

Radcliffe Recorder



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From the Chief Executive

This edition of the Radcliffe Recorder is also our annual report and sets out how we did in the last financial year and some general information as well as future plans.

This year has seen many changes that affect what housing associations do. Our aim has been to carry on with the things that matter most to you, our residents, including home improvements, building new homes, improving energy efficiency and new services such as ways to pay your rent. Our contractors who carry out work to your homes continue to meet their targets for getting work done on time to a standard you are satisfied with.

Last years' report set out how we meet the six standards by which our performance is judged. From next April there will be a new regulator and we will provide more information about what it means for you in our next edition of the Recorder. Finally if you want more information about the Society, copies of our full annual report are available on request or can be viewed and downloaded from our website www.radcliffehs.org.uk



Becoming more involved

If you would like to be involved in how the Society is run we would like to hear from you.

In 2012 we will be considering setting up a form of tenants' panel and carrying out a satisfaction survey. In addition we have a vacancy for a tenant Board member – please contact the office for further information.



Keep warm this winter

Here are some simple tips to stay warm and safe in your home. During the day try to:

- heat your main living room to around 18-21°C (64-70°F) and the rest of the house to at least 16°C (61°F)
- heat all the rooms you use in the day
- keep your living room warm throughout the day and heat your bedroom before going to bed
- set the timer on your heating to come on before you get up and switch off when you go to bed
- close the doors of rooms not in use to prevent heat escaping

In very cold weather, set the heating to come on earlier rather than turn the thermostat up. This means you won't be cold while you wait for your home to heat up.

To keep warm during the night you should open the window a little for ventilation if you use a fire or heater in your bedroom. Never use hot water bottles in the same bed as an electric blanket, even if switched off and unplug blankets before you go to bed, unless they have a thermostat control for safe all-night use.

How we did to March 2011

Repairs and maintenance

All Radcliffe's properties meet the Decent Home Standard. Improved heating and insulation means that average home energy running costs reduced from £450 in 2005 to £347. We spent less on day to day repairs but improved the service by offering timed appointments and text message confirmations.

We monitor feedback on our service and how our contractors perform. The target times for repairs and how we did are below.



Category	Number raised	% on time	HA average
Emergency (24 hours)	88	100	99.8
Urgent (7 working days)	148	98	98.1
Routine (28 working days)	478	95	96

We telephone you after repairs are completed to check that you are satisfied with the following results.

	RHS	HA average
How satisfied are you with the way Radcliffe deals with repairs?	93% positive	90% positive

Source: telephone survey of 131 residents 2010 /11

Housing management

Nuisance and anti-social behaviour

Radcliffe has signed up to the Respect standard and works with other agencies such as the Police and local authorities to tackle



crime and anti social behaviour. To improve security in flats we have put in controlled entry systems, fire smoke detectors and CCTV camera systems.

Communications, involvement and empowerment

How good is Radcliffe at keeping you informed about things that might affect you as a tenant?

96% positive

How satisfied are you with the opportunities for participation in management and decision making?

89% positive

continued →



→ As a smaller housing association we aim to deliver a personal service to our residents and recognise the importance of good communication. Face to face contact is important but the ways we communicate have changed and now contact is increasingly by telephone, text and email. Our website has been updated – please take a look at www.radcliffehs.org.uk

In 2012 we will be carrying out a new resident satisfaction survey which will be simpler and shorter than before.

Rent

Rents and service charges are payable monthly and reviewed every year from 1st April.



Lettings

Last year we let 23 homes to new tenants of which 4 were to retired people needing sheltered housing. The average time to let properties was 20 days compared to a national average of 31.

Radcliffe is a member of Homeswapper, which means Radcliffe's tenants wanting to exchange can register free of charge. At the end of March there were 31 tenants registered for exchanges and 3 moves had taken place.

Average weekly rent	£104.21
Net current arrears	2.4%
Arrears due to Housing Benefit	1.2%

We have procedures for recovering arrears based on a payment plan agreed with the Housing Manager. Increasingly our tenants are paying using debit cards over the 'phone with a high level of take up.

Angela Jenner – 20 years with RHS



We were delighted in February this year to mark Angela's 20 years of service working for the Society. Most tenants will know Angela as their Housing Manager with a special interest in our sheltered housing schemes but less well known is that she also maintains all Radcliffe's financial records.

Angela is pictured receiving a long service

gift from Marion Miller who appointed Angela to her first job with Radcliffe.



Starter tenancies

Dealing with neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour can take up a lot of staff time and while it continues can affect many people. As one way of dealing with this problem

Radcliffe's Board have agreed that from the 1st January all new first time tenants will be given a starter tenancy. The tenancy has a probation period so that if serious nuisance is caused during the first year steps can be taken to end the tenancy by court action. We will monitor the effect of the new tenancies and report back to you on how they are working.

Norman Miller – a tribute



Norman Miller, a founding member of the Society and a Board member after his retirement sadly died in October. Many of our long standing residents will remember Norman who dealt with maintenance, repairs and

development and his contribution was recognized in 2004 when Miller Close in Bromley was named after him and his wife Marion. Our condolences go to Marion who continues to serve as Deputy Chair of the Board

USEFUL NUMBERS

STANGAS - gas heating servicing and breakdowns - 0208 308 1608

Out of hours emergencies - 01732 781910

Radcliffe House (weekdays) - 01732 459144

www.radcliffehs.org.uk

Contact:

Radcliffe Housing Society

Radcliffe House, Homefield Road, Riverhead
Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2DU

Tel: 01732 459144

Fax: 01732 743065

E-mail for staff: First name followed by @radcliffehs.org

Visit our website at: www.radcliffehs.org.uk

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