

# My Home

## Customer Magazine



aspire  
housing

### Join the Easter Egg Hunt!

Find all the hidden Easter eggs in this edition for a chance to win a high street voucher!\*

Submit your answer at  
[aspirehousing.co.uk/myhome](https://aspirehousing.co.uk/myhome)

\*Terms and conditions apply.

### In this issue:

Understanding your rent  
and service charge

Homes Transformation update

Gardening competition





# Welcome

## A warm welcome to the Spring edition of MyHome.

**As we move into a new season, I'm reminded of the strength and resilience that defines our Aspire neighbourhoods.**

This edition is packed with stories that showcase the positive changes we've made together - each one shaped by your feedback, your ideas, and your commitment to making Aspire Housing a place where everyone feels at home.

One of the most important updates this spring is the annual change to your rent and service charge. We know that any increase can be challenging, and I want to reassure you that every penny goes directly into maintaining and improving your homes, delivering essential services, and supporting our neighbourhoods.

We're a not-for-profit organisation, and your rent helps us reinvest in our communities, keep homes safe and warm, and continue to provide the support you rely on.

We understand that managing financial changes can sometimes feel overwhelming. That's why our Money Advice team is here for you - whether you need help checking your benefits, managing debts, planning a budget, or simply making the most of your money.

If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out or visit our drop-in sessions for personalised support. We're here to help you every step of the way.



This edition also highlights the many ways your voice is shaping our work. From the development of neighbourhood plans and improvements to home maintenance, to the launch of new initiatives like No Mow May and our garden competition, your involvement is making a real difference.

Thank you for sharing your experiences, getting involved, and working with us to build stronger, more connected communities.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition and feel proud of the part you play in Aspire's journey. As always, we're here to listen, support, and work together for a brighter future.

**Andrei Szatkowski**  
Executive Director of People



# Understanding your rent

## and service charge

### Keeping you informed about what matters

In the past few weeks, you'll have received a letter about the annual change to your rent and service charge, which will take effect from April 2026.

This rent change helps us keep up with the cost of managing, maintaining, and building homes. It also means we can continue delivering a full range of essential services and vital support to you, our customers.

We're a not-for-profit organisation. We don't have shareholders or make a profit - every penny of your rent goes straight back into running our services, maintaining homes, reinvesting in our communities, and covering the costs of managing the business.

Your new rent has been calculated using the Rent Standard rules set by the government for 2026/27, which all providers of affordable housing follow. This will see your rent increase by 4.8% - this is in line with September's national measure of inflation, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September 2025 (3.8%) plus 1%.

**We know that any increase can be challenging. Please remember, we're here to help.**

Our Money Advice team can support you with checking benefits, managing debts, budgeting, and making the most of your money. If you're struggling with household bills, visit our money advice page or come along to one of our weekly money advice drop-ins.

**If you have any questions or concerns about your rent letter, please contact our Customer Excellence team on 01782 635200.**



#### Drop-in sessions for personalised support:

**Monday** Kidsgrove Community Hub  
9:30am – 1pm

**Tuesday** Guildhall  
9:30am – 1pm

**Wednesday** Kidsgrove Community Hub  
9:30am – 1pm

**Thursday** Guildhall  
9:30am – 1pm

**Friday** Ramsey Road Community Centre  
9:30am – 1pm

### If you receive Universal Credit:

You'll need to update your online journal. Look out for a to-do called 'Confirm your housing costs' - this will appear on or soon after 6th April. **Please don't update before this date, as it won't be accepted.** If you don't complete this step in your April assessment period, you may not receive enough Universal Credit to cover your rent.



# Reporting your annual



## rent charge for Universal Credit

### Keeping you informed about what matters

If you receive Universal Credit to help with your housing costs (rent and service charges), it's important to update your 'Confirm your housing costs' to-do in your Universal Credit journal when your rent changes.

#### When to update:

- If you pay your rent weekly:  
Complete your update on 6th April 2026
- If you pay monthly or you're a shared owner:  
Complete your update on 1st April 2026

You'll find a to-do in your Universal Credit journal around these dates - look out for it, as it will look similar to the examples shown below.

You should have received your rent increase letter recently, which sets out your new rent amount, eligible service charge (the part that can be included

in your Universal Credit claim), and any ineligible service charges (which cannot be included). Your new charges will also appear in the My Rent page of your online account.

#### Why it's important:

Please make sure you complete this update on or as close to the change date as possible, and before your assessment date.

If you miss this step, your housing costs will be paid at your previous rent amount, and you may not receive any backdated payments if the update is late.

If you need any help or have questions, our team is here to support you.



Find advice and support at:  
[aspirehousing.co.uk/money-advice/](https://aspirehousing.co.uk/money-advice/)

### Examples of what to look out for:

Confirm your housing costs  
**Date of change**  
Did your housing costs change on 1 April 2026?  
 Yes  No  
Continue

Confirm your housing costs  
**Date of change**  
Did your housing costs change on 6 April 2026?  
 Yes  No  
Continue

Confirm your housing costs  
**Changes to your service charges**  
Your previously told us the total eligible service charges for your property are £5.00 per week.  
Your landlord should have written recently with details of changes to rent or eligible service charges.  
**Are you still charged weekly for your service charges?**  
 Yes  No  
**How much are your new eligible service charges, in pounds and pence?**  
Only include 'eligible' service charges. They will be listed separately on the letter from your landlord.  
£   
Continue

Confirm your housing costs  
**Changes to your rent**  
You previously told us the total rent for your property is £150.00 per week.  
Your landlord should have written recently with details of changes to rent or eligible service charges.  
**Are you still charged weekly for your rent?**  
 Yes  No  
**How much is your new rent, in pounds and pence?**  
Do not include any service charges or rent arrears.  
£   
Continue



**Delivering for people,  
dedicated to places**

## Potential merger between Aspire Housing and whg

**We announced last month that Aspire Housing and whg are in early talks around a potential merger of the two organisations.**

This would create a new housing association with **32,000 homes** across their Midlands heartland.

The merger would bring clear benefits for customers and communities, combining the best from both organisations. Our aims would be to:

- **Deliver excellent repairs** and housing services.
- **Invest in homes** to ensure they continue to be warm and safe.
- **Provide support services** for our customers, including money advice and access to employment and training.
- **Build more homes** for people in local communities.

### Why are we planning to merge?

Whilst both organisations are performing strongly, there are challenges for all housing associations.

The government expects us to build more new, affordable homes, whilst keeping existing homes well-maintained and energy efficient.

We want to make the most of this opportunity to strengthen our organisations and protect our future, so we can continue providing affordable, good-quality homes for our local communities.

### What happens next?

**We will keep you updated** whilst we move through this process and continue to explore the potential merger.

**Customer voices will be at the heart of our new organisation**, informing our decision-making and helping us to keep improving. It's important for us to hear what you think about these proposals and your priorities as a customer, and there will be lots of ways you can feed back.

**We've created a dedicated information page on our website** where you can find all the latest information, including FAQs, how to get involved and share your feedback, and next steps.



Visit our information page here:  
[aspirehousing.co.uk/whg-aspire](https://aspirehousing.co.uk/whg-aspire)

## Improving our repairs service for you

We're excited to share how your feedback has helped us shape a better, more responsive home maintenance service over the past year.

### What's changed?

With the insight you've shared through Chat2 Aspire, our Home customer panel, and the Aspire 100 group, we've focused on what matters most to you.

Thanks to your involvement, we've made some real progress:

#### Repairs are faster:

The average wait for a repair has **dropped from 27 days to just 12 days.**



#### Joinery repairs:

Waiting times have gone from **31 days to 13 days.**



#### Plumbing repairs:

Now just a **7 day wait**, down from **30 days.**



### What's next?

#### Better systems, less admin

We're refreshing our behind-the-scenes systems to make your repair journey simpler, so we can focus more on fixing your home and less on paperwork.

#### More convenient appointments

We know weekdays don't work for everyone, and sometimes it's tough to be home for early appointments. This summer, we're trialling evening and Saturday slots to give you more flexibility – we'll share more details in the Summer edition!

We know there's still more to do, and we're committed to making things even quicker for you.

#### Less waiting, more appointments:

Our new building materials supplier means our teams spend less time travelling for supplies - **saving 20 minutes on average per visit.** That means more appointments available and shorter waits for you.

#### Easier online repairs:

Reporting a repair online is now simpler and faster. In the past year, **22% more customers have used this option**, so we can get started on your repair right away.

#### "We are on the way" updates:

You now get **estimated arrival times in your confirmation texts.** Just click the link to see when we'll arrive - helping you feel confident that we're on our way.

#### Your feedback shows we're moving in the right direction:

Text message surveys for **repairs rated at 8.5/10 or above** have jumped by 34.65%. We're proud of this progress and are working hard to improve even more.

If you have more feedback or ideas, we're always here to listen.

#### Smoother follow-up repairs

If we can't fix things on the first visit, we want to make arranging follow-up appointments easier and improve how we keep you updated.

#### More repairs done first time

By improving how we diagnose repairs and investing in extra training for our team, we'll be able to match the right expert to your job and complete more repairs in a single visit.

**Thank you** to everyone who's filled out a survey, joined our Home customer group, or helped us test new systems. Your input really does make all the difference.



Letting nature thrive:

## No Mow May across our communities

This May, we are delighted to once again take part in the No Mow May campaign - giving our green spaces a chance to flourish and providing a warm welcome to much-needed wildlife!

Since the 1930s, the UK has lost an incredible 97% of its flower-rich meadows. Every little effort helps to turn the tide.

By leaving some of our grass to grow longer and letting wildflowers take centre stage, we can support pollinators, tackle pollution, and help store more carbon in the soil.

It's a simple step, but it really does make a difference.

Throughout May, our Grounds Maintenance team will keep your neighbourhoods looking tidy while leaving around 25% of our usual mowed areas to grow wild.

We hope these vibrant patches of greenery and wildflowers will soon be buzzing with bees, butterflies, and birds - all bordered by neatly trimmed lawns.

**We'd love for you to join in too!** Even leaving a small section of your own lawn unmown can make a real impact.

With over 20 million gardens across the UK, these wild patches add up to something big for nature, our communities, and the planet.

If you'd like to learn more about the No Mow May movement, **visit the Plantlife website.**

And remember, you can support wildlife all year round by leaving a patch of your garden to grow a little wilder.

## Get involved and share your images

If you plan to take part in No Mow May, or if you're already letting your garden grow wild, we'd love to see your photos! Share your images with us by emailing [myhome@aspirehousing.co.uk](mailto:myhome@aspirehousing.co.uk) and help inspire others to support local wildlife.

Let's make space for nature - together!



# Shaping our future together:

## Launching our neighbourhood plans

### Creating positive contributions across your neighbourhoods

We're excited to announce the launch of our new neighbourhood plans - designed with you, for you.

Working closely with our customers and partners, we've developed four neighbourhood plans - **South, Central, North East, and North West** - each tailored to the unique needs and priorities of their communities.

These plans are guided by local insight and fully aligned with our Corporate Plan, ensuring we're working together for positive change in every area Aspire serves.

Through feedback at our 2025 "Championing You, Our Aspire Customer" event and from our Neighbourhood customer group, we've listened to what matters most to you.

We're now designing these plans into an accessible, customer-friendly brochure, which you can view on our website.

And, because you've told us you want regular updates, we'll be providing **quarterly progress reports in each edition of MyHome**.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their views and helped us shape a brighter future for our neighbourhoods.

### What's at the heart of our neighbourhood plans?

Each plan is built around five key themes:

1. **Involving customers** in everything we do
2. Being **highly visible** in our communities
3. Supporting customers to **help sustain their tenancies**
4. Working in partnership to **support our customers**
5. Being brilliant in how we tackle **anti-social behaviour (ASB)**

Together, we're building stronger, safer, and more connected communities.



View our plans brochure here:  
[aspirehousing.co.uk/neighbourhood-plans](https://aspirehousing.co.uk/neighbourhood-plans)

Your voice has been central to shaping these plans. Your priorities include:



Exploring a Good Neighbourhood Management policy for low-level nuisance



Clear consultation and communication about local plans or proposals



Strengthening domestic abuse awareness and multi-agency support



Targeted partnership working to address ASB, even in areas outside Aspire's direct management (like nearby parks)



Tackling fly tipping and improving bin store management

## National recognition:

### Aspire Housing wins prestigious ASB award

#### Our approach to ASB - Creating positive contribution across our neighbourhoods

We're delighted to share some fantastic news, we've been named the winner of Housing Provider of the Year, ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) Award, celebrating our commitment to safer, more supportive communities.

This recognition isn't just about our team's hard work - it's a testament to the power of customer voices and partnership.

Our customers have played a central role in shaping our approach to tackling anti-social behaviour.

Through feedback, open conversations, and participation in customer groups, **you've helped us understand what matters most and where we can make the biggest impact.**

Your insight has guided our service improvements, helped us respond more quickly, and ensured we act where it's needed most.

Our approach to ASB is rooted in our belief that **everyone deserves to live in a safe, welcoming environment.**

We're dedicated to not only tackling ASB when it arises, but also by creating positive contributions to our neighbourhoods - working with customers and partners to build stronger, more connected communities where people can thrive.

**Winning the Resolve ASB Housing Provider of the Year is a testament to what we can achieve when we stand together for our communities.**

**If you're experiencing anti-social behaviour or need support, our team is here to help.**



Find out more at our ASB support page [aspirehousing.co.uk/asb/](https://aspirehousing.co.uk/asb/)

#### Case Study: Restoring peace and safety for our community

Recently, we were called to support a community experiencing severe disruption caused by the actions of a single customer. The situation escalated quickly:

- **Extensive damage was caused to homes**, including tampering with gas and electricity meters and drilling into properties to access communal and neighbours' utilities.
- **Drug use in the property led to repeated fires and unsafe living conditions**, while unacceptable signage and a constant stream of visitors added to the distress.
- **The behaviour didn't just affect one home** - it impacted neighbouring customers, especially those who are vulnerable, and the overall sense of safety in the area.

#### **Our response was swift and determined.**

We worked closely with affected customers, securing an ASB Injunction to restore order and safety.

Our team coordinated the restoration of utilities, made properties safe again, and provided reassurance and support to those impacted.

When the same customer attempted to cause similar harm in other homes, we took further legal action - issuing additional injunctions and possession proceedings to protect the wider community.

This work meant more than just solving a problem - it was about **restoring peace, rebuilding trust, and showing our commitment to putting people first.** The courage of our customers, combined with the dedication of our colleagues, made a real difference.



**2,350**

Fly tipping incidents

## Tackling fly tipping together:

## Keeping our neighbourhoods clean



### Our approach to ASB - Creating positive contribution across our neighbourhoods



Between April and December 2025, our Neighbourhood Impact team responded to an incredible 2,350 fly tipping incidents across our communities.

Every single case was cleared within three working days - most were sorted on the same or very next day.

We're proud to have received positive feedback from customers for our quick action and commitment to keeping neighbourhoods safe and welcoming.

These removals came at a real cost - £27,360.79 in tipping fees alone - but we know how important it is to act fast and keep your environment clean.

We're not stopping at removals. We're working closely with customers and partners to reduce fly tipping through education, engagement, enforcement, and problem-solving.

Some areas - like York Street, Wilton Street, Hart Court, Norwich Place, and Vinebank Road - have seen repeated incidents, with 348 jobs in these locations alone. Eliminating fly tipping in these hotspots is a top priority for us.

Looking ahead, we'll continue exploring new ways to tackle the problem, including target hardening, partnership working, and environmental improvements to help prevent future issues.

Our teams are committed to responding quickly when issues arise and working proactively to create lasting, positive change. Together, we can keep our neighbourhoods clean, safe, and places we're all proud to call home.



Find out more about reporting fly tipping at [aspirehousing.co.uk/fly-tipping](https://aspirehousing.co.uk/fly-tipping)

# Let's keep our gardens beautiful

## Garden competition now open!



### Making a positive contribution to your neighbourhoods

With brighter days on the way, it's the perfect time to celebrate the gorgeous gardens and green spaces that make our communities special.

Whether you have your own garden, enjoy a shared community garden, or live in one of our community living schemes, we want to see how you're bringing colour and life to your outdoor spaces!

#### Enter our garden competition

We're inviting all our customers who have access to a garden or green space - whether it's your own, shared, or part of a community scheme - to take part in our garden competition. Show us your blooming borders, creative planters, or tranquil corners - no space is too big or too small. If you're proud of your patch, we want to see it!



Win a National Garden Centre voucher!

#### How to enter our garden competition

Simply fill out the entry form on our website at:

[aspirehousing.co.uk/gardening-comp](https://aspirehousing.co.uk/gardening-comp)

Upload your favourite photos of your garden, balcony, or shared green space for your chance to **win a National Garden Centre voucher\***.

Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just getting started, we'd love to celebrate your efforts and share inspiration across our communities.

#### Ready to show off your garden?

Complete the online form, upload your photos, and tell us a little about what makes your space special. Winners will be selected based on creativity, effort, and the love you put into your garden.

**Let's keep Aspire's gardens blooming and beautiful - good luck!**



\*Terms and conditions apply.



## Community spotlight: Highfield Grange

### Independent living, staying connected

Tucked away in the sought-after area of Maybank, Highfield Grange is more than just a collection of bungalows - it's a thriving community where independent living and connection go hand in hand.

Since opening its doors in 1975, Highfield Grange has provided a welcoming home for people over 55, with **31 purpose-built one- and two-bedroom bungalows set around a friendly cul-de-sac.**

At the heart of Highfield Grange is the communal building - a lively hub where neighbours gather for everything from **social events** and **exercise sessions** to **shared meals** and a **friendly chat over tea.**

The communal lounge hosts a variety of activities, and with a kitchen, laundry, and shared parking, day-to-day living is made easy and sociable.

The location couldn't be better. Customers enjoy the convenience of Maybank's local shops, cafes, and amenities, with Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke just a short trip away.

For those who love the outdoors, beautiful parks and country spaces like Brampton Park, Silverdale Country Park, and Apedale Community Country Park are all nearby. Golfers and football fans are well-catered for too, with several clubs and the Aspire Stadium close at hand.

But what truly sets Highfield Grange apart is its **strong sense of community.** Here, neighbours look out for each other - whether it's lending a hand in the garden, sharing a meal, or simply enjoying a chat. With the **support of a Community Living advisor** and a **calendar full of activities,** residents can make new friends, pursue hobbies, and enjoy a fulfilling lifestyle - all while maintaining their independence.

Highfield Grange is a shining example of how independent living schemes can offer so much more than just a place to stay.

**It's a place where everyone is welcome, connections run deep, and community spirit thrives.**

# Working together for stronger communities

## Our approach to ASB

Our partnership working is at the heart of everything we do.

Our Neighbourhood teams collaborate daily with local partners to support our communities, strengthen neighbourhoods, and make a real difference for everyone living in our homes.

By sharing information and working together, we're able to deliver quicker solutions, improve local areas, and provide a visible, approachable presence across our estates.

### Between April and December 2025, we:

- Carried out 20 community walkabouts with partners such as the police and local councils
- Took part in 12 Civic Pride events
- Supported regular litter picks, clean-up days, and police-led days of action
- Hosted four dedicated ASB customer and partner engagement events
- Held 32 customer drop-in surgeries so residents could speak to us directly in their communities

Partnership working is especially important when responding to more complex issues.

### During this period, our teams attended:

- 58 multi-agency meetings for situations involving domestic abuse
- 26 police high demand problem-solving meetings
- 134 mental health and wellbeing multi-agency meetings
- 2 meetings relating to hate crime

### This joint working means people get the right support at the right time.

We received 382 reports of anti-social behaviour, with 211 resolved through early intervention and partnership action.

We secured 10 injunctions where needed, and in cases where behaviour did not improve, 10 cases were progressed to possession.

Enforcement is always a last resort for us, but sometimes it's essential to protect the safety, quality of life, and wellbeing of others.

We're proud to play an active role in the Newcastle Partnership and wider areas, contributing to multi-agency groups and supporting shared priorities across our communities.

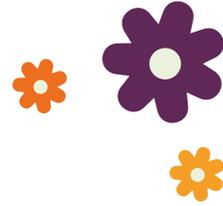
**SPOT IT,  
REPORT IT,  
WE'LL ACTION IT**



Find out when the next Civic Pride event is happening near you at: [aspirehousing.co.uk/civic-pride](https://aspirehousing.co.uk/civic-pride)

## Meet our new team member:

## Help us name the grass cutter!



We're excited to announce that our Grounds Maintenance team has a brand-new helper - a state-of-the-art grass cutter!

This clever machine is designed to keep our green spaces looking their best, **working efficiently and quietly alongside our team.**

The grass cutter, the RC900, can mow large areas, navigate around obstacles, and even return to its charging station when it's done - all with minimal fuss.

It's a fantastic addition to our toolkit, helping us care for your neighbourhood's lawns while freeing up our team to focus on other important tasks.

**But our new robot needs a name** - and that's where you come in! Let's welcome our new team member together - and make Aspire's green spaces even more special!

### Name the robot

We're inviting you all to take part in our competition to name the robot grass cutter. Get creative, have some fun, and send us your best ideas! **The winning name will be proudly displayed on our robot** - and the winner will see their chosen name on the grass cutter.

### How to enter:

Submit your suggested robot name using the form on our website at:

[aspirehousing.co.uk/grass-cutter](https://aspirehousing.co.uk/grass-cutter)

or scan the QR code.

Name the robot  
grass cutter





## Talk to us



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 [aspirehousing.co.uk](http://aspirehousing.co.uk)

 Please recycle me

 Approved by our engaged customers



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