

RavenTimes

Remembering HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

Raven was saddened to hear of the loss of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

His Royal Highness enriched young lives across the UK and the world through his Duke of Edinburgh initiative. The Duke of Edinburgh was also former president of the National Housing Federation and was a strong advocate for social housing.

We send our deepest condolences to the Queen and Royal Family.

Listening to your views

Page 2

Laptop scheme for children

Page 4



Community Litter-picking Partnership

A great example of partnership working between teams to support a community project in Tadworth.

The 'Tadworth Litter Picking Team' were looking for funding to purchase new equipment to keep the neighbourhood tidy.

With the help from Raven's Bob Camoccio and Glyn Elliott and funding from the Brighter Community Fund, we were able to support the project and get the 'Litter Picking Team' mobile in Tadworth.

Well done to all involved, we are proud to have such great communities in the area's we serve.



Listening to your views

Customer satisfaction has increased from 77% to 88% over the last 12 months, with the key areas of improvement communication and listening to customers.

Getting it right for you, our customers is our top priority. We know we don't get it right 100% of the time, but we're listening to your feedback and continually improving.

Some examples of the improvements you asked for:

- **'Leaving your Property'** customers told us they weren't clear how they have to leave their property when they move. People were worried about recharges if we had to clear properties and wanted to understand costs. – we've provided a new guide to property condition, with clear pictures and costs. The new process makes sure people know recharge costs as soon as possible.
- **Electrical test bookings** – customers told us they had problems getting through to book appointments, or received follow up letters before they had time to book. We've made it faster and easier as anyone in Customer Services can now book electrical tests.
- **Communication about complex repairs** – Customers told us communication about Complex repairs was difficult, especially where there were different teams or trades involved. We've improved the way we manage bigger projects, including

where personal belongings have to be removed or stored. We allocate a case manager to each customer who oversees the job as one point of contact for the customer.

- **Dealing with challenging behaviour** – Most of the time, our staff are treated with courtesy and respect. Unfortunately, there are a occasions when this is not the case. We have improved our process to deal with challenging behaviour to ensure customers understand the action we will take to deal with it and staff are supported.
- **Shared responsibility for communications with contractors** – we know there have been challenges where we use a contractor to do work in your home, such as heating. Through regular contractor meetings we are making sure we know of any concerns so we can keep you informed.

We sent out a survey before Christmas on our Customer Service Standards and to find out your priorities.

Over 400 customers responded to the survey and the results have been used to design a Customer Charter to be launched in the next few months. Keep an eye out on our website and future editions of Raven Times for more information.

Top priorities are:

- quality of accommodation
- safety in the home
- repairs

Customers also said 'making it easy to contact us', 'having the ability to speak to somebody using the channel of choice' and 'keeping us informed of next steps/actions following a request' are important, as were the 'quality of repairs' and 'fitting appointments around the customer'.

The Better Connected Customer Panel '**Customer Connect**' has been continuing to work with staff to improve services. In particular they have been looking at repair requests and preparing for the new online Customer Portal.

Want to be get involved in making things better?

We'd love to hear from you to help design our new online portal so please contact Shuna China, shuna.china@ravenht.org.uk, call **0300 123 3399** or take a look at our website for more information.

www.ravenht.org.uk/communities/get-involved/resident-voice/customer-connect/

Thank you!

Lastly, we would like to thank everyone who completed the 'paying your rent' survey.

We're putting all the results together and we'll use what you've told us to our rent collection process and Moneywise support. Keep an eye out on our Raven Facebook page for some follow up questions on the value of rent statements.

Giving Raven safe access to your home during Covid

We know these are worrying times and it's been a tough year. Every effort is being taken to keep you, your family and our staff as safe as possible. We've produced a short video highlighting how we can all help keep each other safe and limit the spread of Covid. You can watch the video on our website at www.ravenht.org.uk.

Keeping you safe also means making sure we carry out legally required inspections for gas safety every year and electrical safety every 5 years. You are required to allow access for these checks, with reasonable notice; even in these difficult times. You'll receive a letter advising when your check is due and explaining how to make an appointment.

If you are self-isolating or have Covid symptoms it's important you call us on **0300 123 3399** or email Raven@ravenht.org.uk to make us aware



New employment support opportunity - Working Homes



Raven is proud to announce that we have launched a two year partnership to help customers and members of the local community get a job.

The new programme - Working homes - is a partnership between Raven, the European Social Fund and Groundwork London and Croydon. It starts in May 2021.

To be eligible a household must have no working adults, have a right to work in the UK and reside in East Surrey, Mid Sussex, Horsham or Crawley. You can be unemployed, looking for work, claiming Universal Credit or other benefits, not actively looking for work with or without benefits.

Participants will receive a mixture of one-to-one support, tasks, guidance, training, new experiences and skill development.

“We will look at local job opportunities, people’s current skills and the skills they may need to gain to help them into work,” said Julie, Raven’s Employability & Skills Manager

“You will be able to go on workshops,

courses and get work experience to help make you a strong candidate for suitable jobs and if required, we will help with special support such as childcare or travel costs.”

The results Raven hopes to achieve are:

- Getting people into part or full time work
- Finding them formal training or education to enable them to progress further
- Encouraging people to actively seek jobs with skills and confidence

If you are interested in building your confidence to begin to look for work, improving your abilities or identifying the skills and training you need to get back into employment after a career break contact us at **Employment@ravenht.org.uk** with your name and contact information and we will do the rest.

If you don’t think this is the programme for you, but still want support to get a job, please still get in touch as we have other programmes which might be right for you.

Happy 100th Birthday Vera

Vera Norman, a resident from Horley celebrated her 100th Birthday in February and received her telegram from the queen.

Vera has lived in her current home for over 30 years. During World War 2 Vera worked in a tool shop and served in the RAF. After the war, she loved working as a dressmaker.

Like many of us, Vera has missed going to shops in lockdown, but grew lots of tomatoes.

Congratulations on reaching your 100th Birthday Vera, from all of us at Raven.



Our complaints process

We have reviewed our complaints policy in the light of a new national code being introduced.

Our complaints process aims to:

- Be fair
- Put things right
- Learn from outcomes.

The Housing Ombudsman published a new Complaint Handling Code in July 2020, setting out good practice that will allow landlords to respond to complaints effectively and fairly.

Key areas in the code

- Universal definition of a complaint
- Providing easy access to the complaints procedure and ensuring residents are aware of it, including their right to access the

- Housing Ombudsman Service
- The structure of the complaints procedure - only two stages necessary and clear timeframes for responses
- Ensuring fairness in complaint handling with a resident-focused process
- Taking action to put things right and appropriate remedies
- Creating a positive complaint handling culture through continuous learning and improvement
- Demonstrating learning in annual reports.

We assessed our complaints process based on the new code and whilst we are pleased to meet all requirements, we want to

improve so that raising a complaint is even easier and responses are informative and transparent.

We have already had great feedback about the Get It On Track complaint stage from customers who have used it and are working on speeding up formal responses.

Our priority is not only putting things right but learning from complaints. Each month our Customer First group will look at complaints to ensure that where a complaint is upheld we learn from what went wrong.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service we want to hear from you so please get in touch on **0300 123 3399** or email **Raven@ravenht.org.uk**

Laptop scheme helping Surrey pupils surpasses 500 milestone

Raven is leading an initiative to refurbish hundreds of donated laptop computers and distribute them to children and young people who need them, as well as some Raven customers who cannot afford to purchase their own laptop or tablet.

Steve Ward, Digital Inclusion Officer at Raven, became the lead for the scheme, called 'Level Up Redhill Reigate Banstead' in late December 2020 and since that time we have donated over 560 laptops to schools and will donate another 230 laptops in schools in the next 3 weeks. We took inspiration from a successful scheme in Horley called 'Level Up' which provides laptops to primary pupils. Working closely with Voluntary Action Reigate & Banstead' decided to roll this out into Redhill, Reigate and Banstead and to target primary and secondary schools and colleges.

The scheme to help young people who need access to laptops during the pandemic has been an unprecedented success, especially when taking into consideration it was only launched a few months ago.

During the last year, it's been even more challenging for families who can't access IT equipment, especially with homeschooling. This scheme has provided a lifeline to enable children to keep up with school work.

Refurbishing donated laptops also has an environmental benefit, reducing landfill and providing value for money as we just need to buy parts.

Our initial target for 2021 was 500 laptops but we now expect to hit a target of 1,000 laptops by the end of the summer school term. We have moved swiftly due to wanting to support children during the pandemic.

During January and February Steve was collecting over 200 laptops every week from people's homes the quality of the recent company donations has been brilliant. Corporate donations are now our main source of equipment as we exhausted the many personal donations from the community at the start of the scheme. The local community have been amazingly generous during this tough time.

The computers are completely refurbished by a team of 20 volunteer IT experts who also replace and dispose of the hard drive to ensure data protection standards are maintained.

Collection points have been set up through local schools and Marks and Spencers. The initiative is also being supported financially and with staff resources by Raven, Pfizer and Fidelity.

Anyone interested in donating or receiving a laptop should go to www.varb.or.uk/level-up or email levelup@ravenht.org.uk



A life changing new friendship...



A serious operation which left a Raven resident as a wheelchair user has led to a new life being started and great new friendship being formed.

Christine Conway underwent an emergency leg amputation in 2020 which suddenly meant she was a 'prisoner in her own home' in Reigate.

"I could not get around and was having suicidal thoughts – I did not see the point in living any more and was very down," recalls Christine.

Raven's support co-ordinator Georgia Neale worked with her as a 'Support Coordinator' customer, building up her trust and finding a wheelchair-adapted home for her in a sheltered housing scheme, Nutley Court.

"I was very unsure about moving and very anxious but soon settled in and was visited by one of my neighbours Lou Langridge, and we are now firm friends," Christine said.

Georgia says that Christine is now a completely different person.

"Last time I saw her she was smiling ear to ear. She couldn't thank everyone enough for the help and the change in her life.

"She had no dark thoughts and cannot believe she has a made a friend of her own age and will never be able to explain how life changing this move has been for her.

"Lou thinks we are angels and she is so over the moon and happy that she has someone to talk to.

"Both ladies are looking forward to getting their mobility scooters and will then hit the town of Reigate – it's an amazing friendship for both!"

Georgia explains.

For more information call **0300 123 3399** or email Raven@ravenht.org.uk

For more information

For more information on any of the articles featured in this edition, for the latest updates surrounding coronavirus and how our services may be affected, or for support and advice during this unprecedented time, please visit www.ravenht.org.uk or follow us on social media.

T: 0300 123 3399

E: raven@ravenht.org.uk

 RavenHousingTrust

 RavenHT

 raven-housing-trust