

# Southway Stories

The magazine for  
Southway Housing  
customers

Autumn 2020

## WORK & CAREERS SPECIAL

**INVEST IN  
YOUR FUTURE**

**SEVEN NEW  
APPRENTICESHIPS**



**PAGE 6** ➔



**High  
temperature**



**Continuous  
cough**



**Loss of taste  
or smell**

### DO YOU KNOW THE MAIN SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS?

If you have any, self-isolate and book a free test straight away.



**Tenant  
approved**



**PAGE 7**

**£25,000 funding  
for your projects**



**PAGE 14**

**Places available at  
Quids In Food Club**



## STAY SAFE AND LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER

At the time of writing, unfortunately, coronavirus cases are still on the rise in Greater Manchester. It's so important that we continue to follow the guidance to keep ourselves and others safe.

At the moment this includes not meeting socially with other households in private spaces, other than those in your support bubble, and wearing a face covering in supermarkets, on public transport, and at all venues added to the list. Remember there may be new rules on the day that this newsletter arrives.

The better we do following this guidance, the sooner

our restrictions can be lifted. For up to date coronavirus information about your local area, we recommend signing up to Manchester City Council's coronavirus email bulletin at <https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

Any updates to Southway's services can always be found on the Coronavirus homepage on our website.

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO NEXT?

As we look to the future and how we can get on track post-lockdown, I'd be interested to know your thoughts on our services, what we currently offer, or how we could offer things differently as we adapt to the impacts of the pandemic:

- Should any of our services change or look different post-lockdown?
- How would you want us to deliver support and services safely in the current climate?
- What more could we do that would have the greatest positive impact in our neighbourhoods?

**Please get in touch to let me know your thoughts and ideas. You can email me at [chiefexecsblog@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:chiefexecsblog@southwayhousing.co.uk) or respond on social media.**



*Karen Mitchell*



# THE FULL REPAIRS SERVICE HAS SAFELY RESUMED

We have really appreciated your patience and understanding while we've worked to make sure the repairs service is fully safe and Covid-secure for you and our staff.



Our full service has now resumed and you can book all types of repairs over the phone and online on our website.

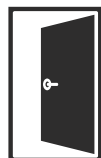
If you request a repair on the website, an Advisor will call you back to book a suitable appointment slot. This will be quicker than calling us and will help to keep our phones free for urgent calls.

Because we had a backlog of over 1,000 repairs to work through, the timescales for completing our repairs have temporarily increased:

- Urgent repairs: from 5 to 10 working days
- Routine repairs: from 10 to 20 working days
- Emergency repairs: still 24 hours

We will review these timescales again this month as the backlog is worked through, and we'll keep you informed.

Please help to keep our staff and your household safe by following the safety guidance:



Please leave the room we will be working in **vacant**, and make sure we have **easy access**



Where possible, **clean and sterilise areas** we will be working in. We will do the same when we are done



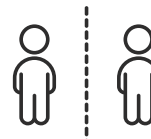
**Avoid other visitors** coming to your home during the visit



If someone is **shielding or vulnerable**, arrange for them to be in a different room



Where possible, **leave windows open** for good ventilation



Follow social distancing keeping **2m away**. If you have a **face mask**, we would appreciate it if you want to wear it, though this is optional



Southway staff will be carrying a Southway ID. If someone isn't – please **don't allow them in!**

*If on the day of your visit, you have symptoms (like a fever, a continuous cough, or a loss/change in sense of smell or taste) please call us and we can rearrange for a later date.*

# THE NEW NORMAL WORLD OF WORK



The Covid-19 pandemic has had a dramatic effect on the economy: while some businesses are experiencing reduced demand for workers, others, such as digital services, are opening up new employment opportunities. This changing situation may mean needing to rethink our career goals and potentially retraining to access future opportunities.

**We understand this is an uncertain time, so we'd like to share the wide range of support available for you.**

## **Looking to refocus or retrain?**

Our 5-week online programme 'The Time is Now', helps job seekers to identify training needs and reset their career goals to improve their chances of gaining employment.

## **Just starting out?**

We are committed to helping young people in our communities and are working with the job centre to help 16 to 24-year olds gain work experience placements through the government's new 'Kick Start' programme.

## **Need some support?**

We appreciate that many people have issues in their life that are a barrier to gaining employment. We run the Be Well project, which helps people deal with issues in their life so that they can move on and achieve their life goals. You can read more about this on **page 18**.

You can also arrange an appointment with our dedicated Employment & Money Coordinator, Elaine. Elaine works with various agencies to offer you a tailored package of careers support.

## **Work for us**

Southway is launching seven exciting new apprenticeships this October. They are open to people of all ages, and we particularly welcome applications from our tenants. **See page 6.**

## **Looking to the future**

Currently, we are planning a series of online events, to support you into employment and to promote apprenticeship opportunities, including those at Southway. We are also running an October "Create my Future" Jobs Fair, where job seekers can meet employers who have local opportunities on offer. **See page 5.**

**Check our website and social media for details of all upcoming employment events and contact us if you want to talk to us about anything above!**





# Create My FUTURE JOBS FAIR

Job seekers, save the date! On **Tuesday 6th October 11am-1pm** you are invited to the "Create My Future" Jobs Fair. For the first time ever our successful jobs fair will be moving online!

The Jobs Fair will link people with good quality work, with a focus on growth industries like construction and green energy, technology, and social care. It will promote training opportunities, and provide support for people in the hugely shifting post-Covid world of work.

You will be able to meet with employers with current live vacancies face to face, introduce yourself, and ask questions about how to work for them.

You will also find out about specific support such as the Kickstart programme for young people and programmes for under-represented groups like Women in Tech.

And, you can attend workshops on current important topics like How to do online job interviews and How to set up your own business.

To find out more about the day and sign up, visit **[www.southwayhousing.co.uk/create-my-future](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk/create-my-future)** or email **[connect@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:connect@southwayhousing.co.uk)**.

If you need help using the internet or getting online for this event, contact us and we will help you get set up. You won't need a laptop or computer – you will be able to join using your mobile phone.

## TIME IS NOW COURSE NOW RUNNING MONTHLY!

Are you looking for work or a change of work due to Covid-19?

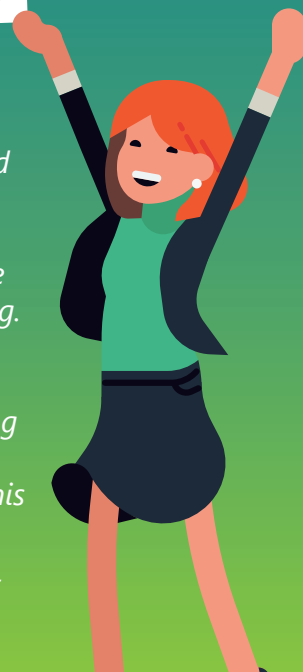
The Time is Now is our unique careers course, taught online over 5 weeks. You will work with guest experts on boosting your confidence, finding your goals, exploring a range of work and training options, and finally choosing your next career steps, gaining all the support and tools you need to achieve them.

**You can read more about the course on our website. Sign up to one of the future courses this year by contacting the Customer Hub today!**



*I really enjoyed and appreciated The Time is Now. It was very well planned, with activities that helped to have insight on the journey we would like to take, and also lots of resources to find support on it. The course is engaging and challenging. I really enjoyed taking action and interaction with others. This really supported my mental health during lockdown. Many thanks for your time I would totally recommend this course to others.*

**Lina, The Time is Now participant**



# LAUNCHING: SEVEN NEW APPRENTICESHIPS

We are excited to announce seven fantastic new apprenticeship opportunities at Southway. These seven apprenticeships will provide the perfect first step into a new career for passionate and hardworking people in our neighbourhoods.

The apprenticeship roles available are:

- **Welfare Benefits and Customer Service Apprentice**
- **Urban Ranger Apprentice**
- **ICT Apprentice**
- **Joiner Apprentice x 2**
- **Electrician Apprentice**
- **Plumbing Apprentice**

All apprentices will be taking a vocational qualification and receive a minimum of NVQ level 2 in their chosen occupation.

Programmes will involve on-the-job training and time spent off the job attending college or block release classes.

## Who can apply?

We are an equal opportunity employer and welcome applications from anyone for all posts including apprenticeships. We are also a registered Disability Confident

employer and we guarantee to interview all disabled applicants who meet the role profiles. We would particularly welcome applications from:

- **School leavers**
- **Older adults**
- **Southway tenants and members of their household**
- **Ex-armed forces**
- **Unemployed people - including those affected with redundancy due to Covid-19 or any other reason**

Work placements will commence from **October 2020**. Applications open this month.

*"Southway places huge value in investing in people in our communities and enabling them to thrive. Our Apprentices make such a vital contribution to our business, bringing in innovative ideas, a fresh outlook and current training and qualifications. These new opportunities will make a difference*

*at a difficult time, and help to launch exciting careers."*

**Karen Mitchell, Chief Executive**

*"I started with no experience; but my apprenticeship gave me the knowledge, qualifications and confidence to progress at Southway."*

**Freya, Apprentice and now Housing Officer**

*I had always intended to go to university full time, but I wanted to start a career as well. My apprenticeship let me do both.*

**Penny, Development Apprentice**

*Having other apprentices here to share the experience with is great. Not only are you in the same boat, but you can see how much you have all learnt since you started.*

**Hannah, Heating and Gas Apprentice**

You can read more of our previous Apprentices' experiences and stories on our website.

**For full job details, and to apply, visit our website  
[www.southwayhousing.co.uk](http://www.southwayhousing.co.uk) or contact  
[human.resources@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:human.resources@southwayhousing.co.uk).**







# GET A **GRANT** AND CELEBRATE **NEIGHBOURLINESS** WITH OUR

## BEAUTIFUL SOUTH FUND



We are still accepting applications to our Beautiful South Fund. The Fund is a pot of money which any group or person can apply for to deliver a project which benefits Southway tenants and meets the theme of 'neighbourliness'.

The maximum grant for any one idea is £2,500 and the total budget for the year is £25k. This is a really exciting opportunity for local people to develop and deliver neighbourly projects.



A group of Southway tenants considers all applications and makes the decisions about whether or not projects meet the criteria. Previous projects include a CommuniTEA party in Withington, and Crafting Classes for over 50s. If your idea needs to wait until social distancing measures are changed, don't worry – the panel are still excited to see the fantastic ideas you have now!

**Please visit our website for more information and to find the application form. Alternatively, you can email or call Maureen Ward, via the Customer Hub.**

## STAY IN AND **DRAG** YOURSELF OUT!

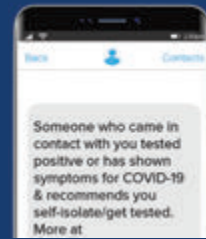
After being put on hold in March, **Drag Yourself Out** is back and you can join from home!



This fabulous and unique project aimed at men over 50 uses drag to explore the experiences of older gay, bisexual and trans communities, all delivered through video workshops.

This is a collaboration between Southway and Ambition for Ageing's Community Navigators and the LGBT Foundation. Sessions take place on Mondays at 11am-12pm over Zoom.

**Please email [lawrence.roberts@lgbt.foundation](mailto:lawrence.roberts@lgbt.foundation) to book your place or find out more.**



# WASH YOUR HANDS OF NHS TEST AND TRACE SCAMS

The NHS Test and Trace service is really important in the fight against coronavirus and it's vital that we have confidence and trust in it. But there are valid concerns about the opportunity it creates for criminals to commit scams. We've been given with this useful information on NHS Test and Trace by Action Fraud for you to use to protect yourself against scammers.

## NHS TEST AND TRACE AND TRACE SERVICE WILL:

- ✓ Only call you from the number 0300 013 5000. Anyone who does not want to talk over the phone can request an email or text instead and will be invited to log into the web-based service.
- ✓ Ask you to sign into the contact-tracing website and provide you with a unique reference number. You're advised to type the web address **https://contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk** DIRECTLY into your browser, followed by the unique reference number given to you, rather than clicking on any links provided in the message.

## NHS TEST AND TRACE SERVICE WILL NEVER:

- ✗ Ask you to dial a premium rate number to speak to them (e.g. numbers starting 09 or 087)
- ✗ Ask you to make any form of payment or purchase a product or any kind
- ✗ Ask for any details about your bank account
- ✗ Ask for your social media identities or login details, or those of your contacts
- ✗ Ask you for any passwords or PINs, or ask you to set up any passwords or PINs over the phone
- ✗ Ask you to download any software to your PC or ask you to hand over control of your PC, smartphone or tablet to anyone else
- ✗ Ask you to access any website that does not belong to the government or NHS. Secure websites all start with https://.

If you think you are being or have been scammed, you can take action by reporting it to Action Fraud at **www.actionfraud.police.uk** or by calling **0300 123 2040**.

## MINEHEAD COMPLETE!

Our brand new Age Friendly development Minehead Court is now complete, changing the landscape of a derelict space in Withington. The site was originally home to the NHS Minehead Day Centre but sadly, in 2014, the building was destroyed by a fire.

Over the years since we've worked with local residents and partners to make the area more age friendly, provide opportunities to tackle loneliness, and increase housing options for older people. We wanted the building that would replace the Day Centre to be able to do all of these things.



Minehead Court will not only benefit those moving in, but the local community; it includes a community café with communal toilets and a treatment room which are for use by local people too. When restrictions are lifted we will also start to hold events and activities here. Watch this space!



# OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Over a million people across the UK don't have a regular bank account, making necessary tasks like paying bills and receiving wages and benefits a real challenge.

While opening a bank account may feel daunting – especially with the ongoing pandemic to contend with – it's more straightforward than you think and can really help to reduce your money worries in the long term. It also means you can use contactless payments and online services which are more hygienic.

## Is basic best?

Your very first step is deciding which type of bank account suits you best. To do this, you can look at different banks' websites to compare the accounts they offer, or visit MoneySavingExpert.com.

Most banks offer a basic account, which are an attractive option for most people. Basic accounts are free and are open to customers with poor credit, who may be unable to open a current account. Basic accounts offer the same facilities as other current accounts including:

- **A Debit Card**
- **Ability to set up Direct Debits and Standing Orders**
- **Online and telephone banking**

Importantly, basic accounts usually don't offer an overdraft, reducing the chance of debt problems developing. Some accounts also offer cash back benefits, so you can top up your account when you shop at certain stores. Different banks may have different names for their basic accounts, so just check which of their current accounts is free.



## OPENING THE ACCOUNT

During the pandemic, banks may offer limited face to face appointments. In this case, you should be able to apply for an account online via the bank's website.

### Banks will ask you to provide two forms of ID:

Personal ID	Proof of address
Full driving licence	A utility bill (under 3 months old)
Passport	Council tax or water bill (under 1 year old)
Proof of National Insurance Number	Tenancy agreement (original or a copy with a Southway stamp)

*It is important that your name is the same on all the documents that you submit, including the same spelling and any middle names. If you've lived at your current address for less than 3 years, the bank will want evidence of previous addresses.*

## Verifying your ID

Once you've submitted your application, the bank will contact you and ask you to bring your ID documents to your bank's local branch for verification. They will also give you a reference number, which you will need to quote at the bank. You won't need an appointment to do this.

At the bank you can ask any questions you have about the account and you can register for telephone and online banking if you want it. You will also be asked to sign a form to say you have read and agreed to their terms and conditions.

## You now have an account!

You will receive your debit card by post after a few days, followed by another letter containing your PIN number.

Once your account is set up, you can have your benefits or wages paid in by supplying your new account details to DWP or your employer. If you are in receipt of benefits, you should contact your provider, as opening your account is a change to your circumstances. Have your bank's sort code and account number ready to give them.

**If you need more advice on opening a bank account, or about any other money worries, please contact Southway's Advice Services Team.**

***Ear for you***

Covid-19 Support line  
for BAME communities.  
A Greater Manchester  
wide service.

## COVID-19 SUPPORT FOR **BAME COMMUNITIES**

Public Health England found that people from ethnic minority groups have been hardest hit by Covid-19. So a new service called 'Ear for you' has been set up to support BAME families in Greater Manchester.

### **It offers:**

- Advice, guidance and signposting relating to COVID-19 matters
- Cross-culture emotional support related to pre- and post Covid-19 issues
- Tailored psycho-social therapy for women and young girls who are victims of violence and abuse during COVID-19
- Individual and Group therapy
- Online training
- Advice, guidance and support provided in varied languages including Somali, Kurdish, Swahili, Urdu, Arabic, French and more

**To access this, call the helpline on  
07862 279289 / 07894 126157 or text the word 'HELP'.**

## WE WANT TO DEVELOP COMMUNITIES WHERE EVERYONE FEELS THEY CAN LIVE **SAFELY AND COMFORTABLY.**

This summer, a resident from St Christopher's Close contacted Southway with concerns about their privacy. Our Age Friendly Minehead Development was being built close to their home, and they felt uncomfortable about the level of privacy between them and the development.

Our Development Manager Paul worked with the site's contractor to resolve the issue. Paul arranged for the contractor to re-locate 5 trees and plant them along the boundary between the site and the resident's home to create a barrier. The resident was very happy with this solution, feeling it provided the privacy they needed.

If you have a suggestion for how we can make your neighbourhood a happier, safer or better place to live, get in touch and let us know!

**YOU SAID**

**WE DID**







# COURT VICTORY FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT CLAIMANTS!

In a recent judgement by the Court of Appeal, the way that the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) assesses income for Universal Credit was found to be “irrational and unlawful”.

## What was the case about?

The case looked at the way Universal Credit treats claimants when they receive more than one wage payment within a single fixed “assessment period”.

Until now, the DWP counted both payments in the same assessment period, which lead to a nil-award of Universal Credit for that period, because the combined income from both wage payments exceeds the threshold at which Universal Credit is given (even though the wage payments are supposed to cover two assessment periods).

The claimant then receives either no payment of UC for that period or a reduced amount, leading to difficulties budgeting.

Up to 85,000 people across the UK have been negatively affected by this system, which can lead to hardship and problems paying bills and rent and buying food.

We know that many of our tenants are among those affected by the way these so-called, “anomalous” payments are treated.

## What happened?

The DWP argued that changing the assessment system to count the wages as covering two assessment periods would require too much manual input into what is supposed to be a fully automated system.

But the Court of Appeal decided that the current system is “irrational”, on the basis that it does the opposite of Universal Credit’s stated aim of “helping people into work” by penalising them when they receive two payments in one assessment period through no fault of their own.

The Court decided that the DWP were being “inflexible” in refusing to look at fairer ways to assess income.

## What now?

Having lost the case, the DWP must now look at ways to change the assessment system for someone receiving two payments in one assessment period to make sure they are treated more fairly.

## Supporting you with your rights

This case was brought forward by a group of ordinary claimants, with the help of experienced welfare rights advisers who were able to connect them with an expert legal team.

It shows that having access to quality advice, like the advice available to Southway residents, can mean ordinary people are able to get the DWP to reconsider their procedures. If you need any assistance with anything to do with Universal Credit or other welfare benefits, send a message to our Advice team.

**We will keep you updated on when the DWP changes the current calculation process.**



## NO TOLERANCE APPROACH TO ASB

Southway is committed to dealing with anti-social behaviour in our properties.

With most households unable to leave their homes and visit their family and friends, the lockdown situation brought about many challenges when dealing with ASB. Being in properties 24/7 has led to a 63% rise in ASB reports, compared to the same three-month period last year. In some cases, we have had to take legal action against tenants who have caused anti-social behaviour or used their property for criminal activity.

Several injunctions with the power of arrest were granted by the court to protect other residents from violence. In other cases, undertakings were given to the court, which means the perpetrator has promised the Judge that they will behave and not cause any further nuisance. We have also excluded perpetrators from our properties using hearsay evidence to protect the identity of the complainants.



Southway will not tolerate anti-social behaviour in our communities and we work with partner agencies to tackle youth nuisance, gang-related crime, tenancy fraud, noise nuisance, threats and violence, to name but a few areas.

If you are experiencing anti-social behaviour you can contact us in confidence. Your complaint will be dealt with in a sensitive, professional and timely manner.

**You can report ASB directly on the website under 'Report ASB or Crime', or by email, over the phone or on social media.**

## EVERYBODY NEEDS GOOD NEIGHBOURS

We shouldn't live in fear of making noise or having fun at home – but by following these sensible guidelines, you can keep the harmony in your home and neighbourhood.

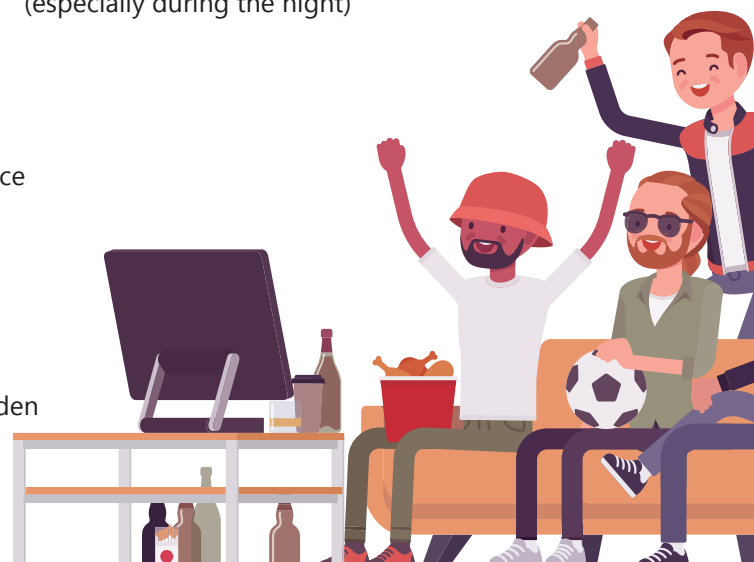
### BEHIND CLOSED DOORS:

- Try not to shout, swear, scream or make excessive noise
- Do your washing or hoovering between 9am and 9pm
- Tell your neighbours if you plan to have a party (once government guidelines allow this)

- Keep your music and TV at a reasonable volume – keep speakers away from the wall
- Close doors and use the stairs quietly – wearing slippers indoors can also soften your step
- If you have a dog, try to control their barking (especially during the night)

### TO KEEP THE OUTDOORS GREAT:

- Consider the volume of music and guests in your garden (once government guidelines allow visitors)
- Be mindful of smoke and smells if you're having a BBQ
- Keep your garden healthy and tidy
- Park cars so they don't block your neighbours' driveways
- Put your bins back in the garden after they've been emptied
- Keep your pets – and any mess they make – in your own garden
- Report any graffiti, dumped rubbish and vandalism to Manchester City Council on 0161 954 9000





# ARE OFF-ROAD BIKES CAUSING A NUISANCE IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?



Riding off-road vehicles in public open spaces is dangerous, noisy and illegal, so tell Crimestoppers where they are, and they can take them off the streets before someone is hurt, or they're used in criminal activity.

Crimestoppers is a charity independent of the police.

**CrimeStoppers.**

[crimestoppers-uk.org](https://crimestoppers-uk.org)

**0800 555 111**

100% anonymous. Always.

## RESPONDING TO NOISY NEIGHBOURS

We know noisy neighbours can be a nuisance – especially as more of us are spending most of our time at home. Our Neighbourhood Officers have been working harder than ever over the last few months to resolve anti-social behaviour, and we have appreciated your feedback on the positive results of their work:

*"Thank you so much for all your support and understanding during the trying times we've had during lockdown! Thank you for being a shining light in a very, very dark time, we will always be grateful."* – **for Janice Teale**

*"The difference you have made is staggering. We were all living a nightmare and you have made such a difference. Thank you, thank you, thank you."* – **for Gavin Wood**



If you are having issues with noisy neighbours, don't suffer in silence. Report ASB to us on our website, or by emailing or calling the Customer Hub. We will work with you to resolve the issue.

# PLACES AVAILABLE AT THE 'Quids In' Food Clubs

## UP TO £15 WORTH OF FOOD FOR JUST A £2 WEEKLY MEMBERSHIP FEE

Our 'Quids In' food clubs are here to support low-income South Manchester households. Unlike with food banks, the food available includes fresh and chilled items that can be difficult to find and expensive to buy locally.

**We have five clubs across South Manchester and there are a couple of places available:**

**Burnage West:** Westcroft Community Centre, Westcroft Road, M20 6EF (*Wednesday 10.00am – 3.00pm*)

**Burnage East:** Burnage Community Centre, Burnage Lane, M19 1ER (*Wednesday 9.30am – 12.00pm*)

**Chorlton:** Brookfield House, Nell Lane, Chorlton, M21 7UD (*Thursday 10.30am – 1.00pm*)

**Merseybank:** Pop Up Shop on Merseybank Shopping Parade, 42 Merseybank Avenue, Chorlton, M21 7NN (*Friday 12.00pm – 3.00pm*)

**Old Moat:** Old Moat Children's Centre, Old Moat Lane, M20 1DE (*Friday 12.30pm – 2.30pm*)

We can also help anyone struggling to access food with referrals to the food banks in our area. Everyone who is in food need will also be offered help from the Advice Team.

Contact the Hub or email [quidsin@southwayhousing.co.uk](mailto:quidsin@southwayhousing.co.uk) to sign up today - if your local club is full we will add you to the waiting list. Members must be claiming some housing benefit or Universal Credit, and be able to attend weekly.



## COULD A **CHECK IN AND A CHAT** HELP YOU?

**Our support service, Check & Chat, is still offering a friendly voice over the phone, to help people through the loneliness of lockdown.**

Check and Chat is run by over 30 volunteers from our staff and Board, and has so far contacted over 1400 Southway tenants. The service aims to check in, inform tenants of the support we can offer, and to let them know we're here.

We've had around 140 requests for regular contact so far, so are now giving these tenants a weekly call back to see if there are any new support needs – or simply check in and have a chinwag!

Our Community Support is here for anyone who needs it. If you think you could benefit from this support at this time, please contact us. Please also keep letting us know if you have a neighbour who might be isolated and in need of a call.





## OUR DIGITAL SUPPORT IS HERE TO HELP YOU STAY CONNECTED

It's more important than ever that everyone can use the internet. It can help us to keep in touch with our family and friends, work from home, online shop, manage our money, keep fit and healthy, and much more.

If you need help getting online, there are lots of ways we can help!

### I need help getting a device or getting online

We have laptops, tablets and home internet devices that we can send straight to your homes as part of our Loan scheme. We prioritise those most in need, like tenants with children who need access to the internet for school, or people who are vulnerable or isolated. You can even purchase one like it at the end of your loan at a discounted price.

Get in touch to sign yourself or someone else up for our Loan scheme.

### Help! How do I use my device and the internet?

We are still running the Digital Champion Service remotely. Our Digital Champions are **volunteers like Naseem Pervaz**, who can work with you to help to you feel confident using your laptop and the internet.

*"I have been volunteering as a Digital Champion with Southway for about 4 years and really enjoy it. It has been very natural for me, as helping people with technology is something I have always done. It's great to meet new people from different age groups - and having done so, I've found that I have to use a different approach depending on who I'm helping. A lot of the tenants have also become my friends, which is great! It would be great to take on more challenges and responsibilities as a Digital Champion to help people even more than I am already doing."*

**Wayne and Ann Jackson requested support from the Digi Champ project** because they wanted to feel more confident about online security. Over the course of their sessions with Naseem, they learnt a lot more!

*"The help we received was above and beyond what we were expecting and Naseem really tailored the way he taught to make it easy for us to understand. If you're in a similar age group to ourselves and you find computers a bit of a mystery, then this service could be great for you as the advice and help you receive isn't over technical and was at a slow pace spread across a few different visits."*

*We are totally happy with the help we received and the process in general. We're only sorry we didn't get on the phone sooner. When Naseem showed up at our door he was like a knight in shining armour."*

**To get support from a Digi Champ yourself, or to volunteer as one, contact us!**



## LOTS OF WAYS TO HAVE YOUR SAY

- Do you often find you have ideas on how we could do things differently at Southway?
- Are you interested in making South Manchester a better place to live?
- Do you want experience in a strategic role that you can do from home?

We're always looking for tenants to get involved and tell us what you think about our services. You can give us feedback any time by going on our website, emailing us or finding us on social media.

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant we haven't held as many structured tenant meetings as usual, but we are planning to re-introduce some of them using video chat. This means you can get involved from the comfort of your own home while meeting with other tenants and Southway staff to discuss Southway's services.

Topics will include anti-social behaviour, food poverty and advice services, and we're keen to understand your thoughts on how we can offer the best services for our tenants and communities.

We are also looking for tenants to join our Scrutiny Panel, a group of tenants who meet regularly to assess what Southway is doing well and how we can improve. These meetings will also be via video.

**If you would like to get involved, please get in touch with Maureen Ward via the Customer Hub.**



## A SMART START TO THE SCHOOL YEAR

As the summer holidays come to a close, many of us have been preparing for our children heading back to school. If you need support with school supplies, Wood Street Mission can help.

Their Smart Start scheme can provide uniforms, sports kits and stationary, to give your child the best start in the new school year. They will keep providing throughout the year too, with new and good quality used donations.

If you think you need support, visit the For Families page on [www.woodstreetmission.org.uk](http://www.woodstreetmission.org.uk) and contact Southway's Advice Team.

**And if you want to help others in your community, you can go to their website to donate your items to Wood Street Mission.**

**UNIFORM ✓ SHOES ✓ PE KIT ✓ BAG ✓ FULL PENCIL CASE ✓ TRIPS ✓**

**IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT BACK TO SCHOOL EXPENSES, HAVE YOU CONSIDERED YOUR AFFORDABLE LOAN OPTIONS?**

### South Manchester Credit Union

Unlike other lenders, credit unions don't just offer short-term solutions to people experiencing financial difficulties; when someone joins, their savings are shared within the credit union and they become a member. This means you're encouraged to save for the future and strengthen your long term financial health.

### Southway Solutions

In partnership with South Manchester Credit Union, we also have our own borrowing option for tenants, Southway Solutions. If eligible you can borrow £100 - £300. There's a speedy and simple application process and affordable repayment plans.

**To apply simply contact the Southway Hub. As with any loan, affordability needs to be carefully considered.**





# YOUR LIGHTBULB MOMENT ON SAVING ENERGY

**£s OFF  
YOUR  
BILLS!**

## FOR MONEY OFF GAS & ELECTRICITY BILLS

### Warm Home Discount

If you receive benefits, or have a low household income, you might be eligible for **£140** off your energy bills through the Warm Home Discount Scheme. Here's how:

#### Core group

You are in the core group if your energy supplier is part of the scheme, your name (or partner's) is on the bill, and you are getting the guarantee credit element of pension credit (even if you get savings credit as well).

You'll receive a letter between October and December 2020 telling you how to get the discount if you qualify.

Your letter will say if you need to call a helpline by 26 February 2021 to confirm your details.

#### Broader group

If you're on a low income and get certain means-tested benefits, you could still be eligible if your energy supplier is part of the scheme.

For this group it is the provider that decides who gets the discount, so you will need to check with yours to see if you're eligible and how to apply.

Do this as early as possible as the number of discounts suppliers can give are limited. Some of the big six energy suppliers have recently opened their applications for winter 2020/2021:

**British Gas / EDF / Eon / Npower / Scottish Power / SSE**

Check your own supplier's website or contact them to check your eligibility and apply. If you can't, contact us, as we may be able to help you.

**The discount will be applied to your bill by 31 March 2021.**

## FOR MONEY OFF WATER BILLS

### WaterSure Scheme

If you, or someone in your household, receives certain benefits or tax credits and you live in a property with a water meter, there are government regulations to protect you. You qualify if:

- You have three or more children up to 19 years old in full time education who live with you, and for whom you claim Child Benefit, or
- Someone in your household has a medical condition which means they use a lot of water.

If this applies to you, you do not have to pay more than the domestic customer on a water meter, and could save money. Check this website for the average in your area:

**[www.ofwat.gov.uk](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk)**

### United Utilities Arrears Allowance Scheme

For every £1 you contribute to the debt, United Utilities put in £1, rising to £2 after 6 months. There is also the

United Utilities Trust Fund, providing help for customers experiencing severe hardship (including bankruptcy).

### British Gas grants

British Gas offer grants whether they supply you or not. Check to see whether you meet the criteria at **[www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk](http://www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk)**

## SOUTHWAY'S SUPPORT

At Southway, we have support available for people at serious risk of not being able to use their electricity or gas (or both). Our Advice Team can help you to find ways of lowering your bills and apply for any of the above support. Everyone referred to us will also receive free energy advice from the charity LEAP.

**Contact our Advice Team via the Customer Hub if you need help.**



# FREE FLU VACCINE

Helps you protect  
yourself and others

**The flu vaccination season begins each Autumn and it's more important to get vaccinated this year than ever before. With Covid-19 still in circulation, the criteria for a free NHS flu vaccination has changed, to help protect higher risk people in our communities.**

The free flu vaccine will automatically be available to:

- People who are on the shielded patient list and members of their household
- All school year groups up to year 7
- People aged over 65, pregnant women, and those with some pre-existing conditions including at-risk under 2s.

If you, or someone in your household, meets this criteria, look out for a letter or text from your GP over the coming weeks. You can also keep an eye on Southway's community notice boards, website and social media for updates on dates and venues.

The aim of increasing the number of vaccinations delivered is to help reduce pressure on the NHS this winter by preventing flu-sickness. Flu can be a serious disease, especially for vulnerable people or those with underlying health conditions, so please be sure to get yours this Autumn.

We work with **The Big Life Group** to deliver **Be Well**, a social prescribing service that can support you with:

**Work worries / Money worries / Difficult living situations / Family issues / Long term health conditions / Stopping smoking / Stress, loneliness or feeling low**

At Southway we have two Be Well coaches who specialise in employment, though they can help you with any of the Be Well services. Here's how they recently helped Ed into work...

Referred from Pathways after receiving help for anxiety and a low mood, Ed, 54, was applying for lots of different job roles when he came to us. We worked together to focus on what work he would most like and enjoy. This

lead to a successful interview for a role at a local college, building on his desire to help young people and previous mentoring experience. He is excited for his future, as he has the option to complete teacher training (PGCE) through the college.

*"'Be Well' helped me keep my life on track, sorting out avenues of opportunity and difficulties I was coping with, day to day. As a source of advice and encouragement it was invaluable, because when you've been through a long traumatic time and you're confused by what or where the path is, it's good to be helped along the way."*

**To find out how 'Be Well' can help you, get in touch!**





# YOUR MIND MATTERS

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

Twice as many of us are reporting symptoms of depression now, compared with this time last year. If you're struggling with your mental health at the moment, there are resources and services to help you. Here are two of the best we have found in Manchester – you can either access these services yourself, or you can contact us and we will connect you.



### Manchester Mind

Most of Manchester Mind's services are now running remotely. These are the key services that will be useful to young people and adults affected by poor mental health and potentially struggling in this current situation.

#### Children and young people

Counselling is available for young people aged 15-25 years of age. You can get in touch by:

- Calling 0161 221 3054 and pressing option 2
- Emailing [cyp@manchestermind.org](mailto:cyp@manchestermind.org)

Young people who are having difficulty with benefits, debts and housing issues can ring 0161 221 3054 and press option 3 to get an appointment to speak to an advice worker. Alternatively, you can email [cypadvice@manchestermind.org](mailto:cypadvice@manchestermind.org).

#### Listening service

Open to young people up to 25 years who may be struggling with this period of social isolation. You can access the service by:

- Calling 0161 221 3054 and pressing option 1
- Emailing [listenerscyp@manchestermind.org](mailto:listenerscyp@manchestermind.org)

Adults who are struggling with their mental health, social isolation, worries and anxieties can access the service by calling 0161 769 5732 between 10am-2pm or emailing [info@manchestermind.org](mailto:info@manchestermind.org).

### Advice service

Adults having difficulty with issues such as benefits, debts and housing can ring 0161 769 5732 between the hours of 10am and 2pm Monday – Friday or email [info@manchestermind.org](mailto:info@manchestermind.org).

### Buzz Manchester

Buzz Manchester is the NHS' health and wellbeing service and offers advice and support on a number of health issues. They have created a Covid-19 Resource Hub, signposting to helplines for:

- Addiction and substance misuse
- Anxiety
- Depression and low mood
- Isolation
- Self-help resources
- Sleep deprivation

Find it at [www.buzzmanchester.co.uk/learn-about-health/health-information/covid19](http://www.buzzmanchester.co.uk/learn-about-health/health-information/covid19).

We understand that poor mental health can have a widespread impact on our lives. We want you to know that we are here to support you as much as possible.

**If you are worried about rent, bills, benefits, or debt, you can email our Advice Team for support. If you are worried about your mental health, or anything else affecting your wellbeing, contact us and we will connect you with the support you need.**

# HOW TO USE... SOUTHWAY'S TRANSLATION AND DICTATION SERVICES

Everybody of every language should be able to access the information and advice that they need. That's why all of the text on our website is available in multiple languages, and can be read aloud to you in multiple languages.

To use these services, click this bar,  
visible at the bottom of every page:



## To translate text

Click 'Choose language' (left):

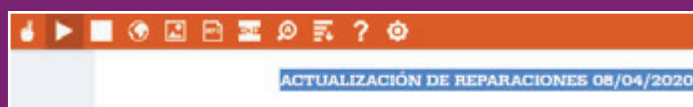
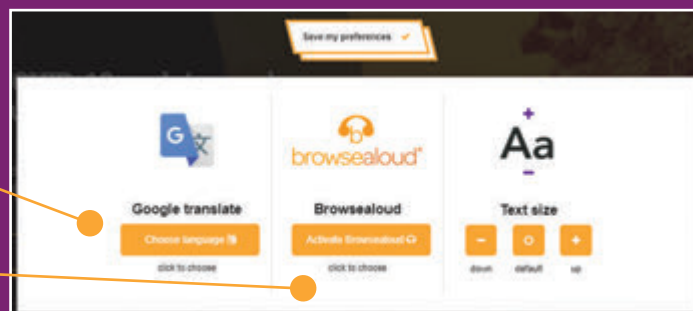
Click 'Save my preferences' to  
keep this setting

## To read text aloud

Click 'Activate Browsealoud' (centre).

On the top right of the page click the Globe icon  
to choose a language translation.

Highlight the text you want to be read aloud and click  
the Play icon.



## FINDING OUT ABOUT YOUR LOCAL AREA

Do you wonder what's being built at the end of the street? What improvements are being made to your local park? What opportunities there are nearby? And do you want to share your views on this and influence decisions?

Our Local Area pages are designed for just this. There are three pages for the three areas in which you live – Old Moat & Withington – Chorlton – Burnage & Didsbury. As well as up to date news and events, you will find:

### Our commitments

Updates on our work taking place in the area; from how we're tackling ASB and what we're building, to how we're improving homes and making the area more Age-Friendly.



Take part in the first consultation on your Local Area page, for a chance to win **£50 shopping vouchers**  
**Deadline: October 16th**

### Your services

Find out who your Neighbourhood and Income Officers are, as well as your local police team and councillors. Also included are the nearest food banks and clubs, libraries and hubs, doctor's surgeries and parks.

### Have your say

Each local page has a forum where we hold consultations. Give your views and ideas on projects delivered in your area and let us know if there is anything more you would like to see!

**Find your Local Area here: [southwayhousing.co.uk/your-local-area](https://southwayhousing.co.uk/your-local-area)**