

InTouch

Issue 63 Autumn 2025



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bit.ly/PCHInTouch**



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Welcome to the Autumn 2025 edition of InTouch



In this edition, we meet the Resident Communication Advisors, a group of residents who help advise Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) on how it communicates with its residents. We are delighted to share the great news that they are now an officially involved group with PCH on the back of their success, and we're excited to see what else they achieve throughout the year.

We share our complaints performance for 2024/2025 and highlight what we are doing to improve, sharing examples of how we listened, how we acted, and how we improved. Read more on page 10.

We provide a quarterly update on our Health and Housing Project in partnership with Livewell Southwest and share information about our exciting projects including the Community Connections App and Community Health Improvement Programme. We also introduce our Trusted Assessor who provides home assessments for aids and minor adaptations which has helped to reduce waiting times for residents and reduce demands on Occupational Therapy (OT) services. If you would like to access any support through the Project, find out more on page four & five.

This summer, we attended a number of summer events and open days, including a garden BBQ at Innes House, one of our Sheltered Housing Schemes where residents enjoyed a relaxed afternoon in the sunshine. We also attended The Janner Men's Shed open day where they unveiled a brand-new defibrillator located outside Leigham Community Hall in memory of a much-loved member of the community.

We're currently recruiting for the role of Resident Board Member, who will be able to use their lived experience

of being a PCH resident to help oversee the high-level decisions that champion resident-centred change for PCH and our residents.

We have created a new Good Neighbourhood Management and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Toolkit which can help you with any issues you are experiencing to find out if they are classed as ASB, or if they are an issue that requires good neighbourhood management. Together, we can make our neighbourhoods a better place to live, and your housing team are here to discuss any issues that you're experiencing.

Read more about this, our sponsorship of the 'Best Community Project Award' at the YMCA Plymouth Community Awards, our Plymspirational feature about Plymouth Community Pride and more within this edition.

If you have any stories about your achievements, exciting events taking place in your community, or the good work of your neighbours, we want to hear from you. Contact us on news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk or message us on Facebook, X or Instagram.

We hope you enjoy the magazine,



Valerie

**Valerie Lee,
Chair of the Board**



Read the
full report

PCH achieves G1, V2 and C2 after regulatory inspection

Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) has maintained its G1 and V2 regulatory grades following a recent inspection by the Government’s Regulator of Social Housing, and been awarded the second highest rating of a C2 against the newly introduced Consumer Standards.

This means the organisation is broadly compliant with the Consumer Standards, but some areas were highlighted for improvement in how services are being delivered.

PCH retained the highest possible regulatory judgment of G1 for its governance following the inspection, which shows that the organisation performs efficiently and effectively as a social housing provider, and is

fully compliant with all governance requirements and standards.

PCH also maintained its V2 grade for financial viability, showing that the business is stable, reliable and dependable for its investors and for tenants, delivering services effectively and maintaining an ongoing investment in existing and new homes.

The inspection, which took place in March and April, also assessed PCH against the RSH’s Consumer Standards introduced in April 2024, using a four-tier grading system of C1 to C4 to assess how well the business is meeting the standards for:



Safety and Quality



Tenancy



Transparency, Influence and Accountability



Neighbourhood and Community

RSH inspectors met with PCH’s Executive Directors, Board members and staff to ask questions, assess documents, and also observed a Board meeting and a meeting of PCH’s Resident Communication Advisors, before speaking separately with a group of residents to ask for their thoughts.

The inspectors found some areas needing improvement to ensure PCH provides an effective, efficient and timely repairs service, as service performance measures were not at the target levels set by PCH.

Other areas highlighted as needing improvement were PCH’s oversight of services provided to some tenants through its Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) at one estate, as well as some gaps in the overall information held about tenants with diverse needs.

An action plan is now being developed to drive forward changes to the key areas highlighted as needing improvements.



An update on our Health and Housing Project



Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) and Livewell Southwest are continuing to work in partnership to help improve health and wellbeing outcomes for our residents by enabling them to live independently, safely, and healthily at home for longer.

The Health and Housing Project is focused on four core themes:

- **Admission Avoidance & Prevention**
- **Health Improvement and Early Intervention**
- **Integrated Place-Based Partnerships**
- **Digital Transformation, Data & Population Health Management**

Find out more about our exciting projects and meet Jackie, our Trusted Assessor below:

Community Connections App

The PCH Living Lab and University of Plymouth has launched 'Community Connections', a brand-new app designed to help older adults in South Devon stay connected to a whole host of online live activities, all from the comfort of their own home.

In January, PCH residents helped to design this new app, and we listened carefully to what was important to them. Now the app is ready, and we'd love for our residents to try it and test out the technology in their homes.

Estelle, a PCH resident who has already joined the Community Connections app, said: "It's been brilliant! Enjoyed the art sessions the most. I'm still learning. I would recommend to friends."

If you'd like to get involved, please contact Dr Kieran Green on 07562434663 or email kieran.green@pch.co.uk.

Visit our website to find out more about what you can do on the app.

Community Health Improvement Programme

In June, we launched our Community Health Improvement Programme to address different topics to support the wellbeing of our residents. Topics have included healthy eating, mindful eating and truggers, stress and sleep and more.

They were held at Four Greens Community Trust on Whitleigh Green, and we received positive feedback from our residents who attended.

Cheryl, a PCH resident, said: "It's very informative and interesting. [The sessions are] helpful and I don't understand why more people don't attend."

Social Broadband Tariffs

Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people claiming Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits. Some providers call them 'essential' or 'basic' broadband.

You can check if your current provider offers a social tariff and you can apply for most tariffs online or call your provider and ask to switch. Your provider might let you leave your current contract without paying a penalty fee.

If you would like assistance with your broadband tariff, please come along to one of our monthly digital support sessions at Plumer House.



Meet Jackie, our Trusted Assessor

Our Trusted Assessor role was created to improve access to home assessments to support residents' safety and independence at home.

Jackie provides home assessments for aids and minor adaptations which has helped to reduce waiting times for residents and reduce demands on Occupational Therapy (OT) services.

Since the role was created in July 2024, 290 Trusted Assessor referrals have been received, and 190 home assessments have been completed.

It is initially estimated that this role will save the local health system up to £100k per year and will help to reduce OT waiting lists.

As well as looking at mobility around the home, Jackie provides an in-depth assessment for all referred residents, exploring all areas of health and wellbeing. Jackie is also able to signpost and refer to other services, including to our colleagues at Livewell when a more in-depth assessment is required from an OT.

Jackie and Sarah, our Wellbeing Officer, have recently completed their Level 3 Social Prescribing qualification to continue supporting the health and wellbeing of people across our city.



Jackie said: “My role as a Trusted Assessor is extremely rewarding, and being able to make a difference to the lives of our residents is so important.

“Providing something as simple as a small piece of equipment can have a big impact on their independence and safety which is a key part of my role.

“My visits also help reduce waiting times for tenants who might otherwise be waiting for an OT assessment from Livewell, allowing them to get support more quickly.

“Please reach out to us if you need our support, we’re on hand to help.”

Grow Share Cook – what is it?

Grow Share Cook is run by Tamar Grow Local and is funded in partnership by PCH, Plymouth City Council and Livewell Southwest.

The project provides our residents with access to high quality locally grown vegetables delivered fortnightly for free, as well as access to recipes and a series of cookery workshops.

It supports our New Home New You Scheme, providing residents free fortnightly vegetable bags when moving into their new home and access to information and support to help them work towards healthy and wellbeing goals.

One resident said: “It’s great to be eating fresh produce grown locally and learn about the importance of cooking and eating healthily, as I’m borderline for type 2 diabetes. Thank you so much for the veg bag I get delivered fortnightly.”

If you are interested in signing up to Grow Share Cook, please contact Growsharecook@tamargrowlocal.org or call **01579 208412**.

To speak to the Health and Housing Project team or to find out more about the support that they offer, email healthandhousing@pch.co.uk.





How we manage responsive repairs

At Plymouth Community Homes, we want to provide our residents with a high-quality, responsive repairs service and homes that are in a good condition.

To help us to serve you better, staff in our Customer Experience team are currently undertaking in-depth training to help them guide residents through the repairs diagnostic process more effectively.

A responsive repair is where unplanned works are required, and responsive repairs could be either an emergency, urgent or routine.

Depending on the kind of repair needed and the risk to you, we attend to complete the repair in line with the relevant timescales:



Emergency repairs
completed within 24 hours



Urgent repairs
completed within 5 working days



Routine repairs
completed within 20 working days

We have created a number of handy tools available on our website to help you determine whether your repair is an emergency, an urgent or a routine repair.

Making sure repairs are correctly diagnosed means we can speed up our response times for genuine emergencies with limited impact on planned appointments.

We're always here to help you if you're unsure whether your repair is an emergency, urgent repair or routine repair. Please get in touch and we can advise.

The training is already having a positive impact on our Customer Experience team and our Repairs team, as well as our residents, and we hope this will continue as more staff within the organisation are enrolled onto the training.

Mark Boyd, Interim Contact Centre Manager at PCH, said: "Our staff are currently undertaking 37 hours of in-depth diagnostic training. This helps us to better assess and triage repair requests accurately from the very first point of contact.

"By doing so, we can better prioritise emergency repairs and ensure routine work is scheduled appropriately. Our aim is to resolve your query correctly the first time, giving you peace of mind and a smoother service."



Responsive
Repairs Policy

What is an emergency repair?

Emergency repairs are needed to avoid serious health or safety risks, structural damage or to ensure your home is secure. Emergency repairs will be completed within 24 hours of being reported and someone must be home over the age of 18 and available during this time.

Examples of emergency repairs:

- Total loss of heating between November and March
- Dangerous or exposed wires
- Blocked toilet
- Blocked flue or damaged chimney
- No electricity (except during power failure)
- Total loss of water

A full list of emergency repairs and responsibilities can be found on our website



What is an urgent repair?

Urgent repairs will be completed within 5 working days of being reported, up to 8pm on the fifth day. Once an emergency repair is made safe, additional work may be required which may fall under an urgent repair.

Here are some examples of urgent repairs:

- Door not closing on door entry system
- Immersion heater repair or replacement (if this is the only form of water heating or alternative form is solid fuel and tenant is elderly or disabled).
- Shower not working and no bath available
- Containable water leak from central heating appliance or system
- Taps dripping (treated as urgent where there is a water meter installed)
- Clear blocked gutter

Find out more information about what repairs PCH is responsible for (including routine repairs, damp and mould, planned repairs and programmed work) as well as repairs that our tenants are responsible for and more on our website.



An adult must be present when visiting your home

We have made a change to the way we carry out repairs in your home.

When we visit for a repair or inspection, there must be a responsible adult present who is over 18 years old. If the only person at the property is under 18, we will rebook the appointment for when an adult is present.

All our staff and contractors carry ID cards with them to confirm their identity with a contact number on the back which you can call to verify. If you are in any doubt about a person's identity then please do not allow them access to your home.

If we call and you are not in, we will leave a card to let you know we attended – simply call the number and let us know when we should call again.

Repairs: You Said, We Did



Here's what you said - and what we're doing to make a real difference.

You said:	We did:
<p>"Can you fix things right the first time?"</p> <p>We understand how frustrating it can be when a repair requires a second visit. You told us you want repairs completed efficiently and effectively on the first go.</p>	<p>We're enhancing our Repairs Scheduling System, empowering our teams with better diagnostic tools and the ability to share photos and videos from your home.</p> <p>This means our operatives will have all the information they need to get the job done right, the first time. We're also restructuring our planning teams to be more specialised in core trades, boosting their knowledge and accountability.</p>
<p>"Are you making the best use of resources and our money?"</p> <p>You wanted to understand more about how we manage our repair teams and the costs involved, including the use of contractors. You want us to be efficient and ensure value for money.</p>	<p>We're closely analysing our contractor usage to ensure we have the right number of in-house staff for common repairs. We've already approved increasing our in-house flooring team, and we're looking at fencing and roofing too. Our goal is to reduce reliance on external contractors where our own teams can provide better value and service. We're also constantly monitoring and challenging our material spend and tackling consumable waste to make every penny count.</p>

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Last year, the Government published a White Paper on devolution and local government reorganisation, with the aim of bringing power closer to the people. As part of that process, the Government has called time on two-tier council structures.

Earlier this year, Plymouth City Council submitted an outline proposal to expand its administrative boundaries to include 13 parishes in the South Hams.

You said:

“How do you know if the repair work is good quality?”

You want assurance that the repairs carried out in your homes, particularly by external contractors, meet high standards. You want **quality checks and accountability.**

“Can you make sure repair costs are fair and transparent?”

You want clear, consistent pricing for repairs and to know that we’re getting **the best value for money** on all work.

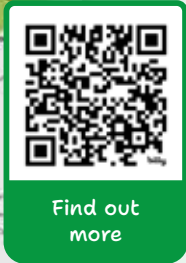
You want clear, consistent pricing for repairs and to know that we're getting **the best value for money** on all work.

We're implementing a **new, structured post-inspection process**. This means more repairs, especially those done by contractors, will be checked for quality by our supervisors. We will be leveraging our upgraded Total Connect system to manage these checks and training our teams thoroughly. This also includes redefining roles within our supervisory teams to focus more on contractor performance and direct labour organisation (DLO) quality.

We're transitioning to the **National Housing Federation (NHF) Schedule of Rates (SOR)** for all our repairs, voids, and compliance work. This is a standardised system used across the social housing sector, bringing greater consistency and transparency to how works are priced. It will help us better monitor and challenge material costs and reduce our reliance on individual "quoted works" which can vary. We'll also be regularly benchmarking our contractor rates against other social landlords to ensure we're always getting good value.

We believe these changes will lead to a noticeable improvement in the speed, quality, and efficiency of repairs in your homes. We'll continue to keep you updated on our progress and look forward to hearing your feedback as these initiatives roll out.

Plymouth City Council is continuing to engage with residents and other stakeholders as they shape and develop the detailed submission later in the year.



Spotlight on complaints

Complaints are an important part of being accountable to our residents and the lessons we learn are invaluable in improving our services to you.

Performance information isn't just a regulatory requirement – it's an essential part of improving as a landlord to delivering better customer service and build trust with our residents and communities.

Our complaints performance for 2024/25



631 complaints



78% of complaints upheld



53 complaints a month



33 stage 2 escalations



22% increase on 2023/24



9 complaints out of target

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code of 1 April 2024, has seen a natural increase in social housing complaints across almost all organisations in the country, and we have reviewed our complaints performance and identified some key improvement areas over the next 12 months.

We've identified the top three reasons for complaints in 2024/25, which were – outstanding work, appointments and contractors.

So, what are we doing to improve?

Communication

We are improving communication with residents, including informing you about changes to appointments, providing updates about ongoing work, and ensuring we give you clear and accurate information at all times.

Contractor Management

We are ensuring our contractors perform to the standards we expect and within agreed timescales. This includes monitoring their performance, addressing any issues and keeping lines of communication open.

Processes

We are ensuring that all processes are followed correctly – things like raising jobs correctly, with regular training for our colleagues and carrying out audits to make sure everything is running as it should be.

Ongoing issues

We are ensuring we address issues like damp, mould and leaks more effectively with thorough initial investigations and completing follow-up work promptly.

Managing expectations

We are setting realistic expectations with you about what we can do within certain timeframes. With clear communication and by managing expectations, you'll know what to expect from us.

How we listened, how we acted, how we improved



	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
How we listened	A resident had been waiting for a persistent leak to be fixed. After heavy rainfall, water was pouring into the property, and a recent repair appointment had been cancelled.	A resident was unhappy that we did not attend an appointment to carry out painting, and there was no communication to tell them.	A resident had been experiencing leaks between their wet room and boiler which had damaged their belongings. The resident made an insurance claim and returned the form to us via recorded delivery; however we had no record of receiving this claim.
What we did	We carried out waterproofing to the flat roof, investigated and cleared the drainage, including complete all internal repairs to restore the resident's home.	We contacted the resident to apologise and confirmed that the work had been passed on to a contractor to complete as soon as possible.	All repairs were completed along with a damp and mould inspection. Works were arranged as well as renewing the boiler. The resident was awarded compensation for the belongings that needed to be replaced.
Learning and improvement	We recognised the importance of keeping residents informed during longer-term repairs. As a result we recruited a dedicated Damp, Mould & Disrepair Co-ordinator to ensure regular updates are provided and residents feel supported throughout the process.	Better communication needs to be provided to our residents when appointments are cancelled or rebooked. As a result, we recruited more Repairs Assistants to ensure the team are resourced to improve communication to residents.	We made improvements to our insurance claim process, so that a record of all insurance claim forms sent out to residents is now kept.



Find out more
about the YMCA

Your Local YMCA Offers A Spectrum of Support

YMCA Plymouth, found on Honicknowle Lane, has transformed in recent years. Many know the centre for its fantastic new facilities – including a modern gym, immersive cycle studio, updated sports hall, and the popular ‘Ocean City’ soft play for under 7s. But this year, YMCA Plymouth joined the city-wide network of Family Hubs and Wellbeing Hubs, offering even more for local people.

The Family Hub and Wellbeing Hub initiatives are supported by Plymouth City Council, and now part of both Hub networks, YMCA’s offering enables is one of the largest hubs in Plymouth – providing a one-stop-shop in support for the local community.

Here are some key services available to make note of at YMCA:

- **NHS Health Advice Drop-in:** 1pm-3pm, every last Monday of each month.
- **Citizens Advice Drop-in:** 10am-2pm, every second Friday of each month.
- **Active Health Programme:** 8-weeks free no-commitment gym and class for those referred by a GP or Health Practitioner.
- **Supported Internships:** Work experience & mentoring courses for 16-19s with an Educational Health Care Plan, offering pathways into a variety of sectors.
- **Dad’s N Dinkies:** Free soft play sessions for dads supported by Barnardo’s, Thursdays, 1.30pm.
- **SEnergy:** Free monitored gym sessions for children with SEND, Thursdays, 4pm.
- **8.2.5 Holiday Club:** inclusive activity club for 8-16s during the school holidays, with free spaces available to children on free school meals benefit.



Plymouth Community Awards 2025

We’re delighted to announce that this year PCH is sponsoring the ‘Best Community Project Award’ at the YMCA Plymouth Community Awards to recognise projects that have made a significant and positive impact on a community.

This award celebrates initiatives that demonstrate excellence in addressing community needs, fostering community spirit, and achieving measurable

outcomes that improve the quality of life for community members.

The Awards Night will be taking place on Saturday 11th October 2025 at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Plymouth and we look forward to celebrating with all the nominees and winners.



Tree partnership transforms green space in Devonport with the addition of new bench

A new bench has been installed at Devonport Hill flats in partnership with Plymouth & South Devon Community Forest (PSDCF) and Plymouth Tree People (PTP) so our residents can enjoy the newly transformed outside space.

Over the last four years, the team at PSDCF, a project facilitating woodland creation across South Devon led by Plymouth City Council (PCC), has worked with Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) to help plant more trees around our homes and neighbourhoods using Defra's Trees for Climate Fund.

PSDCF have worked alongside PTP since the launch of the project and over the last two years PTP have been awarded funding to deliver several tree planting schemes as part of their wider delivery across the city. During this year's planting season, five Himalayan Birch trees and Dogwood shrubs were planted by PTP volunteers and PCH on green space outside the flats in Devonport to bring the space to life.

Ahead of the planting season, residents living at Devonport Hill were asked for their feedback by PTP and Ryan Huws, Communities Worker at PCH, sharing that they loved the idea of the new trees but mentioned there was a lack of seating in the area.

Following this feedback, PTP requested additional funding to purchase a bench, and their volunteers gave up their time in May to construct the bench for all to enjoy.

Ryan Huws, Communities Worker at Plymouth Community Homes, said: "Working with Plymouth Tree People through our partnership with Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest has been a real demonstration of positive collaboration which has



resulted in fantastic outcomes for our residents who are at the heart of what we do.

"We would like to thank our residents for their contributions and feedback to help us to tailor this space to meet their needs, and Plymouth Tree People and their volunteer Tree Wardens for all their efforts in transforming this space for our residents, who we hope will enjoy it for many years to come."

Alison White from Plymouth Tree People said: "We were delighted to be invited by PCH to look at some of their sites, to see if there was an opportunity to plant trees for the benefit of residents.

"We spoke with many of the people who live in the Devonport Hill flats and it was obvious that most people wanted the area improved, they wanted some trees but they were desperately short of outside seating.

"We are so pleased that we were able to make this project happen with funding from the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest and we want to say a big thank you to our amazing volunteer Tree Wardens who planted the trees and installed the bench."

"It's so nice to have been able to bring this space to life and we look forward to working with PCH on other projects in the future.

"The trees will receive regular water and aftercare from Plymouth Tree People until they are established."





Murals Brightening up our community

EFFORD LIBRARY'S NEW MURAL TAKES SHAPE

We recently visited Efford Library to see the unveiling of their new community-inspired mural which is a result of a collaborative effort involving residents, Plymouth Community Builders, Plymouth Community Homes, and a talented local artist, Laura Hole, who just happens to work at the library.

We met with Emily Richards from Plymouth Community Builders, who played a key role in the collaboration, initially hosting a consultation with the community to identify what they would like to see in the library garden space. It was clear the residents wanted lots of colour, wildlife and nature-inspired themes - a perfect reading nook to relax and read.

With a successful consultation behind them, the reading nook was decided on. Laura, a library staff member and talented self-employed artist, was the perfect fit to produce an eye-catching mural for the space, having already created artwork for the library.

This required some funding, so they reached out to Rheinalt Huws, Communities Worker at Plymouth Community Homes, who managed to organise the funding support from PCH.

Rheinalt Huws then suggested a second consultation with residents to pinpoint the designs and theme they wanted to see on the mural. Emily Richards mentioned the large amount of engagement and uptake from the community getting involved in these sessions.

With some fantastic design ideas from residents, Laura used her creative expertise to merge several sketches and concepts into one mesmerising piece.



These prominent features can be seen in the final mural design, including trees, wildlife, piglets and an array of book themed accessories.

WOODLAND CREATURE MAKES APPEARANCE IN STONEHOUSE

A woodland wonderland has popped up on a communal wall in Stonehouse with a new mural breathing new life into a grey suburban area previously targeted for vandalism.

The neglected wall has been turned into a celebration of wildlife using art by popular mural artist and long-standing PCH collaborator, Jordan Lauder, to inspire pride, reduce anti-social behaviour and strengthen community cohesion.



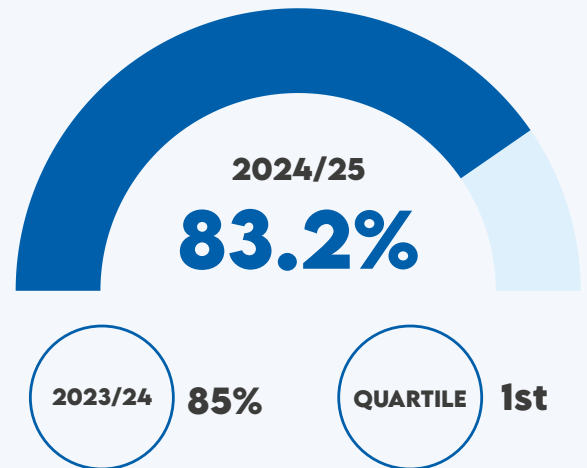
Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/25

Earlier this year we published our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) for 2024/25 – 22 measures introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing in April 2023 to assess the quality of our services to our customers.

The TSMs are a great way for residents to tell us what we are doing well, and what they would like to see improve, covering everything from overall satisfaction, to repairs and complaints.

The TSMs are based on a survey of 1,059 residents covering different demographics carried out by an accredited research organisation Acuity Research and Practice Ltd.

Overall tenant satisfaction is high at 83% - placing us in the top 25% of landlords in the country, and we're developing new objectives to be in the top 5 of all social landlords in England so we've created an action plan to improve those areas we need to focus on.



Our key areas of focus over the next 12 months will be complaint handling, anti-social behaviour case handling, and repairs.

The mural also reduces the frequency of graffiti removal and repairs, so PCH teams can focus on other priorities in the area and our housing and repairs teams can concentrate on delivering essential services to residents.

This initiative aligns with Devon and Cornwall Police's Love Stonehouse campaign, which brings PCH together with other partners such as local schools, and community leaders to tackle long-standing issues in the area.

This mural isn't the first in Stonehouse in recent months – and certainly won't be the last as PCH look to work together with other local artists to create brighter spaces that people can be proud of.

PCH contractors Ian Williams were also involved, ensuring the walls were washed down and prepared ready for the artwork as part of the social value offered in their contract.

Nic Stockman, Housing Officer for PCH, said:

"This is more than just a mural; it's a statement that we care about this area, its people, and its future. By investing in murals that brighten and enhance the area, PCH hopes to send a clear message - these spaces matter.

"We hope that this project will create a lasting and positive impact, not only improving the area visually but helping to reduce ASB and improve the community and demonstrate our values as an organisation by investing in this area."





We're the Resident Communication Advisors

You may or may not have heard about us - or perhaps you know us by our former name, the VRA.

But whether you have heard about us or not, allow us the time to let you know who we are and what we do.

We are the Resident Communication Advisors (RCA) at Plymouth Community Homes - and we're a group of interested (and, some might claim, interesting) residents who come together once a month to help advise PCH on how it communicates with its residents, whether they're tenants, leaseholders or shared owners.



We've recently rebranded as the RCA and become an officially involved group with PCH, increasing our work and influence off the back of the great work we've done since we started in 2023.

This includes suggesting topics for PCH newsletters that are important to residents, and how that information can be communicated effectively. We also proof-read important documents to ensure they are resident-friendly and fit for purpose, as well as hosting focus groups with other residents to look at policies and procedures.

Members of the RCA have the opportunity to volunteer at community events and hold charity fundraising activities for PCH's Charity of the Year - where we try to promote our group and encourage new members and the work we do.

We have an online group for those that may not have the time to get to meetings, which is the Online Resident

Communications Advisors (ORCA). They can offer their advice on the documents we look at from the comfort of their own home and in their own time.

In the past 12 months, just some of the things we have worked on have included the Domestic Abuse Policy, annual rent notification letters and rent and service charge setting statements, complaint letter templates, the PCH Communications Strategy 2025-2028, and the EDI Strategy - and we're hoping for an even busier 2026!

RCA member Mel Gallagher said: "Being a RCA member is a great way to meet other residents, make friends and have a good time - all whilst making a real, tangible difference to residents' lives. We should all endeavour to give a little back and being a member allows me to do that whilst learning new skills and being informed about subjects which directly affect our community."

RCA member Shirley Knibb continues: "You don't have to be an academic - we all bring a wealth of life experience and knowledge of living as a resident. The meetings are light-hearted and we achieve our goals - we all get along and are eager to see new faces. Residents are more than welcome to come along and observe what we do if they are interested, or they can join our online community ORCA."

"I look forward to our meetings as they make me feel valued - and its great company as well."

"All we set out to do in each meeting is improve things for residents and making life just that bit more comfortable, little by little."





Development of affordable homes in Southway – coming soon!

Work starts on site in Southway this Autumn to deliver 125 new, energy efficient homes for social rent and shared ownership purchase, with the first homes anticipated for completion in late summer 2026.

Earlier this year, planning permission was awarded by Plymouth City Council to allow Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) to create a new community on land in Southway located between Clittaford Road and Southway Drive.

The land, which had previously housed a paper-converting mill, was purchased in June 2023 by PCH and the affordable homes will now be built by Vistry. Once complete, 81 properties will be made available for social rent for local people in housing need, and 44 homes will be offered for shared ownership purchase through SO Living.

The development will include a mixture of detached and semi-detached properties, including 41 two bedroom, 38 three bedroom and 10 four-bedroom homes, as well 21 one-bedroom and 15 two-bedroom apartments consisting of four three story apartment buildings.

Nick Jackson, Executive Director of Business Services & Development at Plymouth Community Homes, said: “Developing homes of a variety of tenures, including a total of 48 three- and four-bedroom homes, will help to provide long-term security for local people and families in housing need across the city.

“We are looking forward to working with Vistry on this development, which is being made possible thanks to grant funding from Homes England, in partnership with Plymouth City Council.”

Fred Thomas, Labour Member of Parliament for Plymouth Moor View, said: “We have a housing crisis in our city. We need to build more homes in the right places, and I am really pleased that Plymouth Community Homes has been given the green light to develop this site.

“More affordable homes for social rent and shared ownership is a good thing for people in our city, and I know that PCH will deliver good quality homes for people in my patch, as they always do.”

All available homes to rent will be advertised on Devon Home Choice. To bid for a property or to be considered for a tenancy, registration will need to be completed using their online application form.



Photo caption: Andrew Lawrie, Head of Development & Housing Sales at PCH, Ben Winchester, Regional Technical Director at Vistry, Justin Penhallurick, Associate Construction Director at Vistry, Nick Jackson, Executive Director of Business Services & Development at PCH, Lee Cawse, Technical Team Manager at Vistry, Councillor Chris Penberthy, Cabinet Member for Housing, Communities and Cooperative Development at Plymouth City Council and Jonathan Cowie, Chief Executive at PCH (left – right).



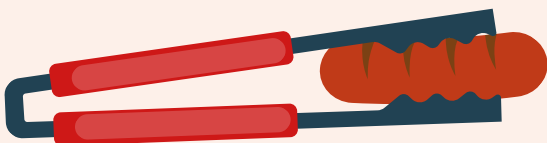
Innes House residents come together for a garden BBQ

Innes House recently hosted a garden BBQ event where residents came together and enjoyed a relaxed afternoon in the sunshine.

Set in the peaceful garden behind the building, the event, organised by the Supported Housing and Communities teams, was a chance to bring residents together and breathe new life into the space with plans to inspire more community led initiatives.

PCH Housing with Support Officer, Kelly Bartlet, explained what inspired the event: “Some of our residents told me ‘There’s not much happening anymore,’ and that the garden didn’t feel the same as it used to and we have taken that on board.”

Working with Communities Worker Rheinallt Huws, Kelly helped organise a small resident meeting to hear ideas on how the garden could be improved. From that, several simple changes were made, with soft lighting added to brighten evenings, a new bird bath and water butt installed, and seating areas made more comfortable with cushions.



Rheinallt Huws, Communities Worker at PCH, mentioned how the changes have made a difference, and the BBQ marked a turning point. He said:

“It was lovely to see people chatting and enjoying the space together. The garden hadn’t been used much lately, so this felt like a fresh start.”

One resident, Angel, said, “This is my first BBQ here. It’s a beautiful garden and it should be shown off. Today is my 65th birthday and hearing there might be plans to create a gardening group is great news. I’d love to be involved – it just needs a bit of effort from everyone.”



Get Involved – Community Drop In Sessions

Tell us what you think of your area and what we can improve by joining us during a drop in with your local Housing Team. There’s no need to book and you can visit any time during the session hours.

This is a great opportunity to meet your housing team and flag any issues or concerns in your communities that we need to address.

Any issues raised (including abandoned vehicles, fly tipping, graffiti and check the general condition of communal areas and the land around where you live) are



Another year of Customer Service Excellence for PCH

Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) has retained its Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation for a fifth consecutive year in recognition of having a customer-focused culture.

PCH again met the standard across all 57 areas of compliance, also retaining the additional award of Compliance Plus for three areas – Customer Insight, Culture of the Organisation, Information and Access, and won the recognition of Compliance Plus for a fourth area, Delivery and a second Compliance Plus award within Information and Access.

The CSE award is a well-regarded national quality mark awarded to organisations following a rigorous assessment and audit process, including an on-site auditing visit during which an impartial assessor meets with staff and residents.

To earn the CSE mark, an organisation must demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the scheme and has a truly customer-focused culture, supporting residents and listening to their views.

An assessor visited PCH for two days in June, meeting with residents at the Tea and Toast session at The Beacon, as well as meeting staff from departments across the organisation.

Topics were discussed including our improvement initiatives to support changes around anti-social behaviour, the MyPCH portal, the growth of our Health and Housing Project in Partnership with Livewell Southwest, the introduction of Service Standards and an update on our Green Fleet progress.

Natasha Kirkham, Quality Assurance Manager at PCH, said: “We are delighted that PCH has retained its Customer Service Excellence status, and to increase the number of areas where we’ve earned the ‘Compliance Plus’ recognition from three to five. This wouldn’t be possible without the care, consideration and thought that staff are putting in daily to ensure that we deliver excellent services for our residents.

“As well as a great recognition of what we are doing well, the CSE process is also designed to promote continuous improvement, and we welcome the feedback from this report which we’ll work on over the coming year so we can keep putting customers first and meet our business plan objective of delivering outstanding services for residents.”



Find out more
on our website

then raised with our colleagues in other departments to monitor them.

If attending a drop in session isn’t for you, your local Housing Team are here to take any questions and can arrange an alternative meeting tailored to suit your needs.

We want all our residents to live within neighbourhoods that are safe, clean and attractive, and we’d like you to work with us in whichever way you can to make sure your community is well maintained.



Find upcoming
sessions



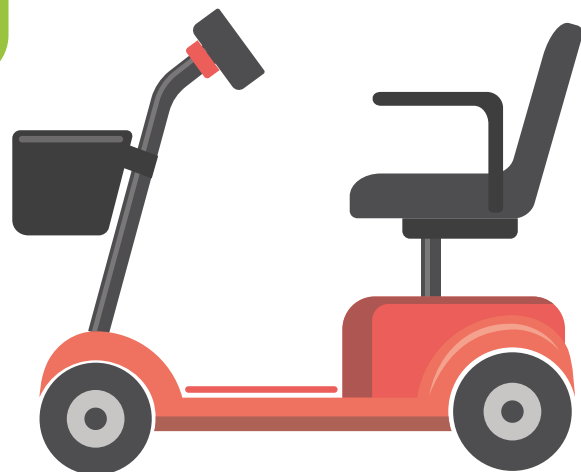
Helping you stay safe - e-mobility devices

E-mobility devices such as e-bikes, e-mobility scooters and e-scooters are becoming increasingly popular — they're practical, eco-friendly, and cost-effective.

But they also come with serious safety risks, especially when it comes to lithium batteries.

In the UK, fires caused by e-mobility device batteries are rising due to neglect or misuse, and a lithium battery fire can be potentially devastating.

Here's what you need to know.



Do



Store your device inside your own flat, not in shared spaces or escape routes



Read the instruction manual first and always use the correct charger.



Keep the device away from flammable items, heat sources, and direct sunlight.



Make sure smoke alarms are working in your home.



Purchase from a reputable UK manufacturer that displays the CE or UKCA safety marking.



Report unsafe storage or charging in communal areas to your housing or leasehold team.

It is a breach of your tenancy agreement to store or charge any e-mobility device in communal areas. This puts residents at risk, and you may face tenancy action.

Your safety is our priority. Let's work together to keep our homes and neighbours safe.

Don't



Store or charge e-mobility devices in communal areas, corridors, stairwells, or bin stores - these are vital escape routes in an emergency.



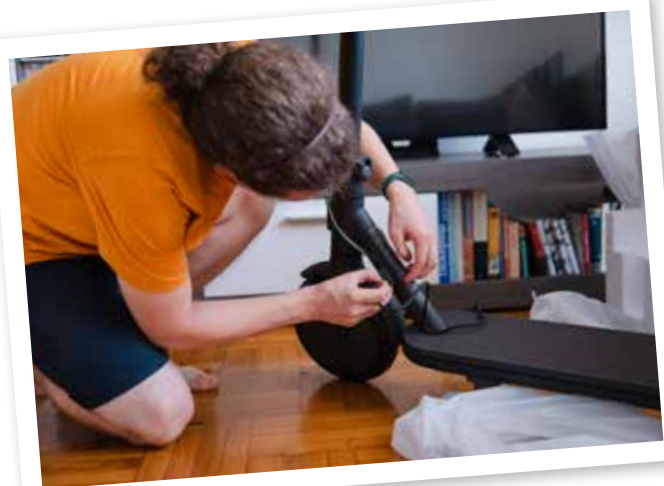
Let devices block access to fire exits or lift lobbies.



Overcharge your device – unplug once fully charged and never charge overnight or while you are out.



Purchase unbranded or second-hand devices or batteries.



Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) or Neighbourhood Management?



Find out more
on our website

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their home and community and we are fully committed to resolving any problems that arise in your neighbourhood.

We know that sometimes problems can arise from neighbourly issues such as lifestyle clashes or sometimes problems can cause more serious harassment, alarm and distress which is classed as anti-social behaviour (ASB).

We've created a new Good Neighbourhood Management and ASB Toolkit which can help you with

any issues you are experiencing to find out if they are classed as ASB, or if they are an issue that requires good neighbourhood management.

Our toolkit will tell you:

- Whether we consider the issue to be good neighbourhood management or ASB
- What we can do
- What you can do
- What other agencies can do

Issues classed as Good Neighbourhood Management include:



Day to day issues



Disagreements with your neighbour



Communal areas



Animal and pets



Noise nuisance



Untidy gardens

Issues classed as ASB include:



Graffiti



Cuckooing



Fly-tipping and bin stores



Harassment and stalking



Hate crime



Criminal behaviour



Cannabis



Drugs



We're looking for a new Resident Board Member! Could it be you?

Earlier this year, we said a fond farewell to Lavinia Porfir, who served eight years as a Resident Board Member and committee member for Plymouth Community Homes.

We're now on the lookout for someone new to take on the role of Resident Board Member who can use their lived experience of being a PCH resident to help oversee the high-level decisions that champion resident-centred change for PCH and our residents.

We want you to help us keep residents at the heart of everything we do, so we can deliver great services and improve lives in the communities we work within.

Who are our Board?

Our Board Members are people from all walks of life who are interested in social housing and who share our values: Care, Respect, Listen and Do the Right Thing. There is a strong focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and our Board members all have a clear ambition and desire to change lives for the better and create equitable outcomes.

The Board is responsible for setting the strategic direction of PCH, with overall responsibility for our financial strength and service performance, maintaining transparency and accountability whilst achieving high standards and value for money.

Our Board meets six times a year, with two strategic away day events and up to six online briefing sessions. The expected time commitment is likely to be three to four days on average per month.



The Ideal Candidate

We're inviting applications from residents who really care about their community and want to help shape the way our services are delivered. If you're someone who enjoys listening, asking thoughtful questions, thinking strategically, working with others, and finding solutions - this could be a great opportunity for you.

PCH will provide all the equipment, support and training you need, so you'll only need to bring yourself and your lived experience.

Board Members are paid an annual fee of £6,560, which is subject to tax and national insurance deductions. If you are in receipt of benefits, we can put you in touch with our Financial Inclusion Team to understand how this could affect you.

Interested? What next?

The recruitment process will include observing a Board meeting followed by an interview. If successful, you will be supported by our Governance Team as you get settled in.

To find out more about the role, and how to apply please get in touch with the PCH Governance Team at governance@pch.co.uk.



Stunning new bench installed at The Beacon for residents to enjoy

We recently visited The Beacon, where a stunning custom-made bench has been designed and installed by Neighbourhood Rangers for the local community to enjoy.

The project started with the idea of making use of the rear garden space at The Beacon and encouraging more residents to spend time outside in the beautiful summer weather.

With a joint vision, Mark Fuller, John Olford and Martin Hillier, Neighbourhood Rangers at The Beacon, planned their design for the bench, built using materials such as wood sleepers and timbers.

Once they constructed the bench, they prepped the installation area and installed the bench into the ground. For the final touches, an eye-catching engraving was added to each side of the bench, and the surrounding area filled with woodchips to add that extra layer of comfort for residents.



John Olford, Neighbourhood Ranger, said: “We’ve had quite a few people using the bench, and it’s been great to see the residents getting outside to enjoy their lunch. Hopefully, they are pleased with it and can see all the positive things we are trying to do here at The Beacon “

Leigham residents unveil defibrillator in heart of the community

Members of the community in Leigham have come together to fund a brand-new defibrillator which was unveiled by the Lord Mayor of Plymouth outside Leigham Community Hall at an open day this summer.

The defibrillator, in memory of a much-loved member of the local bingo group was funded by the Janner Men’s Shed, the local community including the shops and local pub and the Bingo group through combined and separate fundraisers.

Barbara, the host of the Bingo Group worked with AEDdonate who were extremely supportive with the fundraising process and the organising of the defibrillator, kindly donating £200 towards it.

One day, Barbara received a call from AEDdonate to let her know that an anonymous individual had contributed the rest of the funds to pay for the defibrillator, as well as funding an eight year plan to ensure the longevity of the device.

Everyone involved was extremely grateful for the ‘mystery donator’ and through the support of AEDdonate, it was installed on Tuesday 24 June 2025.



Read the full story



Pride not prejudice – Hollis King and Eli McDonough

When the official Plymouth Pride event announced its cancellation earlier this year owing to a lack of financial support, a lot of people felt the same disappointment as many in the LGBTQIA+ community.

In what was seen as a pivotal year with the political landscape shifting and trans rights in the spotlight, many felt that a safe space and vital celebration event where people could come together to be themselves had been lost. It would have been understandable for those in the community to accept the loss and move on - but not Hollis Kings and Eli McDonough. The pair decided to group together with some others and organise something to fill the gap. What started as an idea for a small stall quickly snowballed into a huge event – and Plymouth Community Pride was born.

“Our first thought was that we should still do something,” Eli said. “Not a big event necessarily, just...something. A little art market or something where people could gather and feel seen.”

Eli and Hollis reached out to their friends and networks and found others in the community who felt the same, giving them a clear purpose. Soon venues across Plymouth were stepping forward, offering their spaces, ideas and support to help with making Plymouth Community Pride a reality.

The wider celebration featured a number of smaller events organised by individuals, venues or organisations, with Plymouth Community Pride providing a platform for them all to come together, and to promote them as one celebration. “It was amazing,” Hollis said. “We realised that we weren’t the only ones who wanted to do something to replace the official Pride event, and we could rally enough support to be able to stitch together a series of pop-up events, with a map directing people to what’s on. It was a grassroots-type Pride event across the city, organised by the people, for the people.”



Plymouth Community Homes, a long-time sponsor of Plymouth Pride, signed up to be an official sponsor for Plymouth Community Pride, and its donation was put to good use: with PCH’s help, maps were printed, posters designed, and food was provided for the Queer Out Loud picnic on the Hoe.

The funding was also used to hire St Saviour’s Hall for the Pride Market.

Local businesses like Mrs Brown's Café and St Saviour's Hall on the Barbican offered discounts and opened their doors for the community, and many other local businesses also got involved, either through offering sponsorship or providing space for events free of charge.

Word spread like lightning through social media and at local events.

And then, Pride weekend arrived.

Hundreds of people turned out to support the events that were happening – families, artists, allies, drag performers, activists – everyone that was there came not just to celebrate, but to reclaim their space and their visibility.

Ell said: "We knew people were hungry for it as they had told us, but the response absolutely blew us away."

Plymouth Community Pride was different – and intentionally so. This wasn't one big parade or party, it was a city-wide network of spaces for different people with different needs. There were quiet spaces, art markets, accessible gatherings and family-friendly performances.

Family Pride at the Barbican Theatre (organised by Sally from the Barbican Theatre) was one of the standout achievements of the event as a space designed especially for under-18s and their families.

Hollis explains: "Not everyone wants to go on the Hoe and have a big party and listen to pop music. We made sure the map marked out accessible and quiet zones and spaces so people could go along and choose where they felt most comfortable, which is what it's all about."

Other spaces such as Proud Voices offered storytelling and conversations as a safe space for queer people to share their experiences.

Each volunteer on the day wore a lanyard to identify themselves as organisers, but also there if people felt uncomfortable or needed support. Dozens of people signed up without being asked – people wanted to help.

Ell said: "People didn't just wait to be told what to do, they came with ideas and it felt so inclusive from start to finish."

Despite working full-time jobs, Hollis and Ell put in countless hours of planning and coordinating – their first time organising something on this scale, and they've already got their sights set on next year and beyond.

Hollis explains: "We want to keep it going, not just once a year but for Halloween, for Christmas – year-round events that raise money directly for local LGBTQIA+ people. We're talking about grassroots support and gender-affirming care, top surgery fundraisers and Gender Affirming Care Kit fundraisers for trans people.



Things that make a real, personal difference."

Their mission is clear – keep it not-for-profit, community-led, safe, kind and real.

Hollis continues: "There's a lot of hate and fear out there at the moment and you can see that on social media. People tend to lash out at anyone who looks, acts, or loves differently. We just want to create something that says, 'you belong, you're safe, you're loved.'"

Asked what Pride means to them, Hollis paused and smiled.

"Pride means being unapologetically yourself. It meant not hiding anymore and saying – this is who I am, and I'm proud."

The organisers are accepting links to fundraisers to support people living in Plymouth / local to Plymouth or small local charities / businesses that will benefit local queer causes. Any money raised will be split evenly between them.

They have recently held another Art Market at Almanac Cafe with all money raised from this event and Pride combined and split to support the five fundraisers that they are currently supporting. More information about the fundraisers can be found via the QR code.

Find out more on Facebook (Plymouth Community Pride) and Instagram (@Plymouthcommunitypride).

Photography by ipovphotographer (@ipovphotographer), Anna Peacock (@annaapeacock), Jazz Powell (@jazz_powell_photography)



Filling the void – meet Wendy and Nicky, two of our trusted Void Inspectors

Since 2019, Wendy Edgcumbe and Nicky Bisgrove have been the dynamic duo behind our ready to let homes, ensuring our empty ('void') properties are in good shape ready for their new residents.

As PCH Resident Void Inspectors, they play an important role behind the scenes in helping to make sure each of the homes we let to new tenants are safe, clean and welcoming.

Wendy explains the process: "We take a list of properties, work out where we need to be, and plan the route to make it efficient for both of us, usually finishing up closer to home."

"Each week brings a new challenge. Some weeks it's one property, other times it could be five or more."

But whether it's a quiet week or a packed one, Wendy and Nicky's process is thorough and consistent, working as a team to thoroughly inspect each aspect of the property with a detailed checklist. They look at:



The condition of the garden and exterior



Window function and cleanliness



Whether any windows are blown



Water systems and alarms



Interior decoration standards

Wendy continues: "We make sure nothing is missed. It's important the new resident doesn't have to worry - they should be able to move in and feel at home straight away."

For Wendy, there's also a personal satisfaction in the role: "I enjoy going around and seeing the different homes and the size of them. It makes me feel part of something important - knowing people are moving into a home that's ready and right for them."

Rich Lunn, Resident Involvement Coordinator for PCH, oversees the Void Inspectors and sends them a list for inspection on a weekly basis: "I'm really proud of the hard work and dedication Wendy and Nicky have shown. They've been carrying out inspections for several years and have their routine down to a fine art, and I can rely on them to report on any issues they see in any of the homes they visit."

"We're always on the lookout for residents to volunteer to carry out inspections going forward, so for anyone who's keen, please feel free to get in touch. We can get you trained up by Wendy and Nicky!"

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Wendy and Nicky, we can hand over keys to new residents with confidence, knowing each property is more than just ready, it's a place someone can truly call home. To find out more about volunteering as a Void Inspector, contact us on 0808 230 6500 or email residentinvolvement@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk.





Charity Fundraising Update

PCH Annual Charity Football Tournament for St Luke's Hospice Plymouth & Children's Hospice South West

Staff from across Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) turned out in force on Saturday 9 August to take part in the PCH Charity Football Match to raise money for our Charities of the Year, St Luke's Hospice Plymouth and Children's Hospice South West (CHSW).

The event raised a total of £3,020.23 for St Luke's and CHSW to help the charities to provide specialist care and support to people with progressive life-limiting illnesses across Plymouth, Devon and Cornwall.

PCH staff, volunteers from St Luke's Hospice, contractors and their friends and families took time out of their weekend to support the event at Harpers Football Centre and while most of the players were cheered on by those who came to support, other staff busied themselves selling raffle tickets to raise more cash.



St Luke's Hospice Plymouth Midnight Walk 2025

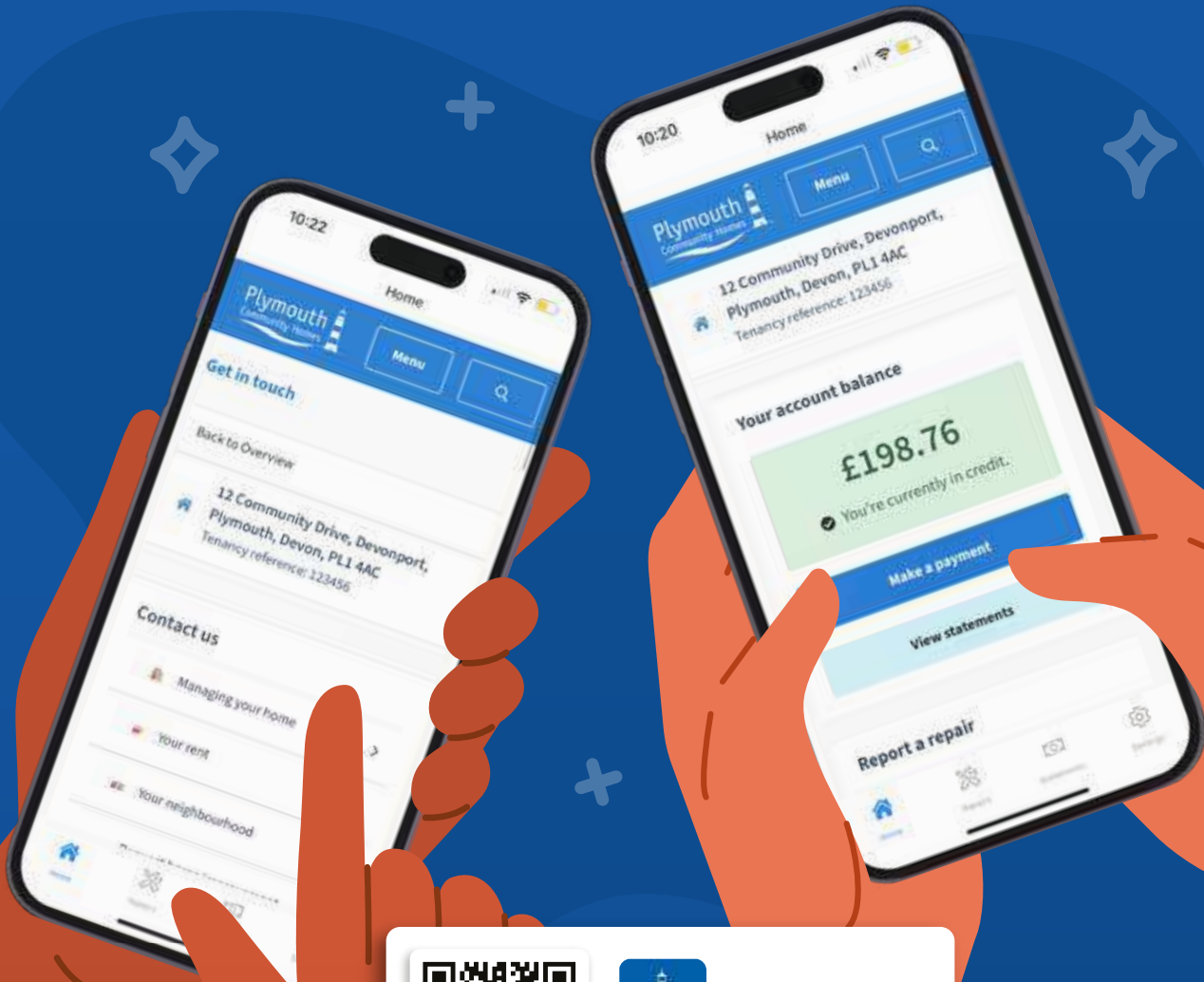
On a sunny Friday evening in July, over 1,000 walkers took on the Midnight Walk celebrating precious memories of much-missed family members and friends, while raising funds to support the compassionate care St Luke's Hospice Plymouth delivers.

The walkers took on a choice of four routes – 2.5, five, 7.5 and 13.5 miles (the equivalent of a half marathon) – making it accessible for people of all ages and levels of fitness, with the 13.5-mile route passing our Head Office, Plumer House from 10:30pm – 1am.

We opened Plumer House as a pit stop for walkers to use toilet facilities and to grab a quick refreshment from the gazebo filled with apples, water, glow sticks and sweets as they were cheered on by our volunteers alongside Jonathan and Imran from City Security.

Many walkers embellished their outfits with cowboy hats, flashing bunny ears, boas, garlands and headdresses, while some opted for full-on fancy dress.

Sign up to MyPCH



MyPCH



Visit mypch.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk
or download the new MyPCH app.

We're always keen to hear what you're up to, so if you'd like to tell us about something we can include in one of our publications, we'd love to hear it.

Email news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk

Plymouth Community Homes

Plumer House, Tailyour Road, Crownhill, Plymouth, PL6 5DH



www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk



0808 230 6500

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