**GATEWAY NEWS**

**SPRING/SUMMER 2025**

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## Welcome from Phil Parramore and Rob Wakefield

**Phil’s Intro**

I’m delighted to start this edition of the tenant newsletter with some fantastic news - Community Gateway has reached a huge milestone with the completion of the development of its 1,000th affordable new home.

This is a true testament to CGA’s commitment to creating high-quality housing for the community. You can read more about this achievement and the journey to 1,000 on page 12. At Community Gateway, we are always looking for ways to improve the services we provide, and your feedback plays a key role in shaping what we do. Whether it’s through surveys, complaints, or scrutiny reviews, we listen to what matters to you and use it to improve our services. In this edition, you’ll find updates on how we’re responding to your feedback, including improvements we have made as a result of this.

We’re also introducing our Customer Service Commitments, developed with your input to ensure we deliver the best possible standards of service. These commitments set out what you can expect from us and how you can help monitor our performance. Take a look at page 20 to see how we’re putting them into action. As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions on how we can continue to improve our services, feel free to email us at feedback@communitygateway.co.uk.

**Rob’s Intro**

Welcome to the latest edition of Gateway News. The days are getting longer, and there’s blossom on the trees - it really does feel like Spring is upon us!

Spring feels the perfect time to see the launch of our new Customer Service Commitments which clearly set out what you can expect from us as your landlord. I’m really pleased that we’ve been able to develop these new commitments alongside you, our tenants, with your feedback really shaping our aspirations in this area. We’ll make sure we work hard to consistently meet each of the commitments – and we’ll keep you posted on how we are performing over the course of the year.

As Phil says it was great to reach the fabulous milestone of Community Gateway’s 1,000th new home recently. I was really proud to walk around the latest of our new homes at Tulketh Brow with our local MP Sir Mark Hendrick – they’re built to a high standard, are in a great location, and I’m sure will make great homes for many years to come. A few weeks earlier I was lucky enough to visit our new homes in Savick – and was delighted to see the opening of the community library, which I hope will become a great local community hub for years to come.

 I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter – and do let us know if there’s anything you’d like to see more of in future editions.

## How we are performing

We are committed to delivering the best possible services to you and regularly track our performance to ensure we are providing the quality and support you expect. Here is a snapshot of key performance figures from April to December 2024.

* 85.4% Satisfaction with our Repairs Service (Target 80%)
* 99% of emergency repairs completed within a set time (Target 99%)
* 88.8% Satisfaction that your Home is safe (Target 80%)
* 86.4% Overall satisfaction with our services (Target 80%)
* 86.3% Satisfaction that CGA treat you fairly and with respect (Target 82%)
* 85.9% Satisfaction that CGA keeps you informed about things that matter to you (Target 76%)
* 94% Calls answered (Target 95%)
* 46 Seconds average call wait time (Target 45 seconds)

## How your feedback is shaping our services

We are committed to listening to your views and acting on them to improve our services. Complaints and Compliments are an important way for us to learn and make changes.

Here are some changes we have made to our services as a result of your feedback:

Communication – We have delivered organisation-wide customer service training to help improve how we communicate with you.

Tailoring our services – We have updated our processes to ensure the services we deliver take into account your individual circumstances.

Damp mould and condensation (DMC) - An increase in complaints relating to DMC resulted in us introducing a dedicated team who now manage DMC jobs and complex repairs through to completion. Inspectors also have new tools to identify the root causes of DMC issues faster.

Repairs Booking System - We can now book follow-on repairs during the initial home visit, reducing the need for callbacks. As part of our commitment to delivering great customer service, a key priority in our Corporate Plan, we have introduced feedback cards. After a visit, our operatives will leave a card at your home, giving you the opportunity to share your thoughts instantly and help us continue improving our services.

Our repairs operatives consistently receive the most compliments from tenants, reflecting their dedication and hard work. Whether it's their professionalism, friendliness, or the quality of work, they go above and beyond to provide a great service.

* 157 Complaints received
* 75% Complaints upheld
* 98% Complaints responded to within a set time
* 314 Compliments received

We welcome your complaints and compliments to help us continue improving our services! Call 0800 953 0213 (option 6), email complaints@ communitygateway.co.uk or visit www. communitygateway.co.uk

## Important information about your rent

Every year we review our rent levels using government guidelines, which set out that rents can be increased by inflation (as measured by September CPI) plus 1%.

The CGA Board has approved a rent increase of 2.7% which will take effect from 1st April 2025. You will have received a letter in late February/early March with details of your new rent.

We want to reassure you that our rents remain some of the lowest in the area and we are committed to providing safe, high-quality homes and services. Based on the latest information, our rents are on average 9% lower than those of other social housing providers operating locally.

How is your money spent?

The rent rise will help us to continue to deliver important services, including repairs, maintenance and improvements to your home. It also means we can support our teams to tackle anti-social behaviour, help with benefit claims and money worries, keep our communities clean and green and build much needed new homes.

Help and Support

 Our friendly Tenancy Support Team are here to help if you need any advice on benefits, budgeting or have any other financial concerns. Give them a call on 0800 953 0213 (option 4) or email tenancysupport@ communitygateway.co.uk

## We're here to help

 At Community Gateway, we believe that a home is more than just bricks and mortar, it’s about feeling supported and secure. That’s why our Tenancy Support Team are here to provide support and advice, ensuring you can manage your tenancy with confidence.

Here are some of the ways the team can assist you:

* Benefit Support: We can help you understand your entitlements, complete benefit applications, and challenge benefit decisions through appeals. Our team will ensure you are receiving the maximum support available.
* Financial Assistance: We understand that financial difficulties can arise unexpectedly. Our team can help tenants access various forms of financial support, including grant applications for household items and help with energy costs.
* Food Parcels: If you require support with food we can refer you to our local partners. We recognise that each tenant’s situation is unique. Our team work closely with you to understand your individual needs and tailor our services accordingly.

Making a Difference

A couple who recently moved into The Watermills, our Independent Living Scheme were referred to our team for a benefit check. During a home visit, we discovered they weren’t receiving the carer element of Universal Credit, meaning they were missing out on nearly £200 extra per month. We quickly helped them apply for the adjustment, which was approved, giving them much-needed financial relief.

This is just one example of how our team make a difference. If you have any questions or need support, please reach out to our team. We’re here to help!

Get in Touch Call 0800 953 0213 (option 4) or email tenancysupport@ communitygateway.co.uk

## Improving Our Services Together

We value your feedback and are committed to continuously improving our services. Last year, our Tenant Scrutiny Group carried out a detailed review of the customer service experience to understand what’s working well and where improvements are needed.

As part of the review, the group mapped out the entire tenant communication journey, analysing key data to identify areas for improvement.

Here’s a look at the key recommendations from the group and the steps we’re taking to make our services even better.

You said:

The Tenant Scrutiny Group found that while outcomes are generally fair, there are inconsistencies in response times and how enquiries are handled across different teams. Key areas for improvement included:

* Inconsistencies in how emails are handled when passed between teams, with some teams restarting the two working day response target when they receive a referred email.
* A mixed experience with call handling, with some tenants not being informed of when they would receive a response to their enquiry.
* Notes from conversations during neighbourhood visits aren’t logged centrally, which can result in missed follow ups.
* Inconsistencies in response times and how enquiries are handled across different teams.

Steps we’re taking to improve

* We are mapping out all communication channels to improve oversight and ensure consistency across teams.
* We have introduced email responses from a central mailbox, making it easier for you to get your queries addressed by a team, regardless of whether individual staff members are absent or on leave.
* Automatic replies are now added to team inboxes, ensuring you receive confirmation that your query has been received. Staff who are absent or leave CGA will also have auto responses to prevent unanswered emails.
* We have set clear standards for call handling, ensuring all staff are fully trained before answering your queries, to ensure a consistent and professional service.
* A new process is being introduced to ensure all teams respond to letters promptly.
* Staff will have a clearer process for logging your queries raised during neighbourhood visits, ensuring no issues are missed.

A big thank you to all the tenants who took part in the review, your input is helping us improve our services for everyone.

Next Steps

We’re committed to keeping you updated on these improvements. Want to get involved and join our next scrutiny session? Email get.involved@communitygateway.co.uk or call 0800 953 0213 (option 6).

## Celebrating our 1,000th new home

We have reached a monumental milestone in our development journey, with the completion of the development of our 1,000th affordable new home at Canal Side View, Tulketh Brow, Preston.

This development, consisting of 12 homes for affordable rent, marks a significant achievement in our mission to provide high-quality, affordable housing for the local community.

To mark this special occasion, we held a celebration event which commenced with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, led by Sir Mark Hendrick, MP for Preston, alongside our Chair of the Board, Phil Parramore.

Sir Mark Hendrick, MP, expressed his support, saying:

“This milestone reflects Gateway’s unwavering dedication to enhancing housing availability and quality for the people of Preston.”

We have ensured that our development activity not only delivers much-needed homes but also makes a positive contribution to the community.

Our development journey began in 2012, with the completion of 16 homes on Patterdale Close, Fishwick. Take a look at the timeline, highlighting key developments, leading to the completion of our 1,000th new home.

Mr and Mrs Eastham, moving in to the shared their delight:

“We are thrilled to receive the keys to our forever home and look forward to a fresh start in CGA’s 1,000th new build home.”

Looking ahead, we have more new homes planned for 2025 and beyond, which you can find out more about by visiting www.communitygateway. co.uk/homes-in-development

* 2012 - We completed our first development Patterdale Close, marking the start development journey
* 2018 - Phase 1 of the Savick Regeneration programme began
* 2021 - The Courtyards, Preston’s first Extra Care Scheme opened, with 60 apartments for over-60s
* 2023 - We completed, our first development in South Ribble and first ‘A’ rated homes, offering high energy efficiency and lower running costs.
* 2024 - Our 1,000th home was completed on Tulketh Brow, Ashton - a development made up of 12 homes for affordable rent.

## New homes and communities

Savick Regeneration

The brand-new Savick Library officially opened its doors to the public late last year. The custom-built library, part of our regeneration project for the area, is the first new library to open in Lancashire in over a decade.

As a community-based landlord we are committed to not only providing new homes for people, but also developing great communities, and we are confident that this building along with the new general convenience store next door will be a great hub for the community for many years to come.

Ribble Heights demolition underway

We are taking a significant step towards improving the Grange area of Ribbleton, Preston, by demolishing five blocks of flats known as ‘Ribble Heights.’

The flats were purchased by us in March 2024, with all 60 flats already vacant. Historically, the blocks had experienced low demand, high tenant turnover, and challenges with antisocial behaviour. An oversupply of flats on the estate, combined with the need for significant investment to bring them up to modern standards, made demolishing them the best option.

Moving forward, we are exploring the potential that this piece of land offers to Community Gateway and the local community and will keep residents informed about our future plans.

Keep up to date with where and when we are building new homes by visiting our website - www.communitygateway.co.uk

## Changes to the Select Move Housing Register

Following a consultation in 2023, a new Select Move policy came into effect in January 2025. These updates aim to ensure fairer access to housing for those with a strong local connection and improve the efficiency of the system. Here are the key changes:

**Local Connection**

 To qualify for the housing register, applicants must have either:

 • Lived continuously in a Select Move area for at least two years.

• Have immediate family living in the area for at least five years and demonstrate they need to provide or receive essential care or support.

• Be permanently employed in the area and have a commute longer than one hour each way to work.

These changes ensure that priority is given to families with strong ties to the area. Safeguards remain for those fleeing domestic abuse or extreme violence.

**Number of refusals**

Applicants who refuse two reasonable offers within a 12-month period will be disqualified from the housing register and not be allowed to reapply for a period of six months. This change stops applicants bidding on homes they do not intend to accept, helping to speed up the letting process and reduce lost rent for social landlords.

**Simplified Banding System**

The number of priority bands has been reduced from five to four:

 A – Exceptionally urgent housing need

B – Urgent high need

C – All other applicants assessed as having a statutory reasonable preference

D – No housing need

For full details, visit www.selectmove. co.uk, or contact us on 0800 953 0213 (option 2) for more information.

High property demand - We are currently experiencing an exceptionally high demand for properties, which means longer wait times than we have seen in recent years. This is unfortunately affecting all social housing providers throughout the North West. We appreciate your understanding and patience during this period.

## Our Services

**We’re here to support you and make sure your home and neighbourhood meet your needs. Here’s an overview of the services we offer and how you can access them.**

KEEPING YOU SAFE IN YOUR HOME

We offer a repairs service to all tenants, as well as safety checks. We also carry out planned improvements and can provide aids and adaptations. 0800 953 0213 (option 1) repairs@communitygateway. co.uk

KEEPING YOU SAFE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Our specialist team works in partnership with the local police and agencies to help resolve anti-social behaviour and safeguarding issues, helping you to feel safe in your community. 0800 953 0213 (option 5) tenancy.management@ communitygateway.co.uk

CLEAN AND GREEN COMMUNITIES

Our GreenCare service ensures that communal areas and our neighbourhoods are well-maintained, safe, and enjoyable for everyone. 0800 953 0213 (option 1) greencare@ communitygateway.co.uk

ALLOCATIONS

We offer support to all new and existing tenants who want to find a new home with us. We offer mutual exchanges to all existing tenants wishing to move home. 0800 953 0213 (option 2) customerservices@ communitygateway.co.uk

INDEPENDENT LIVING AND EXTRA CARE

Our specialist accommodation provides a safe place for older people to live independently. 0800 953 0213 (option 6) customerservices@ communitygateway.co.uk

PAYING YOUR RENT

Everything you need, from ways to pay your rent to finding out when your rent is due, our team is here to help you to make your rent payments. 0800 953 0213 (option 3) rentrecovery@ communitygateway.co.uk

TENANCY SUPPORT

Our Tenancy Support Team offers a tailored benefits advice service to our tenants, household members and anyone applying for a property with us. 0800 953 0213 (option 4) tenancysupport@ communitygateway.co.uk

ENGAGEMENT

We actively encourage all tenants to get involved with us and have your say on how we deliver services. There are lots of ways to have your voice heard, from joining our Tenant-Only Facebook Group to coming to an in-person meeting. 0800 953 0213 (option 6) get.involved@ communitygateway.co.uk

COMPLAINTS SERVICE

We recognise that sometimes things don’t go as planned, and when this happens, we want to hear from you so that we can resolve the issues as quickly as possible. 0800 953 0213 (option 6) complaints@ communitygateway.co.uk

To find out more about any of our services, please call 0800 953 0213 or visit our website at www. communitygateway.co.uk

## Resolving Disputes through our Mediation Process

At Community Gateway, we are committed to tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) in our communities. That’s why we now offer a structured mediation process to handle disputes and conflicts among neighbours. Mediation is a proven way to resolve disagreements, allowing parties to communicate openly and reach mutually beneficial solutions.

 Mediation services can be used to resolve problems such as access and parking, and low-level antisocial behaviour, including excessive noise, differences in lifestyle/culture, pet and animal nuisance and much more.

HOW MEDIATION WORKS

* Preparation – A mediator gathers information from both parties and schedules a meeting.
* Discussion – Each party shares their concerns while the mediator ensures a respectful and constructive discussion.
* Resolution – Parties explore solutions and agree on a way forward, which is formalised in writing.
* Follow up – In most cases, one session is enough, but further support can be arranged if needed.

If you’re facing a dispute, contact us to learn more about accessing this service. Together, we can make our communities safer and stronger. Call 0800 953 0213 (option 5) or email tenancy.management@ communitygateway.co.uk.

MEDIATION IN ACTION

A recent case involved a neighbour dispute over domestic noise and children. Through mediation, both parties had the chance to share their perspectives and agree on a way forward.

One neighbour agreed to be more understanding of the family’s situation, while the other committed to managing their volume. By working together, they reached a positive resolution, helping to restore harmony in their community.

If you’re struggling with a similar issue, our mediation service could help you - contact us on 0800 953 0213 (option 5) to learn more.

## Tenant Engagement Model

At Community Gateway, we have a clear commitment to creating a louder Tenant Voice, ensuring that your views are sought and listened to on any changes we are making.

Our Tenant Engagement Model sets out how we involve, listen to, and work alongside our tenants and communities to shape the services we provide. Check out our new Tenant Engagement Model below.

AMPLIFYING THE TENANT VOICE AT COMMUNITY GATEWAY:

* LEAD Making sure we are Tenant-led
* ENGAGE Providing you with accessible opportunities to take part
* LEARN Using information to better understand your experiences
* INFORM Accessible communications to meet your needs

**To read our full Tenant Engagement Model visit our website and browse over 30 opportunities to get involved or call us on 0800 953 0213 (option 6)**

## Customer Service Commitments

Our Customer Service Commitments were created with your feedback to ensure we deliver the best possible standards of customer service and set out what you can expect from us. Take a look at how we will deliver on our commitments and find out how you can help us to.

**What we will do:**

* When visiting your home, we will show you identification so you know it is us.
* When you call us, we’ll ask you to verify your identity to protect your information.
* We will aim to acknowledge your enquiry within two working days.
* We will set clear timescales and keep you updated throughout your enquiry.
* We will provide you with information that is clear, easy to understand and accessible.
* We will be friendly, approachable and treat you fairly and with respect.
* We will listen to what you tell us and ensure you feel heard.
* We will treat you as an individual, tailoring our services to meet your needs.
* We will ask for you views on any changes to services, ensuring the tenant voice is considered in any decision we make.
* We will acknowledge when we have got something wrong and aim to put it right.

**How you can help us:**

* Ask us to explain anything you are unsure about.
* Give us your feedback so we can improve.
* Give us notice if you can’t make an appointment.
* Treat our staff with respect.
* Provide us with access for essential checks and works, so we can maintain a safe home for you.
* Let us know when your information changes so we can provide a service that meets your needs.

## Community Investment in action

Last year, we launched our Community Investment Strategy, focusing on creating thriving communities where people are proud to live. Since then, teams across Gateway have been working together to make a real difference.

Here are some of the recent improvement activities that have taken place in our communities:

* Clearing overgrown land: We cut back and cleared an overgrown area on Sycamore Road in South Ribbleton, that was attracting fly-tipping, restoring it to a cleaner, safer space.
* Community Improvement Day: Alongside tenants, we cleared a piece of land on Howarth Road in Ingol. We also painted fences, planted bulbs and replaced broken fencing to enhance the space for local residents.
* Creating extra parking in Ashton: We cleared a communal piece of land in Ashton to create extra car parking spaces and installed new fences to keep the area secure.
* Supporting Ashton Primary School: We worked with students on their ‘improving the community’ project, where they carried out a community walkabout to identify concerns. This led to a Community Improvement Day, which involved clearing litter and installing awareness posters to promote a cleaner environment.
* North Ribbleton clean-up: In partnership with the police and local residents, we carried out a community clean-up, collecting six bags of litter and two loads of fly-tipping, helping to improve the area for everyone.
* Removing an eyesore in Brookfield: A burnt-out structure that was negatively impacting the local community was safely removed, improving the look and feel of the neighbourhood.

## Keeping you safe in your home

**Legionella**

Legionnaires’ disease is a respiratory breathing disease. Infection is caused by breathing in very small airborne droplets of contaminated water, for example from a shower or a spray tap.

 Here are some tips on how to reduce the risk of legionella in your home:

* Clean your shower head regularly.
* If you have been away for a few days, run hot and cold taps for a couple of minutes when you get back to ensure they have been flushed through.
* Make sure that any water outlets you don’t use frequently are flushed regularly, e.g. a garden tap.
* Empty garden hoses after use, particularly if you use a sprinkler attachment and keep water butts clean inside.

**Fire Safety**

Your safety is our priority, and we work hard to maintain the highest levels of safety in all our tenants’ homes.

Here are a few tips to reduce the risk of fires starting in your home:

* Never leave food cooking unattended and avoid using chip pans as these are a big fire risk.
* Keep electrical appliances in good working order.
* Never charge e-bike or e-scooter batteries overnight or while unattended, as they can overheat and catch fire.
* Avoid overloading sockets and extensions with plugs.
* It’s safer to smoke outside. Always make sure cigarettes are stubbed right out and disposed of safely in an ashtray.
* Put candles in a holder and keep them away from things that may burn – never leave them burning when you’re not in the room.
* Many fires start at night – carry out some checks before you go to bed and make sure you shut doors to stop a fire spreading quickly. Avoid using or charging electrical appliances whilst you are sleeping.

Did you know? Around half of all UK house fires are down to electrical faults. Appliances such as tumble driers and washing machines can catch fire, particularly when overworked or overheated, so don’t start a cycle overnight or before leaving the house.

**Reminder! Test your alarms**

We will test all alarms in your home when we complete your gas service. However, we recommend that you test all carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms in your home at least once a month. If you discover a fault with your alarm, please contact us on 0800 953 0213 (option 1).

**Don’t ignore Damp and Mould in your home**

We are committed to providing a dry, warm and safe home for all our tenants. Damp, mould and condensation (DMC) can seriously affect your health and wellbeing. Mould often appears as black or green spots, usually in bathroom corners, bedrooms, or near windows.

It may start as tiny spots and spread, so be vigilant. If you notice any signs of DMC report it to us immediately and we will send a specialist operative to your home to complete an inspection, call 0800 953 0213 (option 1) or visit www. communitygateway. co.uk/dmc.

## Come and visit The Atrium

Did you know that The Atrium, our Extra Care Scheme in Ribbleton, Preston isn’t just open to tenants. It’s home to fantastic facilities that everyone can enjoy!

Top Bistro Whether you are in the mood for breakfast, a light lunch, or a sweet treat, the Bistro has something for every appetite. Enjoy freshly made sandwiches, paninis, soups, delicious cakes and signature dishes.

Opening Hours - Monday-Friday 9:30am-4pm Saturday and Sunday 9am-1pm

**Pretty Perfection Beauty Salon**

Treat yourself to a little pampering! Specialising in nails, lashes, and brows, the salon is now open at The Atrium. Book your appointment online at www.prettyperfection.simplybook.it or call 07944 273770

These facilities are open to residents, their families, and the general public. Why not pop in and treat yourself? The Atrium, Miller Road, Ribbleton, Preston, PR2 6FY

## Assistive technology for digital

Customise our website with Recite Me’s Accessibility Tools

CGA provides an inclusive online experience to enable website visitors to access online content and services barrier-free.

As part of our diversity and inclusion strategy, website visitors are able to access a wide range of accessibility and language support tools to customise their digital experience through Recite Me assistive technology.

Being able to offer an inclusive experience is essential to support tenants who may encounter barriers when exploring our website due to having a disability, learning difficulty, visual impairment, or if they speak English as a second language.

The Recite Me assistive toolbar on our website includes screen reading functionality, multiple reading aids, customisable styling options an on-demand live translation feature that boasts over 100 languages including 65 text-to-speech styling options.

If you require any support accessing the tools, please contact us: 0800 953 0213 (option 6)

##