



Welcome to this edition of **Your Riverside** service update

We're always here to help

Although we're returning to some sense of normality, the pandemic is still with us and causing everyone challenges, so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

My Riverside



My Riverside allows you to view and manage your personal information, repairs, rent and charges, all in one place. Register online at my.riverside.org.uk

Website



For the very latest news on service changes as a result of Coronavirus, please visit www.riverside.org.uk/coronavirus

Phone



Or you can call our recorded telephone message on **0345 112 4466**.



Last chance to have your say on partnership proposals

Have you taken the opportunity to have your say on our partnership proposals with One Housing?

Last month we sent a consultation pack to all Riverside customers, either by post or email, which sets out what we are proposing; why we believe the partnership is a good thing; what it means for customers and the potential risks.

If you haven't done so already, please take the time to read through your consultation pack and provide any

feedback which can be done online, over the phone or by post.

If you've not got your consultation pack to hand, please turn to pages 4 and 5 where we've included the main points about the partnership proposals and the various ways you can have your say.

In this edition of Your Riverside we also have important updates about your services, how you can join our Group Board and much more!



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Communal TV aerials

If you live in a building with a communal area, you may have a communal TV aerial.

At the moment, our aerials are setup to provide Freeview services. If you want to purchase satellite services, please be aware that not all packages will work with these aerials.



Before we can upgrade our systems to ensure you can use any satellite service you purchase, we need to carry out an audit of all our existing communal TV aerials to understand the extent of the problem. After this, we'll identify a suitable supplier to carry out the upgrade work.

We're in the process of planning this, and we'll keep you updated as things progress. In the meantime, we apologise for any inconvenience this causes.



Building safety update

In the last edition of Your Riverside, we explained some of the changes we've made this year to prepare for the new Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Bill – new legislation that set out enhanced responsibilities for landlords on how we keep buildings safe.



As part of these changes, we've recruited six Building Safety Managers, each with Building Safety Inspectors covering all the local authorities we operate in.

The team's mission is to ensure you are safe in your home, as well as the building and shared areas your home is part of.

How can we do this?

No-one knows your home better than you, so we want to work closely with you on our approach to building safety and ensure you have opportunities to share your views and feedback.

If you live in a building of six storeys or above, look out for invitations to customer meetings over the next few weeks. They're an opportunity for you to meet our new team, hear about our plans for your building and ask any questions you may have.

Everyone is welcome and your input and views are important to us, so please join us if you can.

You'll also see our Building Safety Inspectors in the communal areas of your building, carrying out regular inspections and collating information. These checks help us understand whether your building needs any repairs or improvements and make plans for the work.

Look out for more detailed information about Building Safety, the team and how we keep you safe on display in communal areas and on our website.

Our Empty Homes Standard

We're committed to providing excellent, consistent service for our customers, no matter where they live. That's why we've adopted a new, more comprehensive standard for our vacant properties and the work we do to prepare them for their next resident.

In May, we began a pilot of our new Empty Homes Standard for our Care & Support properties, after a successful launch for our general needs social housing properties last year.

The new standard includes some new features, such as decoration and new, higher quality components in line with our material specifications.

We'd like to thank the Riverside Customer Voice Executive for their collaboration and support over the last year to help us shape the new standard and prepare for the pilot. We'll continue to work with them closely to ensure it meets all our financial and customer satisfaction requirements.



Coming soon: our new Repairs Policy

We are now in the final stages of developing our new Repairs Policy. Working closely with the Riverside Customer Voice Executive, we've undertaken extensive consultation with customers and colleagues across Riverside.

The new policy will bring several improvements to our repairs services and definitions, including:

- Clearer roles, responsibilities and expectations for both Riverside and our customers, including a new code of conduct.
- A comprehensive list of appointment slots and priority codes
- A new section on additional assistance available for customers who need it
- Clearer definitions of repairs and the methods you can use to report.

Look out for a further update on the new policy in our next edition of Your Riverside.



Reduce energy at home

To help you make some savings and reduce the amount of energy you use this Winter there are a few simple things you can do such as:

- Turning down the thermostat
- Reduce household draughts
- Switch off unused appliances
- Fix any leaky taps.



Find out more our website
www.riverside.org.uk/save-money-on-energy-at-home

Better and Stronger Together

What are we proposing to do?

Riverside and One Housing are proposing to come together to create a long-term partnership. We will do this in two steps:

Step One

One Housing Group would join The Riverside Group as a subsidiary. This means that, like now, One Housing Group would have its own Board running the association on a day to day basis. The difference is that One Housing would sit within a Group which is financially much stronger, agreeing its overall plans and direction with Riverside.

Step Two

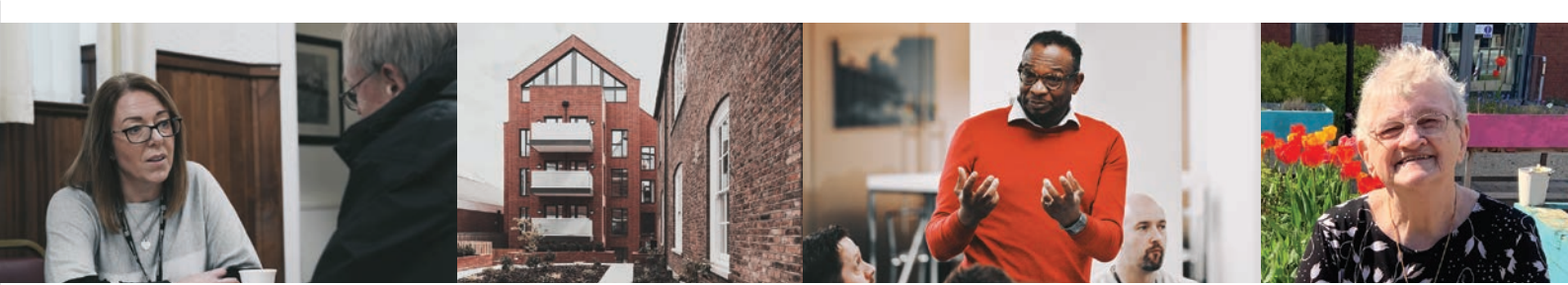
After the first two years of the partnership, we then plan to create a single housing association, with one Board and a consistent approach to delivering better local services and more cost effective support functions such as finance and IT.

Why do we think this is a good thing?

The Boards of Riverside and One Housing recognise that we can be better and stronger together. As charitable housing associations we have very similar values, and want to do the best for our customers and the local communities we serve. We work in different parts of the country, although we

both have homes in London and the South East, where there is an opportunity to work together to deliver better and stronger services such as repairs. Crucially, by coming together we think we can create an organisation that can do even more for our customers and communities.





Tell us what you think

We would like to know what you think about the proposals. This is so we can report to the Boards of One Housing Group and Riverside, before they make a final decision about whether to form the partnership later in the year. They will carefully consider the views of customers, alongside feedback from other stakeholders such as our lenders and local authority partners.



All customers were sent a consultation pack on **Monday 6 September**, either by post or email.

How you can share your views:



POST: Complete the short questionnaire included in your consultation pack and send by post in the postage paid envelope.



ONLINE: Respond online using your unique code (included in your pack) via the website www.togethersurvey.co.uk



PHONE: Call **0800 358 0337** and answer questions over the phone. You will need your unique code from your pack.

Whichever way you choose, your response will go to BMG, our survey partner, and will be completely confidential. BMG will summarise the results for us, but will not tell us the views of individual customers. Once the consultation has been completed we will share a summary of the results with you.

Please send your feedback by Sunday 17 October

Visit our website www.riverside.org.uk/together to see a short video about the consultation and if you need to access this information in another language or format.



Keeping you safe - Healthy Relationships

Your safety and wellbeing is our number one priority. Healthy relationships involve trust and respect from both partners but sometimes we may be in relationships that can make us feel unsafe or that something isn't quite right.

- Physical and/or emotional abuse such as name calling, making you feel bad or threatening behaviour to you.
- Feeling unsafe.
- Won't accept when you say no to things you don't want to do, like having sex or taking drugs.
- Someone who is jealous or possessive – who checks your phone, where you've been or who you've been talking to.
- Controls what you wear, what you spend your money on, where you go or who you see.
- Stops you from seeing family and/or friends.

You might see these signs in other people's relationships – or even your own.

If you have any concerns then speak to your housing officer or support worker and we can help you get the support you need.

Calling all veterans and members of the armed forces

From Lee Buss-Blair, Director of Operations and Group Veterans Lead
Riverside is committed to ensuring that we are able to support all of our customer groups effectively. We have a long standing commitment to veterans and members of the armed forces, both colleagues and customers.



As part of our Veterans and Armed Forces Strategy, and our Corporate Plan 2020/23, we have an objective to develop resources for Riverside staff to effectively support customers who are veterans or currently serving.

Having the correct support and advice available, especially for veterans, is important. Research conducted by Walking with the Wounded indicated that, on average, veterans waited nine years before seeking help, and were generally reluctant to ask for help when needed. But there is a broad range of support available on a range of issues, from mental health and substance misuse, to employment and financial aid.

As a veteran myself, and having served a number of operational tours including the First Gulf War, I understand only too well the importance of being able to receive appropriate support.

But as well as having access to resources, we also need to understand who our veteran and serving personnel community are. To help us to do this we have made changes to our systems to be able to record if a customer is either a veteran or is currently serving. We will be implementing this change over the next month or so, and after it is in place, we will be encouraging customer facing colleagues to ask the 'veteran' question.

As a veteran, I would ask my fellow veterans and serving personnel to let us know who you are when asked, so that we can work together to support you to access any services that you might benefit from, either now or in the future.



Your involvement

Get on Board! We are recruiting a Customer Board Member to join us



We will soon have a vacancy on our Group Board and we are looking for a customer to step into the role.

What the Board does

Our Board is responsible for approving major strategic decisions for us and our customers. The Board usually meets six times a year to discuss and review strategies and make decisions to shape how we operate and deliver services.

These are exciting times and we are currently looking to recruit a Customer Board Member who shares our passion

for improving customers' lives and can offer a fresh perspective that will help us achieve our long-term vision.

What you will get in return

- You will be involved in decision making at the most senior level
- Opportunities to learn new skills
- You will also receive a payment of £10,000 per annum for your time, as well as expenses incurred in carrying out your role as a Board Member.



Find out more and apply

We're keen to hear from any customer who is interested in joining the most senior decision-making forum in Riverside and making a genuine difference to the lives of Riverside customers.

Applications will be particularly welcomed from Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates, members of the LGBTQI community, people with a disability or impairment, and younger people.

We are excited about finding the right person for the role and if you think you have the skills, then we would be very keen to hear from you.

The deadline to apply for the role is Friday 15 October.

The successful applicant will be invited to the Board meeting in December as an observer, with the first formal meeting as a new Board Member being in January 2022. You will receive a full induction and support in taking up your new role.

For more information, go to:
www.riverside.org.uk/boardrecruitment
or email
Mark.Ferguson@riverside.org.uk
for an application pack.



If you have any questions about how you can access our services, call our 24-hour Customer Service Centre on **0345 111 0000.**

Tell us what you think

Do you find this update interesting and informative?

We send the Your Riverside service update to you three times a year and it's designed to include the important news and information about the services we provide.

It might include updates about new digital services, important information about improvements to your home, or highlighting ways you can provide feedback.

We felt it was time to check in with you, to make sure this thrice yearly update is still of value to you.

We've created a short online survey, which shouldn't take more than five minutes to complete.

How to have your say

You can access the survey by scanning this QR Code. Just activate the camera on your phone or tablet, point it at the QR code, then click on the link that appears. You will then be taken to the survey.



You can also access it by going to the following webpage:

<https://forms.office.com/r/jC64PyGB5t>

Technology aiding accessibility

At Riverside we have a host of technology we can use to make communicating with you easier.



For example, we can use immersive reader to help if you find it easier to access information in large print or different languages.

We can also use the software to change the background colour of documents, which can make it easier for some people to read, or use the 'read aloud' function which will speak the words in the document so you can listen to the content instead.

If you have any accessibility needs, speak to your housing officer about how we can use Microsoft 365 to provide you with a better service.



Find us on Facebook and Twitter

You can talk to us and keep up to date by joining us on social media. Search for '**Riverside Group**' on Facebook and **@riversideuk** on Twitter.