

# inspire

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for tenants and leaseholders of Rutland

## New National Standards



In April, months of consultation with landlords and tenants came to an end and the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) was launched. The TSA is the new Government appointed agency that regulates all registered Housing Associations, including Spire Homes.

What does this mean to you? Well, the TSA wants all landlords and tenants to work together to provide a service that tenants want. The TSA is putting you at the centre.

What do these changes mean to us? At the heart of the TSA's approach are new standards, which we will need to focus on. The new standards place a much greater emphasis on the relationship between landlords and tenants at a local level. The standards also give you greater opportunities to help shape, monitor and review our services.

Using these new standards as a guide, we will work with you to see how we are meeting these and what we need to put into place. We will

also be asking you to agree how the standards will meet local priorities, known as local offers. More will become clear over the coming months.

### So what are these new standards?

1. **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard** – making sure tenants have a wide range of opportunities to get involved as well as being involved in monitoring our performance. This standard also includes customer care, choice and complaints
2. **Home Standard** – making sure landlords provide accommodation that meets a certain standard and a good quality repair service, which meets tenants' priorities
3. **Tenancy Standard** – covers how we let homes, tenancy issues and how we set rents
4. **Neighbourhood and Community Standard** – how we maintain and improve

neighbourhoods, including dealing with anti-social behaviour

5. **Value for money Standard** – making sure we provide services that not only give quality, but are also cost effective.

We will be letting you know how we are performing against the new standards and how we will be involving you in developing our 'local offers' to you. You will receive this by 1st October and a copy will also be sent to the Tenant Services Authority.



## COMMUNITY GRANTS PANEL NEEDS YOU!

**We're setting up a Community Grants Panel and we want you to be part of it!**

We are looking for 6 tenants to sit on the panel to help us decide who receives a grant from our new community fund.

We're in the middle of finalising our plans, but the fund will have two parts. One part will give out smaller grants of up to £500. The second part, for larger grants of between £500 and £5,000! Tenants or

groups of tenants will be able to apply for a grant.

We will be looking for applications that show how they will benefit Spire Homes' tenants.

Sitting on the panel will mean you have to attend around six meetings a year. You don't need to have previous experience as we'll support you and give you any relevant training.

If our new panel sounds like something you would like to join then call 0845 603 5399 or email [spirehomes@longhurst-group.org.uk](mailto:spirehomes@longhurst-group.org.uk).



# £21 million improvements are on track

As you know we have big plans to invest £21 million in improving homes across Rutland over the next five years. Well you will be pleased to know that things are really moving forward and we're well on schedule.

We started work on improving homes from day one and so far, so good. Your feedback on the improvements is telling us you're really pleased.

Hardly anything will go untouched. We're improving gutters, soffits and fascias; installing efficient new central heating systems; modernising kitchens and bathrooms; erecting new fencing; and introducing improvements to sheltered housing schemes.

What's more tenants have been helping us make the really important decisions about which choices and products we

should use and the way the work should be carried out.

As well as improving homes, we also promised to improve some of the services we provide and these are on track too! For example, we've introduced a tenancy support service for Rutland tenants. We have also introduced a new text service to make it easier for you to get in touch with us.



Mr and Mrs Harrison's new fencing in Ketton

“ Alan and Sylvia Lee live in Cottesmore. They have had a new bathroom fitted.

We are really pleased with our new bathroom. We had all that snow when FWA West came to fit it, but there was no mess and they were really efficient. ”



We have fitted 57 new kitchens so far

We have fitted 62 new bathrooms so far

“ Audrey lives in Oakham. She has recently had a new kitchen and bathroom.

I am absolutely delighted. It has made such a difference to my home. What more can I say? ”

83 homes have new central heating so far with 100% tenant satisfaction

137 homes have new fencing and 168 have had external improvements

We have fitted 39 new kitchens and 52 bathrooms at our sheltered schemes



“ Joy lives in Oakham, and has had a new kitchen and bathroom.

I'm really pleased with the work that has been carried out. I couldn't ask for a better kitchen. ”

# Join in and make a difference

We really do mean it when we say that our top priority is getting tenants more involved in what we do. There are lots of ways in which you can help influence the way we deliver our services to you.



You can join the Quality Assurance Group, which has helped choose the products that will be fitted in homes as part of the £21 million improvements programme. The group has also helped plan the improvement work and will monitor the performance of our contractors.

Residents living in our sheltered schemes have also selected the colour of the paint, carpets and curtains that will be used to decorate the communal areas in their schemes.

Over the next five years, we'll also be looking for help with our Environmental Improvements programme. We'll be investing £450,000 in making neighbourhoods better and we want your suggestions – just fill in the suggestion form inserted into this newsletter.

We will also be introducing a handy person service, but what kind of jobs could they do? Again, you can get involved and let us know.

If you would like to get involved, please get in touch.

## The RTLP is still on the case

The work of the Rutland Tenants and Leaseholders Partnership (RTLP) did not end when the transfer was completed; it was in fact just beginning.

It is still our intention to see that all the promises set in the Offer Document are kept, not only on time, but also that quality and excellent services are given.

'Trust but verify' are our watchwords. The RTLP are the representatives for you – the tenants and leaseholders of

Rutland. If you have any ideas or feedback, let us know and we will make sure that your views are not only heard, but are taken seriously.

Those of us who have been closely working with Spire Homes' staff leading up to transfer, have no doubts that their heart is in the right place and we can all look forward to a secure future and continued improvement both to our homes and the environment within which we live.

**Denis Owens, RTLP member**



## Spire Homes Fun Day 2010

**Saturday 17th July**

at Uppingham Church of England Primary School, Belgrave Road, Uppingham, LE15 9RT

**From 11am – 2pm**



This is a great opportunity to have a fun day out and tell us what YOU think about our services! Find out about improvements planned to your home and neighbourhood! Get the chance to talk with staff and contractors!

To book your place or if you need transport arranging, please contact Charlotte Holley on **01572 725680** or at **charlotte.holley@longhurst-group.org.uk**

## Blooming Marvellous

If your garden is blooming lovely then enter our Gardens in Bloom competition and you could win one of our fantastic prizes!

We have shopping vouchers to the tune of £30, £25 and £15 to give away to best three entries in each of the following categories:

- Best Individual Garden Display
- Best Hanging Basket, Tubs or Balcony Display
- Best Sheltered Scheme Display
- Best Vegetable Garden

To enter, simply take a photograph of your garden, tub or hanging basket and complete the entry form below. Good Luck!

✂-----

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

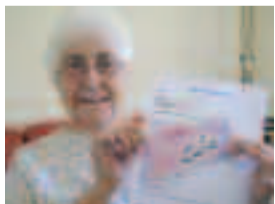
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel number: \_\_\_\_\_

Category: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach this form to the back of your photograph and post it to Spire Homes, 1 Cold Overton Road, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6NT. Entries need to be in by 31 August 2010.

## And our survey said .... you're a winner



Would you like to win £25 of shopping vouchers just like Mrs Williams from Uppingham did in February? Then just return your tenant satisfaction

survey after your home has been repaired and you will be entered into our monthly prize draw.

"As well as being a fun competition, the survey is really important to us as it helps us improve our services," said Spire Homes' Craig McClintock. "The £25 shopping vouchers show everyone that we really do value what they have to tell us."

## Code of Practice for Supported Housing

Eighteen months of really hard work have come to an end and we're delighted to say that we have successfully achieved the Code of Practice.

The Code of Practice is only awarded to housing associations which offer really high quality service to supported tenants. It is a real feather in our cap and also important in showing outside organisations and both current and possible tenants that we offer an excellent service.

Achieving the Code of Practice meant collecting, sorting and presenting evidence to show that we met strict standards in ten areas. We then had to show our work to an independent assessor.

We'd like to thank everyone who took part – both our staff and tenants – we couldn't of done it without your help!



## Would you like to go under cover?

Spire Homes is looking for budding James Bonds – well not really, but we're looking for people to become mystery shoppers and help us find out more about the quality of the services we offer.

Once you've completed your basic training, all you have to do is contact some of our services. Just by giving them a ring, sending them a text or an email, and asking for help or advice and then letting us know what happened is all that's involved.

We'll cover your expenses and the feedback you provide will be really helpful.

To sign up or find out more give Charlotte Holley a call on 01572 725680 or email [charlotte.holley@longhurst-group.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.holley@longhurst-group.org.uk)



Send your entry to **Inspire, Spire Homes, 1 Cold Overton Road, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6NT** for a chance to win a £20.00 Argos voucher by 31st July 2010.

## inbrief



## Inspire formats

Your Inspire newsletter is now available in different formats. If you require a version on tape, in braille, in a different language or large print, please contact us on 01572 755465 and we will be happy to help you.



## Getting in touch

You can now contact us by email at : [spirehomes@longhurst-group.org.uk](mailto:spirehomes@longhurst-group.org.uk)

Our main office number is:

**01572 755465**

Our text number is:

**447797 800 062**

Log onto: [www.spirehomes.org.uk](http://www.spirehomes.org.uk)

## Opening Hours

Monday to Thursday 9am - 5pm  
Friday 9am - 4.30pm

## COMPETITION FUNFAIR WORDSEARCH

Find the hidden words running forward, backward, upward, downward or diagonally.

Which one is missing?

C	F	U	N	H	O	U	S	E
A	O	D	O	D	G	E	M	S
N	H	C	B	H	O	L	C	U
D	S	A	O	A	D	I	W	O
Y	I	R	I	N	S	G	A	H
F	F	O	S	U	U	H	L	T
L	D	U	M	D	L	T	T	S
O	L	S	T	N	I	S	Z	O
S	O	E	D	O	D	K	E	H
S	G	L	H	A	G	Y	R	G

CANDYFLOSS	GOLDFISH	COCONUT
DODGEMS	HOTDOG	CAROUSEL
GHOSTHOUSE	MUSIC	WALTZER
FUNHOUSE	LIGHTS	KIDS

Name: .....

Address: .....

Age: .....

The missing word is: .....

The winner of the Easter Wordsearch from the last issue is-

Mrs S Friend from Greatham

