



Alliance
Homes

Spring 2017

insight

The magazine for
Alliance Homes
tenants,
leaseholders and
their families

Alliance Living Care Team
outside Tamar Court

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www.alliancehomesgroup.org.uk

Tamar Court welcomes its first residents

The first residents moved into Tamar Court in December. The 65 bedroom development has been designed to provide older people with the opportunity to live independently but with the peace of mind of additional care when it's needed.

Having reserved one of the apartments 'off plan', John Green was one of the first residents to move in and living at Tamar Court means that John can be close to family.

John says that he is making new friends and socialising daily, which is more than he would have been able to do in his old home. John also has the peace of mind of knowing that he can get care if he needs it.

He says that the thing that sealed the deal for him was the great lunches on offer.

“ Tamar Court is a model that private developers should be following, it is what older people want and great value too! What I have left over from my purchase has been put aside for future care costs. ”



Norman and Margaret Greed will move into Tamar Court in March.

Here's what they said about their reasons for the move:

“ Our main reason for moving was to ensure that when the time comes we would be looked after, something our current accommodation could not provide. We knew little about Alliance Homes, but after reading about Tamar Court in North Somerset Life we felt that what the company was about was really appealing.

Our first impression of Alliance Homes was when we met Helen, the sales rep, who made us feel very comfortable and reassured us about the whole sales process. We knew that the scheme offered safety, security and support when we needed it and that we were in safe hands. ”





Care at Tamar Court is provided by Alliance Living Care.

Joleyne Rollings leads the Care team and said:

“ We are all very excited about starting a new project with a new team in such great surroundings. The staff have a wide range of experience from community, caring for family, extra-care and care homes and are really looking forward to meeting customers and helping them to get the most out of being at Tamar Court. ”



There are now just two Shared Ownership apartments remaining, to find out more visit our [website](#) or call us on **03000 120 120** (option 2).

As well as the shared ownership apartments there are a number of apartments available to rent. To find out more about renting contact Care Connect on **01934 888 801** or email care.connect@n-somerset.gov.uk



Services for Unpaid Carers

You may have heard the news that Carers Trust Phoenix - formerly called 'Crossroads Care' - has closed down.

Carers Trust Phoenix supported unpaid carers in North Somerset - and other locations in the South West and we wanted to help make sure these vital services weren't lost.

So back in November more than 50 staff transferred their employment to us, and the great news is that all care and support services for carers in North Somerset have continued with no breaks or service interruptions at all.

Through the Carer's Support Alliance we now offer the following free services to carers in North Somerset:

- Support for Young Carers (aged from 5 to 25 years old)

- Support for Adult Carers
- Specialist support for working carers who are struggling to balance their caring responsibilities with paid employment
- Counselling services for adult and young carers



Through Alliance Living Care, our home care business, we are also providing much needed home care services to former Carers Trust Phoenix customers living in North Somerset and Bristol.

If you are interested in finding out more about our free carers support services just give us a call on **03000 120 120** (option 3)

If you want to find out more about our chargeable home care services call us on **03000 121 447**

Giving Something Back Through Volunteering

Keith started volunteering with Weston Foodbank three years ago and got to know the work of the Alliance support team who had a drop in centre at the Foodbank. On the back of his work there, Keith spoke to us and offered to volunteer to make sure that people visiting the Foodbank were aware of the support that was out there.

Keith has been signposting visitors to the Foodbank to support services for several months now but not content with that he was keen to see how his signposting was making a difference. He has recently started doing some admin work for the support team where he is able to see the outcomes of the referrals he makes.



All of this keeps Keith really busy but he's glad to be helping others and gets a lot from the experience.

“ I didn't realise the breadth of what Alliance does. To me they had provided me with a home and repairs when needed; it wasn't until I came across the support team that I realised the extent of their service and wanted to give something back. Something where I could see that I was making a difference.

“ I deal with all sorts of people who are struggling, they come in for food but sometimes they need a little extra support to get things back on track. I get a lot of satisfaction from helping people. I am the first port of call but now I'm helping with the admin I know if I have done a good job because I can see how people are getting on. There is huge amount of satisfaction in seeing that people have got the help and support they need. It can be a bit frustrating sometimes when you make an appointment and people don't show but that's just the way it is. There are a lot of people out there who need support and I am just pleased that I am able to help in the way that I can. I like interacting with people and building relationships and I know what it's like to need a helping hand. I think that people sense that when they deal with me - I am just glad that I can help others now. ”

Growing Together is looking for new members



The Growing Together project is a community allotment group who look after three green areas on the Bournville in Weston-super-Mare and they are on the search for new members to join them.

You don't need gardening know how, just lots of enthusiasm, a willingness to learn and don't be afraid to get your hands a bit dirty.

If you are free every Monday from 1pm-4pm get in touch with Matt White on **07580025674** or visit us at the Information Station on St Andrew's Parade.



Volunteering opportunities and ways to get involved

We have various opportunities to get involved and to enjoy community projects. To find out more visit our website and take a look at the [Get Involved section](#).

MoBro Cafe Success

After a successful bid for funding from the Movember Foundation, the MoBro café was born and resulted in 10 men taking over the café in the For All Healthy Living Centre to serve up healthy 'Mangrub'.

As ambassadors to change people's perception of what counts for healthy food, the MoBro café also allowed the group to come together and share their experiences and improve ties with the local community by offering a new and exiting menu for local people to try. The men also got their food hygiene certificates and being part of the group has greatly improved their confidence.

Building on the success of the first MoBro café an application for additional funding is now being

put together which, if successful, will increase the opportunities for men in Weston-super-Mare to become part of the MoBro café team, so watch this space!

The Movember Foundation aims to "change the face of men's health" by getting men to speak out about issues that affect them such as depression, anxiety and isolation.

The project is run in partnership with The For All Healthy Living Centre who lead the project, Growing Together, Westonworks, Somerset Public Health Teams and most importantly, then men who took part.



HAVE YOUR SAY

At the end of last year our Community Engagement team surveyed tenants to find out if they were interested in having a say on the services they receive, what areas were of most interest to them and how they would like to get involved to have their say!

In total they received 371 responses which is roughly 6% of tenants.

A staggering 99% of those who responded believed in the importance of tenants having a say in how services are delivered.

Encouragingly 83% said they would be interested in having their say and told us the top 3 areas they would like to influence are:

- Repairs
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Future Developments (new homes)

As the majority of the people taking part in the survey did it online, it's not surprising that the most popular way of giving feedback is through online surveys, followed by a Facebook group and then one-off focus groups to get feedback on a specific subject.

Thank you to those who took the time to give their feedback and congratulations to Steven Elliot who scooped first prize of a Galaxy Tab2 in the survey prize draw.

We'll keep you updated on this work through Insight and our online channels.



TENANCY TEAM... SUPPORTING NEIGHBOURHOODS

The tenancy team is here to help you get the most out of your home and sort out any problems you might have along the way. This can range from helping someone who is new to the area and feeling isolated get the support they need, to supporting people who are experiencing domestic violence or neighbour nuisance.



The team is also there to help new tenants and will make regular visits during the first 6 months of a tenancy. They also support people who are looking to swap homes either to an Alliance property or another social landlord.

By acting on resident feedback the team has recently created a communal space at the rear of the flats in Ottawa Road, complete with new washing lines and helped get a bike rack installed for the residents of Walliscote Grove.

Working with a range of partners is key to the success of the team and one such partner who provides valuable support is Bristol Mediation, an independent, charitable organisation, there to help residents experiencing conflict. Through conflict coaching people can explore ways of coping and moving forward. The service is free and confidential and Bristol Mediation will visit residents in their homes or at a nearby venue.

For more information visit the [Bristol Mediation website](#).

If you have any queries about your tenancy, or if you are experiencing any nuisance or anti-social behaviour, please contact our Customer Support Centre on **03000 120 120** and ask to speak to your tenancy officer.

THE place to work

Alliance Homes has once again been awarded the Investors in People Gold award for going above and beyond in the way we develop, support and motivate the people who work for us.

We are also recognised as a 'Disability Confident Employer' which means that we give disabled people the opportunities to fulfil their potential in the workplace.

According to staff at Alliance, making a difference to tenants and the wider community and working with their colleagues are the most enjoyable aspects of their work.

Anyone looking for a job or work experience programme can check out the latest vacancies on our [website](#) or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



[@Alliance_Homes.](#)



facebook.com/alliancehomesgroup



Care Academy recognised for employment support

As part of the work that we do to support people into employment we set up the Care Academy in 2015 with the aim of breaking down some of the barriers that stop people applying for roles in care and also to create opportunities for local unemployed people.

So far we have run four academies, with 72 people attending, and of those 53 were offered jobs with Alliance as a home care worker.

The academy has proved a great success and has recently been shortlisted in the Skills for Care Accolades 2016/17 in the Best Recruitment Initiative category.

Plans are now being made for the next Care Academy so keep a look out on our [website](#) and social media for more information.



Alliance
care

ACADEMY



West of England Works



An innovative partnership called 'West of England Works' has got funding to help unemployed people in the West of England find employment.

It is hoped that the scheme will support at least 1,500 young people and adults into training, education and employment through a community-based support programme.

'West of England Works' is being led by Weston College and involves a range of voluntary and community organisations including Alliance Homes, Weston College and Team North Somerset (North Somerset Council).

To find out about the support that's on hand please call or text on: **07789 955 353** or send an e-mail: sue.estcourt@weston.ac.uk



Universal Credit (UC)

From June/July this year, this new benefit will need to be claimed by any new benefit claimant or anyone whose circumstances change.

It brings together six benefits in one monthly payment. The six are Job Seekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit.

Things to remember:

- Under Universal Credit you will have to pay your rent to Alliance each month. Consider getting a little in advance now, so UC doesn't cause you to get behind and put your tenancy at risk.
- You will need access to the internet to manage your UC claim as it is a digital system. Work out now where you can get access to a computer.

- You will need to sign a 'Claimant Commitment' when you claim UC. It's very important that you tell your advisor about any difficulties you & your family have (e.g. health, transport, family) & that you are able to keep the commitment. If you don't keep it, your UC payment may be sanctioned (i.e. reduced).
- Council Tax Support is not included in UC. If you are currently entitled, make sure you're still receiving this by contacting the Council as it is a separate claim.



New Year New Start

Debt help – is your money out of control? Debts you can't pay? Maybe now's the time to see someone for help and get on top of it all. Alliance has Money Advisors who will give impartial advice on debts & money. They can meet you at home if it's easier. Get in touch on 03000 120 120.

Can you save?

If you have broadband/TV/phone are you on the best deal? Do you need everything in your package?

What about gas & electric – have you got the best deal?

Give them a call and ask.

Websites like Uswitch or Money Saving Expert give advice about switching.

Wessex Water has great schemes to make sure what you're paying is affordable. Ask them about Assist or Restart – you'll need to get in touch with Alliance Money Advisors or Citizens Advice Bureau to apply.

Christmas 2017

It seems a long way off but why not plan now? Open a new bank account and put £20 a month away or how about opening an account with the Credit Union? Get in touch with them on **01275 390650** to get information about their Christmas Saver account.

Council Tax 2017/18

Remember Council Tax is billed in March, for payments from 1st April onwards.

Some things to remember....

- If you haven't received a bill by mid-March, contact the Council on **01934 888144** option 7 and ask for one.
- You can ask them to spread the payments from 10 (billed April – January with no payments in February or March) to 12 (payments every month, which will be a bit less).
- You can pay by Direct Debit but only if you're not behind with your bill. If you want to do that contact the Council in March to set it up.
- If you get behind with your Council Tax and miss a number of payments, it becomes very expensive. Charges and fees can end up doubling the original bill. Contact someone for help quickly to try and avoid this.

- There are discounts to Council Tax. If you are the only adult in the household, it is reduced by 25% but you need to apply to the Council for that.
- Make sure that if you have some Housing Benefit, you also have a claim for Council Tax Support. Sometimes if your circumstances change the Council Tax Support can stop, if you don't claim it.

For money advice get in touch with us on 03000 120 120 and ask to speak to one of our money advisers.





Feedback, compliments and complaints

Alliance Homes welcomes your feedback, no matter if it is a complaint or a compliment.



If you are not happy with the service you are getting from us please tell us.

This way we can put matters right and make sure that it doesn't happen again.

This publication is available in large print, audio tape, CD and Braille.



Help is also available for people who require information in other languages. Please call us on 03000 120 120.

How to contact us

T 03000 120 120

www.alliancehomesgroup.org.uk

customersupport@alliancehomes.org.uk

Our Offices

Main Office

40 Martingale Way
Portishead
BS20 7AW

Weston Office

The Information Station
St Andrew's Parade
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 3SS

Monday-Thursday
9.00am to 5.00pm
Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm

03000 120 120

customersupport@alliancehomes.org.uk

Useful numbers

01934 622 669

For out of hours emergency repairs only

North Somerset Council

01934 888 888

Liberata

(For council tax and housing benefit enquiries)
01934 888 144

Westonworks

01934 426 260

Stand Against Racism & Equality (SARI)

0117 942 0060

'Drop in' for information and advice

Housing Benefit (Liberata)

Clevedon

The Barn
Great Weston Way

Friday 11.00am to 1.00pm

Nailsea

Scotch Horn Leisure Centre
Brockway

Wednesday 9.30am to 10.30am

Pill

The Resource Centre
4 Baltic Place

Thursday 9.30am to 10.30am

Portishead

Alliance Homes
40 Martingale Way

Tuesday and Thursday
11.00am to 1.00pm

Weston-super-Mare

The Information Station
St Andrew's Parade

Tuesday 9.30am to 11.00am
Thursday 2.00pm to 4.00pm

Worle

Knightstone Housing
Weston Gateway Business Park

Tuesday 2.00pm to 3.30pm

PRN 02/17



business for neighbourhoods



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www.alliancehomesgroup.org.uk