

OPEN DOOR

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2025



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

2. Welcome from Lorraine
2. Tenant satisfaction measures
3. Kim puts Andrew through his paces
3. Stock condition surveys
3. Scrutiny panel and tenant voice forum update
4. Spring clean days bring communities together
4. Meet our Waste Prevention and Recycling Officers
5. Need help to quit smoking?
5. A day in the life of a Tenancy Support Officer
6. Improvements to waste and recycling collections
6. The annual canvass
7. From rescue to obedience star
7. Important information about door to door callers
7. Summer crossword
8. How to get in touch



Our Tenant Involvement Officers and Housing Officers taking part in the 'Spring Clean' initiative - read the full story on page 4

The aim of this newsletter is to keep you informed about things that affect you and your property. This issue has been co-produced with our tenant editorial panel – we hope you find some useful information inside.

If you have a story that you would like to share, please email myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk or speak to your Tenant Involvement Officer.

Do you need this newsletter in large print or a different language?

Please contact myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk

This newsletter is also available online at www.northyorks.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement

Welcome from Lorraine, Head of Housing Standards



Welcome to the Summer edition of Open Door Magazine!

I'm Lorraine, Head of Housing Standards. Our team handles repairs to council homes, damp and mould, planned maintenance, updates to make homes more energy efficient, safety checks and more. Over the past year, we've been busy recruiting more staff and improving our systems so that we can support you better.

We've worked with tenants to develop a new repairs standard, which outlines how we prioritise repairs. We're also excited to introduce our new repairs handbook, which includes information on which repairs are your responsibility and which are ours. More information about the handbook is included with this newsletter. Please keep this in a safe place to refer back to.

Our new repairs system is now live - this means everyone will receive the same service. Repairs colleagues will be working on the same system, improving efficiency and clarity in prioritising repairs.

We can see from our tenant satisfaction surveys, that there's more work to do to improve our repairs service, and we hope these things will help. We always want to hear your feedback, so please email us at myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk if you've used the new online form or want to share your experience of the service.

We hope you find your Summer newsletter useful - see you again in Autumn when we will share the Housing Annual Report.

*Best wishes,
Lorraine*



Tenant Satisfaction Measures

We regularly ask you to take part in surveys to understand how satisfied you are with our services. The surveys are being carried out by an independent market research company, Acuity, who, so far, have done telephone interviews in December 2024 and March 2025. We are aware that some of you received calls that appeared as spam numbers, and we are working to resolve this issue.

Thank you for your participation and feedback - it is invaluable in helping us improve our services. Here are the results from the most recent survey carried out in March 2025.



Overall Satisfaction:

Seven out of ten tenants (**68%**) are satisfied with the overall service provided.



Home Maintenance:

Seven out of ten tenants (**71%**) are satisfied with the maintenance of their homes.



Safety:

Around four out of five tenants (**82%**) feel that we provide a safe home.



Communal Areas:

68% of tenants with communal areas are satisfied with their cleanliness and maintenance.

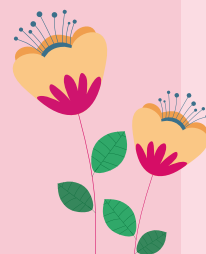


Repairs:

Almost three-fifths of tenants (**59%**) said they had a repair in the last 12 months. **71%** are satisfied with the service, but almost a fifth are dissatisfied (**19%**).



You can view the full results from the March survey and the annual summary for 2024-25 here.



Kim puts Andrew through his paces

One of our involved tenants, Kim, had the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns on behalf of tenants face to face with our most senior officer in the housing service, Assistant Director of Housing, Andrew Rowe. Kim's wide-ranging list of questions covered communication issues between tenants and the council, repairs, improvements to homes and estates, and support with the cost of living.

Andrew spoke about the stock condition surveys, the Decent Homes Standard, and the ambitious retrofit programme that the council is working on to improve energy efficiency.

We will update you in Open Door about the progress on some of the issues Kim raised.

You can watch the full interview, which we've provided in shorter 'easy-to-watch' sections. Scan the QR codes with your phone to watch.

Estate issues



Home issues



Support



Stock condition surveys

We're doing stock condition surveys to ensure that all our properties meet the Decent Homes Standard, which is a legal requirement for all social housing.

We will be surveying all of our council homes which is crucial for maintaining accurate records and identifying improvement works to ensure our homes meet the required standard.

We are committed to completing all the surveys by September 2026, with 50% of them to be carried out by March 2026. We are working with external partners to achieve this target set by the Regulator of Social Housing. We will contact you by phone, email or letter to let you know when we will be surveying your property and what to expect.

It is very important that you let us access your property so we can gather the information required and make improvements if they are needed.

Thank you for your cooperation.



Scrutiny panel and tenant voice forum update

Now that the Tenant Involvement Strategy is approved we have set up our tenant-led groups, to help ensure your voices are heard in decisions affecting your homes, safety, and communities.

Our Tenant Scrutiny Panel examines how well we deliver your housing service. The panel will work on an annual plan of specific topics focusing on areas where you have told us you are not satisfied. It's an opportunity for tenants to work more strategically to influence services.

The first area the panel will scrutinise is complaints, where they will review the complaints process

and take a detailed look at some specific examples.

We are also asking for volunteers to participate in specific projects.

A group has already focused on the repairs policy in January and the Lettable Standard policy in April. Future policy reviews will cover grounds maintenance, disrepair, right to buy, and compensation policies.

In May, we held the first quarterly Tenant Voice Panel Forum meeting. This is open to all tenants and leaseholders, who will be asked to elect a tenant chair and committee members.

The purpose of the panel is to review policies and procedures, or other aspects of service improvement. At the first forum we presented our quarterly performance report and provided updates against the Housing Improvement Plan.

If you would like to get involved in any of the tenant-led groups please email

myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk or call **0300 131 2 131** and say 'housing' when prompted.

Spring clean days bring communities together

We've been out and about on your estates with our 'Spring Clean' initiative.

This aimed to clear unwanted items and enhance neighbourhood appearances.

Skips were provided in the Selby, Harrogate, and Richmond areas, and tenants received help moving heavy items, resulting in tidier neighbourhoods. Our waste team also played a key role in removing bulky waste.

This also enabled tenants to ask questions and share ideas, helping us understand priorities like repairs and tackling anti-social behaviour.

One tenant said:

"You are absolute angels. We were overwhelmed with our rubbish and didn't know where to start. This has been amazing."

Stay tuned for future events!



Meet our Waste Prevention and Recycling Officers

Over the last six months, our waste team has expanded. We have welcomed two new Waste Prevention and Recycling Officers to the team - Ariane and Michelle.

They have been busy talking rubbish in North Yorkshire primary schools with a workshop called 'Rescue Me'.

Children join in with a game that focuses on recyclable items that are commonly mistaken as rubbish, such as deodorant cans, yoghurt pots and toilet roll tubes.

We have had some great feedback from the schools and the children have really loved the workshops.

Ariane and Michelle have also been working with local community groups to support residents to waste less and recycle more.

We want to hear from you!

Tell us what makes recycling difficult, what could help you recycle more, and share any tips you already use to recycle effectively.

Email us at:

waste.campaigns@northyorks.gov.uk



Need help to quit smoking?

If you or someone you know wants to stop smoking expert advisors from our Living Well smokefree team can help.

They provide free support and advice for six to 12 weeks which includes:

- weekly meetings to help plan new routines, check your progress and keep you going. These can be at one of our clinics, online or by phone
- tips with managing things like cravings or stressful situations
- guidance for using stop smoking aids like nicotine patches and gum, e-cigarettes, and medications. These may be subject to availability and a prescription charge.

We know people using this combination of support are more likely to quit for good.

You can request support from the team by calling **01609 797272** (Monday to Friday), email **stop.smoking@northyorks.gov.uk** or visit **www.northyorks.gov.uk/stopping-smoking**

This service is available to anyone from the age of 12 who lives or works in North Yorkshire or is registered with a GP in the county.

When we receive your request one of our friendly advisors will contact you to arrange your first meeting with them.



This will involve asking a few questions, talking through the support you need, and selecting the right stop smoking aids for you.

They will then arrange weekly meetings to help keep you focused and provide any support you may need for things like cravings or new routines.

It's never too late to quit and when you stop smoking there are almost immediate improvements to your health.

It reduces your risk of illness, disability or death caused by cancer, heart or lung disease.

It also helps protect the health of the people around you by reducing their exposure to second-hand smoke. Quitting could also save you over £2,000 a year.

Let us help you commit to quit smoking.

A day in the life of a Tenancy Support Officer

We spoke to Susie, one of our Tenancy Support Officers in the Selby area, to hear about her role.

My role as a Tenancy Support Officer is relatively new; I started at the end of September 2024. I work in Selby and the surrounding areas and receive referrals from housing officers or the rent team.

My responsibilities include visiting tenants, helping them with claiming benefits, setting up bills and providing a range of other support.

I also coordinate with various agencies and the Community Hub to ensure we provide a comprehensive service. I've also helped a few people with the transition to Universal Credit, and I expect to assist more as the changes take effect.

My typical day involves a mix of office work and tenant visits. I schedule visits throughout the day working in the office between appointments.

My schedule varies, but I usually have visits every day. I enjoy the varied nature of my job.

I also love the opportunity to learn new things, particularly about benefits and the diversity of the people I support.

Thanks so much Susie for telling us about your role!



Improvements to waste and recycling collections for Harrogate and Richmond areas

To ensure our waste and recycling service remains as efficient as possible, and there is a harmonious approach across the county, we are making some changes over the next two to three years.

Collections will take place between Tuesdays and Fridays, which will allow us to provide a more reliable service and also reduce the need for bank holiday disruptions, providing a more consistent approach to picking up waste and recycling from homes.

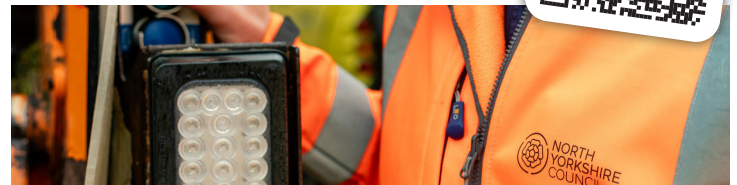
When your area is due to be changed, you will receive a letter explaining what your new collection day will be, as well as further details about how to check collection days, what time rubbish or recycling should be presented, and what you can do if you need any further information. We are also planning to introduce a harmonised recycling service for residents across the county.

Under the plans, the majority of residents will have alternate fortnightly household recycling collections, one for paper and card and one for all other recyclable materials, including glass, cans, plastics and cartons.

This model of collection already takes place in the Selby area and allows us to increase the amount and quality of recycling collected at the kerbside, reduce the cost of collection, and helps with carbon reduction.

Scan the QR code to find out your bin and recycling collection days.

The new collections will be phased in over the next two to three years.



The annual canvass

From July onwards we will be commencing the electoral register annual canvass. Each year, we are required by law to confirm whether the details held on the electoral register are correct.

You will receive an email or letter from us with instructions on what you need to do, and when.

Everyone aged 16 and over can be added to the register, which can be important for getting a credit rating.

Find out more at:

www.northyorks.gov.uk/annualcanvass



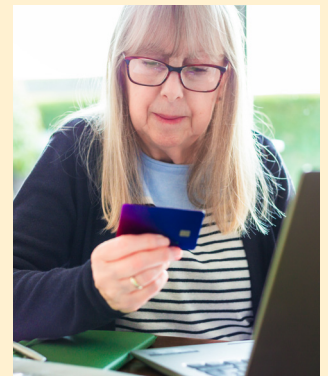
Stay safe: How to avoid scams

Last time we looked at how to recognise scams – this edition, we're going to discover how to avoid them.

Avoiding scams

- **Verify the source:** If you receive a suspicious call or email, verify the source before responding. Contact the organisation directly using a phone number or email address you know is legitimate. Do not use the contact details provided in the suspicious message.
- **Use strong passwords:** Create strong, unique passwords for your online accounts. Avoid using easily guessable information like your name or birthdate. Consider using a password manager to keep track of your passwords securely.
- **Be cautious online:** When shopping or banking online, ensure the website is secure. Look for "https://" at the beginning of the web address and a padlock symbol in the browser bar. Avoid clicking on links in unsolicited emails or messages.
- **Report suspicious activity:** If you suspect you've encountered a scam, report it to Action Fraud, the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime. You can contact them online or by calling **0300 123 2040**.

Next time we'll look at different types of common scams to look out for.



From rescue to obedience star

Rula's Journey with tenant Barbara

Rula, a 2-year-old Chihuahua cross-breed, was rescued by one of our involved tenants, Barbara.

Rula has become a keen participant in obedience classes, where dogs are evaluated on various exercises, such as walking to heel, returning when called, responding to commands from a distance, and lying down for 5 minutes when their owner is out of the room - the ultimate test!

Training is good for dogs of any age, helping them with socialisation and obedience.

There are many training classes available - check the notice board at your vet's.

Some dog rescue centres also run classes, often at affordable prices.

Creating a bond with your dog through training and practice enables you to be a responsible dog owner and helps your pet become a calm and obedient companion.



Important information about door to door callers

We've received reports of individuals going door-to-door offering to help tenants make "No Win, No Fee" disrepair claims.

These people may pressure you to sign legal documents on the spot, often without fully explaining the risks.

What you need to know:

These callers often:

- Promise compensation with "no cost to you"
- Pressure you to sign legally binding contracts
- Exaggerate repair issues or encourage false claims

You could end up tied to a contract with hidden fees, delayed repairs, or even face legal consequences if the claim is rejected.

When people take the council to court, it costs a lot of money.

That money has to be used to pay lawyers instead of improving homes.

What to do:

- ✓ Don't sign anything at the door
- ✓ Ask for ID and company details
- ✓ Report repair issues directly to us.

Details of how to make a complaint to us are on the back cover of this newsletter.

You can also contact the housing ombudsman www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk or phone 0300 111 3000.

Summertime fun!

Here is your summer themed crossword - enjoy!

ACROSS

- The warmest season of the year
- Build these at the seaside
- Usually accompanies the outdoor cooking
- A place to relax on the coast

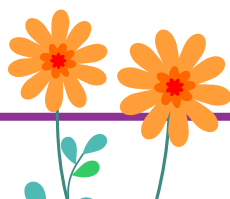
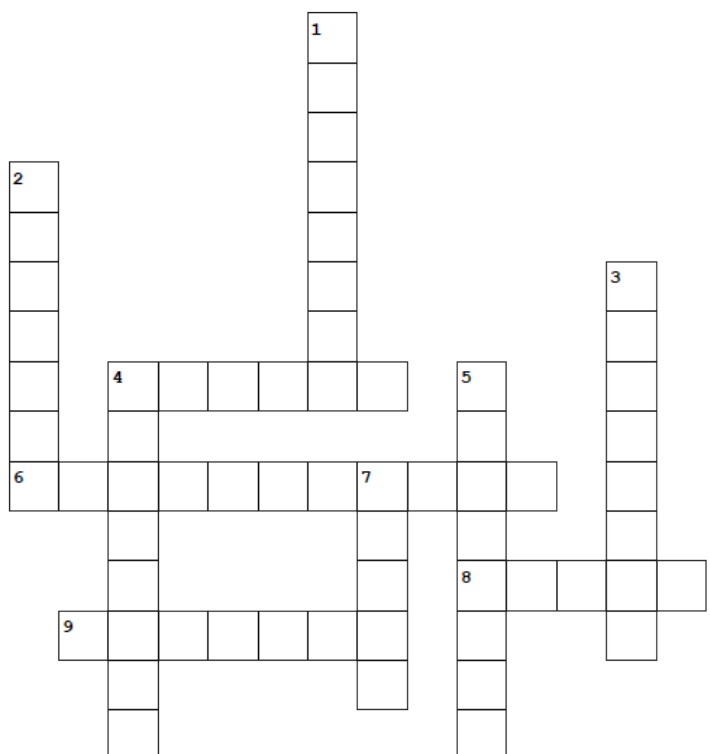
DOWN

- Outdoor cooking
- Save your feet from getting too hot!
- A lovely cool treat
- Use this to protect your skin
- Perks up the salad!
- Useful when swimming or sunbathing

The answers to the Spring crossword were:

Across: 4. Mayblossom, 6. March, 7. Springcleaning 9. Bulbs, 10. Gardening

Down: 1. Showers 2. Butterflies 3. Daffodil 5. Spring 8. Equinox



How to... ...report a repair

Before you report a repair make sure that you have:

- Checked if the repair is your responsibility or the council's responsibility
- Gathered as much information as you can about the repair.

You can report repairs to us in the following ways:

Online: www.northyorks.gov.uk/housing-repairs.

By telephone: **0300 131 2 131**. Please say 'Housing repairs' when prompted.

If you are reporting an emergency repair outside normal office hours, and during weekends and bank holidays you should use the same contact telephone number; **0300 131 2 131**, which will connect you to the emergency repair call handling team.

If you smell gas call the National Gas Network immediately on 0800 111 999 (minicom 0800 5875055).

When you report a repair, we will need the following details:

- The type of the repair, including details and the location of the item that needs repairing
- Your full name, address and postcode • A contact phone number.

After the repair is reported, we will:

- Confirm if the repair is our responsibility
- Record the details of your repair
- Inform you of the date of the appointment
- Tell you if the work will be done by the council or the name of the contractor
if the work is to be done by one of the council's contracting services
- We may need to inspect the problem before carrying out the repair
- After the work is completed we may inspect the work in person or discuss it over the phone.

...report damp and mould

If you have problems with damp and/or mould you can report it in the following ways:

Online: www.northyorks.gov.uk/dampandmould

By telephone: **Call 0300 131 2 131** and say 'condensation, damp and mould' when prompted.

...get in touch

Online: northyorks.gov.uk/contact-us

By telephone: **0300 131 2 131** (please say 'housing' when prompted)

North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Northallerton,
North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

You can request this information in another language or format by emailing
myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk

You can make sure your voice is heard and take part in North Yorkshire Council consultations at
www.northyorks.gov.uk/consultations

...make a complaint

You can share feedback or make a complaint on the North Yorkshire Council website at: www.northyorks.gov.uk/complaints

Would you be happy to get this update on email?

Let us know by emailing myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk



Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished reading it.