



Universal Credit

Universal Credit has started to be introduced in the Lewes District. You **might** need to apply but **only** when you have a certain type of change in your circumstances or when the DWP contact you and ask you to apply.

Some examples of changes that do **NOT** trigger a Universal Credit claim are:

- changing your personal details e.g. your phone number
- moving to a different address within the boundaries of your local authority
- a change in your circumstance that means an adjustment to your existing benefit, for example starting permitted work while claiming Employment and Support Allowance, or a change in the rent you pay.

If your circumstances **do** change, always **check first**, with the DWP to see if you need to change over to Universal Credit.

If you **DO** need support to apply for Universal Credit



Lewes District Council have linked up with Brighton Housing Trust to enable your Senior Caseworker (Area Housing Officer) to refer you to a Universal Credit Advisor. If you have their direct contact details, please use these. Alternatively, call 01273 471600 and ask to be transferred to your Senior Caseworker.

There is help and advice available at Citizens Advice Bureau in Southover House by prior appointment. For information go to:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/universal-credit/before-you-apply/moving-to-universal-credit-from-other-benefits/

There are also trained local volunteers that may be able to help you. The volunteers will not be acting as benefits experts, but have a good understanding of the UC claims process, the potential pitfalls and how to avoid them.

Appointments are available Monday to Saturday at two locations in Lewes at various times. The volunteers have a secure laptop and can give you guidance on how to complete the application. Volunteers are also able, with your "Explicit Consent", to contact the DWP to clarify something for you, ask questions, or help you to book an appointment. Some volunteers may also attend assessment appointments with you, for moral support, or to take notes on your behalf. See here for details of how to get advice:

A word from the Chair



We have a new committee that were elected at our AGM in September (See inside for details). We are all committed to serving our tenants. Please do let us know if we can help in anyway with any issues, but only after you have reported your complaint to Lewes District Council.

Please do ensure you give time to read the Universal Credit article on this page. There have been incidents reported to us about people claiming unnecessary, sometimes to their disadvantage.

Inside, we have Information of when to call East Sussex County Council and not Lewes District Council.

It just remains for me to give to you all Seasons Greetings and best wishes for 2019.

We welcome any contribution you can make to Tenants' Voice. Please send your articles to the tenant.participation@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk or by post to 2a Horsfield Road, Lewes, BN7 2TA. Articles for the next Tenants' Voice are needed by Wednesday January 9th 2019.

To make an appointment with a volunteer for a confidential 1:1 please contact them via e.clarke1982@gmail.com or call/text 07943 344483.

Emily Clarke is a Support Worker at a Brighton Charity supporting young people at risk of homelessness. Emily has been trained by BHT and has delivered training to others.

Articles inside Tenant Voice include: Foodbank information, Repairs over Christmas, When to call East Sussex County Council, Mutual Exchanges, Star Survey Winners, Environmental Budget improvements, Tenant Conference, How to nominate the Tenant Of The Year and details of the new TOLD Committee team.

Food Banks

If you are in need of food for yourself and your family you must be referred first. There are a number of local agencies that may be able to refer you to your nearest food bank, including your area Senior Caseworker, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Job Centre Plus and in addition, other family support centres.

Referrals can be emailed to:

Landport: Tenant.participation@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk or debbietwitchen@gmail.com

Malling: john.lamb@abilitymagazine.org.uk

Fitzjohns': helen.chiasson@btinternet.com

Newhaven:
enquiries.info@sussexcommunity.org.uk

Ringmer: Please call: 01825 750785

We have listed below the locations where food packages can be picked up from **after** you have been referred:

Landport: Landport Community room, 2a Horsfield Road, Lewes, BN7 2TA.

Malling: Phoenix Centre, 26 Malling Street, Lewes, BN7 2RD

Fitzjohns': Christ Church, 31 Prince Edward's Road, Lewes, BN7 1BL

Newhaven: SCDA, Denton Island Community Centre, Newhaven, BN9 9BA

Ringmer: In the Village Library. Lewes Road, Ringmer, BN8 5QH



MEARS

Between 12pm on Christmas Eve 2018 and 8.30am on 2nd January 2019, we will be operating an

Emergency Repairs Service **ONLY**.

During these times the service can be contacted by phoning 01273 471600 and selecting Option 1

If your enquiry is not deemed to be an emergency, you will be asked to call back during normal working hours in the New Year.

From Wednesday 2nd January 2019, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm please ring **01273 471600**, **select Option 3, followed by Option 1.**

ID Badges

If for any reason one of our operatives who visits your home to carry out work doesn't have any ID, you don't have to let them in. Please ask them to wait and then call us on 01273 471600, option 3 then option 1, and we will check the authenticity of the person attending and then we will find out why the operative doesn't have one - (the only time this MIGHT happen is where we have a new starter, but they go out with other operatives, who have ID).

We need your help

When we complete a repair, we need to know how we have done. You can give feedback there and then via the handheld device the operative has, or if you don't wish to do this, you will receive a paper survey in the post, please fill this in and return it in the enclosed self - addressed envelope provided.

Donations to the Food Bank.

The number of tenants that the food banks serve is increasing. Especially at this time of year, we are in need of donations of tinned food, dried pasta, rice, tea bags, cereals and toiletries such as soap, toothpaste, tooth brushes, shampoo, shower gel etc. If you would like to donate please contact your local food bank.

Homes First: What is a Mutual Exchange?

A mutual exchange (also known as tenancy exchange) allows you to swap your home with another council or housing association tenant anywhere in the UK with the written consent of your landlord and the landlord for the tenant you wish to swap with.

In a mutual exchange, two or more tenants swap their homes and take on the terms of each other's tenancy. There is no limit on the number of households that are involved in the chain.



A mutual exchange differs from a tenancy transfer; a tenancy transfer is an offer of accommodation made through the Housing Needs Register (Bidding) where tenants would move into a new property.

Mutual exchange is now the main mechanism through which many local authorities expect tenants to secure a move.

What should you look out for?

- Check the bedroom sharing policy with the Local Authority/Housing Association you want to apply to. Policies vary depending upon the housing needs in each area.
- Lewes District Council have a lettings policy concerning local connections to rural villages.
- Do you or the person(s) you are looking to exchange with have rent arrears or outstanding matters as perpetrators of Anti-Social Behaviour? An application may be refused or postponed.
- Check if repairs or redecoration is needed. When you exchange, you accept the property in the condition you find it in.
- Find out what rent you will pay.
- Don't move until you have all the necessary permissions in writing and have signed the relevant documents, can be evicted if you move without permission.
- Don't make or accept any payment for exchanging. This is illegal and you could be prosecuted and evicted.
- Check the type of tenancy that you may be exchanging to. For example, some housing associations operate 5 year Fixed-Term Tenancies.
- Once you have exchanged your home you will be agreeing to accept the property in its current condition including all its fixtures and fittings.
- It is the new tenants' responsibility for any property left at the premises – this includes any rubbish.
- You will not be entitled to any non-essential repairs for the first 12 months following the exchange.

What restrictions are there on Disabled adapted properties?

Properties with disabled adaptations can only be swapped with if the family going into the property require those adaptations. A letter from your doctor or occupational therapist will be required to demonstrate that the specific adaptations in the property are needed by the incoming tenants.

How long does it take to get a decision?

- A decision will be made within 42 days of receiving all applications linked to the exchange.
- Please note this is not a moving date. A moving date will be agreed by all landlords and parties once permission has been granted for the exchange to go ahead.

For a copy of LDC's guide to Mutual Exchanges, contact your Senior Caseworker



New Trial: Recycling made easy in public places thanks to new bins

You are now able to recycle easily while out and about thanks to new bins installed by Lewes District Council. The 'Recycling on the Go' scheme was launched recently allowing people to recycle items in local street bins for the first time and thereby helping to further reduce the amount of waste being incinerated. A total of 10 new bins, each clearly showing the materials that can be recycled, have been introduced in five areas across the district.

'Recycling on the Go' bins are located at:

[Seaford Railway Station and High Street](#)
Newhaven town centre and West Quay
[Lewes precinct, outside Waitrose and the train station](#)
Ringmer shops
[South Coast Road shops and near the Dell in Peacehaven](#)



Latest figures show that 1,039 tonnes of extra waste was recycled between November 2017 – when the new household recycling service started – and July 2018. With the addition of garden waste collected during the same period, the total recycling figure hits a colossal 7,230 tonnes. The council has also recently appointed a new waste and recycling engagement officer to increase participation across local communities. The role includes working with schools, supporting litter picking groups and coordinating events to promote the importance of reducing waste in people's daily lives.

New family homes are addressing temporary accommodation need



TOLD welcome the news that Cabinet councillors at Lewes District Council have approved a £2.2m project to create a new development of high-quality family housing in Newhaven.

The modern family homes (pictured) will be built off-site by a specialist modular building company, based in Newhaven - Boutique Modern - who are well known for its pioneering use of modular technology in conjunction with innovative housing design.

While construction is subject to the usual planning permission, the proposed scheme would follow closely on the heels of another similar council development in Peacehaven.

Councillors have said: "We have a responsibility to provide accommodation for those households who are homeless, but currently there is very little temporary accommodation that we can use in the district. So consequently, and at significant cost we often have to use B&Bs and private sector housing in other neighbouring local authority areas. Lewes District Council can reclaim some of the temporary accommodation costs, but not all of them. In April, May and June alone this year, £72,500 of unrecoverable expenses were incurred."

"Local people should receive local housing support, not sent miles away from their friends, family, schools and employment, it makes no sense at all." "I'm really excited by this modern and highly efficient accommodation. We can get the temporary housing built and in place quickly, which is great news for families in need of a home and for the new jobs created as a direct result of working with a local manufacturer."

TOLD asked Scot Reid, Head of Customer Service, what calls do you receive which the LDC cannot deal with. His reply was “anything to do with East Sussex County Council.”

If your call is about any of the following you should contact ESCC on **0345 608 0190**.

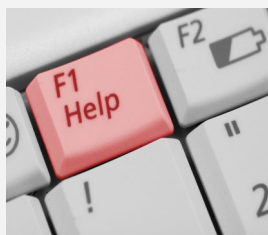
- Bus passes
- Blue Badges
- School Admissions
- Parking Issues
- Roads, Pot holes, Disabled Parking Bays and Paths
- Adult and Child Social Care
- Registrars, Births Deaths and Marriages
- Grass cutting (verges) and hedges
- Household recycling sites
- Libraries
- Trading Standards



TOLD hope this will help tenants by not wasting their time ringing the wrong service.



Thank you to everyone for your applications since April 2018. Applications are now **Closed**. The Tenant Participation team are currently working with TOLD, Parks and Gardens, Maintenance and Tates (Paradise Park) in order to finalise the agreed projects. TOLD will be writing to everyone shortly. Successful applications include the move of a small bin area in Fair Place, Wivelsfield Green—currently situated outside tenants’ front doors. In the spring edition of Tenants’ Voice we will provide pictures of some of the projects so far and of how to apply when the budget reopens.



Homes First Tenant Involvement have a training budget to help tenants obtain the skills to get on-line. **Do you need to set-up a free email address to register for Universal Credit?** Perhaps you would like help with Word, Excel or to make reports on-line to the maintenance team or to the Police. **If so, please contact us by calling 01273 487 249 for details.**



Help if you are suffering domestic violence

Call 999 if it's an emergency or you're in immediate danger

It is important to remember that you are not alone, the abuse is not your fault and there are people who can help you. There are number of ways you can get help, you can approach Refuge, whose professional staff are highly trained to work with everyone experiencing domestic abuse.

They can be contacted via the Freephone 24-Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline: **0808 2000 247**, or the specialist Men's Advice Line on **0808 801 0327**, or you can go to <https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/housing/domestic-violence-support/>

White Ribbon Day - 25 November 2018.

www.whiteribbon.org.uk

THANK YOU

Ms Downe of Ditchling said “I'm so happy with the wonderful support we received from my Senior Caseworker, (formally known as Housing Officer), who really helped me to go through the process of my application. My daughter and I love our new home. After 3 years of facing homelessness, we are now safe and secure. The council are so helpful and we feel lucky and grateful. Thank you.”



TOLD Update

On the 27th September 2018 our new TOLD committee was agreed for the next 12 months. The Committee is made up of:

Chair: Debbie Twitchen - (debbietwitchen@googlemail.com)

Secretary: David Nicholson - (toldsec@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Sue Wells - (toldsec@gmail.com)

Other Committee members: Tony Howard, David Pickbourne, Bob Brown, Richard Jennaway, Sarah Neels, Cathy Blight, Sylvia Gibbs, John Langley and Andi Mindel - reserve.

TOLD Open Meetings



You are welcome at any of our open meetings. The next meeting is on March 14th from 7:00 pm. Transport and carer's allowance can be provided to enable you to attend. If you would like to attend please contact the TP team on 01273 487249, or email tenant.participation@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

At each meeting we have guest speakers. In the September meeting we had, Dan Saxby Brighton Housing Trust who spoke about Universal Credit, Karen Rigby-Faux from Burleys on the wildflower project and Grace Hills from Lewes District Council, on what Lewes and Eastbourne Council are doing to comply with the new Homelessness Reduction Act.

You can also find up-to-date news via our website - www.told.org.uk - and our Facebook page - www.facebook.com/Tenants-Of-Lewes-District (Use the search option).

15 Minute Involvement

Following the Tenant Participation Survey, Lewes District Council have responded to feedback to enable tenants with limited free time to get Involved. As part of the new Strategy, the Tenant Participation team will be arranging for updates and events to be featured on the Facebook Housing page. Please use the following link and 'Like' the page:

www.facebook.com/ldchousing
Further 15 minute involvement opportunities will be announced.

Watch this space!

TOLD - Win a £10 shopping Voucher

Hidden in our TOLD word search are words associated with Winter. See if you can find and ring them all. The words may read forwards, backwards, vertically, horizontally or diagonally.

Once you have found them, send your completed entry to Tenants' Voice, 2a Horsfield Road, Lewes BN7 2TA or scan them into an email and send them to tenant.participation@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk by the **end of December 2018**. Please remember to include your name and address. One lucky winner will be picked at random and the winner's details will be in the next edition of Tenants Voice.



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BLANKET
 BLIZZARD
 BOOTS
 CHILLY
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 DECEMBER
 FEBRUARY
 FIREPLACE
 FROST
 FROZEN
 GLOVES
 HEATER
 HOT COCOA
 ICE
 ICE SKATES
 ICICLE
 JANUARY
 MELT
 SCARF
 SHOVEL
 SKIING
 SLED
 SLIPPERY
 SNOWING
 SNOW BALL
 SNOWFLAKE
 SNOWMAN
 SWEATER
 WINTER