

During March 2017 the team held a series of local roadshow meetings with residents to discuss planned service improvements and explain how services will evolve over the coming months.

We had over 170 residents attend the different sessions and the feedback and interaction has been invaluable. Thank you to everyone who attended! On the back of the questions raised, we have developed this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document which addresses key points raised.

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Frequently Asked Questions

North East Service Improvements

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The JJH Service Offer and access to information

Can we have the new tenancy pack as a brochure?

Yes, we will make the tenancy pack available on the Johnnie Johnson Housing website at www.jjhousing.co.uk.

Can we have a Repairs satisfaction survey?

We already have a repairs satisfaction survey in place which is run using our telephone survey Voice Scape. We can share the results in JJH Voices.

Why do people on a weekly tenancy pay a month in advance on rent when benefits are paid 2 weeks in arrears?

We ask all residents to pay rent in line with the terms of their tenancy agreement, most of which require rent paid a month in advance. This helps provide you with a financial 'cushion' if your circumstances change. We will enter into a Payment Plan with customers who would suffer financial hardship if their benefits are paid in arrears.

Can you text us on our mobiles with updates?

We are developing our ability to communicate with customers by text. You can add your mobile number to your details at any time by contacting the Customer Service Hub.

Can automated feedback calls please be carried out during 'office hours'?

Some of our calls are made outside of office hours so that we can contact residents who work or may be busy during the day.

A seven day service

We can get help during the week, but how do we get urgent help during the weekend?

Astraline customers are able to pull their cord at any time day or night including the weekend. JJH's emergency repairs service is also available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Astraline services are available to customers in both Independent Living Schemes and in General Let properties. You can make enquiries with the Customer Service Hub at any time.

How can we ensure night time and weekend access to doctors, paramedics, nurses etc? they cannot easily get in the building. Can this be resolved with a key safe?

Visitors to schemes should be given access to the building by the person they are visiting. Emergency services can be given access remotely by Astraline who operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In a very small number of schemes there are local arrangements for emergency access which are agreed with residents.

Independent Living Schemes

Can we make appointments to see our ILC?

Yes you can ask for an appointment in your home with an Independent Living Coordinator. You can either make arrangements when your Independent Living Coordinator is at your scheme; or you can contact the Hub to ask for an appointment. As a result of feedback from the Residents Forum we will also advertise times and venues for housing 'surgeries' for which no appointment is required; and for scheme walkabouts.

What will the ILC be doing if they are not on site?

Part of the Independent Living Officer and Independent Living Coordinator role is to build relationships with community organisations

who may be able to bring activities and services into your scheme. They are also responsible for marketing the schemes, working with potential new customers, and are required to keep up to date with training. Most of these activities are designed to help them in their role as your Independent Living Coordinator and to improve services for you at the scheme.

What is the guest room procedure going to be?

Again you can ask your Independent Living Coordinator to make a booking for the guest room at your scheme; or contact the Customer Service Hub. As an organisation we are moving away from taking cash payments, and we will ask you to pay by debit card over the telephone.

Can JJH have a policy on vaping?

Our No Smoking Policy also applies to vaping.

Are there contingency plans in place for scheme emergencies such as power cuts?

Yes, JJH has extensive contingency plans dealing with all emergencies. We also have Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for residents who need one. PEEPs can be accessed by the emergency services even when your Independent Living Coordinator is away from your scheme.

Can we have a business update once a month as part of regular coffee mornings?

Yes, we can provide an update about what's going on in JJH as part of scheme coffee mornings, or as a newsletter for the scheme. The team are working on a scheme newsletter to be launched from July.

Is a key available in case of emergency or help?

The Emergency Services are able to access a master key in the case of emergency. Customers are responsible for their own arrangements for others to have access to their keys in case they lock themselves out.

Can we have free Wi-Fi?

We are exploring the provision of Wi-Fi in schemes - however it is likely to incur a service charge.

Service Charges

Can we have a breakdown of specific cost for all equipment?

We will provide a breakdown of equipment costs and services at each scheme AGM meeting which takes place in the Autumn. This will help us to focus services on the items customers want and improve value for money.

Do you pay service charge on white goods even if it's your own fridge?

Yes, everyone contributes to the white goods at schemes even if they have their own, because it is their choice to buy their own.

Why should bungalows pay for services not directly affecting our individual homes?

At some schemes, residents of bungalows have access to the sheltered scheme and so they make a contribution to the cost of relevant services. This approach was reaffirmed by the customer led service charge review in 2016.

Why have service charges increased when rent has decreased?

JJH is currently following a government directive to reduce rents by 1% per year. By contrast, we are required to recover the actual cost of delivering services. For some schemes service charges have increased, although in other schemes service charges have reduced.

Can we have more transparency in what services are included in the service charge and how they are apportioned?

Yes we will put this information on the JJH website before the scheme AGMs in the Autumn.

Property Maintenance and Investment

When will our kitchens and bathrooms be modernised?

Each year, every resident receives information about major works which are planned over the next five years. We will make this information available on the JJH website.

Can we have bathroom and kitchen extractors to reduce condensation in bungalows?

This would be considered when either the kitchen or bathrooms are replaced. However if these rooms have windows then it is more effective to open the window rather than a mechanical extractor.

Can we have a do's and don'ts list – i.e. if you need a repair?

Yes, this is covered in the new Residents Handbook which is available on the JJH website.

Why don't the schemes have solar panels?

There would be an ongoing service renewals cost to residents covering the installation, servicing and replacement.

How do you monitor contractors to assess quality?

We hold regular meetings to review performance and collect customer feedback via the electronic telephone survey called Voice Scape. If a resident indicates they are dissatisfied then they receive a call by a staff member in the hub. However we are continuing to make improvements in the way we manage the contracts we have for repairs, grounds maintenance, and cleaning. Customers will also be able to feedback through the programme of scheme walkabouts which are being published on JJH's website in June.

Why can't JJH replace all lights to LED, which are cheaper?

We have a programme in place replacing older communal lighting with LED fittings.

Where it doesn't exist, can we have ramped access to properties?

We have a central budget of £30k per annum to be used for improving various access issues around the schemes. So yes if practicably possible this can be looked at on a scheme by scheme basis.

Why are corridor lights on in the day?

Our Independent Living Coordinators are working with technical colleagues and contractors to review day time lighting at schemes. We will report back through the Regional Forum later in 2017.

Astraline

Why can't we opt in and out of Astraline provision?

In most schemes the provision of Astraline is 'hard wired' into the scheme and so all residents contribute to the service. We are exploring the use of the 'I'm OK' button which will make the service more flexible for customers when compared with current 'Morning Call' arrangements.

Can we visit Astraline?

We can enable customers to see how Astraline operates. However Astraline is based in Stockport so it would be more cost effective to do this through a video or via video conference.