



2019/20 2nd Quarter
August - October 2019
Newsletter



Including
Annual Report 2018-19

Dudley Federation Update

Black Country Core Strategy

We are very hopeful that we will have a new 'home' soon - location to be revealed but we believe that it will be more accessible to TRA members. Stay tuned for updates!

Work on raising issues, assisting with benefit enquiries and attending TRA meetings has obviously continued but being without a solid 'base' has had its challenges. We are excited to update the services we can offer to TRAs and hope to see more of you once we are in our new office!

After realising that there is some confusion surrounding the Core Strategy and the development of future housing, Martin and Stan met with the Strategic Director Place & Deputy Chief Executive at Dudley Council, Alan Lunt.

There seems to be a misunderstanding that houses will be built in the Black Country as 'overflow' from Birmingham.

Alan took on the concerns and will work to ensure that there is a better understanding of the Strategy.

Stay up to date on meetings and events - sign up for FREE email and text alerts

 Online at www.dudley.gov.uk

 Text your surname, house number and postcode to 07797 870352
e.g. Brookes, 10, DY1 1HF (initial text will only cost your standard text rate)

or

 Call 01384 815168 to sign up to the service

Dudley Federation Annual Report 2018-19

Partnership meetings are attended to raise issues and obtain important information to pass on to TRA members. Other meetings attended include Repairs Management Centre (RMC), Dudley Housing Board and Specification Core Group.

More details on meetings attended and by whom can be found on our website.



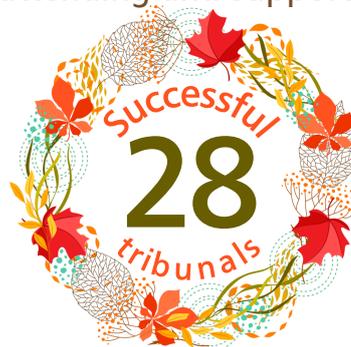
Enquiries we receive are either dealt with by a DFTRA representative directly or sent to DMBC via the enquiry procedure we have with them.



Enquiries that we deal with directly range from repairs issues to serious benefit and housing issues alongside mental health issues.



Benefit issues are more frequent than ever. With limited assistance from other agencies people are often referred to us and we support by helping to complete forms, liaising with the benefit and income teams and attending and supporting with Tribunals.



[You can view our full end of 18/19 report on our website](#)

Our plan for 2019-20

Our new office will hopefully be up and running soon and we will have Open Days to show TRAs around once it is ready.

Several benefit courses will be attended by Board members to further their skills and keep up to date with procedures and information.

A satisfaction survey will be sent to TRAs once we have our new postal address so that we can get ideas and suggestions from you about the service we provide.

Keeping members informed of important information will continue to be a top priority for Dudley Federation.

Encourage TRAs to apply for Discretionary Bids up to £100 is available for groups to purchase items to assist them in running their TRAs.

Continue to attend TRA meetings and events when required—please let us know if you would like a DFTRA representative at your meeting.

Support the set up of new TRAs and Forums alongside the Participation Development Team.

Financial support for people struggling to pay rent

Borough residents struggling to pay their rent or at risk of becoming homeless could get financial support from Dudley Council.

The extra support, known as a discretionary housing payments, are available to people who receive housing benefit or universal credit (housing element) but still can't afford to pay all of their rent. The payments are used to help cover the shortfall between their rent and the benefit they receive, and ensure people avoid eviction and the risk of becoming homeless.

In a bid to support more people, the council has recently extended what the payments can be used for. In addition to on-going rental payments, they can now help by supporting people to clear rent arrears so they can move if they want to, as well as paying deposits in advance to help people secure a property and also help with removal costs.

The claim process is simple and all claims are assessed based upon each individual's circumstances. If you think you may need this additional support, you can contact the council's benefit services on 0300 5556 8100 or make a claim at:

<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/discretionary-housing-payments/>

people had not received the magazine, Martin and Stan (Chair and Vice-Chair of DFTRA) met with the Head of Communications and public affairs in DMBC, Phil Parker to raise this as well as other issues. During this meeting they were assured that the delivery method would be changing and DMBC would ensure that everyone would receive a copy. We are confident that the distribution issue has now been resolved, but please let us know if you haven't had your copy.

You can also view the magazine online at dudley.gov.uk - just type 'Your Borough, Your Home' in the search bar.

Blue Badges extended to people with non-visible (hidden) conditions

The government's Blue Badge scheme is being extended to include people who have non-visible (hidden) conditions, making journeys more accessible for them.

This change to the scheme is the biggest in nearly 50 years and came into force on 30 August 2019.

People with some non-visible (hidden) conditions will be able to access Blue Badge parking permits.

People can find out more about who qualifies for a badge under the new guidance by visiting:

www.dudley.gov.uk/bluebadge.

Y o u r B o r o u g h , Y o u r H o m e

As you are probably already aware, Home Affairs used to be a stand alone magazine delivered to Council Homes. Now it is part of a magazine called 'Your Borough, Your Home' which is delivered to Tenants and Residents Borough-wide.

Following several repeated reports that

Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations

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