

# Better and Stronger Together



Welcome to the latest update for customers of Riverside and One Housing on our plans for bringing our two organisations together.



**My name is Richard Hill and as well as being the Chief Executive of One Housing Group and part of Riverside's leadership team, I am leading on coordinating the integration plan.**



#### **In this issue we want to update you on:**

- Our progress on our pledge to improve the livelihoods of customers and build stronger communities – one of the six key partnership pledges we have made to you, our customers.
- The range of help and support available to you, your family and your community in these challenging times.
- Our commitment to ensuring every Riverside and One Housing home is warm and dry.
- Our progress in bringing our two organisations together with a single, consistent, service offer to customers by April 2024.
- Opportunities for you to transfer to a different home across Riverside and One Housing if you wish.

Please take a few minutes to read this update and if you have any questions at all please email: [together@riverside.org.uk](mailto:together@riverside.org.uk) or [together@onehousing.co.uk](mailto:together@onehousing.co.uk)

## Our pledges

1 We will deliver better services for customers, protecting rents and tenancy rights.

2 We will make sure there is a louder customer voice, with residents able to take part in our Boards and committees, and better able to hold us to account.

3 We will invest nearly £1 billion in improving and repairing homes over the next 5 years, with a focus on fire and building safety, warmer homes and regeneration. We will also build more new affordable homes.

4 We will improve care and support services for older people, those with complex needs and people who are homeless.

5 We will improve the livelihoods of customers and build stronger communities, providing better opportunities by investing in employment support and money advice.

6 We will keep our promises and ensure we have the money to do so.

7 We will keep our promises and make sure you can hold us to account, publishing a report each year on how we are delivering these pledges.

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# Supporting you in your home, your life, your community

In our last update we told you about the £2.5million of additional funds we were promising to invest each year to support you and the community where you live through these challenging times.

This £2.5m is being invested each year from April 2022 by our charitable arm The Riverside Foundation. It will support customers of both Riverside and One Housing.

**Some of it will be used to help strengthen and expand the existing services we offer to help you:**

- ✓ maximise your income and/or get the benefits you're entitled to
- ✓ get trained, get into work or find a better paid job
- ✓ manage your heating and fuel costs
- ✓ tackle other issues affecting your wellbeing.

## Specialist employment and training services



Our specialist employment and training advisers help hundreds of customers every year with everything from job searching, CV writing and interview techniques to retraining for a new career, starting a small business or finding an apprenticeship. They can even help you access funding to support a learning opportunity or get kitted out for an interview!

For Riverside's employment and training service, please email [EmploymentandTraining@riverside.org.uk](mailto:EmploymentandTraining@riverside.org.uk)

Or use the online self-referral form here [www.riverside.org.uk/you-your-home/employment-training/](http://www.riverside.org.uk/you-your-home/employment-training/)

To contact One Housing's employment and training team, please call **0208 821 5377** or email [employmentandtrainingteam@onehousing.co.uk](mailto:employmentandtrainingteam@onehousing.co.uk)

Further information here <https://foundation.onehousing.co.uk/employment>

**In our next customer update we will include details of the new services we are making available through this additional funding.**

In the meantime, you can find out more about the existing range of advice and support available from Riverside or One Housing here...

**Riverside customers:**  
Visit [www.riverside.org.uk](http://www.riverside.org.uk) or call **0345 111 0000**

**One Housing customers:**  
Visit [www.onehousing.co.uk](http://www.onehousing.co.uk) or call **0300 123 9966**

**Please note:** once we have fully integrated One Housing within Riverside we will no longer need these different ways of accessing each service.



As well as the investment in these services that help you and your household, we are also making funding available to:

- ✓ support customers in financial crisis through our Helping Hand Fund. This will provide small emergency grants to help meet one-off, essential costs that they could not otherwise afford. Look out for further details coming soon.
- ✓ support initiatives that help to improve the overall quality of life where you live through our new Communities Fund. This could be anything from an after-school club to an over 50s lunch club, a community grow-your-own veg project or improving the safety and security of your neighbourhood. It could be about supporting existing local organisations that provide advice, creating training or work opportunities or just supporting an event that brings people together in a positive way – the possibilities are many!
- ✓ develop partnerships on a wider scale with established organisations or groups to address local or national issues such as food and fuel poverty, mental and physical health, access to digital services, tackling inequality etc.



## Help with funding community projects



We are particularly keen to work with groups of customers in supporting bright ideas or existing projects that can benefit the local community.

If you'd like to know more, here's how to start the conversation:



**Riverside customers:**  
[EmploymentandTraining@riverside.org.uk](mailto:EmploymentandTraining@riverside.org.uk)

**One Housing customers:**  
[residentengagements@onehousing.co.uk](mailto:residentengagements@onehousing.co.uk)

## Waging war on damp and mould

We want to ensure that every Riverside and One Housing customer can enjoy living in a warm, dry home. We know how important this is for you, especially given the rocketing cost of fuel. That's why we are committing an additional £3m a year for the next three years to tackle this problem wherever we can.

It won't happen overnight, but we have already gathered lots of useful information about the condition of our properties and we are building our understanding of where we need to focus our attention over the next three years to eradicate this problem from our properties. In the meantime, if you are affected by damp or mould, please report this to us in the usual way.

# Thinking of moving?



Through mutual exchanges, customers of Riverside and One Housing or another social landlord have always been able to 'swap' their homes by registering at [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk) and searching for a home matching the type you are looking for.

One of the early benefits of our two organisations coming together is that customers of Riverside and One Housing can now also apply more easily for a home with either organisation. Perhaps where you're living now no longer meets your need in terms of location or size? If that's the case why not visit <https://onehousing.homeconnections.org.uk/>, a choice based lettings system operating across all local authority areas nationally to explore your options.

Where we have flexibility alongside our existing commitments to local authority schemes, both Riverside and One Housing empty homes will be advertised on Home Connections and you will be able to bid on all suitable properties regardless of your landlord.

Registration is simple and, once approved, your application will be placed in an appropriate priority band meaning you can bid for any properties advertised on the site that matches your bedroom need. Homes are allocated by band and then by the time you have been waiting, so if you think you might want or need to move in the future you should register now.

## Need to know more?

If you're a One Housing customer, please check our website <https://www.onehousing.co.uk/resident-services/resident-information/information-for-renters/moving-home> or email our Allocations and Onboarding Team on [lettings@onehousing.co.uk](mailto:lettings@onehousing.co.uk)

Riverside customers should visit our website <https://www.riverside.org.uk/find-a-home/rent-a-home/other-homes/> or contact [homeconnections@riverside.org.uk](mailto:homeconnections@riverside.org.uk)

## Bringing our two organisations together...



**We are already learning a lot about each other's organisations, what we do well and what we can do better, with customers from both Riverside and One Housing very much part of that conversation.**

As we mentioned last time, as well as our boards and leadership teams working together and the establishment of a Merger Integration Panel led by Richard Hill, 12 customers from both Riverside and One Housing are meeting regularly in a Customer Pledges Task and Finish Group.

The aim of the group is to advise on the delivery of the six partnership pledges and most importantly hold us to account for delivering them. We have been working them on the criteria for our Helping Hand Fund and Communities Fund and they are also helping to ensure that our communications to customers through updates such as this are clear, relevant and informative.

For more information, including updates on their work and details of the **Task and Finish Group**, please visit:

### *OneHousing*

<https://onehousing.co.uk/about-us/who-we-are/riverside-group-and-one-housing-have-agreed-to-form-a-complementary-partnership/one-housing-and-riverside-group-partnership>

### *Riverside*

<https://www.riverside.org.uk/about-us/partnerships/riverside-and-one-housing-group/customer-pledges-task-and-finish-group/>

In terms of direct services to you and your home, there will be little change over the first year of transition apart from the increased investment outlined above. However, the work to review our customer service standards is already underway so look out for further updates in the months ahead.