



OPEN DOOR

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2025



Tenant June has brought colour and joy with her outdoor artwork.

Sunflowers and smiles: A tenant's artistic touch transforms outdoor area

A tenant at a sheltered housing scheme has brought colour, joy and community spirit to her residence through a series of hand-painted sunflower murals. Using reclaimed wood and an electric saw, June Tarn created vibrant artworks that now brighten the outdoor courtyard, once described as “depressing” and overgrown.

Inspired by her love of cheerful, sunny motifs, she chose sunflowers for their uplifting presence. But each piece also carries personal meaning. A busy bee represents the hardworking cleaner, while a flamingo sipping gin symbolises the playful spirit of the scheme warden. Other additions include a mouse in a toadstool and a sun wearing a hat.

The transformation has had a profound impact. Residents, many in their 80s and 90s, enjoyed spending time outside during warmer weather, hosting barbecues and admiring the artwork. “It’s brought me to tears,” the artist shared, reflecting on the smiles her work has inspired.

“To make people happy—priceless,” she said.

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 another language?

Please contact myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk This newsletter is also available online at www.northyorks.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement



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Welcome from Susie Eales, Housing Service Manager

I'm Susie, and I manage the team of housing officers who work in various roles to make neighbourhoods safe, inclusive, and well-maintained. In this edition the article on page 4 explains more about the role of my team and how we can support you. For example, we're now using a new system called REACT to help us deal with anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood issues more efficiently. It helps our officers keep everything in one place—notes, evidence, costs, and feedback—so nothing gets missed. It also means we can give accurate updates to the regulator and show how we're doing. With this newsletter, you will also find enclosed the 2024-25 Annual Report co-produced with tenants. This is the first annual report that covers all the areas where we have council houses in North Yorkshire. We really hope you find the report useful and interesting. As always, we would love to hear your feedback on this newsletter and the Annual Report – details of how to get in touch are on the back cover.



*Best wishes,
Susie*

Tenant satisfaction on the rise - what you told us

Thank you to everyone who was chosen at random to take part in the latest tenant satisfaction survey. Your views help us improve the services you rely on.

For the latest survey, 150 tenants from across Harrogate, Selby and Richmond shared their thoughts. We're pleased to report that overall satisfaction with housing services has gone up to 77%, a rise of 9% since the last survey.

Safety and repairs were top performers. 87% of tenants said they feel safe in their homes, and 83% were happy with repairs carried out in the last year. Satisfaction with how quickly repairs are done also improved, now at 78%.

Tenants also told us they feel respected. 83% said they're treated fairly and with respect, and 78% feel well-informed about things that matter to them.

However, there are areas that need attention. Only 57% were satisfied with how anti-social behaviour is handled, and just 33% were happy with how complaints are dealt with. Many said they felt ignored or had to wait too long for a response.

We've listened - the Council is reviewing how complaints are handled and looking at ways to improve communication.

Your feedback matters. By sharing your experiences, you're helping shape better services for everyone. You can read the full results on the website here www.northyorks.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement



Report repairs online – it's quick, easy and convenient

Did you know you can report repairs to North Yorkshire Council online, anytime? It's a way to get help without waiting on the phone.

In our latest tenant survey, 83% of tenants who had repairs done in the last year were happy with the service. Many praised the speed and professionalism of staff, especially for urgent issues like plumbing and heating. But some said they faced delays and had to chase updates.

Reporting repairs online can help speed things up. You can describe the problem clearly, upload photos if needed, and choose a time that suits you. It also means your request goes straight to the right team, helping avoid long waits or being passed around.

Online reporting is especially helpful for non-urgent repairs. You don't need to call during office hours – just fill in the form when it's convenient for you. And if you're not confident using the internet, a family member or neighbour might be able to help.

The Council is working hard to improve repair times and communication. Using the online system helps us help you faster.

Visit the Council's website to report a repair today (see the back cover for details) – it's quick, easy and always open.

To support this new system, we've introduced a Repairs Handbook. It explains:

- How repairs are prioritised
- Who's responsible for what
- Key safety information

To keep costs down, we're not posting it to everyone, but you can request a copy by emailing myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk

Whether it's a leaky tap or a broken boiler, reporting online helps us help you – faster, easier, and with less hassle.



Enclosed with this copy of Autumn Open Door is your 2024-25 Annual Report.

The report explains how we are performing, how tenant rent is being used, and improvements we have made. We hope the report helps build trust, and ensures that you feel informed, listened to and valued.

The role of a Housing Officer at North Yorkshire Council

At the heart of thriving communities lies the often unsung work of Housing Officers—dedicated professionals who work to make neighbourhoods safe, inclusive, and well-maintained. Housing Officers play an important role in estate and tenancy management, helping residents feel supported and connected.

Housing Officers work across departments—from Allocations and Income Management to Anti-Social Behaviour teams—creating a joined-up approach to support tenants. Through regular tenancy and estate inspections, they help prevent fraud, identify service improvements, and develop local plans alongside residents to raise neighbourhood standards.

Supporting tenants at every stage from the moment a property becomes available, Housing Officers are on hand. They manage everything from pre-termination visits and property viewings to tenancy sign-ups, introductory meetings, and housing advice. Their goal is smooth transition into council housing and long-term tenancy success.

Officers contribute to supporting vulnerable tenants by connecting them with essential services.

They manage complaints, liaise with councillors, and work with Tenant Involvement Officers to amplify resident voices.

By promoting engagement they aim to help keep communities informed and involved.

Housing Officers maintain housing records, help to get empty properties ready to be let and provide information for service planning. They often work on their own and have to respond quickly to changing needs.

They are collaborators, problem-solvers, and community champions committed to improving lives across North Yorkshire.

To find out who your housing officer is, get in touch using the details on the back cover.



A warm welcome awaits you at Calcaria House

Looking for friendly faces, fun activities, and a place to feel at home? Calcaria House Centre in Tadcaster is just the spot! Run by a dedicated team of volunteers, this welcoming centre is for elderly and disabled residents to enjoy good company and great times.

There's always something going on to lift your spirits and bring people together:

Bingo: Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 2pm - a lively game and a chance to win!

Line dancing: Get your feet moving every Wednesday evening at 7pm (except the first Wednesday of the month).

Social afternoons & teas: Enjoy a chat over a cuppa, with regular afternoon teas, pie and peas, fish and chips, and more.

Special events: Look forward to our annual Christmas dinner and occasional outings.

Take a peek at the lovely photo from our afternoon tea and entertainment event - a great time had by all!

We're always open to fresh ideas and new faces - come along and be part of the fun!



Stay scam-savvy: Simple ways to keep yourself safe

In our Summer newsletter, we talked about how to avoid scams. This time, we're shining a light on some of the most common scams to watch out for.

1. Phishing

Scammers may send emails or text messages pretending to be from trusted organisations like your bank or the council. They'll ask you to click a link or share personal details.

Tip: Always check who the message is from. If you're unsure, don't click—ask someone you trust or contact the organisation directly.

2. Phone scams

You might get a call from someone claiming to be from your bank, the police, or another official body. They may ask for your account details or even money.

Tip: Hang up and call the organisation using a number you know is genuine.

3. Doorstep scams

Unexpected visitors may offer services or try to sell you something.

Tip: Always ask for ID and check their credentials. If you're unsure, it's okay to say no.

4. Investment scams

Some scammers offer "too good to be true" investment opportunities, promising big returns with little risk.

Tip: Speak to a financial advisor before making any decisions.

Stay safe, stay confident

It's perfectly okay to be cautious and take your time when something doesn't feel right. By staying informed and following these simple tips, you can protect yourself and enjoy peace of mind.



Preparing your home for winter

As colder months approach, there are some proactive steps you can take to protect your home.

Moisture build-up from cooking, bathing and drying clothes indoors can lead to condensation, the main cause of damp and mould. To prevent this, ventilate rooms regularly, use extractor fans, and avoid drying clothes directly on radiators.

From October 2025, Awaab's Law comes into force, requiring us to respond promptly to damp and mould reports. Cold weather increases damp – report issues early.

We also encourage you to **test your heating now**, to ensure it's working before it gets too cold.

North Yorkshire Council has launched an online reporting form to make it easier for tenants to raise issues and ensure timely inspections and repairs – see the back page for details. You can also report any issues by phone.



Pension Credit - are you eligible?

If you're aged 66 or over you could be eligible for Pension Credit, which tops up pension income and can help with everyday living costs.

Even if you have savings, you might still qualify. Not everyone who qualifies for Pension Credit is currently claiming it, so lots of people are missing out.

As well as extra money every week, people who qualify for Pension Credit can also get other benefits like the Winter Fuel Payment, help to pay for NHS dental treatment, vouchers for glasses or contact lenses and a free TV licence if they're over 75.

Use the online calculator to check how much you could get and apply at **www.gov.uk/pension-credit**.

You can also find out more about Pension Credit and other support available to help with the cost of living at **www.northyorks.gov.uk/costofliving**, or you can call us on **0300 131 2 131** Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9am to 5pm, Wednesday 9:30am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4:30pm asking for 'Pension Credit' when prompted, to check your eligibility. Our friendly team is here to help.

Giving something back to the community

When a company is hired by the council to do work—like repairs to houses or surveys — they're also expected to give something back to the community. This could mean offering jobs or training to local people, helping out with community projects, or making sure their work is good for the environment.

They sometimes agree to give back a small part of the money they're paid. This is called a social value rebate. The council then uses that money to support local community projects. Other companies might give back in different ways, like offering apprenticeships to young people, donating materials, or letting their staff help out with local causes. It's all about making sure the community benefits in more ways than just the job being done.

This means there will be a small amount of money that we can use to improve neighbourhoods and communities. We would love to hear your suggestions for how this money could be used – please let us know your ideas, such as a specific project near you that could benefit, by emailing **myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk**



Show us what makes you proud – tenant photography competition

Do you have a favourite spot in your neighbourhood?

Your garden, a scenic view you admire, or a local landmark that means something special to you?

We're inviting you to take part in our photography competition by sharing a picture of something you're proud of in your local area.

Whether it's a blooming flowerbed, a peaceful park bench, or your community church, we want to see the places that matter to you. Your photo could be featured in the next edition of Open Door and you could win a £20 Love2shop voucher – one winner will be chosen from each area.

Entries will be judged by our tenant-led Scrutiny Panel, who are excited to celebrate the creativity and pride you have in your communities. It's a great opportunity to showcase where you live.

To enter, simply email your photo to

myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk or send a print out with your name, telephone number or email address on the back in an envelope to Tenant Autumn photo competition, Freepost Plus RTKB-GCTZ-JRSR, Document Management Service, North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Racecourse Lane, Northallerton, DL7 8AL. You don't need to use a stamp. Deadline for entries is 3 November 2025. Please include a short description of your photo.

Let's celebrate the places we call home – we can't wait to see your entries! The winning pictures will be published in the Winter edition of Open Door.

Privacy Notice

North Yorkshire Council is a 'Data Controller' as defined by Article 4(7) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). We are collecting information for entry into a short term competition to win one of 3 prizes. By submitting your contact details alongside your competition entry, you are providing consent under GDPR Article 6(1)(a) Consent to be contacted by North Yorkshire Council if you have won the competition. We will retain the information collecting for one month after the closing date. If you would like to withdraw consent please contact: My Housing Voice, North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL78 AD, or by email to **myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk** If you would like to contact the Council's Data Protection Officer, Veritau, the email address is **infogov@northyorks.gov.uk** For more information about how the Council uses your data, including your privacy rights and the complaints process, go to **www.northyorks.gov.uk/privacy-notices**

Evelyn's Dorset Apple Cake

We hope you enjoy this seasonal cake recipe from Evelyn, one of our tenants.

INGREDIENTS:

- 200g self raising flour
- 225g peeled cored apples
- 100g margarine
- 100g sugar
- A pinch of salt
- Mixed spice
- Milk to mix

METHOD:

- Peel and core apples and cut into slices
- Mix sugar and apples together.
- Rub margarine in flour until it looks like breadcrumbs
- Stir in apple, sugar and mixed spice
- Add milk if needed
- Place in a cake tin and bake for 20-25 mins at 200 degrees
- Eat warm with cream or ice-cream



The wonderful example in this picture baked by Tenant Involvement Officer Annette, is a variation using apple and plum, which gives a lovely moist texture.

DORSET APPLE CAKE
200g SR FLOUR
225g PEELLED CORED APPLES
100g MARGARINE
100g SUGAR
PINCH OF SALT
MIXED SPICE
MILK TO MIX
PEEL AND CORE APPLES CUT INTO SLICES. MIX SUGAR AND APPLES TOGETHER. RUB MARG IN FLOUR UNTIL ITS LIKE BREADCRUMBS. STIR IN APPLE AND SUGAR AND MIXED SPICE ADD MILK IF NEEDED PLACE IN CAKE TIN. BAKE FOR 20-25 MINUTES AT 200C. EAT WARM WITH CREAM OR ICE CREAM.

SUMMERTIME FUN! CROSSWORD ANSWERS FROM LAST EDITION

ACROSS: 4. The warmest season of the year **Summer** 6. Build these at the seaside **Sandcastles** 8. Usually accompanies the outdoor cooking **Salad**
DOWN: 1. Outdoor cooking **Barbeque** 2. Save your feet from getting too hot! **Sandals** 3. A lovely cool treat **Ice cream**
4. Use this to protect your skin **Suncream** 5. Perks up the salad! **Dressing** 7. Useful when swimming or sunbathing **Towel**



How to... ...get in touch



Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished reading it.

www.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 by taking part in North Yorkshire Council consultations at **www.northyorks.gov.uk/consultations**



...report repairs/damp and mould

You can report repairs to us in the following ways:

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

Do not use the online form to report an emergency repair.

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

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.

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. Go to **www.northyorks.gov.uk/outofhours** for more information

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

If you have problems with damp and/or mould go to **www.northyorks.gov.uk/dampandmould** or phone **0300 131 2 131** and say 'condensation, damp and mould' when prompted.



...get involved

Go to **www.northyorks.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement** to find out more



...make a complaint

You can make a complaint in the following ways:

by telephone – call our Customer Service Team
on **0300 131 2 131** (please say 'housing' when prompted).

Online using the form here **www.northyorks.gov.uk/complaints**

In writing:

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

In person: to North Yorkshire Council housing staff
Or, via a third party/representative.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our complaints handling you can contact the Housing Ombudsman : **www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk** or call **0300 111 3000**



If you're experiencing domestic abuse, you are not alone - North Yorkshire Council can help with emergency accommodation, longer-term housing options, and referrals to specialist support services.

Visit **www.northyorks.gov.uk/housing-advice-those-suffering-domestic-abuse** for confidential advice and support.

Would you be happy to get this newsletter on email?

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

