

# Southway Stories

The magazine for Southway Housing customers

Winter 2017

## SEASONS GREETINGS FROM SOUTHWAY



Tenant  
approved



Employment support  
Courses & more



UC is claimed online  
Need help with this?



# MERRY QUIZMAS!

WIN A  
COMPUTER  
TABLET!

## Christmas Crossword

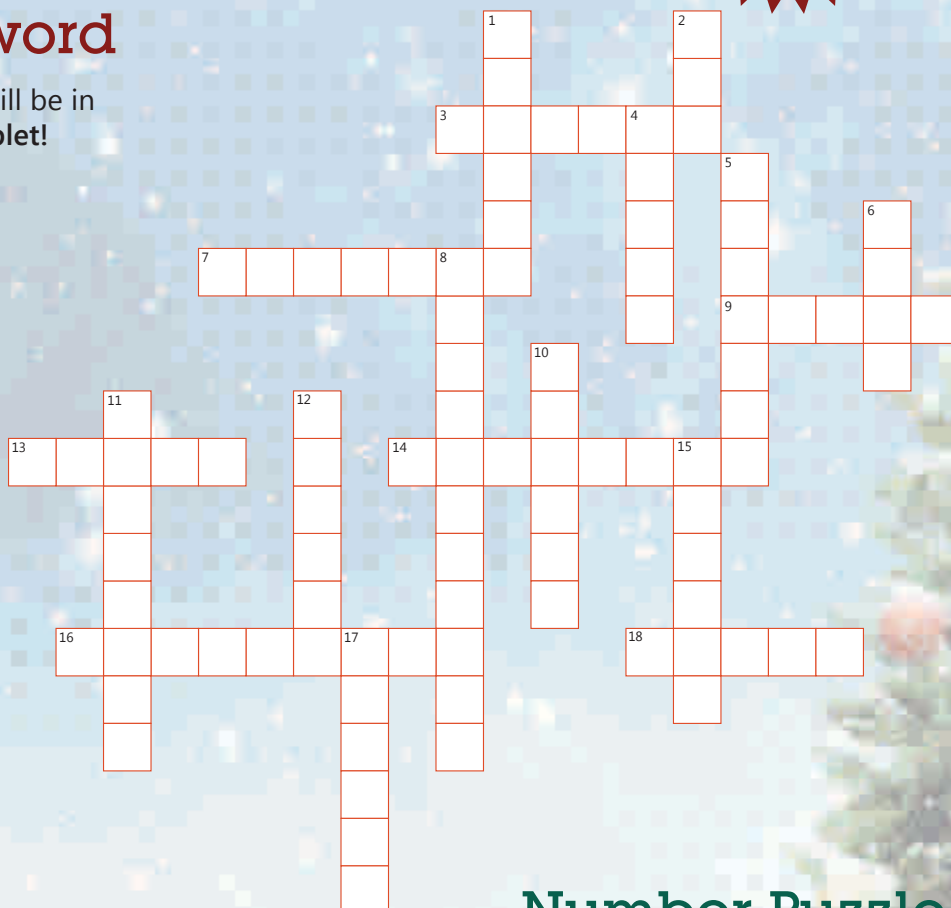
Complete our festive quiz and you will be in with a chance to win a computer tablet!

### Across

- 3. Christmas day food (6)
- 7. Christmas-hating character (7)
- 9. Reindeer name / shooting star (5)
- 13. Sung together at Christmas (5)
- 14. The festive month (8)
- 16. Ice crystal (9)
- 18. Red-berried spiky shrub (5)

### Down

- 1. Shiny round decoration (6)
- 2. \_\_\_ to the world! (3)
- 4. Santa's helpers (5)
- 5. Bang! (7)
- 6. The First \_\_\_ (4)
- 8. House-making biscuit (11)
- 10. Circular tree branch (6)
- 11. Found under the tree (8)
- 12. Metallic thread decoration (6)
- 15. Festive drink (for grown ups) (6)
- 17. \_\_\_ calendar (6)



## Number Puzzle

How many gifts did the true love receive in total over 'The 12 Days of Christmas'?

Clue... 1 Partridge a day for 12 days =  $1 \times 12 = 12$  Partridges in Pear Trees!

## Spot the 7 differences

Can you spot the 7 differences between the pictures of Santa's Workshop?

### HOW TO ENTER

Send your answers to us by email to [communications@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:communications@southwayhousing.co.uk), or via Facebook [www.southwayhousing.co.uk/](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk/) southwayhousing or Twitter @southwayhousing - take a photo of the page or just type out your answers.

Or you can drop your newsletter into Reception by Friday 5th January – don't forget to write your name.

WINNER  
WILL BE DRAWN  
8TH JANUARY.  
GOOD LUCK!



# GET INVOLVED!

**There are lots of ways to get involved at Southway. These range from attending meetings and events to giving feedback online.**

One way to get involved is to join our Tenant Scrutiny Panel which is a group of tenants who take an in-depth look at what we do. One of the key aims is to consider whether services are providing good value for money and benefitting tenants.

The Panel has already carried out reviews on several service areas and is now in the process of looking at how we manage our void (empty) properties.

## **Want to contribute to this review?**

If you have moved into your Southway home within the last 12 months you can help the Scrutiny Panel, which is made up of tenants wanting to improve services for everyone by sharing their experiences.

Please email or call Maureen Ward for more information and she can then put you in touch with the Panel.

## **Would you like to volunteer at Southway?**

We currently have the following volunteering opportunities:

**Helping at a Quids In Food Club** – each Quids In club serves between 20 and 60 local residents each week and you could help Southway staff to provide this service. Depending on how involved you would like to be, some training may be required.

Contact Maureen Ward for more information.

**Be a Digital Champion** – help other tenants to learn computer skills – we will match volunteers with individuals or we will ask you to attend training sessions or events to help in a group setting. See Page 16 for more details.

Contact Joe Sandwick for more information.



If there is any other way in which you would like to get involved or volunteer, please let us know. We're waiting to hear from you!

**Contact Joe or Maureen via the Customer Hub at [connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk).**



YOU SAID...

WE DID

Customer Feedback is extremely important to Southway. We count on you to let us know how things are doing and use your feedback to improve the way we deliver our services.

Feedback reaches us in a range of ways – from themes identified in customer complaints through comments made during a telephone enquiry to things said while one of our officers is making a home visit.

Over the past three months the following themes were identified, and this is what we have done in response to them:



## Call Waiting

1. I have to wait a long time for the phone to be answered before I speak to your lovely staff.
2. I don't appreciate having to wait almost 15 minutes for someone to answer the phone, it really puts people off ringing Southway.

We have been working hard to improve our call answering times in the Customer Hub.

At the start of the year, callers were waiting an average of six minutes before getting through to an agent. We have managed to reduce this to around 90 seconds and are continuing to make improvements in this area.

We are keen for customers to use the online portal to request repairs wherever possible as this will cut calls into our Customer Hub, allowing us to answer those that need to come in as quickly as possible. For how to do this see [www.southwayhousing.co.uk/onlineguide](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk/onlineguide).

## Call Back

1. I was told someone would call back, but they didn't. The officer who answered the phone did her best, but I am more confused than ever.

2. Did not get through to the person I wanted to speak with. I was told they would phone me back, but they did not.

Staff failing to call customers back is something we are keen to improve and for that reason every staff member's performance in this area is measured. We are reviewing our internal processes to help improve this.

## Communication

1. There needs to be better communication between departments. I was told my heating would not be repaired until Monday (no part), yet an Engineer turned up Friday and replaced the part.
2. Communication and organisation seems to be poor. I waited in all morning and no one turned up, this is the third time this has happened.

Southway carries out approx. 20,000 repair appointments every year. Whilst the vast majority are carried out without any issues, there are a small number (2.2%) where things do not go according to plan and appointments are missed.

We are investigating the reasons we sometimes get things wrong and adjusting our working systems to prevent them happening again. If you have a missed appointment, please let us know immediately so we can put things right as soon as possible.





# OFFICIALLY CHRISTMAS

**On Monday 4th December the community came together to help dress the Community Christmas Tree on Kingsway Crescent in Burnage.**

More than 200 children from the local schools attended with the decorations that we had made with them over previous weeks, joining families and friends from the local area. Hot drinks flowed and carols were sung along to a live brass band while we handed out goodie bags – all ending with a big lights switch on and a feeling of festive joy.

A big thank you to everyone that was part of this wonderful community event!

For the community events we have coming up in 2018, check out [www.southwayhousing.co.uk/events](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk/events).





# UNIVERSAL CREDIT FULL DIGITAL SERVICE IS HERE!

**SINCE OCTOBER 24TH, SOUTHWAY HOUSING TRUST'S WORKING AGE CUSTOMERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS A FULLY DIGITAL UNIVERSAL CREDIT SERVICE (EXCEPT THOSE WHO LIVE IN POSTCODE AREA M19 WHERE IT GOES LIVE ON JANUARY 24TH, 2018).**

## What does this mean?

Most working age people making a new Benefit claim in a full digital Universal Credit area are invited to claim Universal Credit. They will no longer make a new claim for Tax Credits, Housing Benefit or out-of-work Benefits like Income Support.

All claims to Universal Credit are made online.

## If you can't get online at home, you can access a computer at:

- Southway Housing Office at Aspen House
- Drop-in sessions and courses running at community centres in the area, including Barlow Moor Community Centre, Chorlton and Westcroft Community Centre, Burnage
- Old Moat Sure Start Centre, and any of the libraries in the area
- Local Job Centres.

Universal Credit is paid monthly in arrears and includes help with your rent, but it may take six or seven weeks before you receive your first payment

**You can ask for an Advance Payment if you are going to find it hard to manage until you receive your first payment.**

## Are you already claiming Benefits?

You won't need to claim Universal Credit until you are told to do so, however, if you have a change in circumstances you may then have to claim Universal Credit.



## What changes in my circumstances mean I must claim Universal Credit?

### Changes in circumstances can include:

- Losing your job
- Failing an Employment and Support Allowance medical
- Having a first child and unable to make a new claim for Child Tax Credit
- A change whilst out of work, e.g. you become poorly, you get well, or your youngest child reaches 5th birthday
- A change in your relationship e.g. separation from your partner
- If you move here from a different local authority

**Remember, if you have to claim Universal Credit you will need to claim separately for Council Tax Support from Manchester City Council.**

**If you are making a claim for Universal Credit please tell us, there are many ways that we can help:**

- Need help getting online? Southway offers an Internet Savvy training course and details on where you can use a computer for free
- Having problems with your Universal Credit claim? We provide a Money Advice and Advocacy Service to help ensure you receive your full award
- Struggling to pay your debts? We have advisors who can help
- If you feel you may struggle paying your rent, contact us and have a chat
- If you feel you may struggle managing with monthly payments, speak to us about Alternative Payment Arrangements
- Struggling to budget monthly? We can provide budgeting advice and support
- Need help opening a bank account? We can help you with that
- We can help you ask the DWP for an Advance Payment if you're going to find it hard to manage until you receive your first Universal Credit payment
- Finding it hard to get into work or increase your hours? We can provide employment support and advice



**For more information contact us:**

Message us: [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk)

Email us: [connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk)

Phone us: 0161 448 4200

**Other useful contacts:**

Department for Work and Pensions  
[www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

Citizens Advice (CAB)  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

National Debt Line  
[www.nationaldebtlines.org](http://www.nationaldebtlines.org)  
tel: 0808 808 4000

Money Advice Service  
[www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk)  
tel: 0800 138 7777

Step Change  
[www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org)  
tel: 0800 138 1111

## ENJOY A RENT FREE WEEK THIS CHRISTMAS

**Southway tenants receive two rent-free weeks per year, one at Christmas and the other at the beginning of April.**

If you're a weekly, fortnightly or four weekly Direct Debit payer\* this means two 'payment breaks' over these weeks where we will reduce or won't take your Direct Debit payment.

To receive these payment breaks, in accordance with your tenancy agreement, your rent account should be (at least) a full payment ahead – i.e. a week, two weeks, four weeks in credit, depending on how you pay. If it isn't, your Direct Debit payment will be taken as usual to pay off any arrears or to move your account into being in credit.

So, clear any arrears and get ahead and you too will benefit from future payment breaks.

\*Please note, monthly Direct Debit payers will not be affected as their 50 weeks payments are split equally across the 12 months.





# Chorlton Green Space is flying the flag



**Barlow Moor Green Space in Chorlton has been recognised by the Green Flag Award Scheme as one of the very best in the world.**

The green space is among a record-breaking 1,797 UK parks and green spaces to receive a prestigious Green Flag Award – the mark of a quality park or green space.

This international award, run by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, is a sign to the public that the space boasts the highest possible environmental standards, is beautifully maintained and has excellent visitor facilities. This is the first time Southway has won one and we are only the second housing association in the country to achieve the award.

Last year, Southway Housing was successful in winning an £8,000 Tesco Bags For Life grant. This money went to improving the Barlow Moor Green Space along Darley Avenue, Mottram Avenue and Leeswood Avenue. It now provides a place for the community to come together and use the space.

Southway worked with the four local primary schools in the area (Barlow Hall, St Ambrose, Chorlton Park and

Brookburn) to plant a Heritage Garden. This started with workshops at each school, where pupils learnt about traditional herb gardens and planting. Each class then designed part of the Herb Garden and an area for climbing plants.

To allow the community to get involved in the project, planters were installed, and an orchard created on Mottram Avenue by planting a mix of fruit trees. Residents have also set up a gardening group to grow vegetables.

Karen Mitchell, Southway's Chief Executive, said:  
**"We are absolutely delighted to receive a Green Flag Award for the first time.**

**"We know how much quality green spaces matter to residents and visitors, and this award celebrates the dedication that goes into maintaining Barlow Moor Green Space to such a high standard."**





# STUDENTS SERVE FOR SUCCESS

OVER THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS, SOUTHWAY'S EMPLOYMENT AND MONEY COORDINATOR ELAINE WILKINSON WORKED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MANCHESTER COLLEGE TO DEVELOP A 'WAITING ON' COURSE TO OPEN UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRONT OF HOUSE RESTAURANT STAFF.



The course proved popular and 18 eventually signed up to it. The course was delivered at Manchester College's Wythenshawe site and Southway paid all students' travel expenses.

Southway also paid for waiting on uniforms and arranged placements to provide students with some work experience. In the run-up to Christmas many local restaurants were looking for staff. Within a few days of starting their placements five students managed to get into

work. All students passed an online Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate for Catering.

We are hoping to develop a Childminding Course towards the middle of next year.

**If you are interested in this or in signing up for other future courses, please contact Elaine via the Customer Hub . We also have details of other job opportunities in the area; in cleaning, hospitality and catering.**





**UC** *Universal  
Credit*

## ***digital drop-in sessions***

**UNIVERSAL  
CREDIT**  
LIVE FROM  
OCT 2017

Universal Credit (UC) is claimed online via [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

### **Do you need help with this claim?**

We're holding drop in sessions to assist Southway tenants applying for Universal Credit. Our Digital Officers/Champions will be on hand to help you with filling in the online form, and our Advice Services team can provide guidance on your claim or signpost you to further help.

The drop in sessions will be every Wednesday 10am-1pm at:

#### **DIDSBURY**

Aspen House,  
Wilmslow Road M20 2SN on:

**January 10th 2018**  
**January 31st 2018**  
**February 21st 2018**  
**March 14th 2018**  
**April 4th 2018**

#### **OLD MOAT/WITHINGTON**

Old Moat Sure Start Centre,  
Old Moat Ln M20 1DE on:

**January 17th 2018**  
**February 7th 2018**  
**February 28th 2018**  
**March 21st 2018**  
**April 11th 2018**

#### **BURNAGE**

Westcroft Community Centre,  
Burnage M20 6EF on:

**January 24th 2018**  
**February 14th 2018**  
**March 7th 2018**  
**March 28th 2018**  
**April 18th 2018**

To discuss an individual claim now, call the UC helpline on 0800 328 9344 or textphone: 0800 328 1344. All Universal Credit telephone lines are now Freephone numbers (all numbers are available Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm).

For further information on UC check our website guide:

**[www.southwayhousing.co.uk/uc](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk/uc)**





# UNIVERSAL CREDIT SUPPORT AT BMCA

Barlow Moor Community Association (BMCA) has courses available specifically for Universal Credit covering the following topics:

- What is Universal Credit?
- What you'll need to claim Universal Credit
- How to Claim
- Support in claiming
- Benefit calculators
- Budgeting

They can offer help and support in many different ways depending on your needs. Due to the diverse and confidential nature they offer 1-1 support sessions by appointment.

## Barlow Moor Community Association

23 Merseybank Avenue,  
Chorlton, Manchester  
M21 7NT

Tel: 0161 446 4805

Fax: 0161 446 4806

Twitter: @BMCA Ltd

# UNIVERSAL CREDIT IT SUPPORT

Skills for Employment are offering various courses to help improve your IT skills ready for the Universal Credit transition.

## IT Users Entry 3

2 days per week (Monday/Tuesday) for 6 weeks including an additional learning element using Universal Credit Live Service.

## ECDL online training

Monday-Friday 9.30am-3.30pm for 2 weeks

## Entry Level 3 working in IT

(including a placement) - 8 week course

There is also the potential (depending on the demand) for an over 50's IT course.

If you are interested in being referred for any of these opportunities contact Elaine Wilkinson at Southway at connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk.





# CHRISTMAS COOKING!

Our very own staff member Melanie Moriarty spends time out of work creating fantastic recipes that are quick, simple and even better; cheap to make!

Below, Melanie has cooked us up a Christmas treat which you can easily make in the comfort of your own home, so why not have a go!?

You can find loads more simple and money saving recipes on Melanie's facebook page Molly's Kitchen, found at <https://www.facebook.com/poundish/>

## Cranberry and Orange Zest Shortbread Cookies

### Ingredients

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped dried cranberries
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt



### How to Make It

#### Step 1

Beat 1 cup softened butter at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy. Gradually add 3/4 cup powdered sugar, beating until smooth. Stir in chopped cranberries, orange zest, vanilla extract, and almond extract until blended.

#### Step 2

Stir together 2 cups flour, 1/4 tsp. baking powder, and 1/4 tsp. salt.

#### Step 3

Gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating at low speed until blended.

#### Step 4

Shape shortbread dough into 2 (7-inch) logs. Wrap each log in wax paper, and chill 4 hours, or freeze logs in zip-top plastic freezer bags up to 1 month

#### Step 5

Preheat oven to 350°.



#### Step 6

If frozen, let logs stand at room temperature 10 minutes. Cut each log into 24 slices. Place shortbread slices 1 inch apart on lightly greased or parchment paper-lined baking sheets.

#### Step 7

Bake shortbread slices at 350° for 10 to 12 minutes or until edges of slices are golden.

#### Step 8

Remove shortbread from baking sheets, and place on wire racks; let cool completely (about 20 minutes). Store in airtight containers



# OFF-ROAD BIKE UPDATE

**We are aware of the concerns that residents have about anti-social behaviour caused by off-road bikes and want to make you aware of how Southway Housing is working with the Police and the Council to address the problem.**

The Police has an off-road bike unit and can issue fixed penalty notices and even confiscate bikes involved.

The Council can issue different types of order such as an ASBO, Community Protection Notice or an injunction.

On our part, we are asking you to let us have details that can be used to build up a picture of what is happening and where so that we can bring in resources where they are needed most.

The most effective way we can tackle the problem is if we know who the culprits are, because all the legal powers available depend on this.

It is vital that if you have any information about who is riding bikes illegally or in an anti-social way that you report them.

To help identify the offenders, a description of what they looked like, a description of the bike and its registration number if it is visible and the location concerned are all very helpful.

You can report by calling the Police on the non-emergency 101 number, by phoning Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or by phoning Southway on 0161 448 4200.

Where we know the identity of the culprits, we at Southway Housing, the Police and Council will work together to take all action possible to stop this type of anti-social behaviour happening.

# CHRISTMAS AND MENTAL HEALTH

**Christmas can be a difficult time for many, with raised stress levels, lots of expense and sometimes, additional feelings of isolation.**

## **Loneliness:**

A recent Samaritans study reveals that one in six people feel Christmas is the loneliest time of the year, with nearly a quarter of people surveyed believing their problems feel worse during the festive period. If you are facing isolation or loneliness, call the Samaritans free any time, from any phone on 116 123. Alternatively, if you use social media and are worried about being alone on Christmas Day, you can join in comedian Sarah Millican's campaign and search for the hashtag #joinin, on Twitter.

## **Stress:**

Leaving all your preparations for Christmas until the last minute can cause unnecessary stress, but planning ahead can save you time and money. Making lists for jobs to do, presents to buy and groceries can

help prevent forgetting something (or someone) and makes it easier to stick to a budget.

## **Money:**

Shopping online can save you a lot of money, as well as avoiding the stress and crowds of the Christmas shopping season. If Christmas costs are causing trouble, you can find some great tips here; <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/christmas-savings>

We can also provide plenty of money advice so getting in touch or check out our website.

Whatever you are going through this Christmas, there is always help available. We wish you a happy and healthy Christmas.

## SOUTHWAY ON SCREEN



**The Quids In food clubs, which now run from five locations across our neighbourhoods, caught the attention of ITV producers recently!**

ITV had been making a documentary on the impacts of Welfare Reform and the different responses to food poverty. Because of the membership system they use, the clubs were seen as a really positive alternative to food banks (for a weekly fee of £2 members get up to £15 worth of fresh, chilled and ambient food).

In November and December ITV filmed at Burnage and Chorlton clubs interviewing members and volunteers about their experiences, as well as dropping in to film at the Universal Credit sessions that were taking place at the same time.

We have been told that this will form part of a special episode of the ITV Tonight programme on 21st December at 7.30pm... So stay tuned!



# PROTECTING OUR TREES TOGETHER



**At Southway we take great pride in our green spaces and tree stock. As part of our garden spaces we have a lot of trees that play a very important role in the quality of our lives.**

They help cut noise levels and reduce air pollution.

In view of the fact that the World Health Organisation considers that the air quality in our city is dangerous in certain areas, it is vital that we keep trees in our communities.

We keep records, so we know what types of trees we have and where they are. We are in the process of inspecting all our tree stock for health and safety reasons as well as to ensure that none of them have been removed.

We have had reports recently of people taking down trees in their gardens without consent – this has meant that the tenant has had to replant a tree to replace the one they have removed. As part of your tenancy agreement you need permission to either remove or plant a tree. So please do not remove any trees or hedges without prior written consent from Southway Housing Trust.

And do let us know if you see anyone removing a tree or hedge row.

If you see any of the following things happen to your tree, please either go online or call us to let us know:

- Your tree has snapped branches that are stuck up in the tree;
- Your tree starts to have mushrooms growing on it;
- In the summer months you can see branches with no leaves on them or see cavities or hollows in the trunk of the tree.

## TREE-MENDOUS FACTS

**Trees help reduce crime**

**Trees benefit wildlife**

**Trees help us save energy**

**Trees help clean our air**

**Trees help reduce water run off in flash flooding**

**Trees are good for mental health and wellbeing**



# BE A CHAMPION

Are you reasonable with computers, and looking for some volunteer experience?



If so, you should consider being a Digital Champion. Being a Digital Champion is all about helping people to get online. You don't need to be an IT whizz, you just need to know your way around a computer, enjoy using the Internet and like helping other people.

You could help someone make more of their money, stay in touch with family, find employment, access help that they need, and generally enjoy a better life because they have more choices. For you it also looks fantastic on your CV!

Champions provide help either in the home, at our Didsbury head office, or at a community centre or public building that is local to both parties, depending on what you are both most comfortable with.

No experience is needed as we will provide you with all the training and equipment that you need.

**To find out more on how to become a DigiChamp, contact our Digital Inclusion Officer Joe Sandwick at [connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk) or on 0161 448 4200.**

**If you would like this information in another language or style please contact us.**

Tel: 0161 448 4200 Fax: 0161 448 4334

Textphone: 0161 448 4349

Email: [connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk)

Web: [www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk)

SMS: 07554 400781



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The Government Standard