



OPEN DOOR

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2026



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

2. Welcome from the Tenant Editorial Panel
2. Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2025/26 Annual Report
2. Thank you for taking part in the tenant survey
2. Latest policy news
2. Making complaints easy
3. Update from the Housing Standards team
4. Enter the 2026 gardening competition
5. Children's competition and fun crossword
6. Our tenant editorial panel investigates: How a new heating system changed a tenant's life
7. Summer recipe
7. A day in the life of repairs team member Richard
8. Get in touch



Meet one of our repairs teams - more inside

The aim of this newsletter is to share information that affects you and your home.

This newsletter was made together with the tenant editorial panel - we hope you find something interesting inside!

If you have a story you'd like us to tell email myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk

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 northyorks.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement

Welcome from the tenant editorial panel

Welcome to this edition of Open Door - the latest updates from your tenant editorial panel. This newsletter is brought to you by a group of tenants who work together to ensure that the content reflects the interests and needs of our community.

Our role is to review ideas, select topics, and help craft articles that are useful to you. We want the newsletter to be packed with helpful information.

We're always on the lookout for new members to join us. If you have a passion for community matters, enjoy sharing ideas, or simply want to help make the newsletter even better, we'd love to hear from you. No experience is necessary - just a willingness to get involved and a desire to make a difference. Your suggestions, feedback, and stories are what make this newsletter yours.

And for the younger members of your family, don't forget our summer colouring competition! Encourage your children or grandchildren to enter by colouring in the picture included with this newsletter. There are prizes up for grabs - so sharpen those pencils and get colouring!

Best wishes,
The Tenant Editorial Panel



Thank you for taking part in the tenant survey.

Some of you have been asked to take part in our tenant survey. If you have received a text or letter, but haven't yet completed the survey, please use the link you have been sent, or contact the tenant involvement team (myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk) and they will be able to help you.

The information helps us support you more effectively, including providing materials in your preferred format or language.

If you've told us you want to get involved and have your voice heard in decisions that affect you, we'll reach out soon.

Latest policy news: What's changing and how it affects you

The council approved the mutual exchange and rent setting policies back in April. We also asked for your feedback on the draft grounds maintenance policy - thank you to everyone who filled in the survey. When the survey results have been reviewed, a final decision on the policy will be made by Cllr Simon Myers, Executive member for arts, culture, leisure and housing, in July. We'll update you in the Autumn issue of Open Door.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures - 2025 - 2026 Annual Report

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) surveys provide valuable insights into how tenants are feeling about the housing service.

Initial headlines from the annual summary of last year's results show that, in general, you feel positive.

The feedback shows that overall satisfaction has increased from 69% in 2024/25 to 75% in 2025/26.

We will be thoroughly reviewing the responses, delving deeper into the data to understand your views and experiences. Actions will be taken based on your feedback to further improve the housing service.

Your feedback matters: Making complaints easy

Last year, our tenant scrutiny panel suggested ways to improve the way we deal with housing complaints. We listened, and we're now changing how complaints are handled to make things better for everyone.

We're reviewing how we track and look into complaints, and we'll be updating and responding to them in line with our new complaints policy once it's ready. Information about how to make a complaint is on the back cover.

Housing Standards update

Why are some properties empty?

Tenants sometimes ask us why some homes are empty for a long time. They are worried that these empty houses mean resources are being wasted.

The main reason for this is that all homes must meet the Lettable Standard, which began last year. This standard makes sure every home is brought up to a better level before new tenants move in.

Because of this, it takes longer to get homes ready now than it used to so there will be times when houses will be empty while we do the work.

We are working hard to get this done as quickly as possible, and thank you for your patience while we make sure homes are improved for everyone.

Repairs update

At present, there is a backlog of repairs. This is because, in addition to high demand for repairs reported directly by tenants, our surveyors are identifying further repairs during stock condition surveys. If your property has not yet been surveyed, please do not worry - we will be completing all surveys this year.

If you have reported a repair and have not heard from us yet, we apologise for the delay. Please be assured that we are processing your request and someone from the council or one of our trusted contractors will contact you to arrange an appointment.

We are prioritising repairs based on urgency and we are working with additional contractors to reduce waiting times for routine repairs. If you need more than one repair, depending on how important they are, each one might have a different level of priority.

You can read more about how we prioritise repairs here northyorks.gov.uk/repairs-priorities

Safety reminder! E-scooters, e-bikes and mobility scooters

Never leave your appliance charging overnight or when you are away from your home - always keep it in sight.

If the condition of your repair gets worse or if you have any health conditions, disabilities, or personal circumstances that we should consider, please let us know. This helps us support you better.

Why are we checking for asbestos in your home?

Many homes built before 1999 contain some asbestos. Asbestos is usually safe if it is in good condition and left undisturbed, but it can be harmful if it is damaged or disturbed.

To help keep you and your family safe, we are checking all council homes to see if asbestos is present. We plan to complete these checks by March 2027.

We are working with Tersus Consultancy, a specialist company with experience in identifying and safely managing or removing asbestos when needed.

If your home has not yet had an asbestos check, one will be organised, especially before any repair or improvement work can take place. The check is thorough but should not take long and will cause very little disruption.

What do you need to do?

You don't need to do anything - we will contact you if your home needs a check. When Tersus Consultancy gets in touch, please help by arranging a suitable appointment and allowing them access to your home so the check can be completed.

Please be assured that your safety is our priority.



Showcase your green space: Enter the 2026 gardening competition!

Whether you have a single house plant, a few pots, or care for a communal garden, all tenants and leaseholders are invited to enter our 2026 gardening competition. Entries are welcome from anyone, regardless of space - showcase a succulent, a colourful doorstep display, or a shared patch. The competition celebrates creativity and community spirit, encouraging everyone to make the most of their plants.

Over the summer, take photos and get ready to send them in. Judging takes place in September, with winners revealed in our December newsletter. There's a fantastic prize of a £25 voucher for each category - so why not have a go?

Here's how to enter:

Submit your picture to myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk stating which category you would like to enter by **31st August 2026**. Categories are listed below.

The Editorial panel will then shortlist the pictures and pick a top two for each category. The panel will then make a final decision in September. Winners will be published in the Winter newsletter.



Competition categories

Most colourful garden - celebrates gardens bursting with vibrant colours, creative plant combinations, and an overall cheerful visual impact.

What judges will be looking for:

- Vibrant use of colour through flowers, shrubs, pots, or garden features
- Good variety of plants showing different shades and tones
- Healthy and well-maintained plants flowers in bloom
- Creative combinations of colours in beds, borders, or containers
- Overall visual impact - does it feel bright, bold and cheerful?

Best pots, hanging baskets, window box, houseplant (s) - recognises beautifully arranged pots, baskets, window boxes, or houseplants that showcase creativity, healthy growth, and clever use of space.

What judges will be looking for:

- Attractive arrangement of plants that complement each other
- Healthy, well-cared-for planting with good growth and colour
- Creativity in how containers are used or displayed
- Use of space - making the most of small or tricky areas
- Neatness and presentation

Best communal garden - celebrates gardens that foster teamwork, community involvement, and create welcoming, well-maintained spaces for residents to enjoy.

What judges will be looking for:

- Team effort and shared involvement - evidence that residents work together
- Clear design and layout, making the space welcoming and usable
- Good maintenance such as tidy paths, weed-free beds, and healthy planting
- Inclusiveness - seating areas, accessible paths, or features that encourage use
- Positive impact on the community - does it bring people together or brighten the area?

Best overall garden - honours the garden that excels in design, planting, creativity, and maintenance, creating an inviting and well-balanced outdoor space.

What judges will be looking for:

- Overall design and layout - thoughtful planning of beds, lawn, paths, and features
- Plant health and maintenance - tidy, cared-for, and well-kept
- Variety of planting (flowers, shrubs, veg, wildlife-friendly areas etc.)
- Creativity - unique features, clever use of space, or personal touches
- Environmental consideration - e.g., wildlife habitats, sustainable features
- Overall impression - does the garden feel balanced, inviting, and well-loved?

Summer colouring competition for children!

Colour in the picture enclosed and send it back to us for a chance to win a £10 voucher of your choice - there are three prizes up for grabs!

To enter, simply email a photo of the coloured-in picture to myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk with the entrants name and age, and your telephone number or email address by **31 August 2026**.

Or you can send your coloured in picture in an envelope to Summer 2026 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. Three winners will be chosen at random and announced in the next issue of Open Door. Good luck - and have fun!

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 three prizes. By submitting your contact details alongside your competition entry, you are providing consent under GDPR Article 6(1)

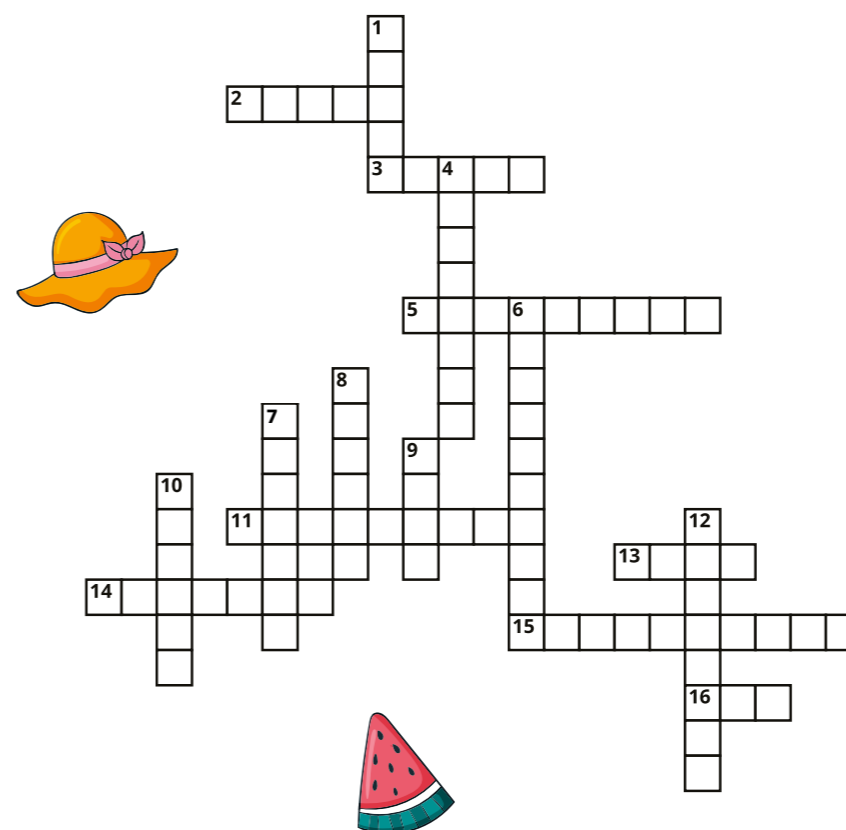
(a) Consent to be contacted by North Yorkshire Council if you have won the competition. We will retain the information for one month after the closing date. If you would like to withdraw consent please contact: My Housing Voice, North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL78 AD, or by email 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 northyorks.gov.uk/privacy-notice

Easter bunny competition winner!

Well done to **Mia Welsh** who counted 18 bunnies in the Spring Newsletter and won the easter egg in the prize draw.



Fun summer themed crossword



Across

- (2) Underwater activity, _____ diving
- (3) It's not hot, it's just _____
- (5) Helps protect your skin from the sun
- (11) Light up the sky at night with a bang!
- (13) A sea creature that moves sideways or obliquely
- (14) Summer shoes
- (15) A castle built out of sand, typically by children
- (16) Helps cool down your drink

Down

- (1) Hang out on the sandy _____
- (4) Bites you all summer at night mostly
- (6) What you wear to see in the sun
- (7) Frozen water which hangs from your gutter, only found during winter!
- (8) Hottest season of the year
- (9) Jump in to cool down
- (10) Outside meal on the grass
- (12) The American way of saying holiday

How an Air Source Heat Pump changed a tenant's life: our tenant editorial panel investigates

Warmth, comfort, and energy savings for one council tenant

Last year, we began making essential improvements to properties, aiming to offer safer, warmer, and more energy-efficient homes for all tenants. Among these upgrades, air source heat pumps are a solution for some residents struggling with outdated heating systems, especially in communities without gas supply. To shed light on what these changes mean for our tenants, our tenant editorial panel asked tenant Carla, some questions about her experience following the installation of an air source heat pump.

Carla lives in a rural village where mains gas isn't available, and for years, she relied on old storage heaters. "The house was freezing cold in winter," she says, recalling how she had to wear coats indoors just to keep warm.

The heaters were costly and only warmed certain rooms, leaving much of her home chilly and uncomfortable. For Carla this situation made everyday life difficult, especially during the long, cold months.

After a property survey and many requests for improved heating, Carla's home was selected for an upgrade. The council installed an air source heat pump, a technology that draws warmth from the outside air and delivers it efficiently throughout the home. "It's made a world of difference," Carla explains. "For the first time in years, I can walk around my home comfortably, even on the coldest days."

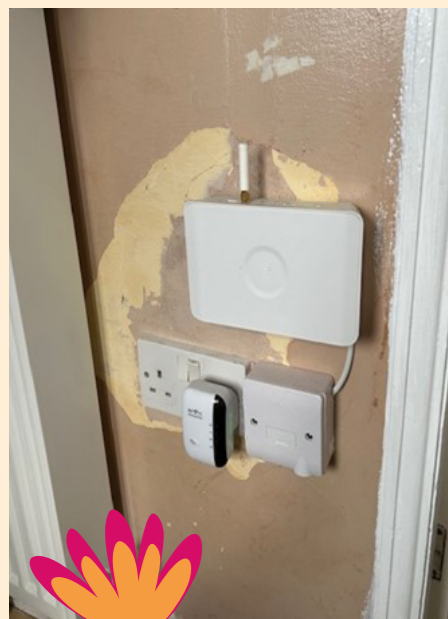
I don't need to layer up, and every room feels cosy."

The installation process was straightforward and handled by skilled contractors. Carla says the team were professional, respectful, and keen to ensure she understood how to use the new system. "They explained everything clearly, and I never felt overwhelmed," she adds. "It's easy to use and keeps the temperature consistent."

One of the biggest benefits Carla has noticed is the reduction in her heating bills. The heat pump is much more energy efficient than her old heaters, and she's already seeing savings. This improvement is particularly reassuring for residents living on fixed incomes, who often worry about rising energy costs. "I feel less anxious about my bills now," Carla notes. "It's a relief to know I can afford to keep my home warm."

Carla's story is just one example of how the Council's commitment to improving housing standards is making a tangible difference. Nearly 250 homes have been improved so far, with many more upgrades planned for 2026 and beyond.

We are constantly developing our knowledge and taking on board the feedback received from our tenants, to improve designs for these systems. Our aim is to improve the energy performance, comfort and affordability of our homes for tenants.



Summer recipe

Tomato relish

Ingredients

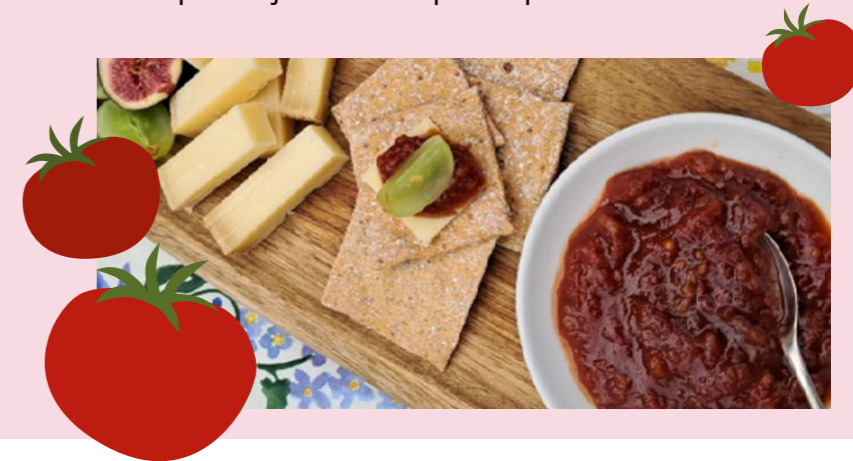
4kg tomatoes
2kg onions
3 tablespoons salt
6 tablespoons corn flour
1.5 kg sugar
4 small cups of vinegar

Method

1. Add the ingredients to a pot
2. Boil for 20 minutes
3. Thicken with cornflour and boil for another 10 minutes.

4. Remove from the heat and carefully pour the hot chutney into clean, sterilised jars.
5. Seal with sterilised lids while still warm.
6. Allow to cool completely, then label and store in a cool, dark place.
7. Once opened, keep refrigerated and use within 4-6 weeks.

Unopened jars will keep for up to 12 months.



A day in the life of Richard, a joiner in our repairs team

Meet one of the friendly faces behind repairs and improvements

Richard has been working as a joiner in council homes for over 20 years. We spoke to him to find out what his job is like and how he helps make our homes safer and more comfortable.

Richard starts his day early, checking his schedule to see what repairs requests have been allocated to him. He could be fixing doors, tiling, or making sure kitchens and bathrooms are in good shape. Every day is different, and Richard enjoys the variety. "No two days are ever the same," he says. "Sometimes I'm fixing a lock, other times I'm working on a big project like fitting a new kitchen."

Richard explains "We are one of a number of repairs teams that work in different areas across the county. Right now, we've got Kev, who is a joiner, Gary and Joshua who are both plumbers, and Darren, who is a builder. Sometimes, we need two people for a job, especially if we are working on ladders, because it is safer to have someone there to hold the ladder. Often, we work together in pairs in the morning, then split up in the afternoon to do jobs on our own, or sometimes it happens the other way round, depending on how the work is planned for the day."

One of Richard's favourite parts of his job is meeting tenants, "I try to make sure tenants feel comfortable while I'm working in their homes."

Sometimes people are worried about repairs, but I always explain what I'm doing and answer any questions," he says. Many tenants appreciate Richard's positive attitude and the care he takes with their homes.

Richard wants tenants to know that the council is working hard to make homes better. "We're doing our best to improve services. If you have a problem, don't be afraid to let us know—we want to help," he says. Richard also encourages tenants to look after their homes and report any issues early, so problems don't get worse.

If you have questions about repairs or want to know more about how the council can help, contact us using the details on the back page of this newsletter.



How to...



Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished reading it.

...get in touch

northyorks.gov.uk/contact-us

By telephone: **0300 131 2 131** (please say **'tenant newsletter'** 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 northyorks.gov.uk/consultations

...make a complaint

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

Online using the form here 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, with your permission, via a third party/representative.

For free impartial advice you can contact the Housing Ombudsman, housing-ombudsman.org.uk or call **0300 111 3000**

Beware of 'No Win, No Fee' disrepair claims.

Individuals may pressure you to sign legal papers without explaining risks. Please report any repairs or make a complaint directly to us.

...report repairs/damp and mould

Online: northyorks.gov.uk/housingrepair

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, please check that it is the council's responsibility and gather as much information as you can about it.

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 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 northyorks.gov.uk/housingdamp or phone **0300 131 2 131** and say **'damp, mould and condensation'** when prompted.

Would you be happy to get this newsletter on email?

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

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 northyorks.gov.uk/housing-domestic-abuse for confidential advice and support.