

Retirement Living



Regional Report 2019

Central



Eco warriors
in the central
region

Légion
d'honneur at
Vinnicombe
Court

Award winning
Court Managers
at Myles Court



Grove Court
refurbishment

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 - Providing a greener service, by Antony Walker

Welcome

We are delighted to be launching regional reports for 2019 at your Resident Events this year. They are a reflection of the hard work undertaken and a celebration of court life throughout our regions.

We are really proud of the valuable contribution both residents and staff at our courts make to the lives of residents and their local communities. We wanted to ensure these contributions were recognised and celebrated across the regions, for both current residents and those considering moving into a Housing 21 property. By sharing stories and information in these regional reports, we hope family, friends and those living and working in the local communities will gain an insight into what we do and how positive it can be.

As an organisation over the past year:

- We have continued to improve and develop our Retirement Living and Extra Care Living services to meet the needs and aspirations of our residents.
- We continue to be recognised as a financially strong and effectively governed organisation by the Regulator of Social Housing, retaining our top V1 and G1 ratings following an In Depth Assessment (IDA) in January 2019.
- We have refreshed our Strategic Plan to provide a renewed focus for what we want to achieve for the next three years.
- We changed our name back to Housing 21 in April 2019 following feedback from you, our residents, and other stakeholders. This re-emphasises the importance of our housing service in enabling you to live with independence and dignity and helps to avoid any perception of care home provision whilst maintaining the core of our strong reputation and identity.

Retirement Living

- We are leading the way in using modular, off-site methods of construction to provide additional bungalows at Ward Court in Brighthouse and new properties at Richard Onslow Court in Shropshire.
- We are committed to improving resident engagement and satisfaction, with over 1,000 residents attending one of our 11 regional conferences to discuss future plans and provide feedback on our services. 94% of Retirement Living residents who rent their properties are satisfied as are 87% of leaseholders.
- We are well on the way to achieving our property standards and continue to invest in our existing Retirement Living buildings. In 2018/19 26 properties had new bathrooms, 18 had new kitchens and 67 courts had a makeover. We are also investing to ensure that all properties meet an EPC level C energy efficiency standard.

We are committed to quality, growth, efficiency and innovation and continue to ensure that your interests and wishes are at the forefront of our plans and priorities. We aim to ensure that all residents have a say in the way their court is run.

We want to thank everyone who has played their part in supporting Housing 21 through 2019 and who we hope will continue to do so. We are looking forward to the year ahead and working with you to ensure we do the right things with passion and enthusiasm to make Housing 21 a great place to live and work.

Stephen Hughes, Chairman

I succeeded Lord Ben Stoneham as Chair of the Board in September 2018. As I had been a Board member for four years before being appointed as the Chair I hope to provide continuity of purpose and direction but with added aspiration and emphasis.



Stephen Hughes, Chairman

James McCarthy, Director of Retirement Housing

I joined Housing 21 five years ago, at a time when there was a need to unbundle and bring focus to the Retirement Housing service. I wanted to make our Retirement Housing a positive choice for older people.

Since then, we have invested significantly in the properties, the Court Managers, the management team and support service. We have seen resident satisfaction rise; especially satisfaction with Housing 21 overall and the value for money of rent and service charges. That has been due to the commitment of the amazing people who work for us.

I am happy that we are seen as a market leader in providing housing and related services for older people and proud to hear about the positive difference that Housing 21 makes for residents. I'm also proud to work for an organisation that makes decisions for positive reasons. We will continue to seek ways to improve our services to residents and do the right thing.



James McCarthy, Director of Retirement Housing

Our performance against strategic priorities

1. Providing more homes



We completed 202 properties in 2018/19, with an additional 539 properties under construction at year end.

2. The quality of our existing properties

We invested £9.9m on improving properties, including kitchen and bathroom areas, and spent £3.8m on design-led makeovers and redecorating communal areas.

3. The quality and responsiveness of our services



We have achieved four 'Outstanding' ratings from the Care Quality Commission (as of 1 September 2019).

4. Our people and potential



We are proud to have achieved the prestigious Investors in People Gold accreditation.

5. Systems and technology

In May 2019 we launched PEBBLES, our tablet-based housing management system, which empowers and enables managers on our courts to carry out processes quickly and easily, providing a responsive service for you, our residents.

6. Providing value for money



We work hard to ensure the services we provide are value for money. You can see how your money is spent on page 7.

7. Innovation and influence



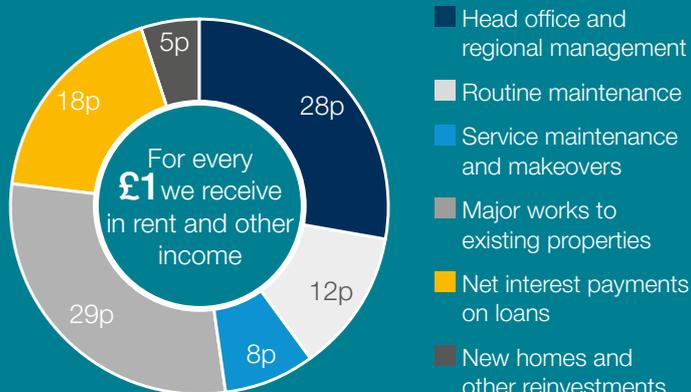
In 2018/19 we continued our work around ensuring people in our properties can live well with dementia and work closely with you, our residents and our staff to do so.

We were shortlisted for the Dementia-friendly Organisation of the Year award by the Alzheimer's Society

Organisational performance

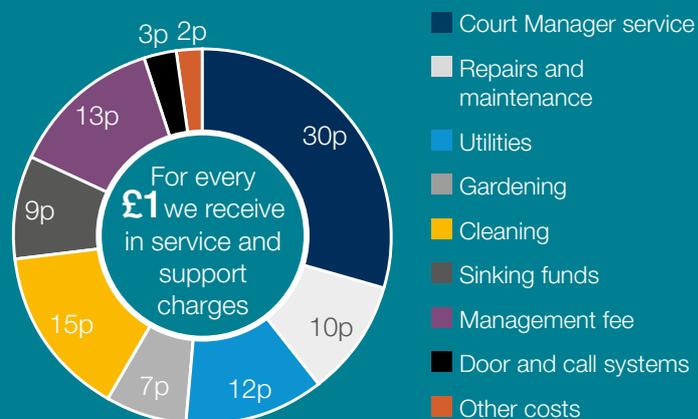
How we spend your rent and our other income

None of the rent we receive goes into the pockets of other people. It is all spent or reinvested on our services and properties.



How we spend your service and support charge

Your service and support charges go toward providing the valuable services which make your court your home.



Number of properties:
21,000

Turnover:
£186.4m

Operating surplus:
£35.8m

Reinvestment in our existing properties

We are reinvesting more and more into our existing properties every year.

We are proud of our properties and want you to be proud of them as well, making them a positive choice.



Map of the region



Meet the team



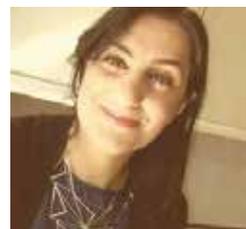
Lucy Hales

Head of Retirement Housing
Central



Jen Davis-Dean

Head of Retirement Housing
Central



Aminda Liddar

Retirement Housing Manager
Hertfordshire and Norfolk



Antony Walker

Retirement Housing Manager
West Midlands, Worcestershire
and Shropshire



Heather Scullion

Retirement Housing Manager
Essex and Suffolk



Rachel Southworth

Retirement Housing Manager
Staffordshire, Warwickshire
north, Northamptonshire,
Buckinghamshire and
Leicestershire



Philippa Hallam

Retirement Housing Manager
Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and
Leicestershire



Justine Hoye

Assistant Retirement Housing
Manager
Cambridgeshire, Peterborough
and Bedfordshire



Becky Hassam

Regional Administrator
Central

Key achievements

508 residents across the central region completed the resident satisfaction survey this year, giving their thoughts on the services we provide.

We're delighted to report that overall satisfaction in the central region is **94%**.

Eco warriors

The stunning gardens are among the first things people notice when visiting Kyrle Pope Court, in Hereford. This year Kyrle Pope Court came 2nd in the garden competition for 'Hereford in Bloom'.

Judges were especially impressed with the way residents championed being environmentally friendly.

Residents are involved with bringing food waste and peelings down to the compost bin to produce their own compost, numerous water butts are installed at the court to reduce the need to use mains water to water the gardens and self-watering pots are in place to reduce the need for regular watering. Special compost which retains water is also used in the gardens for the same

reason and residents are looking into taking this one step further with self-watering hanging baskets. The green fingered residents also grow their own fruit and veg, selling any surplus harvest to fellow residents in the communal lounge, with funds going straight back into the garden pot.

Congratulations to all involved in 'Hereford in Bloom'.



Collaboration and partnerships

New Community Orchard

Wood Court in Redditch has built a partnership with the Headless Cross Community Orchard.

The Community Orchard provided residents with a brand new greenhouse and planted local apple trees in the garden. The court now has its own mini-orchard.



Crucial Crew event

The Older Persons' Crucial Crew, now in its fifth year, was held at Clacton's Princes Theatre.

Court Managers from Hestletine Court, Heidi Standley and Sandra Coe arranged a Housing 21 stall at the event, which saw speakers ranging from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to Essex Police, along with a solicitors' firm who gave free advice. More than 100 people came to the free event, organised by the Tendring

Community Safety Partnership.

The aim of the event is to highlight issues faced in everyday life and share vital safety messages, which could help save lives. Along with the agencies, Heidi and Sandra answered questions on how Housing 21 handle topics such as emergency planning for extreme weather, fire safety, personal safety, rogue traders, and what to do with callers at the door.



Community collaboration

Residents of Gordon Roughley Court in Essex are neighbours with Genesis Housing Association residents. Genesis residents do not have the benefit of a communal lounge, so Gordon Roughley Court residents let them use theirs, with all residents sharing social activities and events.

The local GP visits the courts once a year to deliver the influenza inoculation programme. Court Manager Stephanie Rees said, "for the past two years all of our neighbours have joined in, it's a great opportunity and means that the nurses are able to reach more people."

Court life

Légion d'honneur at Vinnicombe Court

World War II veterans, Anthony, 97 and Norman, 96, former residents at Vinnicombe Court have been awarded the prestigious Légion d'honneur.

They were presented with the awards by the Suffolk Lord Lieutenant, Clare FitzRoy, Countess of Euston during the ceremony.

Lesley Goodwin, Court Manager at Vinnicombe Court, said "We are so proud of Anthony and Norman and delighted they have been presented with this prestigious and well deserved award. It is fantastic to see their bravery and service honoured".



Did you know?

Housing 21 has its roots in the Royal British Legion. The Royal British Legion Housing Association was founded in 1964 to provide housing for veterans and their families. Nowadays, many veterans live in Housing 21 apartments across England.

Dementia Friends and Housing 21

Living well with dementia at De Ramsey Court

Allen has been a resident at De Ramsey Court near Huntingdon for over a year and is living with dementia.

His daughter Denise said, “He is a very happy man and takes everything in his stride. He is an inspiration to all those that are living with Alzheimer’s and dementia.

“When Mum passed away it was heartbreaking for us all, but there was the extra worry about Dad. I was stunned and devastated at Dad’s diagnosis. I immediately thought that was it. I’d lost Mum, now I was losing Dad too.”

But Allen was determined to be positive. He wouldn’t let dementia define him. Over the coming weeks and months, together with Denise, he learnt that a diagnosis doesn’t have to be the end.

They turned to the Alzheimer’s Society for more information. Denise started learning more about his condition and became a Dementia Champion – someone who volunteers to make a positive difference to people living with dementia.

Three years on, Allen lives at De Ramsey Court. “Very often I’ll call him and ask what he had for dinner, but he can’t remember,” says Denise. “He’ll know he enjoyed it though. He can still regale you with stories from 40 years ago. He’s very happy.”



As featured in the Daily Mail

Victoria Edwards, Court Manager at Ronald West Court in Loughborough and Jenny Fawcett, Court Manager at Carroll Gardens in Nottingham, delivered a Dementia Friends session and successfully recruited 19 new Dementia Friends.

Among the attendees there was a gentleman who has poor eyesight and hearing, but he listened intently and joined in with discussions about what it would be like to live with dementia. He willingly accepted the invitation to become a Dementia Friend and as he proudly pinned his badge on his jumper, he said, “We are like an army”. Victoria was moved by his words and commented that “It evoked visions of an army of people, all doing their very best to ensure people live well with dementia.”

Courts across the central region have 354 Dementia Friends and counting!

If you are not already a Dementia Friend, speak to your Court Manager about how to become one.

Design and dementia

Housing 21 designs courts to support residents living with dementia.

We have developed a set of guidelines to make sure we meet the needs of our residents living well with dementia.

The guidelines use different aspects of design such as using colour and contrast to help with wayfinding around the court, making it easy to identify the stairwells and lifts. Easy to use fixtures are fitted in our kitchens and bathrooms and new and improved signage is displayed around the court.

Heidi Fisher, National Property Development Manager said, “We supply hand rails for bathrooms,

larger knobs or handles for kitchen doors and lever taps as standard. A resident panel helped influence the choices on offer and these make a difference to residents’ everyday lives.”

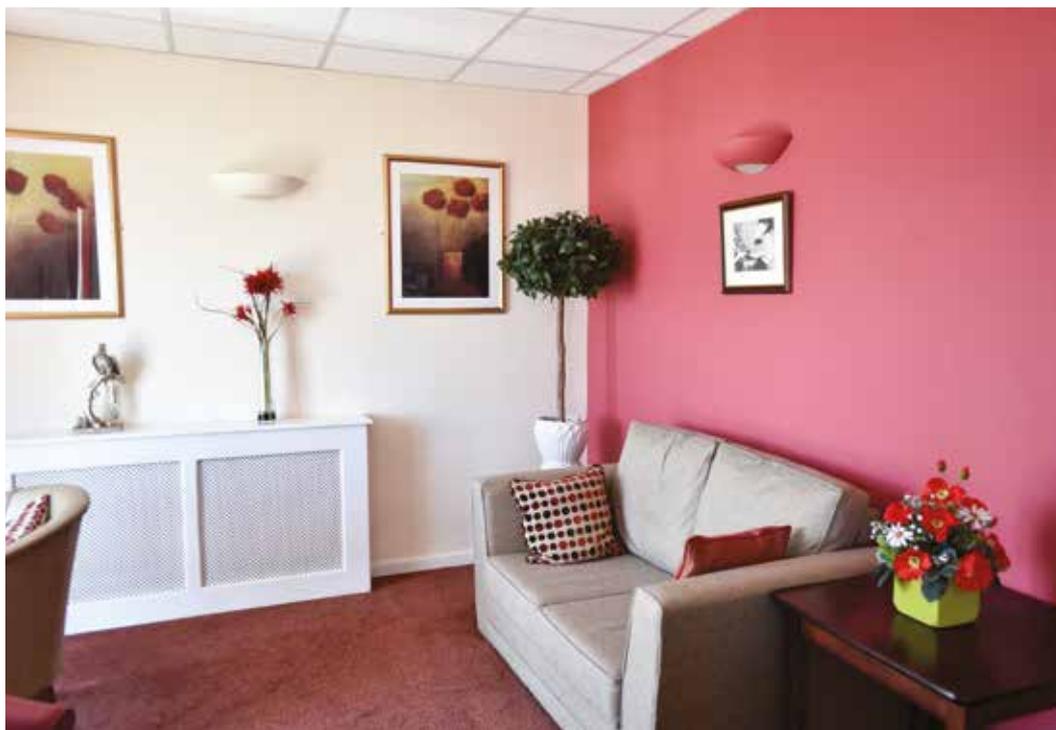
In the central region many of these features have been installed as part of the investment works carried out. Our dementia-friendly designs are subtle and fit in with the rest of the court such as kitchen installations, flooring choices, artwork and strategic placing of furniture and accessories.

Many designs have elements of reminiscence and in the central region we have been able to offer pieces of artwork with local scenes from the past.

Stradbroke Court in Bury St Edmunds has photographs in the entrance area of local landmarks and buildings of interest.

Local scene from the past.





Using colour contrast draws attention to key features.



Extra-large clocks have been put up at Terence Airey Court in Harleston so everyone can clearly see the time on a bigger face.



Artwork displayed at Stradbroke Court, Bury St Edmunds.



Rugs and mats present potential trip hazards so removing them can create greater safety around the court.

Court life

Bringing technology to residents

At William Birch Court in Stoke on Trent, residents have been provided with a tablet computer, as part of a project to encourage them to pick up a device and take part in the digital revolution!

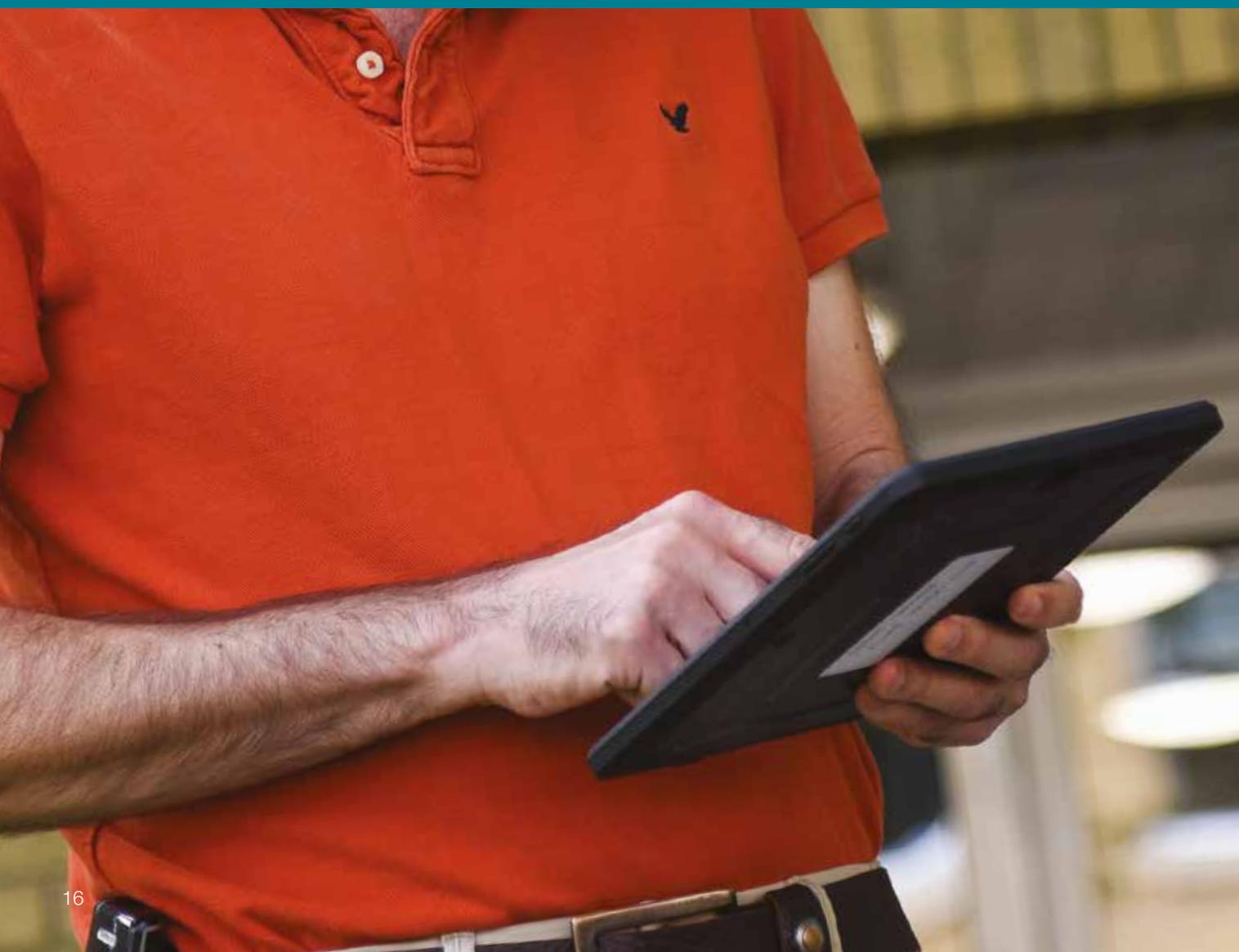
The tablet is powered by 4G which means it does not need to connect to Wi-Fi to give access to the internet. Court Manager Julie Armitt, said “a couple of the residents have had a go on the tablet, they’re

easy to use and after playing around on it for a bit, residents quickly get used to it.”

One resident, Douglas, is finding the tablet a great tool to support him with his Universal Credit journal. He no longer needs to travel to the local library to get access to his account as he can do all he needs to from the court. Julie is helping Douglas and said “It’s great for residents receiving Universal Credit

as new applications and job searches need to be done online now.”

Julie is looking forward to starting a court Facebook page, enabling residents and their relatives to have up to date information on court life and the local community. They will be able to access the page using the new tablet or their own electronic devices.



Court life

Fidget blanket

The story behind the “fidget blanket” begins with a married couple living at Myles Court in Dudley. The wife was diagnosed with dementia earlier this year; despite having carers in four times daily, her husband is still her main, supportive carer.

Earlier this year, her husband mentioned to Court Manager Wendy Darby, that his wife was constantly 'fiddling' with things in her hands, in particular incontinent pads. She would sit for hours rubbing them between her fingers, until the outer layer of them gave way and all the inner would be falling out onto the floor. The husband was fed up of the mess she made, but said it made her feel content.

Listening to all this, Wendy told him about a fidget blanket; a type of blanket with various textures.

Fidget blankets are quite expensive, so Wendy decided to make one from an old play mat! “I wanted a mat that had lots of sensory items on there. I gathered lots of different things – a string of beads, small teddy bears, buttons and such like and sewed them onto it.” The next day she took it down to the lady and laid it across her lap.

Looking at the bright colours, her eyes sparkled and she started to cry with amazement, saying thank you. “This reaction brought tears to my eyes as well as her husband’s, she was absolutely amazed. I myself did not realise the difference this simple thing was going to make to her and never expected the reaction I received at that moment. The lady’s hand went instantly to the string of beads I had sewn on there, and she started to 'fiddle' with them.”



Intergenerational activities

Children and young people from the local community visit courts to spend time with residents throughout the year

Reading with residents

Residents from Heseltine Court, in Clacton-on-Sea, were invited to join children and parents from local Holland Park Junior School for afternoon tea at the school to say thank you.

Pupils have been visiting the court for reading sessions with residents. Once they have finished reading, everyone takes part in craft sessions, and the work is displayed in the court. This has been well received by the residents and there has been fantastic feedback from parents saying that their children have been so excited to talk to the residents and are learning lots of new things.

Student support

A community meeting was held in 2015 at Ronald West Court in Loughborough, to discuss concerns about student behaviour in the local neighbourhood. The Court Manager, Victoria Edwards, decided she would try to do her bit to redress the balance by giving the students the opportunity to support residents.

Loughborough University students jumped at the chance to be involved in court life and visited Ronald West Court every week to cook a Sunday lunch for the residents, eating together once the cooking was finished. This project has now evolved into the students providing afternoon tea and finding more time to spend with the residents, chatting and playing games.

Twice a year the court hosts a community singalong led by Loughborough University students, with Ronald West resident, Bill, conducting the choir.

Victoria is delighted with how the relationship with the students works and said “All of the projects have been of great benefit to the court as a whole. The students presence always comes with a great burst of energy, but most of all the residents at Ronald West love to talk to them. It’s two way though, the students gain as much from being with the residents as the residents get from being with them.”



Growing Rite at Ronald West Court

Every Thursday morning, parents and toddlers from a local Loughborough church group, Growing Rite, join residents at Ronald West Court. The children take part in a range of activities and even play with a friendly dog belonging to one of the residents! Another resident brings her grandson along and both join in wholeheartedly with the weekly activities while others like to chat with parents. A deaf resident who finds communication difficult loves to hold babies, giving parents a bit of break. Even residents who aren't actively involved in the children's weekly visits enjoy seeing people coming and going, with Growing Rite's organiser taking time to talk to all the residents at Ronald West Court, sharing her passion about the relationships residents and children build with each other.



Inspired by the successful involvement of students in court life at Ronald West Court, Sir Robert Martin Court in Loughborough decided to replicate the idea.

The links have been so successful, the University has donated a new bench and garden furniture for the residents' patio.

Stand out events from last year

Award winning courts

The Elderly Accommodation Council (EAC) awards are voted for by the people who matter the most, residents.



Gold winners
Sir Robert Martin Court,
Loughborough



Silver winners

- ★ **Lord Walsingham Court, Thetford**
- ★ **Vinnicombe Court, Ipswich**

Bronze winners

- ★ **Cole Court, Wellingborough**
- ★ **Denis Wilson Court, Cambridge**
- ★ **Myles Court, Dudley**

Visit the EAC website for more details on how to vote this year and have your say awards.eac.org.uk

Britain in Bloom

Great looking schemes are important to us and our residents.

Britain in Bloom is the UK's longest running gardening competition. It provides a regional and nationwide platform for community groups to brighten up their town or city. It is a pleasure to see a number of our courts have entered the Britain in Bloom competition and have been successful!

John Anderson Court has proudly won the Gold Britain in Bloom Award in Great Yarmouth in the Bloom Community Gardens category for the past six years.

For the third year running, Ronald West Court has achieved the highest level in the local Britain in Bloom awards, Level 5 Outstanding, with a total of 91 marks awarded out of 100.



Court life

Love is in the air

As the saying goes “It’s never too late to fall in love” and this is true for Joy (94) and Reginald (95), two residents who met at Valentine Barker Court, in Swaffham.

It wasn’t long until they fell in love and fantastically, Reg proposed to Joy on her 94th birthday. They are extremely happy to share their news.

Congratulations to you both.



Celebrating Court Managers

Award winning Court Managers

Not only are our courts winning awards, Housing 21 colleagues have achieved success too.

Helen Judge and Wendy Darby from Myles Court in Dudley won “Customer Service/Support Team of the Year” at the Women in Housing Awards, in addition to Helen’s special commendation for Housing Professional of the Year.

Head of Central Retirement Housing, Lucy Hales said “Helen and Wendy consistently go above and beyond in their duties to deliver an amazing service to Myles Court.”

“Helen and Wendy are hardworking, committed and professional”, says Antony Walker, Retirement Housing Manager. As well as being recognised at the Women in Housing Awards, both Helen and Wendy are recognised in the region as being supportive of their residents and colleagues.

Both Helen and Wendy support Age UK in running a day centre at Myles Court. Thanks to their support and the partnership, the day centre was nominated for a Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) award. This celebrates positive partnership work on a national level.

When the court’s hairdresser had to drop out at short notice, troubleshooters Helen and Wendy found a new hairdresser as well as a new nail technician to provide a service to residents. These services also bring an income to the court.

Helen and Wendy applied for kerb appeal funding as seed

money for a new gardening club at the court which has become a great success, and a new greenhouse has created much interest across the court.

Wendy has struck up a great supportive relationship with resident Mabel who is blind. Mabel struggled terribly with her bathroom. When she heard about this, Wendy managed to get the bathroom replacements brought forward a year benefiting Mabel and other residents. Mabel waxes lyrical about Wendy and how big an impact she has had on her quality of life.

Antony Walker said “Helen and Wendy have had an incredible year and Myles Court is a real leader of performance. I know colleagues can come to them both for support and advice and the duo will always come to their aid.”

Thank you for making such an inspiring contribution to Housing 21. Helen and Wendy are a perfect team.



Teresa McKenna, Head of Operations Support
with Helen Judge and Wendy Darby



Celebrating Court Managers

Thank you from the region

Court Managers build relationships with residents' families and friends and pride themselves on helping out especially at difficult times.

Court Manager Elaine, at Charles Watson Court in Leamington Spa, received a heart-warming thank you card from the son of a resident who had really appreciated the way his father had been treated.

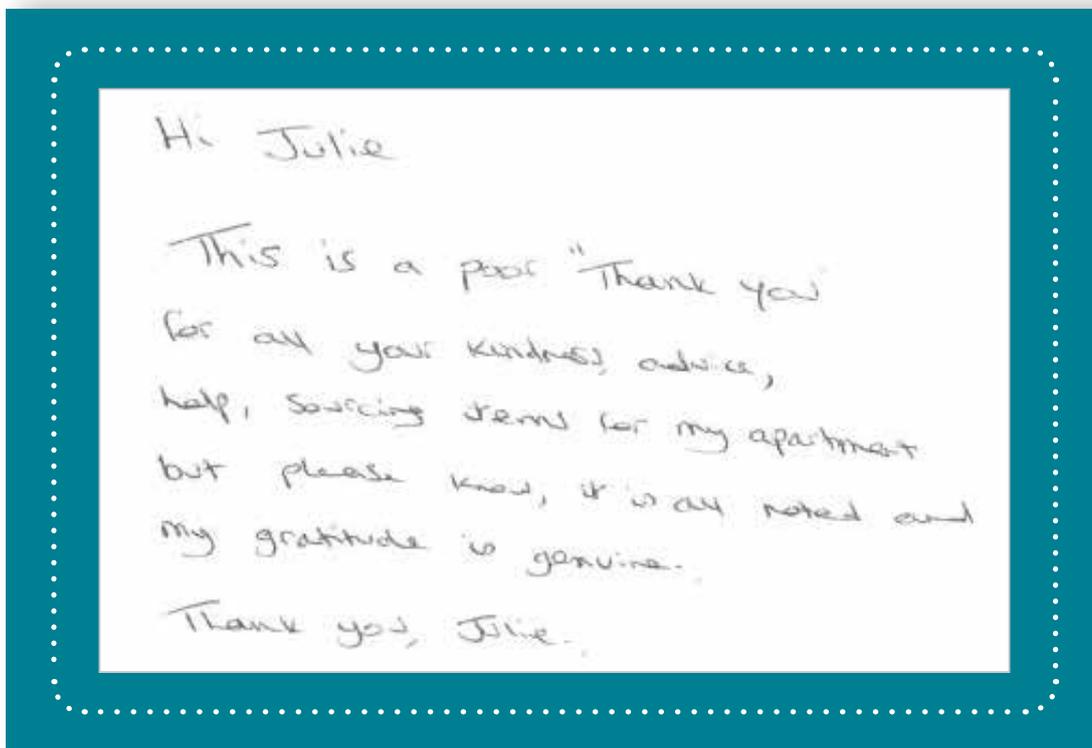
“ I just wanted to say thank you for everything you did for my Dad. The kindness, compassion and friendship you gave him meant a lot to me. He was very fond of you. I also want to thank you for the help you have given me and for your support on the night he passed away. It's always going to be hard but you made it a little easier. Thank you ever so much. ”



One resident moved back to the UK from Turkey following tragic circumstances, where she lost her partner in a road traffic accident. With no belongings, she approached Court Manager, Julie, based in Stoke on Trent. Julie managed to source no longer wanted items from an empty apartment including bedding and crockery. The new resident was overwhelmed by the quick and helpful action.

“Thank you Julie, for all your kindness, advice, help, and sourcing items for my apartment.”

Julie said that “it means a lot to the person on the receiving end knowing that people care. I am glad I could make her more comfortable.”



Celebrating Court Managers

Homeless champion

Chris Marks, also known by his stage persona Spanky Van Dyke, is a member of staff with a unique story of how he came into his role as a Court Manager at Kenneth Gamble Court, in Leicester.

Chris worked as a landlord and hotel manager before he ended up on Leicester's streets and says his story shows homelessness can happen to anyone.

Chris spent four weeks sleeping rough in the city in 2011 after his marriage broke down and he left the family home.

Fortunately, Chris managed to find a job as a Court Manager, at Kenneth Gamble Court, which is still the job he does today.

"That job came with a flat, that job saved me. My new life started that day," he said.

A big part of Chris's new life has been his music. As part of "tongue-in-cheek" pop punk band, The Budgie Smugglers, he applied to be on the 2016 Eurovision Song Contest, although the band were not selected by the BBC for their shortlist of six acts.

For Chris's 150th solo gig, he donated the proceeds to Action Homeless Leicester, to support other people affected by homelessness.



“ We all need support and that is very true when you are homeless. If I could decide on how the money will be spent, I would invest in a good mental health institution, a good drop-in centre and people to talk to, because that didn't happen to me. ”

Chris, Court Manager



Photo taken at Kenneth Gamble Court, contractors happily pose with residents and Chris Marks.

A great place to work

We are committed to delivering a high quality service and developing strong relationships with our external contractors.

We thrive on receiving positive feedback from businesses we work with and in turn, this creates a pleasant atmosphere while work on improving our courts continues.

J Tomlinson's, who had been working at Sir Robert Martin Court in Loughborough shared their experience:

“ I would just like to say on behalf of myself and J Tomlinson's, this scheme has probably been the best scheme we have had the pleasure to work in. Court Manager, Martine Wilson, is a credit to Housing 21, nothing has been too much trouble and the way she communicates with the residents is second to none. When working with any of our clients, I always feel it is paramount that we build good relationships, as we are all working together to achieve the same result. Working at Sir Robert Martin has been a prime example of what can be achieved when we work together. Thank you ”

Customer Service Manager

Investing in our buildings and resident survey

Listening to our residents

It's fantastic that our latest resident survey results said that 86% of you feel that we listen to your views, but there is still plenty for us to do.

If you have any concerns please speak first to your Court Manager. Every six to eight weeks your Retirement Housing Manager will visit the court, which gives you a further opportunity to highlight any issues.

When surveyed, 43% of residents who had made a formal complaint felt that it was

not handled adequately, so we have changed our formal complaints process to include a review by the Director of Retirement Housing to ensure that we provide you with a robust response.

Each autumn we hold a series of resident conferences where you can meet Housing 21 senior management, get updates on the organisation's future plans and offer your feedback on what we can do better.



Service charge meetings

Back in 2016 some residents felt we did not provide value for money and our consultation on service charges was inadequate.

We ran consultation meetings led by the Retirement Housing Manager taking place in November/December and we changed our service charge statements so that they could be more easily understood.

Satisfaction with value for money for the service charge increased to 87% and just 5% said they were dissatisfied with their consultation meeting.



Investing in our buildings

New gas boilers, kitchens, shower rooms and a design-led refurbishment at Creasy Court and Carne Rasch, Francis and Drake Court, have made a huge difference to residents in Basildon.

Howard Vyse Court in Essex had new windows and doors, wall insulation and gas boilers.

“Not only are people much warmer but by being more energy efficient, heating bills are cut as well. At Mays Court in Felixstowe and Wilding Court in Suffolk, Housing 21 have replaced the large immersions for small 15 litre ones. We have installed electric showers too, so there is no need to heat a big tank of water, saving money for the residents and helping do our bit for the environment” said

Heather Scullion, Retirement Housing Manager.

Pearce Court in Lichfield has benefited from a £55,000 refurbishment to communal areas. Court Manger Jean said, “It’s a real pleasure to see our ambitious plans for Pearce Court become a reality and to see residents enjoying the new spaces and improvements to their homes.”

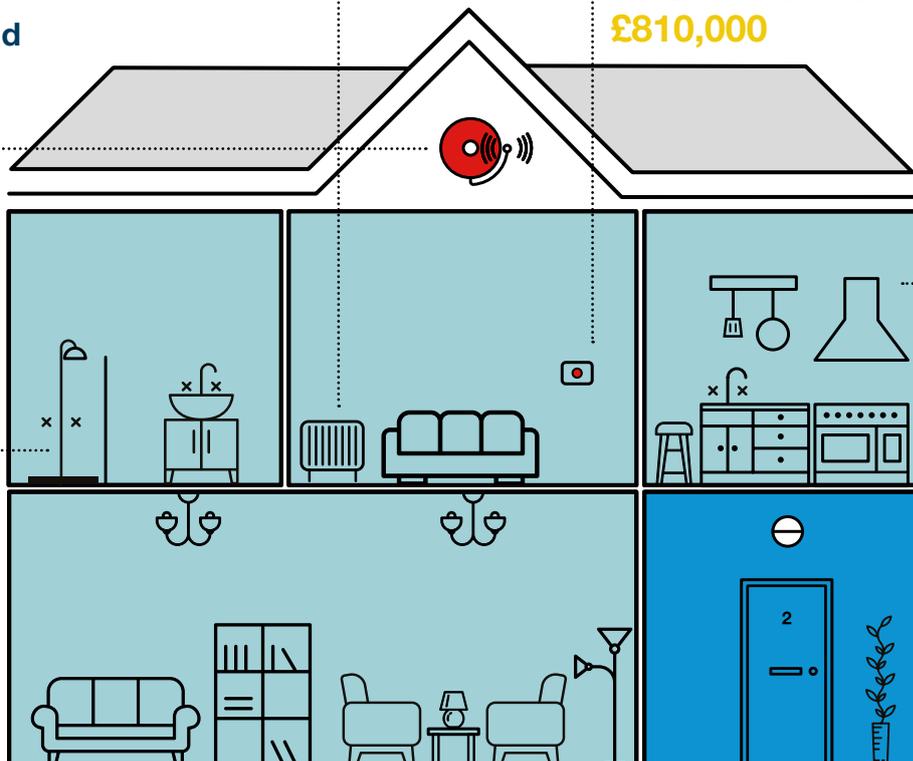
Fire alarm rezoning and upgrades at 28 courts
£658,000

Heating update at 31 courts
£2.5m

New digital emergency call systems installed in 18 courts
£810,000

Upgraded shower rooms fitted at seven courts
£1m

Kitchens modernised at two courts
£324,000



Makeovers, external works and communal lighting upgraded **£1.9m**

Investing in our buildings and resident survey

Grove Court refurbishment

Last year, following a £300k refurbishment including a communal makeover, new digital call systems and new kitchens for each property, Grove Court in Sandwell held an open day to celebrate a new start for the court. The Deputy Mayor for Sandwell, Councillor Carol Goult, officially opened the communal lounge and said “It’s been brilliant to see what Housing 21 does here – a few of the residents have shown me around their flats and you can really see the ongoing work and investment Housing 21 are putting into Grove Court. I’ve actually just asked the Court Manager if I can put my name down for a flat!”



The event was well attended by the local community. Sajid Shaikh, the Court Manager and one of our Leading to Excellence training graduates, was run



ragged throughout the day, giving tours of the court, and even used the court's guest room to give presentations to interested visitors. Trading Standards, the fire service and Wiltshire Farm Foods attended on the day, and residents held a tombola and cake sale which raised over £200 for the court.

Sajid has also set up a regular agreement with the local Greggs, who donated over 100 doughnuts on the day and continue to make food donations to the court every week (making for some very sugar-fuelled coffee mornings!).

He has also built a strong partnership with the local school who send children over to share reminiscences along with the residents. The improvements are not over for Grove Court, which has new heaters and windows due this year and next, to ensure the court meets our Energy Efficiency Property Standard, reaching a minimum of a ‘C’ grade to ensure residents are warm in winter without having to pay high costs.





Sajid Shaikh and Antony Walker holding the ribbon at Grove Court refurbishment opening with Councillor Carol Goult and residents.

Resident feedback

The most important thing for many of our residents was the security and reassurance our courts provide.

Such feedback is really encouraging but we know there's still plenty for us to work on.

There's always a friendly face to chat to.

I have lived in this flat since 1980 and wouldn't move ever.

The security which in turn helps my general wellbeing to remain healthy.

Some residents have concerns about the responsiveness of some of our services. We are working on this feedback to provide the best service to residents.

Fundraising

Defibrillator at Kyrle Pope Court

Late last year a resident at Kyrle Pope Court in Hereford suffered a heart attack. It was witnessed by several residents – including his wife, and also people waiting at the bus stop. Everybody was very distressed. Court Manager Sarah Wood performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) – a procedure to support and maintain breathing and circulation until paramedics arrived – but sadly he passed away.

He had no signs of heart issues previously and it made the residents realise that it could happen to anybody. A group of residents came together and

discussed defibrillators and found that CPR without one has less chance of being successful. Residents immediately decided with Sarah to raise money so they could buy one for Kyrle Pope Court.

Over four months of fundraising ended with an event at the court organised by Sarah. Raffles, a large piggy bank in the lounge where residents left loose change, was used to collect money, and other donations were arranged.

The day finished off with a concert from the Hereford Police Choir and to everyone's delight it was announced that the target cost had been met.



Residents across the central region have been busy fundraising to support a number of great causes.

Hayden Court, Norwich raised over £360 for The Alzheimer's Society at a coffee morning with a 'Walk Down Memory Lane' theme. Sharon Birch, Court Manager said "We held this to mark Dementia Week. We received some donations of raffle prizes from local businesses and residents got involved with baking and helping out."

There was a 'guess the weight of the cake' competition as well as the raffle. Residents provided photos of themselves as babies or young children and played

'Guess Who?' which was a lot of fun! People were encouraged to dress in 1930s, '40s and '50s outfits.

The Alzheimer's Society provided posters and information to promote the event and Sharon put up information, displayed facts and played music from the decades - that really got everyone talking and walking down memory lane. Resident Roy even came dressed as a gangster! It was a fun morning.

Carol Barrett, Court Manager at **Philip Docker Court** in Nuneaton, organised a donation to the Night Shelter at their local church. With the help of residents a generous donation of money, clothes and toiletries was presented for local homeless people. This was gratefully received by the church who sent a letter of thanks and "were amazed by the level of generosity".

At **Lord Cromwell Court**, in Hednesford, residents have raised £1,300 for 'Help a Squaddie', a charity that aims to help develop the skills of the disadvantaged community of ex-soldiers and their families.

The charity is close to the heart of resident Guy, who moved to Lord Cromwell Court with the support of Help a Squaddie.

The fundraising total was helped by two residents, Pauline and Irene who slimmed down by 16lbs between them raising over £200, alongside the sale of Help a Squaddie t-shirts and fleeces.

Local shops and supermarkets supported the fundraising effort with food donations to the charity, as well as donations for Sunday lunches and BBQs held on court.



Staff news

Providing a greener service

Antony Walker, Retirement Housing Manager, explains...



Imagine paying a fiver for a tank of petrol and not having to leave your doorstep. No need for your credit card, no fumes, no queues.

Earlier this year, I bought a new car. "It's electric" I told people. "Oh right you got one of those hybrids, they look good" they replied. I needed to clarify things a bit.

My car isn't a hybrid but a fully-fledged electric car. No petrol, no carbon dioxide, no emissions. About 2,000 less moving parts, pleasantly silent and eager in its instant acceleration.

"Ah but what's the range?" they said. Always the first question. "About 150 miles" I said. This covers a return trip to pretty much all of my courts. If I need to charge on the road then it's

because my journey is too long to humanly do in one go (we all need a loo stop after a while). A quick 20 minute charge and a cup of tea and I'm ready to go again (the tea probably cost more than the charge).

When I get home I plug in and charge up overnight as I do with my mobile phone. I chose to go electric because I worried about the environmental impact of all my travelling. Last year I did 15,000 miles travelling out to courts, contributing about three tonnes of CO2 to the atmosphere and a lot of pollution.

In my new car, on my green electric tariff, I've already saved a ton in CO2. Being green is very important to me; I have a four year old and a new baby. The

future is theirs and I want it to be a good one for them.

But aside from the environmental impact, how about getting an electric car because it's cheaper to run? About £30 per 1,000 miles. And it's just cracking good fun to drive!

The future is exciting and we want to be an active part of it! So if you see me silently roll up at the court car park, feel free to corner me for a chat about how I'm getting on. I may keep you a while, mind!

: We are looking into ways that we can support residents in the transition to electric or alternatively fuelled cars by looking at putting charging points on court car parks.



*“ Living here gives me
great peace of mind.”*
Zohra, resident



Feedback

We hope you have enjoyed reading your Regional Report 2019. We'd love to hear your feedback and any suggestions you have for next year. Please get in touch by emailing communications@housing21.org.uk or speak to your Court Manager.

Thank you.

Are you looking to visit friends or family, or do you just want a break?

Housing 21 have over 200 guest rooms across the country that you can book for a small fee. To find out more about the guest rooms and their locations, speak to your Court Manager or visit housing21.org.uk.

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