

InspiredLiving

WINTER 2022 THE MAGAZINE FOR OLDHAM PFI RESIDENTS



Cost of Living
tips and support inside

**Great Places
installs EV
charging point
at community
centre**

Here's how you can get in touch with us

Call

Call Great Places or Wates on **0300 123 2003**

A full range of services is available between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. An extra out-of-hours service, provided by Wates, can be reached using the same number.

Press 1 – for Wates Living Space, for help with repairs, refurbishment and new-build enquiries.

Press 2 – for Great Places Housing Group, for help you with housing management and information on sales units.

Email

Need to email us? Drop the Great Places team a line on oldhampfi@greatplaces.org.uk or contact the Wates team on infooldhampfi@wates.co.uk.

Come and see us

You can also pop into the Crossley Centre, 323 Denton Lane, Chadderton, OL9 9GA or call on **0161 652 1419**. Alternatively, you can visit the Primrose Centre, 9 Magnolia Gardens, OL8 1HX which you can call on **0161 624 7202**.



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Welcome to

InspiredLiving!

Welcome to your latest edition of Inspired Living!

I'd like to introduce myself as your new PFI Manager having taken over from Ryan Smith in the summer. Ryan is now Head of Neighbourhoods for Oldham and the wider region so he's not deserted us completely! I'm sure you'll join me in wishing Ryan all the best in his new role and thank him for all his dedication and hard work over the years.

Since joining the Inspiral Team, I've been really impressed by the high level of customer service we offer you, our customers. This is reflected by the indicators on page 15, and I really want this level of service to continue throughout 2023 and beyond.

I've also been impressed by the amount of different activities and events we run at our two community centres. It can't be underestimated how important these two centres are to the local community and I'd like to

personally thank the staff, trustees and volunteers for all their hard work this year. These centres will play an even more important role over the coming months in helping customers with the cost of living crisis. Further details can be found on page 12.

We've lots of new events planned for next year. One I'm particularly excited about is our 10 year anniversary project which we are running with Manchester Histories. We've already held some drop-in events where I've listened to local residents share their memories and stories of living in Crossley, Dew Way, Fitton Hill and Primrose Bank. If you would like to find out more, please email oldhampfi@greatplaces.org.uk or speak to your local Neighbourhood Coordinator.

Have a wonderful Christmas for those who celebrate it and all the best for 2023!

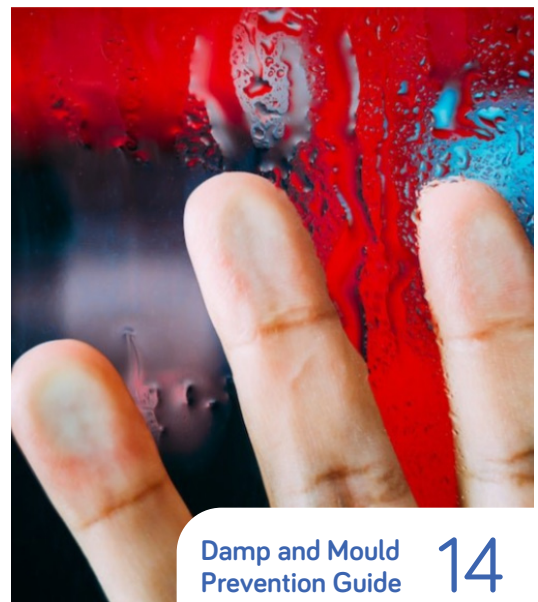
Paul Doherty – Housing Management PFI Manager



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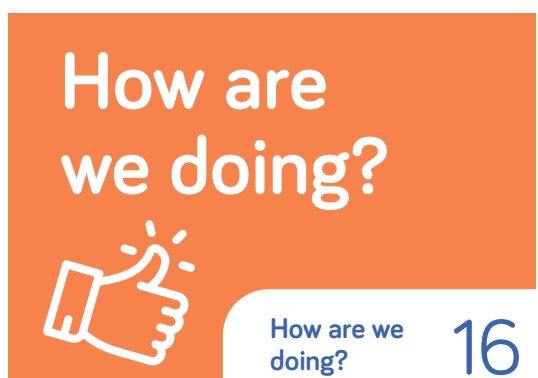
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5 minutes with Paul Doherty – Your new PFI Manager

We caught up with new PFI manager Paul Doherty to find out more about his role and how he has found his first few months.

What is your role as PFI Manager?

I manage the housing management team which includes your caretakers, community centre staff and the neighbourhood team. I also work quite closely with colleagues from Inspiral, Oldham Council and Wates to make sure we deliver what is required in the PFI contract. I would say the best part of my role is that no two days are the same!

Have you always worked in the Housing Sector?

Yes, my first job after leaving school was with a housing association based in Manchester. I've since worked in a variety of roles including community involvement, neighbourhood management, repairs and regeneration. I've mostly worked in inner-city Manchester, so this is the first time I've worked in Oldham. Everyone has made me feel really welcome!

What are your aims and objectives coming into the role?

To maintain the high level of service we already deliver but to also look at how we can do things slightly differently. The world looks very different than it did when the PFI

was first set up so we need to make sure that you as our customers feel safe, live in good quality homes, feel that you are listened to and have more opportunities to get involved with us.

What are your first impressions of working in Oldham?

I think Oldham is an exciting place to work in at the moment. There is lots of investment being made not only in the town centre but in other areas such as the Northern Roots Project which will hopefully create lots of benefits for local residents.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I enjoy hiking especially around the beautiful countryside we have here in Oldham. I also do a bit of running and play tennis when the weather allows. I like spending time with my friends and family and on a Saturday afternoon you will find me cheering on the mighty Mossley AFC!

Great Places installs EV charging point at community centre

Electric Vehicle owners in Oldham can now take advantage of a new electric charging point at Crossley Community Centre on Denton Lane in Chadderton.

Crossley Community Association, who manages the Crossley Community Centre on behalf of Oldham Council but is run on a day-to-day basis by Great Places Housing Group, has recently installed two electric vehicle charging points in the car park at the centre.

The decision to install the chargers is in line with Great Places Housing Group's commitment to introduce facilities to support the reduction of carbon emissions to zero by 2038 and improve air quality and reduce noise pollution in the local area.

The charger will also help generate much needed income for Crossley Community Association with all profits generated going back into supporting activities and events for the local community.

The 22KW charger has two charging ports, making it one of the fastest and cheapest available in the borough,

competitively priced at 27p per kWh. At the moment, the port is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Paul Doherty, Great Places Housing Management PFI Manager, said: "As part of our commitment to reducing carbon emissions in the borough, we wanted to play our part by installing EV points to enable the growing number of EV drivers to be able to charge their cars locally at an affordable rate.

"Not everyone considering EVs has space to install a charger at home or may not want to pay £800 plus for an installation off street points, making the need for affordable charging points increasingly more important. The response so far has been positive and with the charger status live on ZAPP MAP we expect increased interest from local EV owners."

Anyone wishing to use the chargers simply needs to scan a QR code on the machines and enter bank details to charging their vehicle and can contact the community centre on 0161 652 1419 for more information.



Neighbourhood News

Mayor guest of honour at Primrose Bank's Jubilee celebrations

Councillor Elaine Garry, the newly elected Mayor of Oldham, was guest of honour at Primrose Bank Community Centre's celebrations to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June.

Cllr. Garry was treated to afternoon tea and had an opportunity to speak to volunteers and local residents at the event that included a whole host of family activities to mark the occasion supported by Great Places Housing Group and the Primrose Community Fund.

The Mayor also helped plant a Magnolia tree that will take pride of place in the centre's garden, to mark the Jubilee and the tenth anniversary of the Gateways to Oldham PFI partnership between Oldham Council, Great Places, Wates and Inspiral, which coincides with the seventieth anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne.

Cllr. Garry also had the opportunity to see two banners commissioned by local artist, Andy Fear working with local residents to mark both occasions, which will be displayed at the centre. The community centre also plans to bury a time capsule which will include photos

and items from 2022 suggested by members of the local community.

Commenting on the event, Councillor Garry, Mayor of Oldham, said:

It was great to see so many communities hosting Jubilee events across the borough and to be invited to a number of celebrations.

Primrose Bank community centre had something on offer for everyone and it was an honour to attend and plant a magnolia tree to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Jan Wade Community Development Co-ordinator at Great Places, added:

We were delighted that Cllr. Garry was able to join our celebrations to mark what are two important milestones for the residents at Primrose Bank.

We hope that the tree will provide a long lasting reminder of the occasion and can be enjoyed by members of the local community for years to come.



Cosy Crossley

Crossley Community Centre will be part of a network of Warm Spaces, where Oldham folk can come together to stay warm, read a book, play a board game, have some hot food or simply relax and enjoy a cup of tea and a biscuit.

With the cost-of-living crisis resulting in unprecedented pressures on people already struggling, despite government support, thousands of people in the UK will be forced to make tough decisions about when and what they eat, what they can do in life, and when they can afford to heat their home.

Crossley Community Centre in partnership with Oldham Council wants to do more to help its residents. Oldham Council is spending £3M to tackle the cost of living and creating warm spaces for people to go to and get warm whilst enjoying a range of activities and meeting new people.

The space at Crossley Community Centre is now open every Wednesday.

Also, every Tuesday from 3pm to 9pm you can join us at The Primrose Centre, and enjoy the free warm atmosphere as well as the following sessions:

3-6pm: Homework table, kiddies play corner, games and activities – and advice from staff about welfare rights, benefits and health

6-9pm: Free 3-course meal provided by volunteers from the Food Cycle Hub

For more information please call the centre on 0161 652 1419 or contact jan.wade@greatplaces.org.uk

Feed my City

The Crossey Community Centre is welcoming the Feed My City team to the centre starting from November every Wednesday between 2.00pm and 4.00pm.

The volunteer organisation was set up based on the belief that everyone has the right a hot meal if they need it.

This may include people in financial difficulty, in work poverty, homeless or anyone about to come homeless.

The team operates from a fully equipped mobile van, where the food is prepared, served at several different locations around the Greater Manchester Area. Their aim is to provide simple, free vegetarian nourishing food to those who need it.

For Further information visit their website: www.feedmycity.org



Our Community Centre activities



Regular activities – Primrose Centre

Monday

- 9:45am to 11:45am Messy Play (1st Monday of each month)
- 12:15pm to 2:45pm ESOL Entry Level 1
- 6:15pm to 8:15pm Youth club for 11-16 year-olds

Tuesday

- 12:15pm to 2:45pm ESOL Entry Level 1
- 2:00pm to 4:00pm Coffee & Crafts
- 3:00pm to 9:00pm Warm Place
- 6:00pm to 8:00pm Food Cycle Hub – free 3-course vegetarian meal

Wednesday

- 10:00am to 12:00pm ABL Health – weight loss management (referrals only)
- 2:30pm to 5:00pm Parkinson's Oldham (1st, 3rd & last Wednesday of each month)
- 6:30pm to 8:30pm M J Dance (private dance school)

Thursday

- 1:00pm to 2:30pm Poetherapy (Urdu poetry for ladies ran by Peaceful Minds)

Friday

- Starting January Free art class for over 50's

Saturday

- 10:00am to 11:30am Diabetes Prevention Programme (referrals only)

Sunday

- 11:00am to 1:00pm Rising Stars Maths & English Tuition for 6 to 16 year-olds

Regular activities – Crossley Centre

Monday

- 10:00am to 12:30pm Sewing Class
- 12:30pm to 2:30pm ABL Health & Nutrition Group (fortnightly)
- 6:00pm to 8:00pm PHAB – activities to reduce isolation for people of all abilities

Tuesday

- 10:00am to 12:00pm Making Space Dementia Group

Wednesday

- 10:00am to 12:00pm Oak Tree Woodcarvers
- 2:00pm to 4:00pm Feed my City – free hot vegetarian food

Thursday

- 10:00am to 11:00am Sunshine & Smiles Parent and toddler group
- 1:00pm to 2:00pm Chair based exercise class
- 6:30pm to 8:30pm Youth Zone – youth club for 11-18 age group

Friday

- 10:00am to 11:30am Sensory Stars Creche
- 1:00pm to 3:00pm Making Space Dementia Group

Saturday

- 8:00am to 12:00pm Slimming World

Walkabouts

Dates for the next walkabouts in the new year are as follows:

- Tuesday January 10th at 10 am at Fitton Hill & Dew Way
- Wednesday January 18th at 2 pm at Primrose Bank
- Tuesday January 31st at 10 am at Crossley
- Wednesday February 1st at 2 pm at Fitton Hill & Dew Way
- Tuesday February 7th at 10 am at Primrose Bank
- Tuesday February 28th at 10 am at Crossley
- Tuesday March 7th at 10 am at Fitton Hill & Dew Way
- Wednesday March 15th at 2 pm at Primrose Bank
- Tuesday March 28th at 10 am at Crossley

What's on in Oldham?



Motown's Greatest Hits: How Sweet it is

Oldham Coliseum Theatre
Friday 20th and Saturday 21st January 2023

The ultimate celebration of the sweet sound of Motown is back. This is always a sell-out at the Coliseum so do book soon to avoid disappointment. This stunning 100% live show combines first class music together with slick choreography, and an amazing band. You'll be Dancing On The Ceiling, with songs from Lionel Richie, The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, The Four Tops, Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye, The Jackson Five, The Isley Brothers, Edwin Starr and many more.

Sing-A-Long-A-Encanto

Oldham Coliseum Theatre
Saturday 11th February 2023

Gather la Familia! It's time to celebrate something truly magical. From the producers of Sing-a-Long-a Sound of Music and Sing-a-Long-a Frozen, the brand new smash hit film musical of 2021 about the family Madrigal with lyrics on screen that everyone can't stop singing. Cheer on Mirabel as she tries to save the magic surrounding the Encanto. Sing your heart out with our live host, who will teach you some dance moves, help you create some magic and show you how to use your free props bag. And remember we don't talk about Bruno no no no!

Visit <https://coliseum.org.uk/> for more information on both shows and to book tickets

News from the Wider Borough



‘Change the Pattern’ – Local up and coming musician Seb Lowe writes new song to address hate crime

Seb Lowe, 19 and from Delph, has performed at no less than Glastonbury festival. Now, he’s worked alongside teenagers aged 13 to 16 from Oldham Theatre Workshop (where he’d previously attended) and members of Oldham Youth Council, to discuss their experiences around the issue of hate crime.

This is obviously a difficult and uncomfortable topic to discuss, but Seb believes that music and young people can be powerful tools for change. As the workshop went on, Seb remarked upon how “astonishing” it was “how much they had to say”, and it’s these valuable thoughts and opinions of the young people of Oldham that have made up the lyrics to his new track.

‘Change the Pattern’ was released in October on Seb’s social media channels, including his Tik Tok channel @Seb.lowe.music, and it will also feature in Oldham Theatre Workshop’s immersive theatre experience ‘You Stand Accused’. This will educate secondary school children across Oldham about the seriousness of hate crime.

Original article: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/news/article/2382/seb_lowe_collaborates_with_oldham_residents_on_new_song_to_address_hate_crime

Oldham Council approves £2 million for food vouchers during school holidays

In October, Oldham Council made the decision to invest £1.95m towards issuing food vouchers to households with children receiving free school meals during the holidays. These are funded by the Household Support Fund and equate to £15 per week per child for most holidays, and £20 per week per child over Christmas.

Amanda Chadderton, leader of Oldham Council, explained the decision considering the Cost-of-Living crisis, and stresses the need for parents “to double check if they are eligible” for free school meals, as “thousands” go unclaimed. Local authorities will regularly contact eligible families, but parents must follow this up with an application. The first vouchers were received over the recent half term holiday in October.

Alongside this, a range of free, fun, and exciting activities for kids of all ages were made available over October half term – and there will be more to come over the coming holidays!

Original article: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/news/article/2386/oldham_council_approves_2_million_to_provide_food_vouchers_during_school_holidays





Accessible Oldham

‘Accessible Oldham’ is a recent project set up to make Oldham a smoother and safer place to travel through.

Starting in January 2022, the project has made great improvements such as removing visually intrusive coverings, reinforcing the ground, and recycling existing materials to create an even surface for residents. What’s more, there’s also new seating and cycle stands to be enjoyed, as well as the new ‘rain gardens’ allowing for sustainable drainage, which will also help Oldham reach the council’s aim to be Greater Manchester’s first green borough.

This is part of the wider ‘Creating a Better Place’ programme, which is also behind revitalising the Old Library for the public, Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre and the creation of new homes at the former Oldham Mumps Railway Station.

After feeding back to Oldham Council last month, Councillor Amanda Chadderton states the impact this project has had on Oldham is huge. The town now “feels more modern and already looks more inviting to residents and visitors.”

Original article: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/news/article/2384/better_streets_and_public_improvements_taking_shape_thanks_to_accessible_oldham

Next Steps for Spindles Shopping Centre redevelopment

The iconic Spindles shopping centre is set to be transformed into a 450,000 square foot development, housing Tommyfield Market, a food court, event space, heritage archive as well as office space for businesses.

This exciting new space is the soon-to-be home of Oldham Council, and some have already moved into the offices in the upper mall in October.

There are more phases to come where more office space will be created on the site previously home to Debenhams. The council’s former home, the Civic Centre, will be freed for redevelopment thanks to this, saving money and reducing the council’s carbon footprint.

As Councillor Amanda Chadderton explains, this redevelopment is the result of a lot of discussion and planning within the ‘Creating A Better Place’ project. This aims to bring more people into Oldham and make it a better place for residents. Residents also had their views heard through the ‘Big Oldham Conversation’, and steps are being taken to make Spindles more accessible to everyone.

Original article: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/news/article/2378/major_step_forward_for_spindles_redevelopmentto_provide_food_vouchers_during_school_holidays



Cost of living

(Great Places help)



The Cost of Living crisis is causing difficulties for everyone and Great Places is committed to helping our customers through these challenging times.

Here are a few useful tips and links to help you make the most of your money.

Use government approved benefit calculators

Make sure you get the benefits that you're entitled to - www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators. It is always worth checking your eligibility as you might be missing out when you don't realise it.

Coupon bonanza

There are often as many as 40 online coupon offers, such as £3 off vegan chicken and free £2 chocolate, available at www.moneysavingexpert.com/deals/supermarket-coupons.

Keep food fresh for longer

Puts eggs, oranges, most other fruits and vegetables in the fridge. Leave potatoes, bananas, onions, pineapples and bread out.

Free food

Olio (www.olioex.com) offers free food. Instead of binning surplus food, people or stores can offer it to their local community.

Avoid expensive calls

Numbers that begin with 084, 087, 09 or 118 have high charges. The site www.saynoto0870.com will help you find cheaper alternatives.

Petrol deals

BPme Rewards, Texaco Star Rewards and Shell Go+ all let you swap points for fuel.

Get bank cashbacks

NatWest Reward current account gives you £1 in Rewards for just logging on the app once a month. Santander 123 Lite current account gives three percent cashback on household bills. Halifax Reward gives up to 15 percent cashback on selected retailers, and £5 a month if you spend £500 on your debit card each month.

Disabled Railcard

It costs £20 a year and pays for itself in just a few journeys as you get a third off all tickets www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk. An Interrail ticket offers great value unlimited train travel in Europe, plus you could be eligible for a complimentary Interrail Pass for your carer www.interrail.eu/en. For other railcards, you can see www.railcard.co.uk.

Free cash back

The free cashback app Airtime Rewards is an easy way to get money off your phone bill. Link your bank account to the app and it automatically tracks your spending at more than 100 retailers, and gives you between one and ten percent cashback at them.

Prepayment meters

You should speak to your supplier if you have a prepayment meter and your credit is running low. Your supplier may be able to offer you a fuel voucher (a code that can be used to add credit to your gas or electricity prepayment meter). When you speak to your supplier, let them know you are in financial difficulty and explain if you are vulnerable in any way. Your supplier may offer you an additional support credit to help keep you on supply.

Most prepayment meters also have functions built in to provide:

- emergency credit, which provides a small amount of credit in emergency situations where you cannot top up your meter; and
- friendly-hours credit, which allows you to access a small amount of credit at times when top-up points are likely to be closed.

If you are still struggling economically and need support from your local or national government, there are several funds available. The specifics around the eligibility for various schemes can be found on the website www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment.

Customers in financial hardship will also be able to apply to the Household Assistance Fund for emergency financial support for shopping and household essentials, as well as school uniform costs and for white goods.

New customers who are vulnerable may be eligible for our House2Home programme which provides a range of start-up furnishings.

Customers struggling with their fuel bills or debt can access support from our Financial Resilience team and may be eligible for a fuel voucher to help with costs.

Customers needing financial support should contact their Neighbourhood Services Manager for an informal discussion in the first instance, or by emailing FinancialResilience@greatplaces.org.uk

Cost of living

(Oldham help)



Oldham Council also has many things in place to support its residents on the Cost of Living – from free school meals to support with bills – check the 'We Can Help' page for all the information you need:

<https://www.oldham.gov.uk/wecanhelp>

For families, there are also a range of support options, including:

Oldham Food Bank

Oldham Food Bank is Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm at Unit B, Prince of Wales Industrial Units, Vulcan Street, Oldham, OL1 4ER

If you are given a foodbank voucher by any care professional, you can bring it to the foodbank centre where it can be redeemed for three days emergency food. You will be met by volunteers over a cup of tea or free hot meal, and the volunteers will also signpost you to agencies who can solve the longer-term problem.

Tel: 0161 622 1061

School Uniform Exchange

If your child goes to school in Oldham, their school may be one of many schools across the borough that are running programmes where you can either donate uniform items that your child no longer needs, or receive help equipping your child with their school uniform throughout the year.

You can also check out the school uniform exchange Facebook group, running through Oldham: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/5948292315198237>

Feed my City – Serving Free Hot Veggie Food at Crossley Community Centre

Feed my City provides simple and nourishing vegetarian food for free across Greater Manchester, all served from their fully equipped mobile van. From Wednesday 9 November onwards, they are serving at Crossley Community Centre every Wednesday. You can eat in and take away!

Crossley Community Centre, 323 Denton Lane, Chadderton, OL9 9GA

Tel: 0161 652 1419

Visit their website: www.feedmycity.org

Home Improve Loan

If you are a homeowner, on a low income and have lived at your current address for at least 12 months, you may be able to qualify for the Home Improve Loan, which helps with essential improvements or repairs to your home. The loan is registered as a percentage against the value of your property, and is paid back when you sell your home or change ownership details (or when you pass away if not).

Find out more: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200258/housing_benefit_grants_and_loans/1840/home_improve_loan

Warm Homes Oldham

This Oldham-based scheme is there to support households reduce their energy bills and stay warm this winter. Just contact the team, who will assess your situation and offer you:

- Advice on using heating controls efficiently and reducing energy use
- Help with switching energy suppliers, claiming the Warm Homes Discount, registering on the Priority Services Register
- Small energy saving measures such as draught proofing

They may also refer you to other schemes.

Contact warmhomes@oldham.gov.uk or ring 0800 019 1084

For more information: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200258/housing_benefit_grants_and_loans/1979/help_to_heat_your_home

Food vouchers during school holidays

Oldham Council is working with local schools and colleges to roll out food vouchers for families of children eligible for means-tested Free School Meals, families on low incomes with pre-school children, and for Care Leavers under 25. Eligible young people at Oldham College and Oldham Sixth Form will also be supported through this.

Families do not need to apply – Oldham Council will issue the vouchers to eligible families through the online system used previously. The vouchers are valued at £15 per week per child, and over Christmas this will be £20 per week.

More information: https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201225/help_for_families/2910/food_vouchers_-_october_christmas_february_and_easter_school_holidays



Damp and Mould Prevention Guide

It's always important for us to help tackle the problem of damp and mould in our homes. Everyday jobs around the house like washing and drying clothes, cooking, and bathing all release moisture into the air, creating condensation. If this continues for a long period of time, it will eventually cause damp and mould to begin to grow.

To prevent this problem from starting you can follow some of the advice below:

Produce less moisture:

- Dry clothes outdoors where possible.
- Avoid drying your washing on a radiator.
- Always cover pans when cooking and do not leave the kettle boiling

Remove excess moisture:

Wipe down windows, windowsills, walls and shower walls every morning to remove condensation. Just opening a window isn't enough.

Ventilate to remove moisture:

- Open your windows and throw back the sheets or duvets to air the bed and bedding.
- Clear windowsills of clutter that will restrict opening the window.
- Avoid overfilling cupboards and wardrobes as this prevents air circulation.
- Don't block air vents in your home

Regulate your heating

- In cold weather, the best way to keep rooms warm and avoid condensation is to keep low background heat on all day, rather than short bursts of high heat, and it's cheaper!
- Avoid using portable gas heaters

Defective plumbing

Leaks from water and waste pipes are common and can affect both external and internal walls and ceilings. The affected area looks and feels damp to the touch and remains damp whatever the weather conditions outside. A quick examination of the water and waste pipes could find the source of the problem.

If in doubt – Call us

If you think something needs looking at in your home please contact the Helpdesk on 0300 123 2003 option 1 or email info.oldhampfi@wates.co.uk where the team will arrange a visit to assess any concerns with your property you may have.

Great Places News



Great Places and Mosscares St Vincent's Housing Groups in merger talks

Great Places Housing Group (GPHG) and Mosscares St Vincent's Housing Group (MSV) have started discussions to officially join together. Should the plans progress satisfactorily, the intention is to move to full merger by 1 July 2023.

The proposal is that the new organisation will retain the name Great Places and that Charlie Norman, currently Chief Executive at MSV, is Chief Executive designate. Current Great Places CEO, Matt Harrison, is deciding to step down after nine years in the role and over 30 years with Great Places and will leave his role at the point of merger.

Tony Davison, Chair of Great Places, said: "This is a great opportunity to tackle the challenges facing our sector head on, to put more money into the communities we serve and to improve services for our customers."

Gareth Hall, Chair of MSV welcomed the proposed merger, saying: "The shared geography, ambitions and vision of the two organisations make for such a compelling case to join forces and raise the bar further in helping to improve the lives of our many existing and future residents."

"What an exciting time to be involved in either organisation and help shape what the larger group could and should look like as we move forward."

Charlie Norman, Chief Executive of MSV, said: "In an increasingly challenging environment, there will be meaningful and significant benefits of creating a larger, more resilient organisation. The new organisation will keep a strong local focus and connection to our communities, put customers at the heart of all we do and value the shared heritage and legacy of MSV and Great Places."

"It has been such an honour to be part of the MSV journey, working with wonderful colleagues, customers, and partners for the last 20 years, and very much in partnership with Great Places in many ways. I have the greatest respect for everything that Matt Harrison and his colleagues have achieved, and I feel so privileged to be given the opportunity to work with everyone to take our new organisation forward with optimism into the future, building on strong foundations."

Matt Harrison, Chief Executive at Great Places Housing Group, said: "It has been a privilege to lead this fantastic organisation and the wonderful people who work here, and I will be forever grateful for the opportunity."

"I could not think of a better person than Charlie Norman to lead the new Great Places into a new chapter."

Talks are subject to a full customer and colleague consultation, but the Boards of both organisations are confident that the merger will progress as planned.

Great Places has taken the keys to the first of 49 new homes in Royton from Kellen Homes.

Leader of Oldham Council and local Councillor for Royton South, Amanda Chadderton, visited the first of the new two and three bedroomed houses at Vernon Gardens in Royton to officially mark the start of handovers to Great Places' new customers.

Councillor Chadderton took the opportunity to inspect the completed homes and see the finishing touches being put to some of the other houses.

The handovers are part of a new 99 home mixed-tenure development by Kellen Homes working in partnership with Great Places and will provide 49 affordable homes for local people.

Helen Spencer, Executive Director of Growth from Great Places said: "We're delighted to be working alongside Kellen Homes at Vernon Gardens to deliver much-needed affordable homes in the local area."

"Bringing brownfield sites back into use by building mixed tenure communities is a shared ambition of both organisations and we look forward to further opportunities to work with Kellen. Vernon Gardens is the latest in a string of projects by Great Places within Oldham where we continue to experience high demand and need for our homes."

Local councillor Amanda Chadderton added: "I'm really impressed with both the size and the quality of the homes and I know from speaking to local residents that the community is delighted with this new development which brings much needed new homes to the popular area of Royton."

The next release of homes at Vernon Gardens is now on sale. It includes a mix of two and three bedroomed homes and prices start from £242,995. You can visit the show home or visit the Kellen Homes website www.kellenhomes.com. The next phase of shared ownership homes are now available through shared ownership specialists, Plumlife Sales. Customers can register their interest by calling **0161 447 5050** or emailing sales@plumlife.co.uk.

How are we doing?

**% of calls answered
within 15 seconds**

92%

(target 85%)

**% of repairs that
are inspected within
20 days following
completion**

11.53%

(target 10%)



**Estate inspections
performance**

4 per month

(target 4 per month)

Void re-let time

17.55 days

(target 21)

**Repair for
re-let time**

7 days

(target 10)



**Rent collection
& arrears**

1.28%

(target 1.49%)

