

Winter 2025

YOUR HOME MATTERS

News for Stroud District Council Tenants and Leaseholders

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Spotlight on

HOMELESSNESS

Find us at: www.stroud.gov.uk

WELCOME: FROM ANDY KEFFORD

Follow us:



Welcome to the first ever issue of 'Your Home Matters' – a newsletter produced to help you, our residents, understand the work we are doing within our organisation, across our community and within your homes to ensure Stroud District Council Housing Services is delivering on your expectations. This is 'your' newsletter, which is why we've consulted with residents to develop the name and we hope you like it. It reflects both the content in terms of news and matters affecting your home, but also that your home really does matter to you and us.

This issue covers some seasonal topics around safety within your home, catches up with our Tenant Oversight Panel about how they support us, as well as some news about the work carried out by our Housing Advice team and what we have been doing in our local communities.

We'd like to thank everyone that took part in our recent TENANT CENSUS. We've had over 2,500 responses so far. We will be reaching out to anyone we haven't yet heard from in the coming months or alternatively, if you've yet to take part, feel free to contact us via any of the contact methods on the back page, as we'd love to hear from you. Your voice matters to us, which is why we work closely with tenants to ensure you have your say and your feedback that will help shape our future services. We're constantly working towards improving our services, not only in line with legislative changes, but to ensure we're providing safe and healthy homes for our tenants.

We'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a fun filled festive season and happy and healthy 2026!

We hope you enjoy this first issue.

Andy Kefford
Strategic Head of Housing



We are in the process of updating our IT systems, to provide you with a better service and ensure you have the information you need. Please bear with us as this work takes place – we appreciate your patience during this transitional time.

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**STROUD
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

MEET THE SENIOR HOUSING TEAM: WORKING FOR YOU

Stroud District Council is proud to manage its own housing stock with over 5,000 properties located across an area of 400 square miles.

Stroud District Council housing service employs over 120 people and is responsible for a variety of services aimed at enhancing the lives of residents in our district. We'd like to introduce you to a few key faces, whose roles directly effect you, our tenants.



ANDY KEFFORD

Strategic Head of Housing

Overall lead for the Council's housing services and responsible for the delivery of the Consumer Standards.



TARA SKIDMORE

Head of Assets and Investment (Council Housing)

Responsible for repairs & maintenance, asset investment and health, safety & compliance.



STUART PATTISON

Head of Tenant Relationships

Responsible for tenancy management, income collection and resident engagement.



PIPPA STROUD

Head of Housing Solutions

Responsible for housing advice, enabling, international resettlement and homelessness services.

SEE US AROUND

Our team is regularly out in the district looking for ways to improve your area. Tenants are welcome to join our estate inspections or walkabouts, or drop into a housing surgery at your Local Community Hub.

We want your homes and neighbourhoods to be great places to live. If you spot a problem, we'll work with you and, when needed, other partners, to find a solution.

If we plan improvement works in your area, we'll let you and your neighbours know and ask for your feedback before we begin. See **page 07** for details on recent events.



Scan if you want to get involved?

GET INVOLVED: TENANT OVERSIGHT PANEL



Our Tenant Oversight Panel consists of volunteer tenants, who independently review our Housing Services and make recommendations for improvements. It is really important tenants influence the decisions we make, working in partnership to ensure we better meet the needs of those living in our community. Listening to you, our tenants, offers us your unique perspective on how services are delivered and helps us focus on the things that matter most to you.

WHAT'S INVOLVED:

Q. Describe your role as part of Tenant Oversight Panel

We listen to tenants' experiences to see what aspects of the housing service are causing the greatest concern. We also monitor tenant satisfaction surveys, performance indicators and complaints.

Q. How has it helped you understand the work the Council does for its tenants?

We have learned a great deal

about the inter-relationships between teams, the complexity of housing and social housing regulations.

Q. What do you enjoy about being part of the panel?

We find satisfaction in knowing that we can influence decisions at the highest level and that our recommendations for improvements will make tenants' lives better which makes our involvement worthwhile.

Q. What does the future look like for housing services?

We think we will have a positive impact on responsive repairs communications and tenants' satisfaction will improve when our recommendations are implemented. Our next scrutiny review will investigate the council preparations to address damp and mould issues.

We'd like to say a huge 'thank you' to everyone that's involved in our Tenant Oversight Panel and other involved residents. If you'd like to get involved and help us shape the future of Stroud District Council housing service, or find out more about the opportunities to get involved please get in touch on: 01453 766 321 or resident.involvement@stroud.gov.uk



SEASONAL SAFETY MESSAGES: STAYING SAFE IN YOUR HOME

RECHARGEABLE BATTERY AWARENESS

You might already use an E-Bike, E-Scooter or Mobility Scooter, or may be lucky enough to receive some gadgets that rely on rechargeable batteries over the festive period.

We've pulled together some helpful hints and tips on how to make sure you **stay safe** this Christmas:

- Don't leave your device charging unattended or when you're asleep.
- Only use the correct charger for your battery.
- Don't charge or store bulky batteries in hallways, communal areas or where they could block your escape.
- Don't forget, as tempting as it might be, so you can enjoy it during your holidays, it's only recommended that a professional carries out an e-bike scooter conversion.
- Only buy e-bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters and batteries from trusted retailers and manufacturers.



Stay powered, stay safe, and enjoy a hazard-free holiday season!



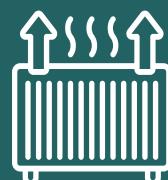
ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Recent changes in legislation mean we must now carry out electrical safety tests every five years, rather than every ten. To meet this requirement by April 2026, we need to complete checks in around 1,600 homes.

- These checks are straightforward and usually take only a couple of hours. They are essential to ensure your home remains safe for you and your loved ones.
- Everyone affected by this change has now been contacted directly. Thank you for your cooperation and support as we work to keep you safe, it remains our top priority.



It's time to test your heating! If you haven't done so already, check your heating is working correctly before the winter weather sets in. Please scan QR Code for more details on how best to do this.



SUPPORT IN STROUD: A TOUGH TIME OF YEAR



SPOTLIGHT ON HOMELESSNESS – TEAM Q & A

Facing homelessness is difficult at any time of year, but especially during these colder, darker months. We caught up with Debbie Hughes and Ros Young to talk to them about their role within the Housing Advice Team and how they can help anyone in difficulty.

Q. What is the role of a Homelessness Prevention Officer at SDC?

A. We work closely with households at risk of homelessness to explore housing options and provide support. Our aim is to prevent homelessness by helping maintain tenancies, offering advice, and signposting to specialist legal services if needed. Options may include registering on Homeseeker Plus or accessing the Homelessness Prevention Fund for private rentals. Where possible, we help prevent notices or court action for rent arrears and can refer to agencies such as Citizens Advice, P3, and CleanSlate.

Q. If someone is worried about their housing situation, what should they do?

A. Call us on 01453 766 321 option 3, option 4, or email us at: housing.advice@stroud.gov.uk

Q. Do you have any particular advice for young people worried about becoming homeless?

A. It may seem daunting, but the first step towards preventing homelessness is to get in touch, so we can help. We can give advice to young people and explore options that may be suitable for them, for example, supported accommodation, accessing house-shares in the private sector, or remaining in the family

If you've seen someone sleeping rough, or in a car - please log their location on thestreetlink.org.uk this notifies the local authorities and charities, so they can help.

STOP LOAN SHARKS

Economic challenges are nothing new, but at this time of year rising fuel, food, running costs, and living expenses may make life harder. This financial strain creates the perfect storm for illegal money lenders - loan sharks - who prey on vulnerable people.

Warning signs of an illegal lender:

- No paperwork or loan agreement
- Refusal to share loan details
- Keeping items like bank cards or passports until debt is paid
- Taking possessions if you miss payments

- Adding charges so the debt never decreases
- Using intimidation or violence

If you think you've borrowed from one, you've done nothing wrong. Please contact us confidentially for help and support.

Speak to your Housing Officer or for independent, confidential support, Stop Loan Sharks: 0300 555 2222.

For safe, ethical borrowing visit Great Western Credit Union: www.greatwesterncu.org.uk

SOCIAL VALUE: GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY



BE A FIRE HERO



Stroud District Council's Be a Fire Hero campaign is an innovative, community-focused initiative designed to empower children with life-saving fire safety skills while fostering resilience and connection across the district. In partnership with Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Harmony Fire, and local primary schools, this programme transforms essential safety education into an engaging, interactive experience.

Fire safety is a core priority. By teaching fire safety to the youngest members of our community, we aim to build confidence, reduce risk, and create a culture of safety that extends into homes and neighbourhoods.

The campaign launched with a series of workshops structured as three progressive levels within a fun Fire Hero game. Children learned to identify fire risks,

test smoke alarms, make emergency 999 calls, and perform Stop, Drop and Roll. They explored a real fire engine, practiced using a hose, and met firefighters - turning education into an unforgettable experience. Each child graduated as a certified Fire Hero, reinforcing achievement and pride.

This project supports individuals by equipping them with practical life skills and fostering trust in emergency services. It promotes health and wellbeing by reducing fire-related risks and creating safer homes. By connecting schools, families, and local partners, the campaign strengthens community bonds and resilience. Every child becomes an advocate for safety, creating a ripple effect that benefits the entire district.



LIVING IN HARMONY

We delighted to confirm we have installed the first Internet of Things fire door at one of our Independent Living Schemes in the district. We're fully committed to leading the way with the testing of new technology and innovation, in partnership with contractors, ultimately to keep our tenants safe 365 days a year.

HELPING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Alongside the Be a Fire Hero campaign, we asked schools how else we could support them. This led to additional community projects such as building welly boot stands, bird boxes, hedgehog houses, and scooter stores. Using donated materials from Travis Perkins and the skills of our housing operatives, these items were built and installed on-site, with children painting and decorating where they wished, creating a sense of ownership and pride.



CHECK YOUR CO₂ & SMOKE ALARMS!

Did you know you should check your smoke alarm and any carbon monoxide alarms are working at least once a month, and many fire services recommend weekly is better. You should also replace the battery every year and replace the unit every ten years.

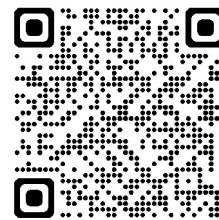
Unit not working? Contact us immediately to arrange a replacement.



USEFUL CONTACTS & INFORMATION

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR:

Report it, Sort it!



EMAIL US:



For enquiries related to services provided by Stroud District Council, please find below the email addresses:

Damp and Mould: dmenquiries@stroud.gov.uk

Customer enquiries: customer.services@stroud.gov.uk

Homelessness: housing.advice@stroud.gov.uk

Housing Management: housing.management@stroud.gov.uk

Pest control: environmental.health@stroud.gov.uk



SPEAK TO US: 01453 766 321

Hours:

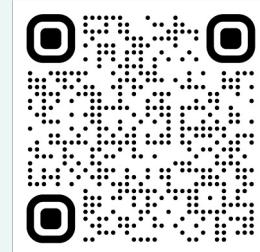
8.45 - 5.00 pm : Monday - Thursday

8.45 - 4.30 pm : Fridays

EMERGENCIES

Outside of office hours, if your call is a genuine emergency, you should contact our out of hours provider on 01453 222104

COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK:



Here you will find our policy and associated documents to let you know how we will manage your complaints and feedback. To provide a compliment or general feedback please fill in our online form by scanning this QR code.

WRITE TO US:

Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill,
Ebley Wharf
Stroud,
GL5 4UB



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.stroud.gov.uk

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