

DECEMBER 2023

YOUR WREKIN

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S LIVES



HERE TO HELP

Plus



Money saving
Housing Perks



Preventing
condensation



Careers
in care



HOUSING PERKS

Download the app for shopping discounts



The Wrekin
Housing Group



Wayne's Wrekin word

Hello and welcome to the winter edition of Your Wrekin.

We recognise that damp and condensation can be a concern during the colder months. We're committed to helping customers tackle the issues around damp and condensation in their homes - particularly when it comes to taking preventative steps.

That's why we've produced our new 'Healthy Homes' leaflet - a guide to help our customers keep on top of some of the issues that can lead to the build-up of condensation.

With energy prices rising and the weather turning colder, it can seem impossible to keep a home warm and well ventilated at the same time. Our Money Matters Team are here to help if you feel like you're struggling with your finances. We also have a dedicated energy advisor who is on hand to offer practical tips and advice.

In this edition you'll read more about some of the brilliant work our involved customers have undertaken during the last 12 months. The last twelve months has shown us that customer voice has never been more important – and we've made some key changes that mean our tenants have a greater say at the highest levels of our organisation. Your views matter to us and we're always looking for people to get involved. By working in partnership with you, we can make sure we offer excellent customer service.

Wayne Gethings, Group Chief Executive

Kevin Morgan Customer Committee Chair



Hello, I'm Kevin, Chair of Wrekin's Customer Committee.

Your voice matters and is at the heart of everything Wrekin does. It's been a busy first few months for Wrekin's Customer Committee.

We've been working closely with the Wrekin Board to identify any concerns, monitor performance and put our suggestions across. One thing I know that's worrying people is the current cost-of-living crisis. We're fortunate that there's lots of support available from Wrekin if you need it. Our Customer Voice Team have also been speaking to Wrekin customers about the impact any potential rent increase will have.

We're keen to hear about the issues and services that matter to you. Is there something you would like us and Wrekin to look at? If so, please get in touch! You can sign up to our Wrekin Voices update email or follow our Facebook group to find out what our Customer Committee are working on.

Go to [wrekin.com/voices](https://www.wrekin.com/voices) to find out more.



Save money with Housing Perks

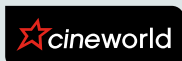
Wrekin tenants can now take advantage of discounts at their favourite shops with the Housing Perks app

Housing Perks gives you access to discounts of up to 18% with over 100 brands and stores – helping you save money with everyday spending.

We know finances are tight at the moment, and the app will help to save money by offering discounts on everyday items and essentials such as:

- ✓ GROCERIES
- ✓ CLOTHING
- ✓ FUEL
- ✓ FAMILY DAYS OUT
- ✓ HOME FURNISHINGS

For more information about the Housing Perks app visit wrekin.com/housingperks or email getinvolved@wrekin.com



Discounts at over **100** stores

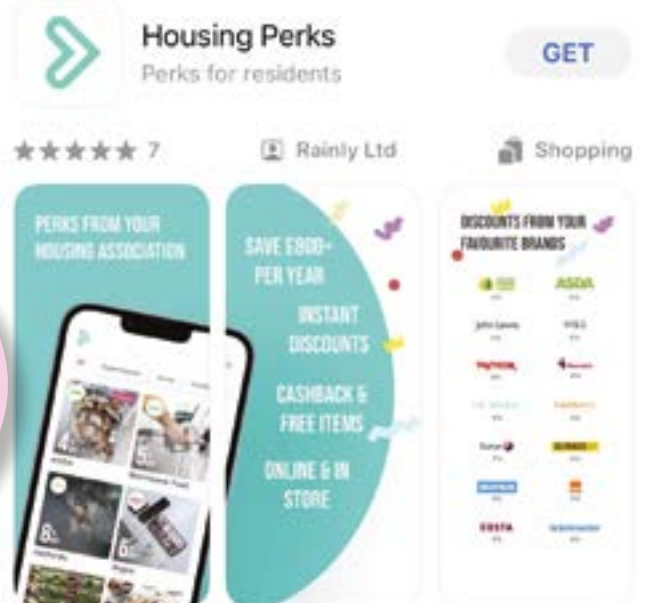
Housing Perks is **free, quick and easy** to sign up for



Download the Housing Perks app from the App Store or Google Play



- Press "Sign up", enter your details and follow the on-screen instructions.
- You will be asked for your 'Organisation ID', type **Wrekin** and click continue.
- You will need to enter your **Tenancy Reference Number** – this can be found on the address sheet that came with this newsletter or look on your tenancy agreement.
- Now you're all signed up!



Preventing condensation in your home

Condensation occurs when the warm air in a room comes into contact with a cold surface, such as a window, mirror or wall, and turns into water droplets. This happens more in rooms where there is a lot of moisture, such as bathrooms and kitchens, and in rooms where there are a lot of people.

Everyday activities like showering and air-drying clothes create moisture in your home, and without proper ventilation this will lead to condensation – the most common type of damp.

Left unchecked, condensation on walls and windows can cause mould to grow.

While there are many causes of damp – and some are impossible to avoid – here are some small things you can do to keep your house as dry as possible:

- Always use your extractor fan in the kitchen and in bathrooms if you have one.
- Avoid drying clothes indoors and especially on radiators.
- Leave a small gap between furniture and external walls.
- Open bedroom windows for 10 minutes when you get up.
- On cold mornings, wipe condensation from your windows.
- Try to maintain an even temperature in your home throughout the day. Keep the temperature in your home between **18 - 21 degrees**.

We know that there are other types of damp aside from condensation, and that some problems are a result of issues with the property itself.

If you experience a build-up of condensation in your home, spot any signs of mould growth or notice anything that needs repairing, contact us on **01952 217217** or email enquiries@wrekin.com

We take our responsibility as your landlord very seriously and we'll do our best to get our friendly repair team out to you as soon as possible.

Keep temperature levels in your home consistent



Reduce moisture levels in your home



Keep air flowing through your home



We're on the lookout for community champions!

Is there someone in your community who goes out of their way to make life better for others? Maybe someone who volunteers their time to help others with daily tasks like shopping, driving or gardening or organises events to bring everyone together?

We want to highlight **Wrekin tenants** who help make our communities better places to live. If you have a story to tell, get in touch!

Email marketing@wrekin.com



Electrical safety

As part of the continued work to ensure that you remain safe within your home we repair, improve and inspect all electrical installations.

We all use electrical items and it is really important to ensure the items are safe when you plug them in.

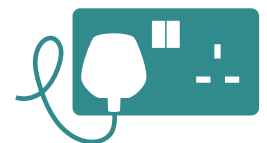
What are we doing to keep you safe?

- We will carry out an electrical inspection at your home every five years.
- If you are moving into one of our properties, the electrical installation will be inspected and tested before you are allowed to move in.
- We will upgrade or rewire the installation to improve it, whenever required.
- We will carry out electrical repairs at your home.
- We ensure that our Electricians and any appointed contractors are fully qualified and appropriately experienced to carry out any electrical work.



What you should be doing to keep yourself safe:

- Don't use lots of extension leads. If you don't feel you have enough sockets, let us know so we can see what can be done to help.
- Don't leave extension leads across walkways as it may cause a trip hazard.
- Don't place items (e.g. coats or blankets) over your fuse box as this may cause it to overheat.
- Ensure that you allow access to your home when your electrical test is due.
- Don't carry out any electrical work on your home yourself or allow such work to be carried out by persons who are not accredited to do so.
- If you are planning to have electrical work done as part of home improvements, seek landlords permission for this element of the work.
- Ensure that you report any repairs immediately by calling **01952 21217**.
- Let us know if you have any concerns about the electrical installation in your home by calling **01952 217100**.



Prees time capsule

Guests gathered at Whitchurch Road in Prees, the site of our 27 affordable homes to witness the burial of a time capsule.

Local school children were invited to enter a competition earlier in the year to create artwork to showcase life in Shropshire in 2023. Their winning entries were added to the time capsule with a range of items, including memorabilia from The King's Coronation, the Lionesses World Cup achievements, a Barbie doll, the front page of the Shropshire Star and one of our famous mini-green vans!



Ever thought about a career in care?

Meet Sharon! She is the Registered Manager at Heath Street and St Michael's Road, two of our care homes for adults with learning disabilities. Her role is to oversee all aspects of care in the homes, making sure each individuals' needs are met and that the homes are safe and secure.

Sharon joined our care team 25 years ago as a Support Worker. With training provided by Wrekin she progressed to Senior Support Worker, then Deputy and now Manager.

Sharon says: "The best thing about my job is the people we support and making a difference to their lives. That can be from the smallest little thing, like making them smile, to supporting them with a big outcome they've wanted for some time.

"It isn't just a care home, it's somebody's home so you've got to be warm and accepting. We think out-of-the-box on how we can make people happy. I always think does it pass the mum test? If I would leave my mum in that home then we've definitely hit the mark!"

Wrekin has a range of entry and senior level positions available at our Learning Disability and Supported Living schemes across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Staffordshire.

All current vacancies can be found at [wrekin.com/careers](https://www.wrekin.com/careers) or you can register your interest for a career in care by sending your CV to recruitment@wrekin.com



To anyone thinking of a career in care, Sharon says:

“No one is born a carer. Everyone has to learn, but as long as you have the right values and attitude then it could be the role for you!”



All aboard! The Trip Buddies making sure no one's left behind

Wrekin has a programme of trips and activities, set up to help tenants of our Retirement Living and ShireLiving schemes stay active and make friends.

We're lucky to have a group of volunteers who help make sure no one misses out.

Katrina Pooler, Events Coordinator for Wrekin said: "We came up with the idea of Trip Buddies when a number of our tenants told me they would love to come on our day trips but they didn't have the confidence to go alone. Dawn was the first Trip Buddy to get involved and it soon became clear we needed more. Pauline and Josie offered their help and we are now up to three. It's great news for our tenants!"

Dawn Whitehead had a long career in care before retiring in 2022. She said: "Throughout my working life I've met lots of people who are lonely and that don't go out because they have no one to go with. Katrina had one particular lady in mind for me. We met and got on really well. People ask if I'm her carer and I say absolutely not – I'm her friend. I'm there to have a chat and make sure she's alright."

For more information about our trips for Retirement Living or ShireLiving residents or for details on how you can volunteer get in touch with Katrina Pooler on **01952 217371**.



Customer Committee update

Wrekin's Customer Committee is a tenant-led group that has a direct link with Wrekin's Board, ensuring our 28,000 tenants can influence decision-making. They play a key role in helping Wrekin make a difference to people's lives.

One of the latest focus points for the group has been to look at Wrekin's approach to supporting customers. This includes helping customers manage income, maintain tenancies and additional lifestyle costs, making sure their wellbeing is at the heart of everything.

The Committee has had their say on the Customer Feedback report and Wrekin's Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Both help to ensure Wrekin is providing the right service to our customers. They have also discussed with the Board how Wrekin can learn from complaints to drive positive change to services.

From regulations and repairs to neighbourhoods and homes, the committee can bring anything to the Board room table. Is there something you would like them to look into? Get in touch!



We want your feedback



How to get in touch with us

If you would like to contact us there are a number of ways you can do this, you can:

- ▶ Call us on **01952 217100**
- ▶ Write to us at **The Wrekin Housing Group, Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford TF3 4AW**
- ▶ Email us at enquiries@wrekin.com
- ▶ Message us on the **My Wrekin app**
Download the app for free from the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#)
- ▶ Or contact us through our social media channels

We don't always get things right, if you are unhappy with a service please make a complaint. You can do this by any of the methods above or email:

complaints@wrekin.com

You can also contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for independent advice by calling **0300 111 3000**

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

Alternatively, we would love to hear from you if you are really happy with a service.

Contact us at compliments@wrekin.com

Customer drop-ins

The Customer Voice team will be hosting regular drop-in sessions for customers at our Hubs in Wellington and Stirchley. They are an opportunity for customers to pop in, have a chat, and share their views. For more information, get in touch:

getinvolved@wrekin.com | **01952 217308**

wrekin.com/voices

Wellington Hub, Tan Bank

Thursday 07 December
3:30pm - 5:30pm

Thursday 08 February
2:00pm - 4:00pm

Thursday 11 April
10:00am - 1:00pm

Stirchley Hub, Grange Avenue

Thursday 11 January
2:00pm - 4:00pm

Thursday 07 March
3:00pm - 5:00pm

Wrekin VOICES

Money Matters help tenant clear £9,000 worth of debt

A Wrekin tenant who faced so much debt that he couldn't afford to eat has discussed how he was able to turn his life around.

Stephen from Telford was suffering from bone arthritis in his knees and facing debts totalling around £9,000.

After turning to credit to pay for disability equipment and with regular taxi trips to hospital to fund, he was unable to even afford presents for his family at Christmas. That was until he contacted our Money Matters Team for support.

Stephen said: "I was in such a mess as I'd only got so much money from my pension. I received £242 and was paying out £350 every week so I had nothing left.

"I was having to go to hospital twice a week at the time and that was costing me a fortune in taxi fares because I couldn't walk very far."

"I'd paid all my money out, I'd got nothing in the fridge and I had no food. I thought I'd better do something."

It was at that stage that Stephen contacted a member of the staff at Wrekin, who put him in touch with Dan Bebbington, the Group's Debt & Energy Manager, for support. Dan paid a visit to Stephen's house and was soon able to stop most of his outgoing payments and put him onto a debt relief order.

Revealing how it has turned his life around, Stephen said: "The Christmas before last was the first time I've been able to buy anyone a present in years.

"I'm keeping my head above water now and I couldn't have done it without Dan's help. We worked out I would've been 210 years old before I'd paid all the money I owed back.

"The best thing I ever did in my life was to speak to Dan as it took such a great weight off my mind.

"I'm in a spot now where I can actually put some money together and I've even got some saved for the first time in years."

Money Matters



Here to help

During 2022/23, our Money Matters team dealt with **2,306 referrals** and secured nearly £5m in additional income for tenants.

We know that it can be hard to take the first steps to talk about money or get advice, and we're here to help. We want to make it easier for our tenants to ask for support, whether it's for budgeting advice or full on debt management. Our friendly Money Matters team are here for you. They offer a confidential, non-judgemental service to support all tenants.

Call **01952 217234**

Or email money.matters@wrekin.com

New features available on the MyWrekin App

✓ **EASY** ✓ **CONVENIENT** ✓ **SAFE**

The My Wrekin App is the easy way to manage your Wrekin tenancy at the touch of a button. It's available to download now for free, via the App Store or Google Play, simply search for My Wrekin or The Wrekin Housing Group. The app is available for every Wrekin tenant, leaseholder or anyone who rents a garage from us.

As well as making payments and booking repairs, we've introduced some new features that will help make life a little easier, including:

- ✓ Make a referral to our Money Matters team
- ✓ Access **30% discount** for our Wrekin Revive stores
- ✓ Update and follow the progress of any reported ASB cases

