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Gas safety checks

Council tenants in the Dudley borough are being urged to take advantage of a free annual gas check as part of a drive to ensure people's safety.

Every year around 20 people throughout the UK die from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which are incorrectly installed or maintained, according to the Health & Safety Executive.

Around 20,000 Dudley Council properties which have gas appliances installed are visited as part of a rolling service contract, carried out by the authority's partners, PH Jones, as a legal requirement. These free visits are made to check council owned gas central heating and fires are working safely and efficiently.

Andrea Pope-Smith, director of adult, community and housing services, said:

"We take our responsibility as a landlord very seriously and ensure that our tenants are safe in their homes. Having an annual gas safety check is free to all council tenants and is part of their tenancy conditions. This yearly safety check makes sure everyone in the property is safe, and only takes a short while."

Dudley Council tenants are asked to call 01384 286086 to arrange an appointment, if their gas appliances have not already been serviced. Servicing is carried out from Monday to Saturday between 8am and 8pm to ensure tenants can arrange a convenient time for appointments.

Netherton Park Fun Day

On the 14th July Friends of Netherton Park will be holding their Annual Netherton Park Fun Day. Last year turned out to be a great event with an estimated 5000 people attending. This year will be the seventh time the event will be held and it is hoped to be even better

If you would like to be a part of this year's event you will find an information sheet and booking form for stalls on the DFTRA website.



Congratulations Phyllis!

- You may remember previous articles on Board Member Phyllis' karate achievements from the DFTRA newsletter and even the Express and Star.
- We would like to congratulate Phyllis on her most recent achievement - her brown belt!

If you wish to submit an article or piece of information, please let Caroline know by emailing it to caroline@dfta.org.uk, or post it to:

Dudley Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations, The Ground Floor Complex, Booth Court, Lower Derry Street, Brierley Hill, Dudley, DY5 2SJ. You can also call us on 01384 868 010.

If you have any information that you would like to be on the DFTRA website, please let us know.

High rise residents fire safety

Residents living in Dudley Council's high rise properties are being advised about fire safety, following the launch of a new policy.

The policy, which can be viewed at www.dudley.gov.uk/housing has been developed to ensure residents in high rise blocks know what to do in the event of a fire. The document also explains the steps the council is taking to continually ensure people's safety.

There is also advice on not storing items in communal areas which could become a fire hazard.

The fire service is working in partnership with the council to ensure they have easy access within the blocks should a fire occur.

Storing goods on the landings, stairwells, in common rooms and blocking doors creates obstacles which would block an escape route and hinder any rescue operation by the fire service.

Residents who are aware of any items stored within communal areas which should be removed should speak to their housing manager by telephoning 0300 555 2345.

Red Hot Fire Day

On Thursday 22nd March we went with the PDO officers to Handsworth Community Fire Station for a Red Hot Fire Day.

When we arrived we were met by the fire officer Trevor who introduced himself and went through what we would be doing for the day. Trevor explained about different ways an extension lead can be overloaded and how fires can start in the home, we were then shown a DVD about fires in different areas throughout the home and how to cope with the fires. It was surprising to see the mistakes we make daily concerning fire safety in the home. After that DVD Trevor gave us a talk on road accidents and showed us another DVD about a teenage driver and what happened after she was in an accident. We found this to be very thought provoking and it really made us think about taking care when driving, we all agreed it should be shown to all young drivers.

After lunch we went outside and were shown how to handle the hoses by Trevor and another fire officer Andrew (see photos). Everyone had a turn and it was a great laugh as well as being educational. We then went inside where we were shown 2 fire appliances, one of which was the Incident Control Unit, this is only used in major incidents where other emergency services are needed as there is room for other senior officers. We were then shown a normal fire tender and some of the equipment used in road accidents to free people.

After this, for a few in the party came the highlight of the day - we were shown the Fireman's Pole and Trevor showed us how to slide down it. Unfortunately the day came to an end too soon and it was time to leave, everyone said how they had enjoyed the day and how much we had learned and hoped to put into practise when we got home. It was an absolutely brilliant day, thanks to the PDO team.

Stan and Pat Chance Butterfield Court TRA.







Bogus Callers

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Keep an eye out for....

Thermoseal is currently being monitored by Trading Standards. Canvassers are targeting vulnerable people in respect of selling roof cleaning and resealing at what they believe to be cost price. They have recently been seen out and about on Caledonia Estate Quarry Bank where a couple of victims have handed monies over. They could strike any area, and any knowledge of this and/or visits by said canvassers should be passed to Bernie Cheek at Trading Standards directly on 01384 818 872.

'Boiler Room' Fraud Alert

You may have already received a fraud alert from the Financial Services Authority or via your bank recently, warnings have been sent out from mid-April regarding land investment scams or share scams which are commonly known as 'boiler room scams.'

The letters are being sent out as the FSA has recently recovered lists from companies that they believe are involved in these scams, the lists are basically phonebooks used by the fraudulent companies. If you or anyone you know has received a letter or an email from the FSA between April and May, you are urged to read it, as it could save you or someone else thousands of pounds.

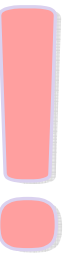
If you have already been contacted by a firm offering you a 'once in a lifetime' investment opportunity, or you have already invested in one, you should inform the FSA immediately as the information you provide could help them to catch criminals and shut the scams down. Please note, the FSA will not call you for any further information and will never ask for money, bank account or personal details.

Things to look out for:

- A phone call out of the blue
- High pressure sales tactics
- The promise of huge returns

Beware....

There was an incident in Upper Gornal during April, a man posing as someone from an animal sanctuary was door knocking and saying that all the neighbours were donating money, if the person said that they would donate, he was asking for their bank details.



In May, free loft insulation was being offered in Fens Crescent in Brierley Hill by a 6ft 3" local man. He was unable to provide any identification and did not carry any ladders.

Remember... ask for ID from anyone you don't know who knocks your door and if you have any doubts do not let them in, and report anyone who asks you for money or your bank details. If you have any information on the above bogus callers, contact your local police station, and don't forget to alert vulnerable friends and relatives

The FSA have a team ready to answer questions about the letter and investment scams generally who can be contacted on 0845 1556355. Several High Street Banks have also provided phone numbers for their customers (callers should quote 'Operation Bexley'):

- Adam & Company - 020 7770 0015
- Bank of Scotland - 0845 606 2196
- Barclays - 0800 051 6195
- The Co-operative - 0845 602 9402
- Coutts & Co - 020 7770 0011
- Halifax - 0845 601 6954
- HSBC - 0845 600 9961
- Lloyds TSB - 0845 600 1928
- NatWest - 0845 605 0789 (overseas +44 870 243 0464)
- Royal Bank of Scotland - 0845 600 8212 (overseas +44 131 317 4597)

You can also report an encounter with a suspicious company via the online reporting forms, there are links to these on the DFTRA website (www.dfta.org.uk) there are also links to the letter and information leaflet that has been sent out.

Please spread the word to anyone you know who may be vulnerable, and remember...if it sounds too good to be true...it probably is!

Free Housing Alerts

Do you own a mobile phone? Do you want to know what's happening in your area? If the answer is yes to both of these questions then why not sign up to this exciting new service which is being offered by Dudley Council.

What do I need to do?

1. From your mobile phone: text your name, address and postcode to 07797 870352

Or

2. Complete a registration form at:
www.dudley.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/tenant-participation/keeping-you-informed/

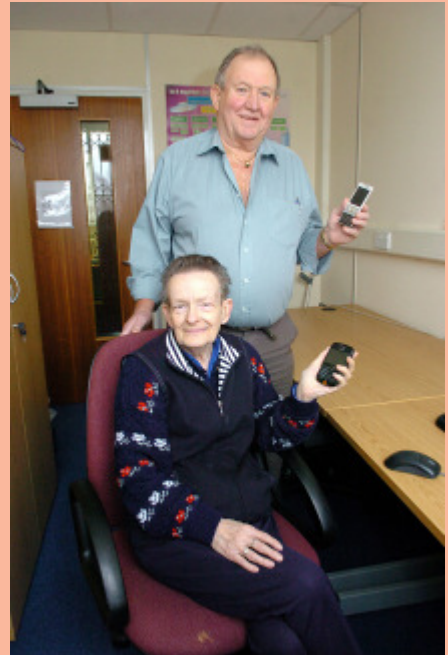
Or

3. Ring the Participation Development Team on
01384 815168

It really is that easy

So if you want to know when your local Tenants & Residents Meetings are being held, sign up for free today.

Remember to tell your friends and neighbours how easy it is too.



If you wish to give feedback regarding repairs or improvement work that you have recently received from Dudley Council, you can now complete their short customer satisfaction online survey to provide your valued feedback and make any suggestions.

Should you wish to discuss your experience of the service in more detail, contact the Repairs Management Centre on 0300 555 8283.

This information helps Dudley Council to improve the service and understand their customers needs. They also welcome any suggestions you may have on how they can improve, or additional services you may require in the future.

For all photos and links from articles featured in the DFTRA newsletter, go to www.dfta.org.uk.

If you have information that you would like included in the next issue of this newsletter, or if you have any questions, please call Caroline on 01384 868 010 or email caroline@dfta.org.uk.