



Our offices will close for the Christmas period at 5pm on Thursday 23rd December and re-open at 9am on Tuesday 4th January 2011. For emergency repairs please call 0121 766 1100.

FAMILY TENANTS VISIT NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - SEE PAGE 2

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Improving your repairs service

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Customer 1st - getting it right together



Thank you to everyone who has been involved! Our resident groups meet regularly and help us to improve the services we provide. Here are some of things we have done in response to resident feedback. To find out more, please call the Customer 1st Team on 0121 766 1100.

Improving Repairs



You said...

We want to know what Family is doing to ensure our repairs service is performing well and is good value for money.

We did...

Action has been taken to help improve the repairs service. This includes a re-structure of the department and training repairs operatives to ensure they all have the required skills. See more on page 5.

Better Homes



You said...

We want to visit Family's new housing developments.

We did...

A trip was arranged for members on the service group to visit our new developments at Brierley Place and Bearwood Road.

Customer Contact



You said...

We want to play a full and active role in the development of our annual report.

We did...

A resident focus group worked with our design team to develop ideas and themes for the annual report.

Safer Cleaner Communities



You said...

We want to have more day trips and would like to visit some of Family's housing schemes.

We did...

30 residents and children attended our day out at West Midlands Safari Park and more day trips are being planned. Visits to housing schemes are to be arranged when suitable schemes have been identified.

One Voice



You said...

We want to know more about Family's budgets and how the Association spends our money.

We did...

Residents received training on how services are bought in by the Association and further training will be provided on funding and budgets in the new year.

Better Homes Tour

Residents on our Better Homes Service Group recently visited our new housing development at Brierley Hill in Coseley. The development is being built by Cala Homes and will provide 89 homes in total. When

finished in April next year, we will have 32 new homes, providing a mixture of 2,3 and 4 bedroom properties. 7 homes have been completed so far and are now occupied, with a further 8 to be filled by Christmas.



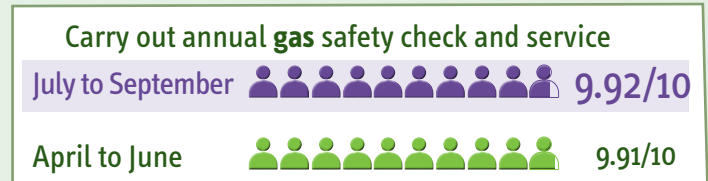
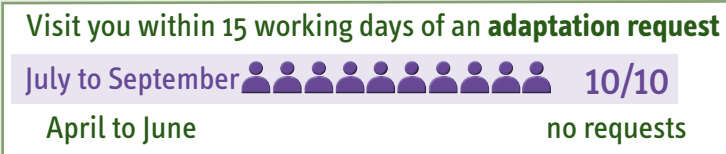
Service 1st - Performance Update



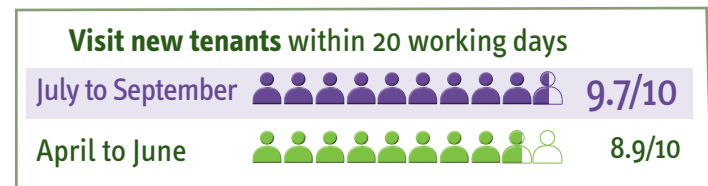
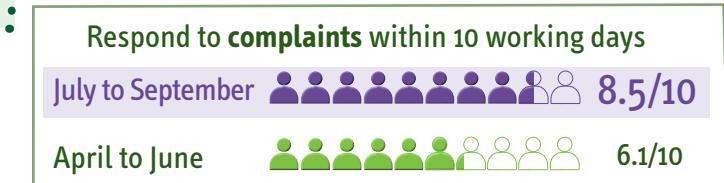
Service 1st details the standard of service you can expect from Family. By monitoring these standards we can see where we are performing well and the areas where we need to improve.

Our performance results from July to September are set out below. The results are marked out of ten and show how they compare to our performance from April to June.

WHERE WE HAVE DONE WELL



WHERE WE ARE ON TRACK

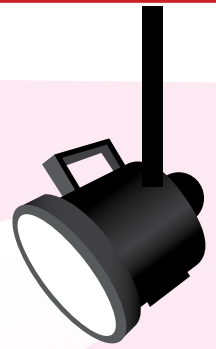


WHERE WE CAN DO BETTER



We are working on those areas where we are not doing so well to achieve high performance for all our service standards. If you would like further information on Service 1st, please contact us on 0121 766 1100.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A A Neighbourhood Services Manager



Darren Newton has worked as Neighbourhood Services Manager at Family for 2 years. He has a team of 9 staff responsible for tenancy queries, neighbourhood management, rent collection, estate inspections, anti-social behaviour, leaseholders and our debt advice service.



7.30am - Leave the house, drop my two year old son Daniel off at Nursery and drive to the office



8am - Start the day with a coffee whilst checking e-mails and tasks for the day. Catch up with some of the team and check our performance for rent collection. It is critical for us to collect rent when it is due as this means we can continue providing our services such as repairs, gardening, cleaning etc.



9am - Meet with Managers to review our empty homes. When a resident moves out of a property my team are responsible for ensuring new customers have been interviewed and signed up, so they can move into the property as soon as it is ready to be re-let.



10.30am - Go out to check an estate we have recently improved. This is one of the best bits of my job as the area looks so much nicer and customers are happy with the work we have done. Also visit another scheme to check on the condition of the communal area and deliver a food hamper, as one of our anniversary gifts, to a resident who is a Family 1st Class member and been with us for 30 years.



1.30pm - Consider our plans for the rent and service charge review which will happen in April next year. Seems a long time away, but there's lots to be done in consulting residents about service charges before then.



3pm Attend a Safer Estates partnership meeting. Serious anti-social behaviour needs a joined up response and this is where we share information and discuss what we are going to do with other organisations such as the Police.



4.30pm - Quickly catch up with our Debt Advisor. We provide a debt and money advice service with the Trinity Housing Resource Centre and since it was first set up in November 2009, over 100 residents are now benefitting from the service.



5pm - Go straight from work to Aston to play 7 a-side football against one of our partners, BM3 Architecture. We win (for once) with a score of 13-8, great result!



Darren Newton, Neighbourhood Services Manager

Beat the Christmas credit hangover

Are your debts snowballing out of control?

Over Christmas and the colder months it is especially hard to keep control over bill payments and you may have extra pressure on you to spend more than you can afford. The temptation to borrow money or avoid paying your bills could be too difficult to resist.

Don't panic as you are not alone. We can provide you with the help and support you need. With our confidential money advice service we can help you check your benefits and help you manage your bill payments. Or you can speak to our home energy advisor to get some energy saving tips on how to cut down on your fuel bills. If you are struggling to pay your rent, get in touch with us as soon as you can. We're here to help! Please contact us on 0121 766 1100.



Improving your repairs service

The need for change

Having listened to our tenants we realised that our repairs service needed improvement. Therefore we discussed how to improve this service with residents at our Improving Repairs Service Group and an external specialist organisation. As a result, we have made several changes to help improve the repairs service

So what have we done?

Before

Two different departments for repairs and home improvements, with two different managers.

Action Taken



Repairs and asset management brought together with one manager.

Before

Responsibility for empty homes and lettings with the repairs and maintenance department.

Action Taken



Moved responsibility for empty homes and lettings to Housing Services department, creating a new dedicated team.

Before

Unsure of exact skills required to deliver repairs service.

Action Taken



Assessed the skill levels of all our repairs operatives. Training is now being provided where necessary to ensure we have the required skills within the team.

Before

Our Gas Engineers and Electricians carry out all gas servicing, gas repairs and electrical maintenance.

Action Taken



We are reviewing options of how we can improve this service.

Once all these changes are in place we hope to deliver a better repairs service. We want to get all repairs right on our first visit and ensure you are happy with the service you receive. If you have any comments on these changes, please contact us on 0121 766 1100.

Repair Appointments

To see the full benefit of the changes to our repairs service we need your help.

We have a lot of missed repairs appointments. This is where a resident has ordered a repair, agreed an appointment time, but they are out when we arrive to carry out the work.

Missed appointments waste time and money. We estimate that at least £250,000 is wasted in lost time each year.

To manage missed appointments we are looking at:

- sending you a text message to remind you of your appointment and
- cancelling repairs jobs if you miss your appointment. This means that you will need to re-report the repair and arrange another appointment.

Keep it or change it!

If you have made an appointment for a repair, please keep it, change it or cancel it so that we can allocate the time to another customer who needs it.



Please remember your gas service could save your life and the life of others

It is FREE and a legal requirement

Over winter it is very important to ensure your gas appliances are working properly. A faulty gas appliance can explode or kill through carbon monoxide poisoning.

To avoid this we must, by law, service your gas appliances once a year.

Almost half of our customers miss their gas service appointments. Missing your gas service puts your life and the lives of those around you at risk. Please make sure you allow our gas engineers access to your home to carry out the gas service as your safety is extremely important to us. Please call us on 0121 766 1100 to check when your gas service is due.

All customers who allow our gas engineers first-time access into their home to service their gas appliances are automatically entered into our free draw to win £50 shopping vouchers.

Customers missing gas servicing appointments is a very important issue. Therefore in consultation with our Improving Repairs Service Group we are considering introducing a charge for missed appointments.

Winner! Well done to Mr Logan from Aston who has won our £50 Gas Service Prize Draw.

Please contact us on 0121 766 1100 if you have any comments or suggestions about charging for missed appointments.

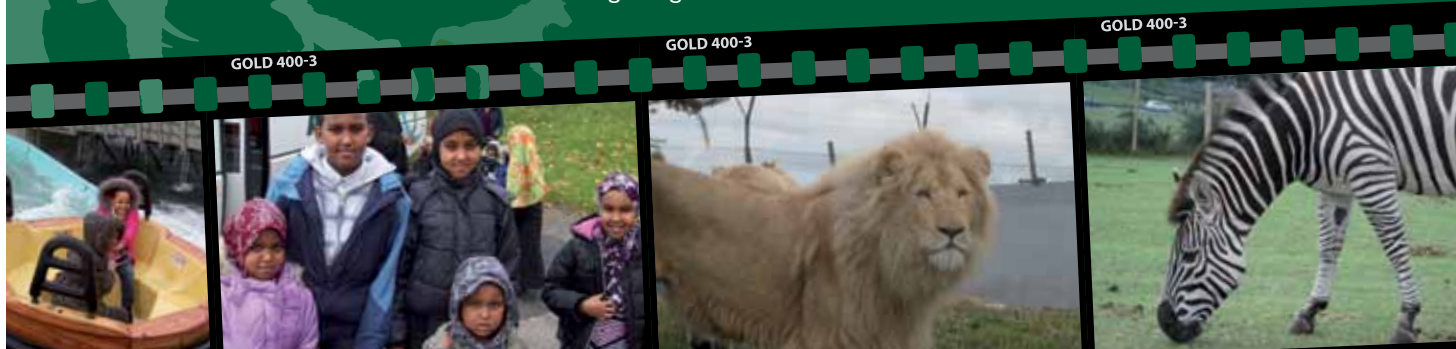
Carbon Monoxide

Faulty gas appliances can produce carbon monoxide. You cannot smell it, taste it or see it, but it can kill. If you think your gas appliances are not working properly please call us or the gas emergency helpline on 0800 111 999.

Safari Park Day Trip

During half term break in October, Family Housing residents enjoyed a day trip out to West Midlands Safari Park. The trip was organised by our Community Investment Team and was a huge success, with 30 tenants and their children enjoying the day.

After very positive feedback from residents who attended the safari trip, we are planning more days out, so watch this space or contact us if you are interested in getting involved.



YOUR questions answered

I would like to set up and run a business from home – am I allowed to do this?

Yes but only if you have our written consent. We welcome the idea for our residents to work from home and have their own business and generally we will approve these requests if the business won't disturb neighbours, damage the property or raise any health and safety concerns. Please note that we will not undertake any renovations to the property to help accommodate the business.

I have heard a lot about the Government cutting social housing budgets – will this affect me and my home?

We are currently looking into the potential impact of the Government Spending Review and hope to provide more information in our next issue of GN News when we will have a clearer picture on the Government's plans for social housing.

For further information and advice, please call us on 0121 766 1100 from 8am to 8.00, Monday to Friday or 8am to 1pm on Saturday.

Countdown to Birmingham census

The census, run by the Office for National Statistics, happens every ten years and is an estimate of the UK's population and our characteristics. The next census is happening in March 2011, and we all need to take part.

The census is also creating over 600 part time work opportunities in Birmingham which will be advertised at www.censusjobs.co.uk. For more information, please contact Birmingham City Council by emailing census@birmingham.gov.uk or go to www.birmingham.gov.uk/2011-census.



WHAT'S ON?

Frankfurt Christmas Market & Craft Fair – 18 Nov - 23 Dec
Birmingham City Centre

Christmas Festival –
1 Dec 2010 - 28 Feb 2011
Birmingham Symphony Hall
Tel. 0121 644 5198.
www.thsh.co.uk

Nativity Trail – 1 Dec 2010 - 6 Jan 2011,
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
Tel. 0121 303 1966
www.bmag.org.uk

Bollywood – Learn Bollywood dance steps at the Rialto Dance Academy. Every Friday 6pm-7pm.
Tel. 07725 000 732
www.rialtodanceacademy.co.uk

Santa's Magical Underground Workshop –
Visit Santa Claus by Dudley canal tunnel. 4-19 Dec.
Sat & Sun 10am - 5pm.
Dudley Canal Trust
Tel. 01384 236 275
www.dudleycanaltrust.org.uk

CHRISTMAS!

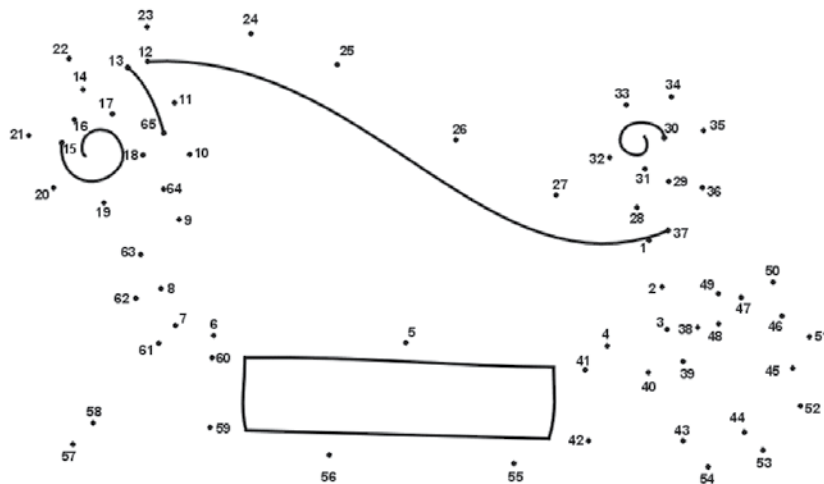
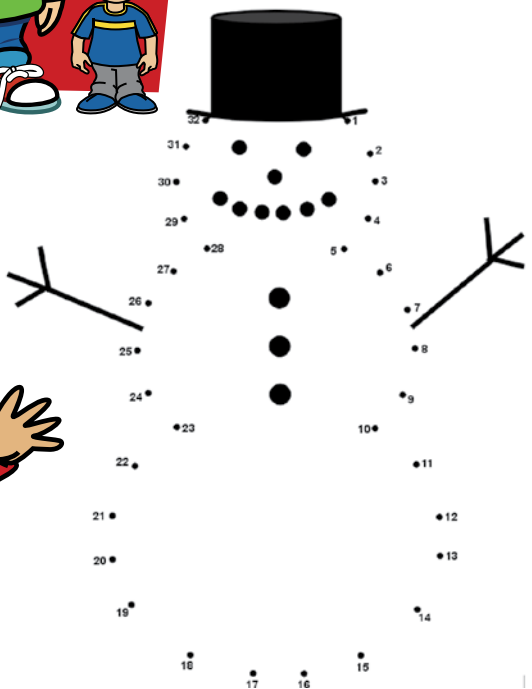
KIDS ZONE

Complete and colour in our dot-to-dot puzzles to win £20 High Street shopping voucher.

Once completed, please add your name and address and return by FREEPOST to enter our prize draw to win a £20 High Street shopping voucher.

Please remember to include your full name and address. Post to: Family Housing Association (Birmingham) Ltd, FREEPOST BM 6027, Birmingham B10 ORX

All entries must be received by 31st January 2011.



Name Age

Address

.....

Congratulations! The lucky winner of our Black History Wordsearch was Adam Hasan from Balsall Heath who wins a £20 High Street shopping voucher.



0121 766 1100

This document is available in another language upon request.



HOW TO CONTACT US



Telephone 0121 766 1100

8am-8pm Monday to Friday,
8am-1pm Saturday

Emergency out of office hours
0121 766 1100



E-mail
post@family-housing.co.uk



Post Family Housing Association (Birmingham) Ltd, Bordesley House, 44/46 Coventry Road, Birmingham B10 0RX



Website
www.family-housing.co.uk

Albanian Me kërkesë, ky dokument gjendet edhe në gjuhën shqipe.

هذه الوثيقة متاحة باللغة العربية عند الطلب.

Arabic

Bengali এই ডকুমেন্ট অনুরোধে বাংলায় পাওয়া যায়।

Gujarati આ દસ્તાવેજ વિનંતી કરવાથી ગુજરાતીમાં મળી રહેશે.

Hindi अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ हिन्दी में भी उपलब्ध है

ئهم بەلگەنامەیە بە زمانی دیکەش دەست دەکەوێت ئەگەر داوا بکەیت.

Kurdish - Sorani

Kurdish - Kurmanji Vê belgenameye li ser daxwazîya we bi zimamên din pêşkiş dibe.

Punjabi ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Somali Dokumentigaan waxaa lagu helaa Soomaali haddii la codsado.

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز اردو میں بھی مل سکتی ہے۔

Urdu