

Resident bulletin

Winter
2024

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Welcome

Hello and welcome to our winter newsletter, Here to Help. In this edition, we've packed it with useful tips to keep your home safe and dry from the winter chill.

Discover the steps we're taking to provide a consistent service during these colder months and beyond. Get involved in community activities to stay connected. Share your thoughts on how we can make this newsletter even better for you, and you will be in with a chance to win a £50 Love to Shop voucher.

What you've been telling us

We've been listening and learning from resident feedback – your voices have sparked some big improvements to some of our property services. You said clear communication, timely updates on repairs and respect go a long way, and we're all about it.

Our repairs teams and Networks operatives got to work through our 'Toolbox Talks' – where they collaboratively share tips on fixing things in homes, the best tools to use, and even the best ways to prevent hiccups. And you know what? It's working. Our Networks team has bumped up repairs customer satisfaction levels to 73% and we're working diligently to continue making improvements. But don't just take our word for it – here's what some residents have been saying:



“He came on time, did his work, left everything clean and then went so I'm very satisfied.”

South London resident

“It was easy for me to book. I was well-informed and told when the operatives were on the way. Everything was left tidy, and everything was fixed correctly and replaced with a nice new fan.”

Midlands resident

Digital noticeboards in action



We're trying something new to keep residents in the loop and ensure you get the latest news fast. We're testing out digital noticeboards in one of our estates in Northampton.

Why are we doing this? Because we get how important it is to keep you informed, and we want to do it in the most effective way possible. These digital noticeboards help us share news more quickly, and it's a cost-effective move to make our services even better for you.

Unlock savings and financial support with Pocket Power

In our third year of partnership, over 632 MTVH residents have saved £169,399 by switching to cheaper household deals and applying for discounts. Worried about winter-related expenses? Call our Empowering Futures team on **0203 535 3535** to learn more about the support we can provide.



“From the support provided, I had £3k debt written off which seriously made me feel like a new person! It reminded me to watch where my money is going a bit more, allowing me to feel more in control.”



Warm, safe, and dry homes - £1.5m fund commitment for damp and mould

Providing homes that are warm, safe, and dry is a top priority. That's why we've set up a £1.5 million fund to tackle damp and mould head-on. This fund is our way of saying, we're here to help. Because a warm and dry home isn't just nice – it's essential.

Rapid response and long-term solutions, for your peace of mind

Did you know we've got a fantastic team of specialists who can help to keep your home safe from damp and mould? If there's ever a damp or mould hiccup in your home, we're on it within five days of you reporting it. But we're not about short-term fixes. We carry assessments after 12 months to make sure things aren't just patched up but are actually fixed at the root. Your safety is our top priority, and we're here to make sure your home stays safe and dry, all year round.



Networks staff at Edgware, Middlesex.

Warm homes, big savings – £9 million funding secured for 2,000 homes

Did you know we secured £9 million in government funding this year to make over 2,000 homes in Lambeth and Nottingham warmer? It's a big step towards our goal of making homes greener and more sustainable. During the winter months, it means warmer homes and extra savings on energy bills – around £167 each year on average, and with some residents saving up to £900.



Available now protection from the unexpected with home contents insurance for all MTVH tenants and homeowners

Subscribe now and make the most of £10,000 in home contents coverage, thanks to our partnership with the Wessex Group, with no excess fees to pay. Winter storms, unexpected leaks, or accidents at home – our exclusively negotiated insurance for MTVH residents has got you covered. Our insurance scheme ensures you can enjoy the winter months without worrying about unforeseen events.

Some examples of what is not insured:

- Damage due to wear and tear, mechanical breakdown, or gradual deterioration.
- Issues related to wet or dry rot.
- Storm damage to fences, hedges, and gates is not included.
- Incidents of theft or malicious damage caused by you, paying guests, or tenants.
- Motorised vehicles, aircraft, boats, caravans,

or trailers are excluded.

- Accidental damage from domestic animals, including chewing, scratching, or fouling.
- Damage to personal belongings, including certain sports equipment in use.

You can read the full list of what is not covered at mtvh.co.uk. Search for 'Home contents insurance.'

The Wessex Group, working hand-in-hand with our insurance broker Aon, is here to ensure you get the best possible service and support when you need it most.

This insurance scheme is only available if you apply for it. Visit our website for all details on coverage and complete your application today.

Empowering lives, warming hearts

For over three years, MTVH Warm Hubs have been a lifeline for London and East Midlands residents. Offering food support, debt advice, health-checks, and exercise classes for seniors, these hubs make a real difference to people's lives during the colder months. Residents praise the services for unifying communities during challenging winter months.

Call our Empowering Futures team on **0203 535 3535** to learn more about the support we can provide.

Volunteers at Clapham Park Cube.



Winter fun within your community



Cooking workshop for kids at West Hendon Community Centre.



Brixton Chamber Orchestra at St. Martin's, Lambeth.

Did you know, we have a variety of upcoming local events brought to you by MTVH's Empowering Futures team? Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to learn more about the exciting community events in your local area.

Thinking about volunteering?

You may be thinking about volunteering, wondering what opportunities there are, and how you can help. There are many types of volunteering opportunities and every contribution, no matter how big or small, is a gift to the local community and rewarding to volunteers themselves.

To register your interest, contact us via emailing: **communitysupport@mtvh.co.uk**. You can also learn more about inspiring stories from other resident volunteers online mtvh.co.uk search for 'volunteers'.

Nottingham Food Hub.



Be prepared during cold weather

Cold mornings may look picturesque, but they can also bring challenges for properties. Is your heating going to work properly? Is damp, and mould condensation is likely to be an issue as the outside temperatures drop? Here are a few handy tips to help you make your home safe and dry during the winter season.



Thaw away pipes

The colder weather can make pipes from condensing boilers get a bit chilly. But don't worry, you might be able to thaw them out yourself using our handy guide. Want to learn more about how to thaw frozen pipes, visit our website and search for 'frozen pipes' for our helpful guide. Request an emergency repair if you can't thaw pipes and you've lost heating.

Does your home insurance cover you for weather-related problems? Cold temperatures can cause pipes to freeze and sometimes leak, so make sure you're covered for any damage.

Managing damp and mould and condensation

- Damp, mould and condensation can occur at any time, but it's more likely to be an issue as the outside temperatures drop. Moisture naturally builds inside your home from daily activities, such as cooking, washing and drying clothes. If it can't escape, it leads to condensation, which in turn can cause damp and mould to form on windowsills, tiles and walls. Understanding the causes is key to preventing health risks and home

damage. These suggestions may not remove damp and mould, but they can help manage it while we're taking other steps.

- Did you know warmer air holds more moisture? If you can, try to warm up your home and maintain a comfortable temperature, ideally at least 16 degrees.
- Keep your home well ventilated – Close the kitchen door whilst cooking or use extractor fans in the bathroom.
- Where possible, dry washing on an airer not a radiator
- Get your boiler checked to make sure it's safe and efficient. If you rent a home from us, we'll check all the gas appliances we provide are safe and working properly every 12 months. If you own your home or are a shared owner, you need to arrange this yourself with Gas Safe Registered engineer.

For more guidance on dealing with damp and mould in your home or to report it, search for 'damp and mould' on our website for more information. To find information on financial advice and available support, take a look at page 10.



We can support you with managing your money

We know that the increased cost of living is affecting everyone, in different ways. If you're worried about money, our Money Advice team can help and there are also organisations that can support you.

We can help you with things like:

- Making a budget.
- Keeping your utility bills down this winter and beyond.
- Paying rent
- Claiming benefits
- Other charities and organisations that can help.

Specialist Benefits and Debt Caseworker Jose Doval from MTVH's Money Advice team recently supported resident Rosette, a 67-year-old pensioner whose Housing Benefit stopped when she reached state pension age. She was unable to claim pension credit. Rosette, who is disabled and in receipt of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), was left feeling distressed and struggling to pay rent from her £624 pension.

After learning more about Rosette's circumstances, Jose provided support with online applications via telephone. As a result, Rosette is now able to get her state pension

backdated and receive full Housing Benefit moving forward, as well as £80 per month on Council Tax Support.

Commenting on Jose's support Rosette said: "It's been an extremely difficult time for me, I was really struggling financially especially with rent as I had to pay it from my pension, which was my only source of income. I was overwhelmed with how I needed to go about getting support which caused me a lot of stress and anguish. With Jose's help, I was able to understand what support was available and how I could go about getting it."



"Jose helped with developing financial stability in my life, which has relieved a lot of my stress. I am grateful and truly appreciate all that he has done to help me throughout the process."

If you need financial support with benefits, applying for relevant support funds or energy bills we provide free and confidential advice. Email communitysupport@mtvh.co.uk or you can call 0203 535 3535 to speak to our Money Advice team.

Keeping you safe from fire

Did you know you we recorded 50 household fires since January 2023 with the most common starting in the kitchen? During the winter season we also see increased use of heating sources, candles, and smoking which may increase fire risks. So as a resident, it is important that you are aware of fire hazards and how best to avoid them.

Cooking

- Be extra vigilant when deep-fat frying or cooking with oil because hot oil can easily catch fire. The safest way to deep fry food in oil is to use an electric, thermostat-controlled, deep-fat fryer.
- Try to avoid distractions – whether it is pets, children, or the tv. If you're not watching your cooking, it could burn and cause a fire before you have the chance to notice. Always keep an eye on your cooking and turn off appliances when you've finished. Never leave cooking on when you're not in the house.

Candles

- Always attend to candles while they are lit. We recommend placing candles on stable, heat-resistant surfaces, ensuring they are away from curtains, papers, or any other flammable materials.

- Remember to put candles out when you leave the room and ensure they're put out completely before you go to bed.
- Put tea lights in proper holders. The foil outer container gets extremely hot and can melt surfaces underneath.
- Keep out of the reach of children.

Smoking

- Choose a designated area for smoking that is far from flammable materials.
- Avoid smoking in bed or on balconies.

Batteries

- Stay safe with lithium-ion batteries. While they power our everyday devices, improper use can pose a fire risk. Follow these tips for a worry-free experience:
- Use the original charger provided by the manufacturer or from reputable retailers.
- Follow manufacturer instructions for charging.
- Avoid extreme temperatures when using or storing batteries.
- Regularly check batteries for damage and unplug immediately if there's sign of malfunction.
- Charge e-bikes/e-scooters away from escape routes.
- If you notice signs of fire, raise the alarm, get out, stay out, and call 999.

You're not alone

Did you know we have a partnership with the Befriending Network to help residents reduce isolation and loneliness? Winter can be a time that feels a bit lonelier for some. So we can refer residents to the Befriending network. There are a number of national befriending organisations across the country, we can connect you with to get the support you need. To help you find one in your area, visit the Befriending Network's website or contact us for more information: communitysupport@mtvh.co.uk.



Visitors at Christmas celebration at West Hendon Community Centre.

GET IN TOUCH

Your chance to win £50 Love to Shop voucher

Scan the code to enter our winter prize draw and be in with a chance of winning £50 Love to shop vouchers. All you have to do is share your feedback about this newsletter. Competition closes at 11pm on 31st March 2024.



CONTACT US IF YOU WANT TO



**Make a
payment**



**Request
repairs**



**Update your
contact /
personal details**



**Make
enquiries**

WAYS TO GET IN TOUCH

MTVH ONLINE

Request and track your repairs, make a payment or check your balance through your personal MTVH Online account 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1 in 3 MTVH residents use MTVH online. **Visit www.mtvh.online**

For heating repairs, contact your contractor directly. See the "Cold weather update" at **www.mtvh.co.uk/news** for more details.

CALL US

From 8am – 6pm, Monday to Friday our phonelines are open with support for emergencies available 24 hours a day. We offer a call back feature so you don't have to hold too long waiting for an answer. Choose the call back option when you phone and keep your place in the queue – let us call you. **Call us on 0203 535 3535**

WRITE TO US

Our address for letters is: Metropolitan Thames Valley, Waterfront House, Technology Drive, Beeston NG9 1LA