ball, it's your turn to speak. I've curated a bank of materials like leaflets and vouchers, so I can signpost people who attend the sessions to anywhere that may support their mental health.

"I'm really passionate about helping people with their mental health. I have completed some courses on mental health awareness, conflict resolution and have learned how to support people who might be struggling as well as having my own lived experience. The Andy's Man Club sessions can get really busy, so in April of 2024 I set up my own group in Exeter South which is held every Monday which helped boost my confidence.

"Looking to the future, I'd like to be able to take my support group to other BCHA properties, like George House in Plymouth or maybe even up to Yeovil. I'm really keen to expand the message that support for mental health is out there. I'm also working towards being able to apply for some funding for the support group – I'd like to be able to get some branded t-shirts and funding would really help me with supplying refreshments and getting engagement. I am working with Mike to make this reality and look forward to how the group develops."

DEVON

CoLab Exeter Update

We are very grateful for the generous donation of four refurbished laptops from BCHA. This contribution has already made a real and tangible difference to the work of Common Ground and to the opportunities available to people involved in our peer support spaces.

When we first discussed the donation, we spoke about the idea of a 'Geek Club' as a way of building digital skills and confidence among our members. While that group has not yet formally taken shape, the laptops have very quickly become central to several strands of our work.

Most immediately, they have been vital in kick-starting and supporting our early work around podcasting and digital storytelling. Members have been using the laptops to plan, record, edit and reflect on podcast content, helping people to develop new technical skills while also creating spaces for lived experience voices to be heard. This is an area we are now expanding further through upcoming radio and podcast training with Phonic FM.

Just as importantly, the laptops have enabled us to loan equipment directly to group members. This has supported people to take part in online training courses, learning programmes, and online interviews connected to further opportunities. Without access to this equipment, several participants would simply not have been able to engage in these activities at all. Having access to a laptop has been a genuine enabler, reducing digital exclusion and opening doors to learning, confidence-building, and next steps.

"BCHA's donation is therefore not only supporting creative projects but also removing practical barriers that often prevent people from accessing development opportunities. It is helping us to create a culture of possibility where peers can experiment, learn, tell their stories, and move towards new pathways."

We are hugely appreciative of BCHA's support and generosity, and we wanted to share how meaningfully the laptops are already being used.

John Stammers, CoLab Exeter

Urban Bike Project Rolls into Exeter

Earlier this year, a BCHA resident in Exeter shared an idea with the local Community Physical Activity Organiser and Community Builder from Well-Being Exeter. Keen to use his bike-repair skills to help others, he had already begun gathering tools and sourcing donated bikes from fellow BCHA residents to upcycle - inspired by the BCHA Urban Bike Project (UBP) in Bournemouth.

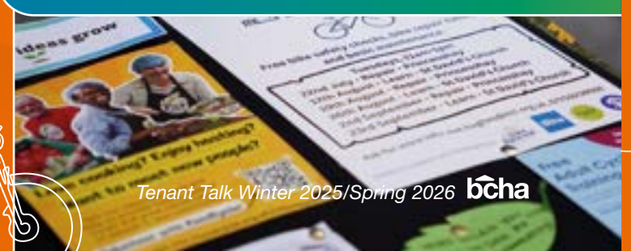
He spoke about the project, and how the bike repair could have a soft launch event or some pop ups to start gaining interest. Other residents with repair skills also started to offer their help. These residents met and were all attendees a Community Café in Exeter which is also run by former BCHA residents.

BCHA and Well-Being Exeter worked together to find funding for the UBP to run some summer pop ups through Cycling UK's 'Big Bike Revival' grant. These pop ups would conduct free bike safety checks, bike repair tutorials and basic maintenance for anyone over 18. The project especially wanted to support those who might be in recovery from homelessness and/or drug addiction, offering a free, supportive space where they could gain confidence to get back to cycling.

Princesshay Shopping Centre and St David's Church in Exeter were approached about using their venues for some 'fix' and 'learn' sessions. The pop ups were a great success. 24 people had their bikes checked and repaired, including chains, brakes, gear cables and tyre replacement! While the bike repairs were in progress, the Community Builder and Activity Coordinator spoke to residents about other activities going on in the area, encouraging them to get involved in other meaningful activities. The pop ups received lots of positive feedback, including:

"Massive improvement with the new chain, I'm very grateful.."

"I brought my bicycle to the bike project in Princesshay on Tuesday. I just wanted to thank you for the 'What's On' leaflet. There are a few activities that I feel could be good to get involved with."



DEVON

Morwenna Court Champion Co-Production in Exeter

Morwenna Court, one of BCHA's supported accommodation properties in Exeter, has been transformed under the guidance of their senior practitioner, Mick Campbell.

Mick said "I started as Senior Practitioner here after a number of years at Gabriel House, another of BCHA's accommodations in Exeter. Something I'm really passionate about is getting customers involved and engaged and I knew I wanted to transform Morwenna into a community: somewhere that customers could feel like they could knock on someone's door and go for a coffee together.

"There were no communal spaces at the time. Morwenna is typically made up of either self-contained units, or en-suite rooms that have shared kitchen facilities. I was aware that customers might not feel comfortable inviting someone in for a cuppa, so being able to provide somewhere they could go together was one of my goals for the place.

"With any project we take on, I make sure the customers are involved and this was no different. We decorated in colours that are from a Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) colour palette, which helps to ensure spaces feel safe, welcoming and non-institutional.

"We converted a storage area into a working space which can be used by staff or agencies that come into Morwenna. This provides a safe, quiet and confidential space that can allow for more engaged sessions or meetings. We converted another area into a living room space. We bought a television, soft furnishings and sofas and even a pull out table. People can now come together and eat meals together – food really brings people together and this is no different at Morwenna.

"We host our house meetings in the new converted space. Something that has come up often within the meetings is that our next project should be to convert the garden space. There is also a small green space that we'd like to transform.

"The customers decided that once safe to do so, the outside space can provide an additional community space. Being able to go outside is really important for everyone's mental health, at Morwenna we'd love to be able to complete key-work sessions in the garden when it's sunny. The property backs onto a large green space, and in the warmer months it is a real wildlife haven. You see birds of all kinds, squirrels and even foxes. We'd like to get squirrel feed boxes to encourage the animals.

"Staff and customers have been working hard to try and bring the ideas to life. We received two grants, one from Exeter City Council and one from Wickes, which we are going to put towards equipment for the garden and a lockable bike shed.

"One customer came up with an idea of a small memory garden to remember our former customers that have sadly passed away. They are keen to get involved with the physical work, replanting and getting the garden ready for the summer and making an outdoor space that will benefit their mental health for years to come."

DEVON

George House Football Team

Natalie has been living at BCHA's George House in Plymouth for the last two years. She has recently encouraged fellow residents alongside BCHA colleagues to start up a George House football team.

A keen football player, Natalie played for a local team back in 2004. Having not played football for nearly 20 years, Natalie was keen to get back to doing something she both enjoyed and could use as a healthy coping mechanism for past traumas.

"I used to shut myself in my room and isolate myself, not speaking to anyone. I just wanted to change. Being able to get out for an hour or two is my escape," Natalie said of her motivation to put the team together. *"I'd love to thank the George House team for always encouraging me, supporting me and getting me to engage."*

"I still find it quite difficult to get out of my room and do have bad times still. I am pushing myself and feel I now have too much to lose to go back to old ways."

Being able to get fellow residents to commit to a team has been difficult, but as team captain something Natalie has taken on. Now, members of the team meet every Thursday for practice and have recently played a game against local Salvation Army staff, where Natalie won the game for George House during penalties.

Natalie's dedication has not gone unnoticed. Plymouth Argyle, a Championship football team, have pledged to donate football kits and boots to George House's players. Natalie also received a letter from Birmingham City Football Club thanking her for her ongoing support and dedication to participating in football.

"*When I got the letter from Birmingham, I was really worried that I had done something wrong! When I realised that it was a good thing, I got so overwhelmed that I cried. I spent hours analysing each word and just couldn't believe it.*"

> *"I'd love to be able to get a tournament together between BCHA's other schemes in Exeter and Bournemouth, or even to compete against other Housing Associations. We could get a BCHA football kit!"*

Joe, Natalie's Support Worker, said "*Organising the football has been amazing for Nat. She's brought the whole of George House together and even got residents from other schemes involved. Thursday football is the best part of our week, it's lifted Nat's confidence, boosted everyone's mental health and got us all fitter and happier.*"

Molly, Premises Manager for George House, also added *"Seeing Natalie's passion and determination in setting up the football team with Plymouth Argyle has been truly inspiring. It's the one time each week where staff and customers feel equal on a level playing field - it brings so much excitement to our service."*

Family's Holiday Success for Martin in Plymouth

DEVON

Huge congratulations to Martin, a BCHA customer in Plymouth, who will be heading on holiday with his son after support worker Claire secured funding through the Family Holiday Charity.

Claire, Service Co-Ordinator for the Families team in Plymouth, applied for the grant in August of 2025 and in January found out that their application had been successful.

Martin was able to choose his holiday destination and has chosen Dawlish Warren, going away for his son's birthday over the Easter holidays. The Family Holiday Charity has covered the caravan stay, transport and gifted £60 in supermarket vouchers to cover food for their stay.

> *"After everything we've been through - the struggles of living in temporary accommodation and the hard times we've faced together - we never imagined something like this would be possible.*
>
> *"We can't put into words how grateful we are. This holiday means the world to us - not just a break, but a reminder that there is kindness and support out there, and that brighter days are possible. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to Claire at BCHA for making this happen for our little mini family."*

Claire said, *"I am ecstatic that Martin and his son get to experience a family holiday together and I hope they have a chance to make memories that will last them both a lifetime."*

Keep your eyes peeled for Martin's holiday update, coming in Tenant Talk's next issue later this year.

Wordsearch

Football Frenzy!

SHIN PADS	WHISTLE	GOAL
SOCKS	KIT	KICK
GRASS	CARD	GLOVES
CAPTAIN	FOOTBALL	TEAM
BOOTS	SCORE	SIDELINE
STUDS	PENALTY	

Return this slip to be entered into a prize draw to win a £25 JD Sports voucher. Return to:

FAO Communications, The Factory, Alder Hills, Poole, BH12 4AS. Alternatively, hand your slip to your Housing Officer FAO Communications.

Name _____

Address_____

_____

_____

Contact no. _____

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

Awaab's Law

Awaab Ishak was just two years old when he passed away in 2020 due to exposure to mould in his home.

Now, 5 years later, Awaab's Law means that social housing landlords like BCHA must legally act quickly to fix damp and mould in tenant's homes.

BCHA is committed to providing safe and comfortable homes to all our customers. We review our guidelines and policies regarding mould annually and have a dedicated Damp Team to ensure our customers' homes stay safe.

We also have a guide on the BCHA website on how to prevent mould in your home. You can find this under the Repairs section.

Reporting damp and mould:

To report damp and mould in your property, please call BCHA's Customer Services Team on **01202 410 500**. They will ask you some questions to ensure you get the right support at the right time, including:

- Your address, or the property that has a damp or mould issue
- Your name, or the customers' name if you are reporting on behalf of someone else
- Who lives in the affected property and if they are a vulnerable person, for example if they are an older person or have a condition that may be worsened by the mould (i.e. asthma)
- Where the issue is in the affected property
- If you have any photos of the issue

Your property will then be attended by one of BCHA's Surveyors from our Asset team within 10 working days. Following the survey, any repairs will be started within 5 working days.

You can find the most recent figures and updates on page 18. These are part of the Consumer Standards, set by the Regulator of Social Housing and detail our customers' satisfaction with our handling of complaints, repairs and home maintenance.

Investing in Your Home

Providing safe, comfortable and high-quality homes is at the heart of BCHA's new Strategic Plan. Over the past few years, we've been working behind the scenes to make sure we're well placed to invest in our homes for the long term — and we're pleased to now share what comes next.

Over the past three years, we have carried out detailed assessments of all the homes we own. This work has given us a clear picture of where improvements are needed and how upgrades can be planned in a careful and coordinated way. This has paved the way for the next phase of our journey: a thirty-year investment programme to upgrade our homes.

The upgrade plan focusses on the next five years and will deliver improvements across our homes, including new kitchens, bathrooms and roofs, helping to ensure homes remain safe, comfortable and fit for the future. We also know that the details matter. That's why we are committed to working closely with customers, offering an options catalogue and one-to-one conversations so you can make choices that reflect how you want your home to look and feel.

"Our homes are where life happens, so it's important we get this right. This five-year plan means we can invest in improvements in a planned, thoughtful way, while working with customers to make sure their homes are places they feel comfortable and proud to live in."

Richard Fudge, Head of Assets

What this means for you

- You'll be able to see **when your home is scheduled for an upgrade** and if these are due, what work is planned (subject to a final survey).
- You'll have **choices** of flooring colours, wall colours, kitchen units and worktops and tiling, helping you personalise your home where possible.
- We'll **work with you directly** before any work starts, so you know what to expect and when.
- The upgrades will help ensure your home remains **safe, comfortable and fit for the future**.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour Together

Our Housing team has been working across our homes and neighbourhoods to respond quickly and effectively to reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB), helping everyone feel safer where they live.

Over the past six months, BCHA has joined Resolve ASB, a leading specialist organisation supporting social housing providers. Our housing teams have completed specialist training to make sure they have the right skills and confidence to deal with ASB concerns fairly and consistently.

We are also working closely with local neighbourhood police teams and council ASB teams, meeting regularly and taking joint action where needed. By working together, we've been able to address serious cases, including securing a Closure Order at one property, which made a real difference to the safety and wellbeing of customers living nearby.

We're pleased to welcome our new ASB Specialist, Louise Griffiths-Grozier (photo), who brings valuable experience from her time working in the police. Louise will support staff and help lead our response to ASB across BCHA.

If you'd like to help shape how we deal with ASB, we'd love to hear from you.
Email: **LouiseGriffiths-Grozier@bcha.org.uk**

Meet the New Board Members

Suzanne Rastrick

Suzanne started with BCHA in November of 2025 - her career in the NHS has spanned over 40 years and she was appointed as Chief Allied Health Professions (AHP) Officer for England in September 2014.

In 2017 Suzanne launched the first AHP strategy for England, publishing a second national AHP strategy in June 2022. The second strategy had a greater emphasis on patient, public voice and specifically the inclusion of those who may be digitally excluded along with communities who may find it difficult to connect with traditional consultation methods.

For over three decades, Suzanne has held non-executive portfolios outside of the NHS predominantly in the social housing sector. Suzanne was also recognised as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2019. She is a Fellow of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists and of the Royal Society of Arts.

Richard Knott

(co-optee to the Development & Asset Management Committee)

Richard brings over 26 years of housing and leadership experience in local government, with a proven record of delivering operational transformation and service excellence across several authorities both in the south and in the Midlands.

He has held several senior roles at New Forest District Council, most recently as Strategic Director for Housing and Communities. Under his leadership, tenant satisfaction has risen significantly, placing the Council among the highest-performing local authority landlords nationally. In November 2025 Richard took on the newly created role of Chief Operations Officer/ Deputy Chief Executive.

Richard is passionate about developing innovative services and led one of the very first mental health and homelessness strategic partnerships in the country. As a strategic leader Richard's experience has also spanned more than the housing sector, focusing on developing community services to meet community needs alongside key stakeholders and the voluntary sector.

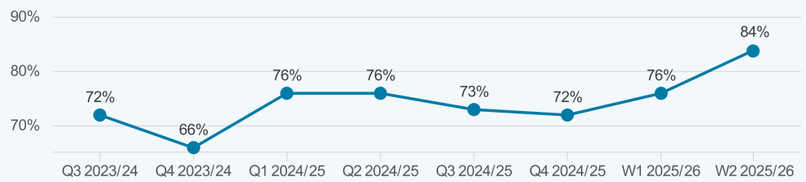
Tenant Satisfaction Measures

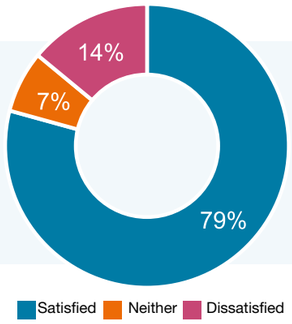
The Tenant Satisfaction Measures and surveys were introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to assess how well social housing landlords in England are providing good quality homes and services. BCHA engages an independent company, Acuity Research, to deliver telephone surveys to BCHA customers every quarter. In 2025 - 26, 312 BCHA customers took part in surveys. These results, and the valuable feedback we collect throughout the year, champion our customers' voice to help improve our services and homes. See our website for more information on our approach to conducting customer surveys. Our end of year TSM's measures show an increase in satisfaction in all areas compared to our end of year results the previous year.

What's Next? Measuring our performance is essential for maintaining customer trust and satisfaction. A dedicated working group will review survey responses to address issues and identify common themes. These insights will be shared with our leadership committees to inform strategic plans, with an action plan put in place to go alongside this. We will also be writing to all tenants who took part in the survey and updating them on the actions we are taking.

Overall Satisfaction

Annual Target	Fully Interviewed	Partially Interviewed
400	312	9





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TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Well Maintained Home	80%
Safe Home	80%
Repairs Last 12 Months	86%
Time Taken Repairs	80%
Communal Areas	75%
Neighbourhood Contribution	79%
Approach to ASB	70%
Listens & Acts	74%
Kept Informed	79%
Treated Fairly & with Respect	83%
Complaints Handling	45%

Veggie Paneer Masala

Brian, Complex Needs Support Worker in the Plymouth area hosts a community cooking session every Wednesday.

Brian says, "*The act of cooking and sharing food brings us all together and encourages a community of sharing and getting to know one another. Our cooking sessions allow us to share our skills as well as sharing friendly, open conversations. I hope you enjoy my veggie curry – you can switch the paneer out for tofu or chicken if you'd prefer a different protein!*".

Ingredients (serves 4)

1 x 200g pack paneer
75g cornflour
3 x tbsp ghee or 2 x tbsp oil of choice
1 x tin of baby potatoes, chopped
75g garden peas (fresh, tinned or frozen)
5 x garlic cloves
1 x fresh ginger piece
1 x chilli (optional, or add half for lower heat)
1 x onion
300g basmati rice

Spices

3 x bay leaves
1 tbsp x coriander
5 x cardamom seeds, crushed
½ tsp x chilli powder
(optional, omit if you don't like the spice)
½ tbsp + ¼ tsp x turmeric
½ tbsp x ginger (powdered)
1 tbsp x garam masala
½ tbsp x cumin

Method

1. Chop your paneer into cubes around 1cm thick and add to a bowl filled with your cornflour. Toss paneer pieces in cornflour until coated.
2. In a pan, add 1 tbsp of your ghee (or 1 tbsp oil) and bring to a high heat. Add your coated paneer and fry until golden brown – pop this on a plate to one side with a bit of kitchen roll to absorb any excess ghee.
3. While your paneer is frying, dice your garlic and chilli, and finely slice your onion.
4. Using the same pan, add a tablespoon of ghee (or 1 tbsp oil) and bring to a medium heat. Add your spices and toast until fragrant. Add your chopped potatoes and your garden peas along with half a cup of water. This is your **masala spice paste**.
5. In a separate pan, add your sliced onions, your diced garlic (save a teaspoon of garlic), ginger and chilli with a pinch of salt – fry these until they are softened and translucent. Combine with your masala spice paste and bring to a low heat – this will simmer while you cook your rice.
6. In a saucepan, add 300g of basmati rice, 500ml water, teaspoon of diced garlic, ¼ teaspoon of turmeric and a tablespoon of ghee. Bring to a simmer on medium heat – add the lid and simmer for 12 minutes.
7. Drain your rice once cooked and fluff with a fork.
8. Serve your rice alongside your paneer curry – for a community feel add pots and spoons to a table and allow people to help themselves. Serve alongside naan, samosas or onion bhajis for a full-on feast!

Masala Chai recipe

Masala Chai (also known as Chai tea) is a popular drink across the world. Chai is a great way to end your meal, bringing the community feel of sharing a cuppa with the sweetness to cleanse the palate of spice.

Ingredients:

6 – 7 cloves
2 green cardamom pods, crushed
2 cinnamon sticks
4 tea bags
(add more if you prefer a stronger tea flavour)
1 x 397g can condensed milk

Method:

1. Add all your ingredients to a saucepan along with 1.7 litres boiled water (this is a standard kettle size).
2. Bring to a simmer for around 20 minutes – serve into mugs straight from the pot.
3. Top tip: the longer you leave your Chai to simmer, the more the spices infuse the tea. Can't drink it all? Don't worry! You can keep your chai in the fridge and reheat as needed.

Fire Safety in Your Home

Top tips for keeping you and your family safe

Plugs

Turn off appliances when not in use

Doors

Do not leave a fire door open and never disconnect an automatic closer

Appliances

Do not leave an appliance running when no-one is home

Smoking

Do not smoke in bed and always put out cigarettes fully

Smoke alarms

Test your smoke alarm weekly and do not cover or remove

BBQ

If you have a balcony do not have a BBQ on it

Cooking

Do not leave cooking unattended

Belongings

A tidy home with fewer belongings can reduce the risk of fire spreading

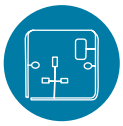
Candles

Do not leave candles unattended and always put out fully

Matches

Store matches and lighters in a safe place and away from children

Electrical



Do not overload electrical sockets and switch them off when not in use

Flammable

Do not store anything flammable such as petrol in your home

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Useful Contacts at BCHA

BCHA Customer Service
01202 410 500 • customerservices@bcha.org.uk

Maintenance Enquiries
BCHA Home **0300 1234 001** or email:
repairs@bcha.org.uk

BCHA Floating Mental Health Support
Phone-in service on **01202 612 600** (Mon-Fri 10:00-16:00)
MHfloatingsupprt@bcha.org.uk

BCHA Learn
01202 410 595 • bchalearn@bcha.org.uk

Foodbanks
are available if you are struggling to cope financially.
Call **01202 410 500** for further advice

Help with housing, learning and living
Call **01202 410500**
Email enquiries@bcha.org.uk

www.bcha.org.uk
The Factory, 14 Alder Hills, Poole, BH12 4AS
Unity Hub, 5 - 11 Millbay Road, Plymouth PL1 3LF

Are you getting everything you're entitled to?

www.turn2us.org.uk
www.gov.uk
www.entitledto.co.uk

All websites have a benefits calculator to assist you.

Emergency Numbers

NHS
111

Mental Health Connections
0300 123 5440

National Domestic Abuse
0808 2000 247

Samaritans
116 213

NSPCC
0808 800 5000

Cruse Bereavement
0800 808 1677

Shelter
0808 800 4444

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