

# be.

magazine

## COVID-19

**What we're doing to keep you and our staff safe**

### **Money matters.**

A round up of the benefit changes to help you and your family during this time.

**pg 8**

### **Tips to help stay well at home.**

We share some advice on staying healthy while self-isolating.

**pg 10**

### **From the front line.**

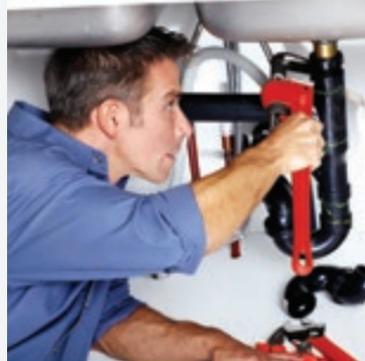
Hear from Revival who are in hospitals doing their bit to help support the NHS.

**pg 11**

# 04

## COVID-19.

What we are doing to help keep our customers and staff safe during this global pandemic.



# 06

## Repairs.

What repairs we are currently able to do in your home and how you can report them.

# 08

## Money matters.

A quick round up of the changes to benefits introduced by the government to support you during this time.



# 10

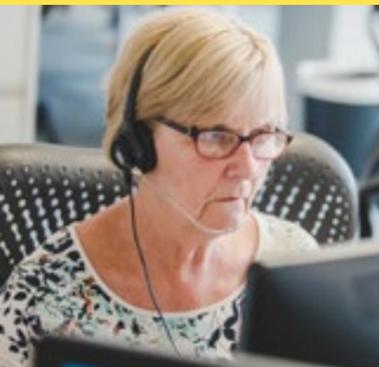
## Be well.

5 things you can do to make sure you take care of your wellbeing during lockdown.

# 11

## From the front line.

We speak to staff at Revival about working to get patients home from hospital.



**Contact us.**

[www.staffshousing.org.uk](http://www.staffshousing.org.uk)  
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## Welcome to our second edition of Be Magazine.

**I hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well during these unusual and difficult times. I recognise that each and every one of you will be finding this situation challenging.**

Like any other organisation, we have had to follow the government's guidance to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives. This has obviously impacted on some of our services but we are working hard to ensure that we still deliver our essential services to keep your homes safe and secure.

I am extremely proud of the way our staff team have responded to support our customers. Many have been in contact with our older tenants or those that may need a little more support and I hope that this has gone some way to help.

You will find more information on this throughout the magazine as well as other ways we can help you. There is also a round up of some of the financial support and benefits introduced by the government and some tips to help you protect your wellbeing.

We've included a story about Revival, who are also part of the Honeycomb Group. Revival staff have been working tirelessly to support patients who can leave hospital to get back home.

I'd also like to thank everyone for playing their part to stop the spread of the virus, whether you're a key worker, volunteering to help others, or staying home - each and every one of you is playing an important role during this time to keep each other and our wider community safe.

Take care, stay safe.

**staffs housing**

*Diane Thompson*

Chief Executive

# COVID-19.

## Our response to this global pandemic.

Your safety and wellbeing is our number one priority

Following Government and Public Health England advice for Coronavirus, we've made changes to how we're operating to keep you and our staff safe.

Our Head Office at 308 London Road is now closed but we are continuing to provide essential services.

We're only visiting homes for essential visits, such as emergency repairs and severe anti-social behaviour incidents.

If we do need to visit, we'll ask you two questions:

1. Have you been advised to self-isolate?
2. Do you have any of the following symptoms?

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough

If you answer yes to either, we'll make arrangements on a case by case basis to ensure you get the help, support and services you need.

Most of our staff are now working from home and

are still providing services as normal. If you have any queries you can still get in touch by phone or email.

If large numbers of staff get ill and can't work, we may need to cut back services to focus on urgent work. We'll let you know on our website and social media if this happens.

It's really important that you keep paying your rent. If you normally pay by cash, we'd prefer you pay by direct debit, online or over the phone. *See p7 for more details*

So far, we have:

**CALLED**  
**732**  
**TENANTS**  
TO MAKE SURE  
THEY'RE SAFE  
AND WELL

**COOKED**  
**55**  
**HOT MEALS**  
EVERYDAY  
FOR VILLAGE  
CUSTOMERS

**GIVEN**  
**70**  
**CUSTOMERS**  
MONEY  
ADVICE

Find out more about what we are doing >

[www.staffshousing.org.uk/covid19](http://www.staffshousing.org.uk/covid19)



# Be. In the Know.

## What repairs are Staffs Housing doing?

At the moment, we are only carrying out emergency and essential repairs to your home.

We know this will cause some disruption and will be disappointing to those who were due to get new kitchens or bathrooms fitted. We have done this to reduce the risk of spreading the virus by reducing the number of homes we visit.

If a contractor comes to your home - please allow them to wash their hands before they complete the repair and give them space by observing social distancing.

## What are classed as emergency repairs?

- Anything that needs to be fixed to protect the health, safety or security of you or a member of the public.
- These include gas leaks, major bursts or leaks, dangerous electrical faults and total loss of heating or hot water.
- We are still carrying out gas safety checks and other essential safety inspections.

## If I get sick, will you still do my repair at home?

- If you or anyone in your home thinks they may have coronavirus you must let us know.
- We will still carry out emergency repairs. Our contractor will carry out a risk assessment and wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

**To report an emergency repair, call 01782 744533 or visit our website.**



# Paying your rent.

## It's really important that you keep paying your rent during this time.

Our Head Office is closed so if you usually pop in to pay your rent, we're asking you to pay in a different way.

You can pay by direct debit or standing order. It's a regular automatic payment you don't even have to think about.

It's paid direct from your bank to us and you can even choose the day the money comes out.

Call us on 01782 744533 and we can help set this up for you.

You can also pay online or by calling 0870 243 6040. You'll need your swipe card and payment card to hand.

## We understand paying your rent may be difficult for some people.

If you're struggling to pay your rent, for whatever reason, get in touch as soon as possible.

Give us a call and ask for the income and money advice team.



# Be. Money savvy.

Here's a quick round up of the financial support introduced by the government during the COVID-19 crisis. Visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) to find out more.

If you need advice on any benefit or rent issues text **'SUPPORT'** to **07520 634032** or email **[hello@staffshousing.org.uk](mailto:hello@staffshousing.org.uk)** and one of our income officers or money advisers will call you back within 24 hours (Mon-Fri).

## Job Retention Scheme/ Furlough.

This provides a grant to employers so they can still pay staff who may not be working at the moment due to the Coronavirus outbreak.

This covers 80% of an employee's wages, up to £2,500 a month.

You will then be classed as a furloughed worker, on a temporary leave of absence until you are needed to work again.

\*these details are for guidance only and are correct at the time of publishing

## Changes to Jobcentre Appointments.

You'll still get your benefits as normal, but you won't need to go to the Jobcentre in person during this time.

You should only go if you have been asked to attend and have a booked appointment.

## Benefit changes.

### Universal Credit.

The Standard Allowance was increased by £20 a week for 12 months on 6 April 2020. The work availability and work search requirements has also been suspended for at least 3 months.

### Jobseekers Allowance.

If you get Jobseekers Allowance and are self-isolating because you or someone in your home has symptoms of Coronavirus, you won't lose entitlement to your allowance.

### Council Tax Hardship Fund.

If you get Council Tax Support or Rebate, you could be eligible for the Council Tax Hardship fund, which will reduce your Council Tax bills by up to £150.

### Carers Allowance.

You will still be entitled to Carers Allowance if you have to take a temporary break in caring because either yourself or the person you care for have to self isolate.

### Working Tax Credit.

The basic element was increased by £20 a week for 12 months from 6 April 2020.

### Housing Benefit.

If you get Housing Benefit and your income has been reduced due to Coronavirus, get in touch with the local authority to tell them of this change. It may mean you're entitled to more housing benefit.

### Medical Assessments.

Medical assessments for Universal Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit have been postponed. If you had one booked, you'll be contacted to organise an alternative.

### Free school meals.

If your children are eligible for free school meals but not attending school, you'll still get help. Get in touch with the school to find out more.

## Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

The government will pay self-employed people, who are eligible, a taxable grant worth 80% of their average monthly profits, up to £2,500 a month.

If you're eligible, you'll be contacted directly by HMRC once the scheme is up and running.

## Statutory Sick Pay.

Statutory Sick Pay is now payable from your first day of sickness, rather than the fourth.

Getting a fit to work note could be difficult at this time, so speak to your employer for guidance.

# Be. Well.

5 things you can do to make sure you take care of your wellbeing during lockdown.

1. **EXERCISE** will help boost your mood and your body. If you can, get out for a short walk around your local area (staying 2 metres from other people), or why not try an at home exercise video - there's plenty on YouTube to try!
2. Get some **FRESH AIR** even if you can't leave your home, try opening your windows for at least 15 minutes a day.
3. Set yourself a **TASK** for each day. It could be something like sorting a cupboard, weeding your garden or finishing chapters of a book. It will help you feel like you have achieved something with your day.
4. Keep to a **ROUTINE** such as getting up and dressed at the same time each morning and having set meal times.
5. **CALL** a friend or family member for a chat. They might be feeling lonely too.

## Some ideas for the kids (and big kids).

1. Go camping in your living room by building a fort with cushions and blankets.
2. Chances are you have a pack of cards or a forgotten board game lying round. Why not dust them off and have a game.
3. Download the TikTok app and challenge yourself to learn one of the dance routines.

## Some things to do this weekend.

1. Start learning a new language or refresh one you did at school. There's lots of websites and apps to use. We particularly like Duolingo, plus it's free!
2. Cook something new. There's a lot of inspiration on the BBC website or take a look on Facebook and Instagram for some inspiration.
3. Start reading a new book. Check out your local library's website as many have free books you can download.
4. Take a day trip without leaving your home. Lots of zoos, museums and aquariums have set up live cams for you to enjoy completely free.

Revival is also part of the Honeycomb Group.

## Working to get patients home from hospital.

Local home improvement and support specialists Revival have been working hard to get patients home from hospital during the global pandemic.

Revival's hospital discharge team already work in hospitals to make sure it is safe for patients to return to their home. This may include making sure the patient's home is suitable for them and they have food, heating and hot water.

Since the outbreak the team have been working hard to free up bed spaces. Mark Cliffe, Home Support Officer at Revival, said: "We're supporting people to return home, sometimes within 2 hours of them been told they can. This is to help the NHS free up capacity to cope."

**“We are under lots of pressure at the moment doing our bit to protect the NHS.”**

The team are doing this in a variety of ways, from arranging taxis (funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council) to meeting and greeting people at the other end and making sure that they are settled in.

"One of our staff even donated a mattress so a patient could go home. All the bed stores were shut." says Mark.

"There is of course risk attached to going into homes and we are seeing more people who have had the virus.

**“We are all anxious at times, but we are very much all in this together.”**

"This is not just about COVID-19, there are people still going into hospital with strokes, heart attacks, addictions and so we mustn't lose sight of the fact that this work we do is for them too."

It's not just patients from the hospital Revival are helping. They are also doing welfare checks with vulnerable people in the community, checking that those who are self-isolating can get shopping delivered and referring them to other agencies for support.

Julie Russell is Revival's Support & Wellbeing Manager: "I am pleased and proud that the team has pulled out all the stops to provide a flexible responsive service to vulnerable people locally."

Find out more about Revival and their services at [www.thisisrevival.org.uk](http://www.thisisrevival.org.uk)



REVIVAL

Revival is part of the Honeycomb Group

**DID YOU KNOW** we have a customer support Facebook Group for any customers feeling lonely or isolated. Search for "Staffs Housing self-isolating residents"

## Other support available.

If you want benefits or rents advice text **SUPPORT** to **07520 634032**.

If you need help, there are lots of people you can speak to.

### Mind

0300 123 3393

### Samaritans

116 123

### National Domestic Abuse helpline

0808 2000 247

If you cannot leave your home to shop or pick up a prescription and have no one to help, call the numbers below and they will let you know if they can help you.

### If you live in Stoke on Trent

0800 561 5610

### If you live in Staffordshire

0300 111 8050

### If you live in Cheshire East

0300 123 5034



## Contact us.

**Online** [www.staffshousing.org.uk](http://www.staffshousing.org.uk)

**Email** [hello@staffshousing.org.uk](mailto:hello@staffshousing.org.uk)

**Customer Services** 01782 744533

**Head Office** 308 London Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 5AB

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