

Progress People

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A proposed merger with Reside Housing Association



In the winter, we wrote to you to let you know that Reside Housing Association is thinking about joining Progress Housing Group.

Progress Housing Group is your landlord. We provide homes all over the country for people who have a support need.

Reside Housing Association is like us and also provides housing to people with support needs. Since we last wrote to you, Reside, and Progress Housing Group have been learning about each other.

If you have any questions, you can ask us. We would love you to tell us what you think about Reside joining Progress Housing Group.

You can do this by:

- ◆ Sending an email to community@progressgroup.org.uk
- ◆ Phoning us on ☎03333 204555
- ◆ Or, if you need assistance, please ask your support worker or family member to help you contact us

What happens next?

Over the next six weeks, we will listen to your comments. We will then use your feedback to help us decide about Progress Housing Group and Reside Housing Association joining together.

We will write to you again in the summer to tell you what is happening.

You can also read updates on our website, www.progressgroup.org.uk/support

No matter what we decide, your home and the support you receive will not change. So you don't need to worry about anything.



Virtual Scarecrow Festival 2021

Following a suggestion from one of our tenants, we are excited to announce our first Virtual Scarecrow Festival.

We would like to invite you to get creative and make your own scarecrow. You can use anything you have at home to make it, like old clothes, gardening gloves, plant pots, garden canes, straw, or things from your recycle bin.

You might choose to make a traditional scarecrow or one inspired by your favourite character like the scarecrows in these photos made by members of the Progress Involvement Team and their families.

Share a photo of your scarecrow and send it to community@progressgroup.org.uk to enter or post it to our Facebook page. All entries received between now and 30 August 2021 will be shown in our newsletters, social media, and website. There will be prizes for the 10 most creative entries. We can't wait to see them all!



The Minions



Gangsta Granny

Progress in Bloom

Entries are now open for our annual 'Progress in Bloom' gardening competition or sunflower growing competition.

You can enter online at www.progressgroup.org.uk/bloom, email community@progressgroup.org.uk or call 03333 204555.

The closing date is **30 June 2021**.

Judging will take place on **13 July 2021**, with an awards event and presentation on **23 July 2021**.



Can you help us make the next three years count even more?

We are looking for enthusiastic, creative and committed people who live in our communities to help us shape our future organisation.

You will join the second group of our award-winning two-year part-time board trainee programme.

“We believe it is important to tackle inequality and promote diversity. Our board developed this programme to enable underrepresented people to gain access to non-executive board training and opportunities. Helping to ensure a wider representation of our society and communities and build strong governance for the future”

Jacqui De-Rose, Chief Executive, Progress Housing Group.



Find out more by calling 03333 204555, using live chat www.progressgroup.org.uk or emailing enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk

Customer scrutiny update



Our tenant-led Scrutiny Pool has been very busy over the last couple of months.

In our last update, you may remember that the current scrutiny review is tenant engagement and involved looking at the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants Charter.

For the Scrutiny Pool to carry out their scrutiny review, teams from across Progress Housing Group have completed a self-assessment of their tenant engagement activities, using the six areas set out in the Together with

Tenants Charter:

- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Voice and influence
- ◆ Accountability
- ◆ Quality
- ◆ When things go wrong

This work has now been completed. The Scrutiny Pool is working its way

through each of the six areas, looking at what Progress Housing Group can do differently to make improvements.

This is a huge task, so we are looking at one area at a time. The Scrutiny Pool has completed its review of the first three areas and will complete the full review over the next few weeks.

Once each area is complete, a report will be produced detailing the findings of the Scrutiny Pool and their recommendations.

You can find out more about the Together with Tenants Charter here www.progressgroup.org.uk/together.

The Scrutiny Pool comprises tenants who volunteer their time to get involved; we are always looking for more people to join the Scrutiny Pool.

If you would like to find out more about this group or if you would like to suggest an area to be reviewed, please contact the Progress Involvement Team on 03333 204555 or email community@progressgroup.org.uk.

Investing in your home

April 2021 was the start of this year's maintenance and improvement programme. We plan to spend £9 million on improving and repairing your homes over the coming year.

Looking back to last year, despite the restrictions of COVID-19, we carried out £10.5 million worth of improvements.

This is how the money was spent:

Planned improvements

Bathrooms, kitchens, electrical rewiring, heating systems, etc.

£1.4 million



Cyclical maintenance

Gas servicing, electrical testing, painting, energy efficiency works, etc.

£4.6 million



Responsive repairs

Day-to-day repairs, empty property repairs, etc.

£2.8 million



Miscellaneous

Environmental improvements, major repairs and maintenance, etc.

£0.2 million



TOTAL £10.5 million

This year we will be investing more money into improving your homes, with a repairs and maintenance budget of £9 million. This includes planned improvements, repairs and maintenance and ensuring you are safe in your home. We will also make sure that if you were on a planned improvement programme last year and we were unable to carry out the work, you will be on our priority programme this year.

How is the work planned?

To help us plan our future maintenance programmes, we record the condition

of each element of every property in a database. We continually update our records using information collected from our property inspections. We will contact you if we need to inspect your home and advise you when we will be attending.

How will I find out if any work is being carried out to my home?

We will tell you in advance if we are planning to carry out improvements to your home. We will usually let you know by letter at least four weeks before starting any work that may affect you. We will explain the works planned and the level of disruption you can expect. If you live in a scheme, we will also work closely with the care providers to ensure everyone is aware of the work being undertaken.

Planned maintenance and improvements

Every year we carry out a programme of planned maintenance and improvements to replace or repair the parts of your home that need to be updated. This year, we will carry out the following works to your homes. Most of the work will be delivered by our chosen partner contractors. We will make sure the work is of a high standard and that quality products are used. All the work will be monitored and managed closely by our Progress Contracts Team.

Types of work	Number
Major internal works	
Kitchens and electric upgrades	65
Bathrooms	61
Major external works	
Roofs	13
Double glazed windows	11
External Doors	52
Heating systems	
Gas heating	48

Every year we carry out a package of necessary major internal works, including the following:

- ◆ Kitchen replacements
- ◆ Bathroom refurbishments
- ◆ Heating system renewals
- ◆ Electrical rewiring

The major planned programmes run throughout the year (starting on 1 April and ending on 31 March).

We only carry out those works that are required in each property. For example, one house may have had a new kitchen installed more recently than neighbouring properties and so may not need a replacement at this time. Before any major internal works and external painting work, we will need to carry out an asbestos survey at your property. You will be told if your home is part of the planned works programme, and an asbestos surveyor will contact you in advance of the works to carry out the survey. If you refuse to have an asbestos survey carried out, we will not be able to continue with the planned works.

Aids and adaptations

Every year we carry out aids and adaptations work to help those with a disability enjoy their homes. Demand for these works is high, so we carefully assess every request.

We have a health and wellbeing officer who can advise on making the best use of your home. If you think that you would benefit from an improvement of this type, email us at enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk or phone 03333 204555.

Major works inside homes



Painting the outside of your home

We will spend over £120,000 painting the outside of your homes this year. Often this will involve carrying

out minor repairs to rotten or damaged timber before the painting is carried out. All tenants will be notified if their property will be painted within the next few months.

Gas servicing

Every year we need to check the safety of all the gas appliances that we have provided in your home. This service is for your safety, to ensure that everything is working safely and efficiently.

We must carry out these checks every year if you have gas in your property, so please try to keep to the appointment we have made with you. If you are not available on the day of your appointment, please contact us

immediately to rearrange. This helps reduce the number of 'no access' visits we carry out and means we can rearrange an appointment to suit you.


Cyclical maintenance
£4.6 million

If a gas engineer calls at your property and has been unable to gain access, a card will be posted through your door to tell you that someone has called to do your inspection. The card will have our phone number on it. It is important for your own safety and to comply with the law that you contact us to make a suitable appointment. If you have a support worker, they will be able to


Responsive repairs
£2.8 million

assist you if you need help.

Electrical testing

We have increased the number of electrical tests we undertake by reducing the frequency of these tests from every 10 years to every five years. The electrical test is for your safety, to ensure that everything is working safely.

It is very important that we carry out these checks every five years (and sometimes more frequently), so please try to keep to the appointment we have made with you. If you are not available on the day of your appointment, please contact us immediately to rearrange. This helps to reduce the number of 'no access' visits we carry out and means we can rearrange an appointment to suit you.

If an electrician calls at your property and has been unable to gain access, a card will be posted through your door to tell you that someone has called to do your inspection. The card will have a phone number, and it is important for your own safety that you contact us to make a suitable appointment. If you have a support worker, they will be able to assist you if you need help.

You must allow us access to your home to carry out these checks. Gas servicing and electrical testing are carried out to keep you safe in your home. We will do our very best to schedule an appointment convenient for you. It is important you allow us access to your home before the date of your last certificate.

Other health and safety works

We have many other maintenance programmes running all the time. These include servicing all lifts and fire alarms, testing electrical appliances

in communal areas of our supported living schemes, and disinfecting water storage tanks. We

always try to minimise disruption to tenants, and, in most cases, you will not know that they are happening - but where you do need to know, we will contact you in advance. We must carry out regular health and safety checks. This year, we have increased our investment to ensure the safety of our tenants and residents.

Day-to-day repairs

Every year, we carry out thousands of day-to-day repairs at the request of our tenants. We also repair and carry out improvements to empty properties and prepare them for new tenants to move into once the old tenant has moved out.

Customer satisfaction

We have received some fantastic feedback from our customers over the last year. For example, you told us that our operatives were following COVID-safe working practices. This helped give you the assurance you needed at a difficult time. We are always delighted to hear from our customers. Please let us know if we get it right, as we'll keep on doing the things that you appreciate and let us know if we get it wrong so we can look at ways of improving our services. So if you have any feedback on any part of our repairs and maintenance service, please don't hesitate to contact your Supported Living Housing Officer or our Property Services Continuous Improvement Manager, Diane Strickland. You can reach Diane at enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk or by calling **03333 204555**.


Miscellaneous
£0.2 million

Fire safety in your home

Fire safety here at Progress Housing Group is a high priority. Our employees work extremely hard to ensure that our buildings are maintained as safe as possible.

Fire risk assessments are carried out at properties managed by the Group that have common means of escape, such as:

- Community centres
- Blocks of flats
- Houses of multiple occupations
- Shared houses identified as supported accommodation (more than one tenancy)
- Houses with support staff sleep rooms or offices identified as supported accommodation

The fire risk assessment identifies actions and recommendations to be carried out to keep all our properties safe and protect you from the dangers associated with fire. Any significant findings and recommendations are recorded by the Group and monitored through to completion of the action.

Unfortunately, fires are common and can cause serious injury and damage to your home and possessions.

By following these simple tips, it will keep you safe in your home.

However, you can reduce the risk of fire in your home by following these basic rules:



- ◆ Regularly test your smoke alarms and report any faults



- ◆ Extinguish cigarettes carefully and never smoke in bed



- ◆ Keep all exits clear of obstructions so that people can escape quickly



- ◆ Keep candles in secure and non-flammable holders and never leave them unattended



- ◆ Take care in the kitchen and never leave cooking unattended



- ◆ Do not overload electrical sockets



- ◆ Never leave electrical appliances switched on when no one is at home



- ◆ Do not leave a fire door open, and never remove an automatic door closer



- ◆ Always keep matches and lighters out of reach of children



- ◆ Do not store anything flammable such as petrol in your home

Project SEARCH interns join Progress!

We now have ten young people set to join us in September as part of our partnership with DFN Project SEARCH.

Project SEARCH is a project to help people to find work and was launched in South Ribble with partners including Progress Housing Group, Runshaw College, Lancashire County Council, South Ribble Borough Council and a national charity called Hft. Hft provides services for people with learning disabilities. The project will help young people with a learning disability or autism (aged 18-24) gain workplace skills.

The ten young people will take part in a mix of classroom-based learning and workplace experience within one of our departments. Look out for further updates about Project Search in our future newsletters and on our Facebook and Instagram pages.



SignLive

The Group is now using an online sign language service, SignLive

SignLive is an online video British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation service available for free for our tenants and customers.

To use this service, you need to register on the SignLive website www.signlive.co.uk and either download an app or access it via the internet on your computer or smartphone.



Once registered, you can search and look for Progress Housing Group in the online community directory.

Then, by clicking on the phone number, you will be connected to an interpreter who will support you throughout the call using BSL via a live video link.

Karen Cookson, Customer Contact Manager, said:

“We hope that using this new service will make it easier for British Sign Language users to contact us; particularly at the moment when face-to-face appointments are limited, and deaf or hearing impaired customers may not be able to have the support they usually use from family or friends.”

Are you ready for changes to online payments?

Banks are starting to add more checks to keep you safe when using your bank card online to buy things or make payments to organisations.

Progress Housing Group is not bringing it in, but it might make it harder for you to pay your rent to us if you use our online payment service.

You can prepare for these changes by:

- ◆ Making sure your bank has your correct contact information, such as your telephone number
- ◆ Alternatively, you can call our Progress Connect Team on ☎ 03333 204555 to find out about other ways to pay your rent or speak to your housing officer.

Easter cheer

We received 21 entries to our Easter card decorating competition which we ran across the Group.

Congratulations to our ten winners, we received some fantastic designs. A special mention goes to **Lisa**, who won for her design and thank you to **Philip** for his wonderful entry.



Lisa with her fabulous Easter card

Philip's entry

Competition time!

Congratulations to Debbie, who lives in Lancashire, who is our competition winner. Debbie participated in our creative activities in the last edition of Progress People and drew this fantastic self-portrait. Your £20 One4all voucher is on its way to you!

If you would like to be in with a chance of winning a **£20 One4all voucher**, please complete the spot the difference below and either take a photo and email it to marketing@progressgroup.org.uk with your name and address. Or you can send your entries with your contact details to **Joanne Hodson, Progress Housing Group, Sumner House, 21 King Street, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2LW**. Good luck!



The deadline for entries is Friday, 30 July 2021.

Find 10 differences



Brain-teasers

Questions:

- 1: What small flat tool is used by stringed instrument players to pluck or strum while they're playing?
- 2: Which married couple created the Sci-Fi TV series 'Thunderbirds', 'Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons' and 'Stingray'?
- 3: Who succeeded Jimmy Carter as US President in the 1980 US presidential election?
- 4: Which famous road bridge links the Houses of Parliament to the London borough of Lambeth?
- 5: In the UK we call it a curriculum vitae or CV. What is it called in America?
- 6: Ant Middleton is the author of the newly published motivational book 'Zero Negativity'. On which Channel 4 show is he the Chief Instructor?
- 7: In Thunderbirds who was the pilot of Thunderbird 2?
- 8: Which former Charlton Athletic and Newcastle United player is now the manager of Fulham FC?

Answers: 1: A plectrum, 2: Gerry and Sylvia Anderson, 3: Ronald Reagan, 4: Westminster Bridge, 5: A resume, 6: SAS: Who dares wins, 7: Virgil Tracy, 8: Scott Parker

Useful addresses and telephone numbers

Due to coronavirus, our offices are currently closed to visitors.

You can still contact us in the following ways:

Write to us at:

Progress Housing Group
Sumner House, 21 King Street,
Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 2LW

☎ 03333 204555

💬 Live chat with us on our website at

🌐 www.progressgroup.org.uk

✉ enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk

Leeds office

Progress Housing Group
New Pudsey Court, 101 Bradford Road,
Pudsey, Leeds, LS28 6AT

LiLAC tenants ☎ 0345 241 6041

Progress Housing Group tenants

living in Cambridgeshire, Durham, Essex, North Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Scottish Borders, Suffolk, Yorkshire.

☎ 0345 241 0208

💬 Live chat with us on our website at

🌐 www.progressgroup.org.uk

Online tenant account

Visit our website 🌐 www.progressgroup.org.uk/activate to set up and activate your tenant account. If you have already set up your tenant account, you can log on to it via the website.

✂ Repairs

There are now several different arrangements for repairs, so please check with your Supported Living Housing Officer to find out about the correct telephone number to ring.

Remember: Repairs lines are usually very busy first thing in the morning. If your repair is not urgent, please try phoning after 11am. You can report repairs online 24 hours a day!

This newsletter is available in audio CD, large print, Braille or an alternative language.

To request your alternative format please contact the Progress Involvement Team on ☎ 03333 204555 or write to us at our Head Office address (details above) or email ✉ enquiries@progressgroup.org.uk