

CONTACT

Residents Newsletter

Spring 2011 · Issue 34



Pupils working with CA2 Green Group, Carlisle on daffodil planting project along the River Caldew, December 2010

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Our Offer to Customers



Included with this newsletter is our first Offer to our customers.

This is our way of showing you that we have listened to your comments and that we are responding to what you have said.

The first offer covers the following areas:

- How we will take account of your views and how we will report back on what we have done about those views.
- What action we will take to help keep heating costs affordable.
- How we will provide care and support for customers in supported housing.
- How we will help people in debt.

We will also give all customers a copy of the Impact Home Standard. Our statement to all customers of what they can expect from our housing.

This is the first offer we have sent out. I will be reporting how we are delivering on the offer to the Service User Forum. If you want to add things to the Offer or if you want to make any comment to me, you can:

Phone me on 01228 633626 (Direct Line) or 03448736290 (Lo Call)

Email at keithd@impacthousing.org.uk

Write to me at: 47 Nelson Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 5NE.
Or

You can speak to staff and Service User Forum members at one of the events we have planned coming to a venue near you over the next few months.

Or

You can come along to a Service User Forum Meeting, if you are interested talk to Pauline Mitchell on 01228 633633 (Direct Line) 0344 8736290(Lo Call).

We want to hear whatever you have to say.

Keith

Keith Dobson, Operations Director



In April this year Impact will become part of the new Cumbria Choice Scheme. This is a joint scheme between most of the main housing associations and local authorities in Cumbria which through completion of one application form will register people to a single list and give access to housing provided by each partner. We need to do a number of things to make sure we are ready.

If you are currently registered on Impact's housing register or are thinking about registering then the following information will help you understand what is happening.

What is happening now?

- Impact has closed its own housing Register.
- Only people currently on the Impact register can now bid for properties.
- Impact will continue to advertise its properties until the new scheme starts in April.
- When the new scheme starts people will need to be on the Cumbria Choice housing register to bid for the properties that Impact advertises with this scheme.
- Everyone on our register is being sent a Cumbria Choice form so that they can register.
- These forms need to be returned by April so that people can bid for properties when the new scheme starts.
- Anyone not registered on our list and wanting to register with Impact now will be sent a Cumbria Choice form and will be able to look for properties in April, when the new scheme starts.

What will happen in April?

- All those people who returned the Cumbria Choice form will receive a letter to tell them their registration number and their band with the new scheme.
- Everyone will receive information about the scheme and how to use it.
- If you were previously on the Impact register you may find that your band is different.
- You will be told when the first properties will be advertised and you will be able to view these adverts:
 - On line at www.cumbriachoice.org.uk
 - By looking at news sheets in the offices of any partner organisation, including local authority offices.
 - By contacting Impact staff in the Housing Options team on Tel: 03448 736290 - option 2
Email: enquiries@impacthousing.org.uk
- You will be able to bid on any of the properties advertised including those owned by other housing associations.



Rent Payments

The Income Management Team checks the rent accounts of all residents every week and has noticed an increase in overall arrears over the past couple of months.

We realise the period after Christmas can be a very difficult time financially, but must stress that paying your rent should always be a priority. Not paying your rent can have serious consequences and very high level arrears or persistent failure to pay can result in eviction. Whilst we will give every reasonable support and opportunity to help resolve problems, eviction can result if problems continue and arrears are not paid.

If you are finding it a struggle to pay your rent, or have other financial difficulties then please contact the Income Management Team on 03448 736290 and select option '3'. We can discuss options available for paying your rent, or refer you to our Money Matters Service who can help tenants to maximise their income, for example, by providing advice regarding welfare benefits or by referring you to other specialist organisations who can help.

Impact's Income Management Team is:

Liz Preston – Team Leader

Lia Woolaghan – Senior Assistant

James Elder – Senior Assistant

Karen Horsfield – Administrator

Lorraine Royle – Administrator

Tel: 03448 736290
(then select option 3)

Rent Payment Methods: You can pay your rent by at least six methods, including:

Debit Card (by telephoning the Impact Office)

You can pay with a debit card by contacting our Salterbeck Area Office on 01946 839933 / 01946 839929 or via our main number on 03448 736290.



Debit Card

(by telephoning the Allpay automated service)

Impact can accept rent payments over the telephone using a 24 hour automated telephone service. We can only accept payment by debit card. Unfortunately we cannot not accept credit card payments.

You will also need your Allpay.net card number (that is the 19 digit number on your rent payment card) so please have these to hand before you start. When you are ready just telephone Allpay.net on 0844 557 8321 and follow the instructions.

Internet

You can pay your rent over the internet using Allpay at the following website: www.allpayments.net



Rent payment card

You can pay your rent where you see this sign with a swipe/ payment card.



Did you know you can pay your rent at around 165 PayPoint locations in Cumbria, as well as at all Post Offices?

All you need to do is take your payment card and money to anywhere you see the PayPoint sign including newsagents, supermarkets, convenience stores and garages.

Direct Debit

This is our preferred method and probably the easiest way of paying for you. It is cost effective for both you and Impact. You can choose when your money leaves your account; you can pay weekly, fortnightly or monthly on any date of your choice.



We are holding a prize draw in the summer for all residents who pay by direct debit, so if you would like to switch to direct debit then please contact us on the above number.

Direct Debit Prize Draw Winners

In the Christmas edition of the newsletter we featured a promotion to encourage residents to pay their rent by the most cost effective method and a prize draw, open to everyone setting up a new direct debit mandate was held.

We had a fantastic response with over 50 new direct debits set up within the six week period.



The lucky winner of the first prize of £100 is Miss Hodgson from Carlisle, pictured here with her daughter Gracie. Miss Hodgson, who was very surprised at her win, intends to use the prize money on a christening for her daughter!

Winners of the 3 runners up prizes of £50 are:

Mr & Mrs Brown from Windermere

Mrs Welsh from Mossbay

and Mr Hughes, also from Mossbay.

In the summer we will be holding another prize draw, open to all residents who make payments to their rent account by direct debit. So, if you currently pay by standing order, debit card or rent payment card and would like to opportunity to enter the next prize draw then please contact the Income Management Team now on 03448 736290 to speak to us about switching to direct debit!

Celebrate Success

Impact Men's Accommodation services continue working to provide tailored support plans for residents helping them to make informed choices on issues that are important to them and their future.

We are pleased to see residents positively moving on a regular basis, which is encouraging for both residents and employees. Since the beginning of January 2011, from Arnwood House two young men have moved to accommodation in Longtown, while one has found a suitable flat in Carlisle, with two other residents successfully transferring to accommodation in a quieter area. Lindisfarne Street has seen three positive moves since the beginning of this year, with two residents having moved to a different part of the county to live closer to their families, and another resident having moved to a flat in Carlisle with their partner. A St James's Road resident has now found accommodation that suits their preferences with a private landlord.

We continue to work together with the residents in order for them to move on to accommodation of their choice, and become more and more equipped to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Residents from Men's Supported Housing join forces with Erol!

After asking residents throughout our accommodation including the residents in our move accommodation, what type of training they would be interested in, most of them said they would like to be computer literate.

We arranged for some I.T. Sessions to be held at The Eden Foyer, in Penrith which will run for 10 weeks. The residents now have their own email accounts and can confidently use the computer for research and job/ training opportunities. We are currently half way through the sessions and they are proving to be a big success.



Community and Neighbourhood Planning

Improving the places where you live



One of the main reasons for the restructure that Impact carried out in September 2010 was to put residents and customers at the centre of what we do.

We have introduced specialist teams and now have an Asset Management Team to deliver an improved and more responsive repairs service; a Housing Options Team to manage the housing application system and how we allocate homes more effectively; and an Income Management team who manage all rent payments, rent arrears and service charges. This means that the services you get are now more customer focussed and will deliver an improved service.

The other new Team is the Neighbourhood Team. There is an article on page 4 of Contact that explains some of the work the team is busy with – but another big area of the team's work is the development of Neighbourhood Plans. Our new structure makes sure that individual questions and queries are dealt with effectively and efficiently, however there are some issues that will affect a wider area or Neighbourhood and so the Neighbourhood team are developing plans for some areas that will look at how we can lead

and influence these bigger Community issues and make a real difference for you and the place you live. There are some areas where we own just a small number of properties and so it will be difficult here to influence and lead on bigger community issues. In these areas, we will still have a close relationship with all residents and we will work with you to improve the services that we provide and services others provide on a more local level. In some areas though we can make a real difference to bigger issues – things like:

■ Employment

Impact can signpost residents and customers to employment and training opportunities.

■ Crime

We can work with local Policing Teams and residents in your area.

■ Health

We may be able to work with local GPs and other health professionals to improve healthcare and general well being.

■ Local Authorities

Many of the services that Councils deliver can receive feedback from Impact to help meet what communities need.

■ Voluntary Organisations

Are increasingly important in delivering services and we believe that we can influence their service delivery to communities.

So up to the end of March, we will be looking at who we need to speak to and meet with to make sure Impact can lead and influence services in the areas where we know we can make a difference in communities or neighbourhoods level. These areas are:

Salterbeck	Fletcher town
Keswick	Moresby
Kendal	Penrith
Maryport	Pica
Calderbridge	St Aidens
Botchergate	Cleator Moor
Cockermouth	Denton Holme
Distington	Windermere
Whitehaven Town Centre	
Workington Town Centre	
Eskdale	

We will also be meeting with local residents groups where they are operating, and also helping to set up new residents groups.

This will mean that by early April 2011 we will have mapped out who we need to talk to, we will know what the local issues are in all of the areas above and we will then start to develop and deliver the local Neighbourhood Plans.

When we have the draft plans then we will be coming to talk to you to test that we have got it right and then to let you know how we will deliver the plans. Once the plans are in place then the Neighbourhood Team will be making sure that the actions agreed are implemented and that there is a difference in the services you get and how the place you live in has improved. We believe that this new approach to how we work with you and others partners in the communities where you live will make a real difference to the services you get in the place you live.

Your Neighbourhood Coordinator will be talking to you more over coming weeks about the Neighbourhood Planning process and how we will deliver the plans, however if you have any questions now, please contact:

Stephen Wilson,
Neighbourhood Manager

Direct line – 01946 839928

Mobile – 07834320188

E-mail – stephenw@impacthousing.org.uk



2010 Group Reports to Tenants and Customers

Impact Housing Association is pleased to welcome you to our first series of annual reports to customers.

These reports are an important step in how we communicate to residents and agencies in the way we work, the services we deliver and the resources we use.

We have highlighted the Residents Activity Project, CA1 Green Group, CA2 Green Group, Milbourne Street Residents Group and Workington Matters Residents Group in this edition, others will be published in future editions of the Contact magazine.

Each report will give you a picture of what each group has done over the last 12 months.

If there is one key message we want to give out it is that the individuals and groups are working with Impact and other agencies to improve the quality of life for neighbourhoods. If the groups can do something they will, if they cannot they will work with you to find someone who can.

RAP Residents Activity Project

2010 Report to Tenants and Customers

In January 2011 we held a review and development meeting. As a result we have recruited a RAP committee. The committee is tasked to develop a **2011 programme** & secure additional **funding** to enhance and increase both day and outdoor residential activities for tenants in 2011.

All supported housing tenants are welcome to attend meetings and get involved in activities free of charge.



Facts and Figures 2010

Total Residents hrs involved = 266hrs
 Total Venue costs = £2070
 Total Value of participants involvement £2660
 Total Numbers of participants involved = 36
 Total Refreshments = £520
 Total Transport Cost = £463
 Total Impact staff costs = £2200
 Total Cost for 2010 = £7913
 Total Cost to Impact HA = £5253



Outcomes and Differences made in 2010

- 2 Planning Meetings organised & held.
- 1 Constitution Adopted & signed.
- 5 overnight residentials organised & delivered.
- 3 activity days organised and delivered (mix of one to one and group sessions)
- 36 at risk participants engaged and benefited
- 1 steering group formed (Jan 2011)



CA1 Green Group

2010 Report to the
St Aidans Community

Outcomes and Differences made in 2010

During 2010 we met 3 times to discuss and develop initiatives around the issues raised at meetings. The group delivered on the following . . .

3 raised flowerbed schemes for the area developed and maintained by Group members.

1 Group Award for the work & effort of Group in 2009/10.

1 Recycling/Rubbish Awareness Event with new students at The University of Cumbria.

Regular dog fouling & fly tipping issues reported to City Council.

1 agreement signed with unpaid work team regarding Close St back lane.

1 attendance at Melbourne Park Group Meeting, to explore joint working.

1 Legacy City Council Week Area Clean Up – result of councillors & group efforts.

4 repair issues – finally resolved after 2 yrs. (back gate, scheme gate, shrubs, overgrown hedges)

1 member involved with Impacts Service Users Forum.



1 Successful RSPB Talk organised & delivered by Group member. (Jan 2011)

1 attendance at Green spaces - city wide Green Group get together/networking event.

1 County Council Grant of £500

Regular Police feedback & updates on local anti social behaviour at meetings.

Impact Housing Associations restructure will see closer involvement by the new Neighbourhood Services Co ordinator for the area through meetings and future activities.



Facts and Figures

Total Residents hrs involved = 84hrs

Total Venue costs = £254

Total Value of participants involvement £870

Total Numbers of participants involved = 41

Total Refreshments = £258 (includes awards)

Total Impact staff costs = £660

Total Cost for 2010 = £1442

CA2 Green Group, Carlisle

2010 Report to the
Denton Holme Community

Outcomes and Differences made in 2010

During 2010 we met 7 times to discuss & develop initiatives around the issues raised at meetings. The group delivered on the following . . .

2 Community Bulb Planting Events along the River Caldew. 5000 + bulbs planted.

1 Tree/Shrub Planting Scheme along Carlisle Crematorium Wall.

1 Award for the Groups Efforts on green issues in the area.

1 Feasibility Report funded & researched into idea of Hydro Electric Scheme for Holme Head weir.

2 presentations to our local Neighbourhood Forum about our activities.

1 Match funding bid with City Council for Land Fill Tax Fund – shrub/tree planting scheme submitted (unsuccessful)

1 Development of Local Tools for local schemes via City Councillor.

1 in-depth St James Park Inspection and report (submitted to CLL & City Council for action).

1 On Yer Bike Session as Part of Love Parks week.



We hope to build on the closer neighbourhood cohesion and friendliness that we have tried to develop in 2010 by encouraging more local people to get involved with us and the Denton Holme Community Centre.



Facts and Figures

Total Impact HA Staff time 23 hrs

Total participants involved = 133

Total participants hrs = 334

Total value of participations involvement = £3340

Transport = £22.00

Total cost of project = £5042

Milbourne Street, Carlisle

2010 Report to the
Milbourne St Community

Outcomes and Differences made in 2010

During 2010 we met 4 times to discuss & develop initiatives around the issues raised at meetings. The group delivered on the following . . .

2 Community Clean Ups organised and delivered on the street.

1 Award for the Groups Efforts on neighbourhood issues in the area.

1 presentation to local Neighbourhood Forum about parking issues in street.

1 Development of a Pilot Parking Scheme to address specific issues with local City Councillor.

1 petition raised and submitted regarding parking issues.



Milbourne Street



Community Clean-up



We hope to build on the closer neighbourhood cohesion and friendliness that we have tried to develop in 2010 by encouraging more local people to get involved with us through the group.

Facts and Figures

Total Impact HA Staff time = 14 hrs

Total Staff costs = £280

Total participants involved = 125

Total participants hrs = 125 hrs

Total value of participation = £1250

TOTAL COST OF PROJECT = £1542



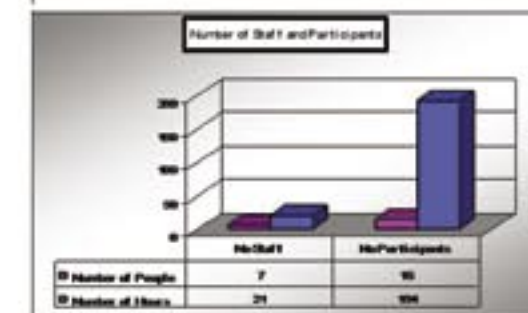
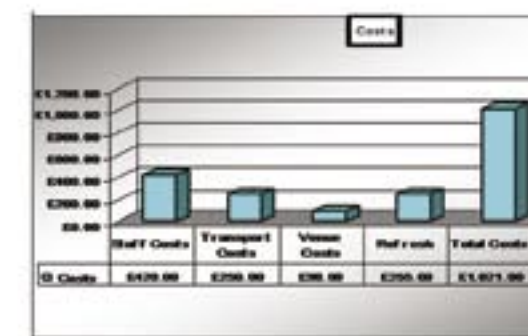
Monthly Meeting

Making an Impact Awards



Trip to Muncaster Castle

Facts and Figures



Workington Matters

2010 Report to Tenants

Outcomes and Differences made in 2010

During 2010 we met 5 times to discuss & develop initiatives around the issues raised at meetings. The group delivered on the following . . .

2 Community Events and Street Clean ups.

1 raised flowerbed scheme for the area.

1 presentation by Allerdale on Parking issues and concerns.

1 Award event for area.

1 local dog fouling issue resolved.

1 repair issue – finally resolved after 2 years.

1 Recycling Station idea partly explored.

1 Residents Trip delivered and completed.

1 Local Car Park Sticker Scheme for area.

3 members—involved with Impacts Service Users Forum.

Outstanding issues for 2011 are: 1 Parking, 2 the need for a Local recycling station, 3 Service Charges and 4 bank account for the group.

Impact Housing Associations restructure in 2010 will see the closer involvement by the new Neighbourhood Services Co ordinator for the area through the meetings and future activities.

We hope to build on the closer neighbourhood cohesion and friendliness that we have developed in 2010.



Clean up & Social

Your Neighbourhood Team

As you will probably know, we have a new Neighbourhood Team in place and we are putting a real emphasis on being out and about in the places where you live. As well as signing up all tenants and dealing with tenancy queries, we are also involved with:-

Tenancy Visits - We are carrying out the individual tenancy visits in your home and up to the end of February we had met with over 1000 people. This has been invaluable in hearing your issues and concerns, and being able to answer your questions and queries. It also gives us a

Lesbian gay bisexual and transexual group

Impact Housing Association are interested in setting up an LGBT group to identify the needs of their residents, so they can feel safe reporting any incidents that they may experience because of their sexuality.

The object of the group would be to provide a safe and supportive environment to enable people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning their identity to participate in personal development opportunities, that will assist them to develop their physical, mental and spiritual capacities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society.

If you would like further information or interested in helping to set up a group then please contact me in confidence.

Damien Morris,
Resident Involvement Officer

Tel 01228 633630 or
email: Damienm@impacthousing.org.uk

chance to meet everyone and get to know you better – and to find out more about the issues that are important to you and your neighbourhood.

We are using this information to start to develop Community and Neighbourhood Plans and there is an article on page 6 and 7 in this edition of Contact that tells you more about this.

Scheme Visits and Street Walkabouts.

By now you should have received a calendar of the street and scheme walkabouts for your area. We will be there on the advertised dates and will be carrying out a scheme audit at least once every two months.

This will help us to pick up details of things like fly tipping and anti social behaviour and generally will make sure we know if there are any issues where you live so we can put any problems right. When we pick up issues or concerns we are now sending out brief scheme or street newsletters to let you know what we have seen – or have been told, and importantly, what we have done to sort the issue out. We will always follow up on our next visit to check things have happened.

Please keep an eye out for us on the dates we have set for visits and walkabouts. Come out and talk to us and let us know if you have any concerns. If you would prefer, you can contact us and make an appointment for us to call.

Anti Social Behaviour –

One of the key jobs of the Neighbourhood Co-ordinators is dealing quickly with reports of anti-social behaviour. We pick some things up on our walkabouts and visits, but we also encourage you to get in touch with Impact 24 hours a day to report behaviour that is causing you nuisance, or in a small number of cases, harassment. We work to timescales to respond quickly, record all anti-social behaviour complaints when they are reported to us, and make sure that you have a dedicated officer to deal with your issue.



If any issues arise out of office hours please telephone 03448736290 and report the nuisance to Impact's out of hours emergency service.

We take anti social behaviour seriously and in the past 6 months some of the actions that we have taken against people causing anti social behaviour have been:

● Court Action under the tenancy

In Carlisle, where we will be asking the County Court to give us possession of a flat. This means that if the order is granted the tenant will be evicted.

● Ending a starter tenancy by issuing a Section 21 Notice.

All new tenants get a 12 month assured short-hold tenancy and if they cause serious anti social behaviour, we can end the tenancy without a Court Order. At Salterbeck, we have carried this out and the tenant will lose their home because of the nuisance they and their visitors have caused to their neighbours.

● Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

We work closely with the police and are able to sign young people up to Acceptable Behaviour

Contracts where they agree with Impact and the Police not to cause anti social behaviour.

● Partnership Agreements

This agreement is where parents sign up to an agreement with Impact and the Police to make sure their children do not cause nuisance to neighbours.

● Formal warnings under the tenancy agreement.

Your feedback on
Anti Social
Behaviour
– Win £50



We are interested in what you think of our service and we send out a questionnaire at the end of each anti social behaviour case. We might also call you on the phone to ask your views on a case.

Please let us know what you think. We have a monthly draw and in the last 5 months we have given out £50 Tesco vouchers to the people who returned their surveys to us – so there have been 5 lucky residents who have received this. Thank you.

You should have the contact details for your Neighbourhood Co-ordinator, but if you are not sure how to get hold of us – or you have any comments or concerns then please contact **Stephen Wilson, Neighbourhood Manager.**

Stephen's contact details are:

Direct Line – 01946 839928

Mobile – 07834320188

E mail – stephenw@impacthousing.org.uk

Energy Efficiency Update

Cavity Wall Insulation Programme



We are currently installing cavity wall insulation to 300 of our properties on the Salterbeck estate. The works have been made possible by securing part funding from one of the energy utility companies. This is the first time Impact have embarked on wall insulation improvements and initial calculations suggest potential savings of over £100 a year on tenant's fuel bills.

Loft Insulation

All of our properties should have at least 100mm of insulation in the loft space and we are now targeting a range of low energy rating properties for 'top up' insulation works. Again we are trying to source some external funding from the energy companies to help with this.

'Hard to treat Properties'

An unusual phrase, these refer to some of our older terraced properties constructed with solid walls situated in rural areas where mains gas isn't available. Typically these are some of our lowest energy rated houses so we are looking at the possibility of installing PV solar panels to help generate free electricity. This is known as renewable energy and really helps in reducing carbon emissions.

If you would like a chat about energy efficiency measures please call Colin Atkinson on 01900 842995.

Residents at Jenkins Crag Court 'Get Digital!'

For many older people the thought of learning new skills, particularly when it comes to technology can be a daunting prospect. But the residents of Jenkins Crag Court in Kendal and Gowan Lea in Burneside have been 'getting digital' with a new digital inclusion programme designed to help older people get online and using the internet.

Funding was secured by Impact to run the programme, which allows anyone attending to learn completely at their own pace with the support of a personal tutor. Liz Laidlaw, the appointed tutor at Jenkins Crag Court has done just this and residents have had the benefit of one to one support and guidance to get them up and running.

Demand for the scheme has been great and despite many people feeling wary at first, it wasn't long before residents were searching the net and emailing family and friends in far away places.

Those involved have been very supportive of one another and the regular attenders now intend to carry on the work themselves after the project ends – even hoping to share their new skills to offer support to other newcomers with an interest.

Impact offers computing and internet facilities in all sheltered and extra care housing schemes, as well as other housing schemes with communal facilities.

