

## MESSAGE FROM REBECCA RANCE, INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### Welcome to the first edition of 'Epic News'!

This is where we share with you any updates in relation to EPIC, how things are going, what we are working on and how you can get involved. This edition also introduces you to the EPIC Interim Management Team.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions you have or visit our website. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section is particularly helpful.

Take care and stay safe,

*Becky*

## REGULATOR UPDATE

The Housing sector is regulated (controlled) by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) who ensure that the sector is viable, efficient and well-governed, and that we deliver homes that meet a range of needs.

The RSH use a grading system to identify how we are doing. We wrote to you in November last year to let you know that the RSH has rated EPIC 'G3/V2' which is a lower rating than previous.

We are working hard and taking steps to improve the way EPIC is governed and are undertaking fire safety work in certain properties. If your home is one of the properties requiring fire safety works you will have received a separate direct communication and consultation concerning the work required.

We are committed to improve the way we operate and to meet the required standards. We have created a full plan to address all the areas that the RSH has advised must be improved. We are meeting

regularly with the RSH to explain our plans and for them to oversee our progress, and they will continue to have close contact with EPIC.

**Please be assured that your home and tenancy is secure and the services you usually receive are not affected and will continue.**

## MEET EPIC'S MANAGEMENT TEAM



**Rebecca (Becky) Rance** (Interim CEO) – "I am passionate about providing great services, safe homes for tenants and leaseholders and ending homelessness."



**Jason Cannon** (Interim Operations Director – Assets/Technical) – "I have worked in the asset management and repairs sector for over 25 years also operating at executive level in all aspects of asset management."



**Lynn Clayton** (Interim Operations Director – Housing/Infrastructure) – "I've worked in social housing for over 30 years – 20 of which have been at Director/Executive Director level."



**Dan Glass** (Acting Finance Director) – "I have been with EPIC for 17 years, as a Finance Officer, Finance Team Leader and now operating as the Interim Finance Director."



## COVID 19

The last two years have been a rollercoaster with the pandemic. Please be assured that we continue to monitor all Government guidance and will let you know of any changes to our service.

### Currently on hold:

Reception Service at our Bentilee Office.

Face-to-face customer engagement activities.

### Coming soon:

Virtual Engagement Forum.

If a member of our team is due to visit you, or if you have a contractor booked in for a repair, please inform us if you develop any Covid symptoms or have tested positive.

The main symptoms are a **high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste**. The NHS website is helpful if you are unsure or need to book a test.



## PUZZLE CORNER

Fed up with Winter? Have a go at our Spring themed wordsearch:

B	N	U	R	G	E	C	Y	F	L	I	N	G	I	P	
R	O	M	H	A	D	H	K	U	H	L	H	S	M	A	
V	P	D	C	R	N	G	S	P	R	O	U	T	S	Z	<b>SPRING</b>
J	E	A	I	D	I	R	N	U	K	J	P	G	Q	M	
V	M	F	P	E	S	E	J	J	L	H	L	Y	T	W	CHANGE
D	A	F	A	N	W	E	C	S	A	G	D	X	D	N	CROCUS
E	A	O	K	C	R	N	L	R	N	Z	H	J	W	G	DAFFODIL
C	B	D	Z	F	E	V	E	R	R	C	Y	A	L	X	FEVER
Z	R	I	N	T	N	W	X	D	Y	E	L	X	H	T	FLING
K	F	L	N	Z	E	H	I	Z	Z	E	Q	W	B		GARDEN
S	W	B	T	L	W	C	H	A	H	N	F	E	G	P	GREEN
E	W	N	Z	U	U	L	L	G	A	Z	E	Z	D	X	HATCH
C	W	B	T	U	A	J	M	Y	T	U	G	K	O	N	RENEW
P	S	K	R	C	P	M	B	R	C	R	O	C	U	S	SPROUT
Z	C	B	C	H	A	N	G	E	H	M	F	I	N	X	



## SPOTLIGHT ON DAMP & MOULD

### Types of damp:

**Condensation** - When warm moist air comes into contact with cooler surfaces. Left untreated, condensation can result in peeling decorations, unsightly mould growth and damage to fabrics and clothing, particularly in areas with little air circulation.

**Penetrating damp** - When moisture enters your home because of an external defect (for example a crack in a wall or missing roof tile).

**Rising damp** - Usually when a property's Damp Proof Course (DPC) or membrane fails and moisture from the ground rises and damages plaster finishes and decoration.

### What can you do to help?



#### Do:

- Heat your property adequately.
- Ventilate your property, particularly when cooking and bathing.
- Remove excess moisture from cool surfaces to prevent mould spores from germinating.
- Consider occupancy levels within your home and the humidity levels generated.
- Clean areas of minor mould growth with an approved Mould & Mildew treatment in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.



#### Don't:

- Cover or block trickle ventilation or air bricks within your home.
- Isolate or switch off extractor fans in the kitchen or bathroom.
- Leave condensation on windows or frames.
- Dry large volumes of clothes on radiators, particularly during winter months.
- Leave kitchen and bathroom doors open when in use.

By Email – [mailbox@epichousing.co.uk](mailto:mailbox@epichousing.co.uk)

Website – [www.epichousing.co.uk](http://www.epichousing.co.uk)

#### Minor areas:

- Treat minor areas of mould with an approved mould & mildew treatment (available from hardware stores and supermarkets) in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.
- Increase ventilation either mechanically or naturally, particularly when cooking and bathing.
- In affected areas reposition furniture where practical, particularly when adjacent to external walls to improve ventilation.
- Once mould spores have been treated, redecorate using a quality fungicidal paint to prevent mould spores from germinating.
- Stripping of contaminated wallpaper is usually necessary.



**If you have followed the advice given and feel that your property is continuing to suffer from condensation or moderate/severe mould growth, please get in touch on:  
01782 252575**



### GET INVOLVED – WE WANT YOUR VIEWS

We aim to provide high levels of customer satisfaction and want to work with customers to make sure we deliver a high level of service.

As we move forward and develop the way forward for EPIC it will be important to involve you, our tenants and customers, in the journey and ensure key decisions are taken with you in mind. In the next couple of months we want to develop a virtual tenant consultation forum and we are looking for volunteers. All meetings will initially be held virtually via Microsoft Teams and we will be happy to support you to use this system.

**Please get in touch to find out more either:**

**In writing** – EPIC Housing, 131-141 Ubbertley Road, Bentilee, Stoke-on-Trent, ST2 0EF

**By Telephone** – 01782 252575



### SAFETY UPDATE

Following the successful completion of the alarm installation programme **in the properties in Bentilee affected by the urgent fire safety work**, EPIC recently started a programme of works in the above properties to keep you and other residents as safe as possible.

A letter was sent to all tenants of the properties where these works will be carried out, explaining that we will be starting a programme of interim fire safety works in the upcoming weeks.

These works include:

- Adding a door closer to the front of the external door of each flat.
- Boarding any glazing that is present in the external door.
- Boarding any flat windows that are located within the communal area (i.e. bathroom windows)
- Blocking of air vents located within the communal area.

These are temporary works for the added safety of our tenants. The next phase of our programme will replace the temporary measures with new fire doors and fireproof glazed windows.

#### IMPORTANT NOTICE

**Tenants of the affected blocks are reminded that they must evacuate their homes if the fire alarms are**

activated and must not re-enter the block until they are advised to do so by the Fire Service or an EPIC representative.



## STAYING SAFE IN YOUR HOME IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

Epic carries out regular fire safety checks in our blocks of flats. There are lots of things you can do to keep yourself and other residents safe.

- If you live in a house, make an escape plan with your family.
- Evacuate your home/building if you hear a smoke detector or fire alarm, or if you see smoke or fire.
- If you live in a block of flats, make sure you know where your nearest exit is and be clear about your quickest escape route from your home/building.
- Make sure you and your family are familiar with the instructions on the Fire Action Notice for your building if you live in a block of flats.
- Do not take risks or attempt to fight a fire. Do not return to your home/building for any reason until authorised to do so by the Fire and Rescue Service or an EPIC representative.

### FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

- Keep your escape routes clear and do not store belongings, including mobility scooters, in stairwells and corridors.
- Never leave appliances such as cookers, tumble dryers, heaters or fires switched on when you are either asleep or out of your home.
- Never place flammable items (e.g. clothes, paper) near to or covering storage heaters, stove tops or gas/solid fuel fires.
- Take extra care when you are cooking.
- Never prop open or remove the closing mechanism from the front entrance door to a flat.
- Test the smoke detectors in your home every week.



## HOW ARE WE DOING?



If you are unhappy about the service you have received please let us know and we will do our best to resolve your issue as soon as possible.

We value customer feedback (including complaints) and use it to drive service improvements.

You can give us feedback on any of our services anytime:

**Online** ([www.epichousing.co.uk](http://www.epichousing.co.uk))

**By phone** 01782 252575

Or feel free to drop us a **letter**:

EPIC, 141/141 Ubbberley Road, Bentilee, Stoke-on-Trent, ST2 0EF or **email** [mailbox@epichousing.co.uk](mailto:mailbox@epichousing.co.uk)

## HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE COMMUNICATED WITH?



If you would prefer to receive this newsletter and any other correspondence via a different method, please drop us an email or give us a call.

---

*We hope you enjoyed our first newsletter – If you have any ideas for our next edition or stories to share, please let us know!*

---