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Who's your Landlord?

Connexus!

Thanks to all those customers who got in touch with their feedback last year after consulting with you about streamlining our governance processes and giving our customers one name to focus upon and one name they could trust - Connexus.

We've completed this task and will be legally known as Connexus Homes Limited, trading as Connexus. Your position as a tenant, leaseholder, and shared owner will not be affected in any way. Our branding will stay the same; our vans and uniforms aren't changing, and you will still be supported by our friendly teams in your home and within your community.

Our commitment will continue to put you, our customers, at the heart of what we do. We strive for excellence and admit that sometimes things don't go as we had planned. So we actively ask customers to get involved with us and provide feedback about our services. There are many ways to get involved - from becoming a member of our scrutiny panel to taking part in a telephone survey or giving us your thoughts through our online customer consultation portal.

To find out more about getting involved, about Connexus itself, or to keep up to date on the latest news from across our counties, then head over to our website. Your input will really help shape our services.

Chief Executive, Connexus

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Together with tenants

Back in the autumn of 2019, we became an early adopter of The Together with Tenants charter. This national initiative focuses on strengthening the relationships between housing associations and their customers.

We launched our Together with Tenants campaign back in February, across social media, email, and our website inviting our customers to be involved and we received over 50 sign-ups.

We've now chatted with these customers to find out what interests them and how they want to design ways that work for the customer. So, for the first review of our services, customers are looking at how well we keep you informed.

In March, Connexus took part in a campaign to promote the National Housing Federations Together with Tenants taking part in an online webinar to demonstrate the work we started to ensure that we hear as many customer views as we can.

Our Director of Operations, Christine Duggan, discussed how customers have a voice and influence over Connexus alongside Lorraine Teece, one of our involved customers, answering questions from the audience.

Thank you to all those customers that got involved and provided us with feedback to help keep us accountable, protect your rights and interests, and help us set clear expectations on the service we can deliver.

If you'd like to become an involved customer or learn more about Together with Tenants, check out our website.



You said, we did

What's happening?

We're always asking you, our customers, to give us helpful feedback on how we can improve our services so that your experience is a good one.

Here's what you told us:

- Reduce the phone line options
- Keep us better updated on our emergency repairs
- Get us online

So, here's what we're doing in response to your feedback:

- Phone line options have been reduced, and we have put in place two skilled teams, one for repairs and one for housing, to deal with your enquiries quicker and more effectively.
- Once you've logged an emergency repair with us, you will be assigned a dedicated work planner who will contact you to keep you up to date on progress.
- We're looking at how we can provide our customers with an online portal to pay their rent, report repairs, and make inquiries.

Supporting young people

Connexus is committed to supporting our communities and supporting young people to fulfil their potential is one aspect of the work we do. We currently have two young people's support projects that offer housing, support and opportunities for training and gaining life skills, alongside family mediation work we carry out in the community.

Ludlow Foyer

Our Ludlow Foyer opened its doors in 2000 and along the way has helped hundreds of young people.

Residents are given opportunities to gain new skills, either by taking up formal education courses or getting involved in centre-led projects. The training is individually tailored to each resident to enable them to become more independent, so that eventually they can take on a tenancy of their own.

A New Herefordshire based service to transform young lives

Earlier this year we opened a new housing service in Hereford, which offers young people aged 16-25, tailored support to help them gain essential life skills to enable them to live independently.

Operated by Connexus, the project offers high quality accommodation with 24/7 support for up to 16 residents who have been specifically referred into the service by Herefordshire Council.

The scheme has been jointly funded by Connexus, Herefordshire Council and Homes England. It aims to provide young people with the opportunity to learn the skills they need to thrive in their local community and maintain a healthy lifestyle. The service also works with families across the county to provide mediation support to prevent youth homelessness.

Connexus worked in partnership with Herefordshire Council and the developers, Harpers, to follow COVID-19 guidelines and complete the scheme on time and within budget and has seen the creation of 13 local jobs.



This has been a real team effort from everyone involved helping make this project a reality, we all worked through challenging times but it has been worth it! I'm so proud that Herefordshire's young people have a safe space where they can live and learn, with support to access education, training and gain life skills.

Harriet Edwards
Young Persons Service Manager

Outreach services

Mediation Services

We support young people to identify how they can manage their own needs, mitigate risks and take up opportunities. We work with families and the young people themselves to create a more positive family life, where possible and a more supportive family environment. Sometimes this isn't possible, and the service has a particular focus on supporting them to obtain or maintain accommodation, or where homelessness is inevitable. We support them in securing and maintaining suitable alternative accommodation. This service is currently offered within Herefordshire and to individuals referred to us, aged 16-25.



Keeping you safe

Safety checks in your home

We have several safety checks that we need to complete to ensure that we keep you safe in your home. Please allow either our in-house repairs team, or our nominated contractors, access when we make an appointment with you. We offer many appointment slots, so we are flexible to work around your needs, so please let us know.

What do we check?

- Gas servicing
- Electrical testing
- Oil and solid fuel heating checks
- Renewables heating checks
- Stairlifts



Tips - how to minimise the risk of fire

- Keep stairwells clear
- Keep fire doors closed at all times
- Test your smoke alarm regularly
- Turn off appliance plugs when not in use
- If you have a balcony, no BBQs
- Keep communal areas free from personal items and rubbish.



To ensure the safety of our customers who live in flats and maisonettes, we've updated our checks to every six months. So please do let us in to complete these checks - we are checking that the door will help prevent the spread of fire within your block, keeping you, your family, and neighbours safe.

Listening and improving

We're committed to the safety of customers. We have several homes that are heated by electric storage heaters that we don't regularly visit. However, in consultation with customers, we will shortly be rolling out an annual programme of visiting these customers in their homes to check the electrical heating and fire detection within them.

In consultation with our customers, we've decided to roll out a carbon monoxide detector installation programme into all properties with a fixed gas appliance (for example, a gas boiler or a gas fire). We already complete annual gas safety checks within customers' homes to keep you safe. Adding a carbon monoxide detector is an extra layer of safety to ensure you feel safe in your homes.



Covid-19 update

Connexus is committed to reopening services to our customers when it is safe to do so. We are closely following government announcements and abiding by government guidelines to keep our customers and staff safe during this time.

We would like to thank all our customers for your patience during this time. Stay safe.

You can find the latest Covid-19 updates and your FAQs on our website

Legionella reminder

You may be thinking about taking a holiday now Covid-19 restrictions are easing. Please remember that if you are away from your home for over seven days or haven't run a tap for more than seven days, return from holiday, run each tap and shower for 5 minutes, and remove stagnant water from the system. Also - put the lid down on your loo and give it a flush!

Our Falls Responder Team

Who are we?

In Herefordshire, Connexus provides a falls responder service to all adults in their homes 24/7, 365 days a year to help reduce ambulance call-outs, hospital admissions and increase an individual's confidence to mobilise safely.

We provide a non-clinical mobile rapid response for non-injured fallers and those in imminent danger of falling to assist them up or make them safe from the threat of a fall.

Did you know?

People aged over 65 and older have the highest risk of falling, with 30% of people older than 65 and 50% of people older than 80 falling at least once a year.

Falling also affects the family members and carers of people who fall. Falls are estimated to cost the NHS more than £2.3 billion per year. Therefore falling has an impact on quality of life, health, and healthcare costs.

Last year we attended 928 call outs, which saves the NHS Ambulance service resources, and reduced response times for the people who had fallen, and needed assistance quickly.

What do we do?

We offer three types of falls responder services for private customers, those funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group and those funded by the Better Care Fund in Herefordshire.



Get in touch

For more information on our Falls Responder service, please give us a call on 03332 31 32 33

Fighting Climate Change

We're committed to managing, mitigating lessening, and continually improving, where practical, its environmental risks and impacts. We have a dedicated team of colleagues helping shape the environmental vision at Connexus.

How?

- Commitment to reduce waste of any kind
- Reduce fuel poverty
- Develop a carbon-neutral approach for new homes
- Increase energy efficiency
- Warmer Homes provides a roadmap for homes to be SAP band rated C by 2030 and carbon neutral by 2050
- Committed to Environmental Sustainability in our Communities.
- Reduce our carbon footprint by 35% in 2023
- The repairs fleet has trackers which record CO2 emissions.

How can you help?

Three simple steps to start today

- Say no to single-use plastic items.
- Stop using non-biodegradable wet wipes.
- Stop food waste.

The Connexus Climate Action Team would love to hear from you! We would like to know the environmental issues in your community and how we could help improve them. You could become the next environmental champion!

Our journey to Net Zero Carbon

As a Registered Provider of social housing, we are working towards a target of moving all of our customer's homes to an EPC level of SAP C by 2030. This isn't a legal requirement, but we suspect it will become so soon, so we want to be prepared. This will help to protect our customers against the rising costs of heating their homes. We are also focusing on achieving net-zero carbon by 2050.

What does Net-zero carbon mean?

'Reducing carbon emissions by:

- Reducing energy requirements
- Using low carbon fuels
- Self-generation of energy, e.g., planting more trees.

How?

- Collecting condition data from all of our homes
- Using energy efficiency data to set our budgets
- Continuing our work on phase 2 Passive House new build scheme in Much Wenlock
- Working on our Warmer Homes project

Keep an eye out on our website and social media channels for updates.



Community Development Fund

Here are some of the fantastic projects that they have been part of, helping enhance and positively affect your local communities.

Our Community Development Fund team has been busy receiving all your applications for grants in Herefordshire and Shropshire.



Climb 61, Cleobury Mortimer

Connexus has helped fund the new bouldering wall, which is part of Cleobury Community Hub, opening back in February 2021; it is already a huge success.

The bouldering wall has become an asset to the community and helps encourage interactions between different generations in the local area, as well as being an excellent sport for individuals to aid both their mental and physical health and is super fun too!

Find out more about Cleobury Community hub and how it was designed by young people of the community, for the whole community:

www.smy.org.uk/cleobury-community-hub

Belmont Wanderers - Under 16's

Belmont Wanderers Girls Under 16's football team came to us looking for sponsorship for tracksuits for the team to go to matches in and use for training. From the funding we provided the team were able to purchase 15 full tracksuits for their under 16 team. Although this will benefit the team now initially, they are planning for the tracksuits to be handed down to other players as well in the future.



CLIMB 61



I cannot thank you enough for your generosity in contributing towards the floodlights. Without your financial support, we would not have been able to get these lights working again."

**Netball court flood lights,
Ludlow CE School**

The Rec Skate Park, Church Stretton

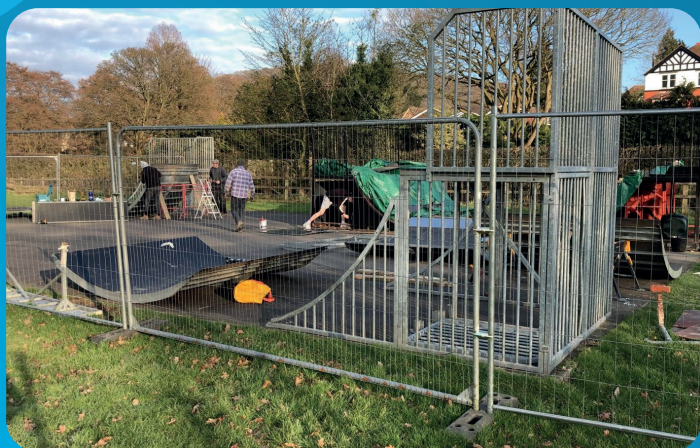
It's all systems go at Church Stretton; the skate park is near completion and will be available for all to enjoy now the warmer months are here.

The crowdfunded community initiative group led by local resident Tom Rochester and friends have been skillfully working in all weathers to get the park erected, painted, and in 360 conditions ready for those who can't wait to use the half-pipe and all the park has to offer.



A skatepark is a positive influence on a community, giving young people a place to play, socialise and express themselves

Tom Rochester



Sensory Garden, The Brookfield School Hereford



A huge thank you from all of us for your generous donation. It will most certainly have a great impact on our outdoor space.

Sensory Garden, The Brookfield School Hereford

Why we want to help

We want to help support our customers and their local communities by providing grants to manage open spaces better, helping community groups, and developing skills for young people.

If you have a new or existing project that you need assistance funding, we would love to hear from you. You can apply for a grant by visiting our website :

connexus-group.co.uk/cdf

Investing in your homes

What are we doing?

Every year, Connexus invests, where needed, its profits back into your homes. This year, our work program focuses on improving our existing houses by completing internal improvements, which include replacing kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, full heating, and any rewiring that is needed.

We will also be looking at external works; replacing roofs, windows, exterior wall insulation, and updating internal communal areas

Our goal is to work alongside the customer lead focus groups that we have in place to help us improve our policies and procedures to give you a better service.

Keeping you warm

We seek to obtain grant funding through Shropshire Council Local Authority Delivery Scheme to help replace 40 oil-fired heating systems with air source heat pumps in Prees, North Shropshire, on our journey to achieve net carbon emissions.

The oil boilers were installed around fifteen years ago and are now at the end of their useful life. Replacing these boilers with heat pumps is a good solution, as the distribution pipework and radiators are already in place, which means less disturbance for residents. We will also remove the oil tank, giving residents back use of their gardens. Shropshire Council's LAD team will contact residents and explain the process and advise on the likely timescales. It is hoped that the new systems will be installed before the end of September so that residents don't have to think about spending money on them filling their oil tanks before the winter.

Passivhaus, savings for our customers

Our Warmer Homes Project (part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund) has already started looking at how 132 of our older properties can be brought up to PassivHaus standards of energy efficiency, using wall cavity insulation and improved ventilation and modern heating systems. This project will both help to inform the next 30-years of our plans of how best to invest in existing properties and contribute to the Government's efforts to reduce the UK's net emission of greenhouse gases to zero by 2050.

One resident, who moved from a 1940s property to one of the new Connexus Passivhaus homes, saw her gas bills fall from £110 to £10 per month told us:



We lived in a 1940s former council house before, and the change has been extraordinary. The air is continuously filtered, extracting stale air, and it feels like a much healthier place to live.

Connexus Customer

The Warmer Homes Project

The Connexus Warmer Homes project is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), contributing to this £2.6m project to make some of our existing homes more comfortable and energy-efficient.

This year we will be working on 52 non-traditional three-story Cornish Unit flats in Hereford City installing:

- New external wall insulation & roof insulation
- New exterior doors & triple glazed windows
- New gas controls to improve the heating system
- Monitoring the performance of homes to help future improvements

Name that street

We want to involve our communities in naming new streets on our developments as we know how important it is for your homes to feel part of the local history. So, here's what you have helped name recently...

Danny Lee Walk, Hereford

We've built 44 high-quality, affordable homes between Tillington Road & Roman Road, Hereford. These new homes will be a mixture of Affordable Rent, Shared Ownership, and Rent to Buy. They will be 1, 2, and 3 bedroom homes with a play area included on-site.

Back in October last year, we ran the competition asking the local community to 'Name that street,' and the response was tremendous. Thank you to everyone who took part, there were some great ideas, recognising the area's local history and inspiring heroes.

There were many entries for the much-loved Danny Lee, a local fundraiser and entertainer from Hereford. Danny was well known for his love of football and recording the Hereford United terrace favourite, 'We All Love You,' and raised thousands of pounds balancing a pint of beer on his head while walking a mile, landing him the world record back in 1983.

Sadly, Danny passed away in 2007, but now his memory will be kept alive after you helped name the street 'Danny Lee Walk.'

Colliers Way, Highley

We are set to build 20 new homes in Highley, Bridgnorth, and asked the pupils of Highley Primary School to help us name the street on the development.

We received so many creative entries for this competition, and the winning pupil has won a £20 bookshop voucher and £80 to go towards school funds.

Highley is well known for its entry in the Domesday book and has been a significant mining community since the middle ages.

Naming the street Colliers Way represents the history and pride that the community still has to this day of its mining heritage.

Developments

You can find out about all our upcoming developments and how to find a home on our website. Here are a few of our current developments across our counties.

In progress

The Full Pitcher

- 93 properties
- 29 affordable rent - 1, 2 and 3 bed houses
- 32 rent to buy - 19 x 2-bed houses and 13 x 3-bed houses
- 32 shared ownership - 14 x 2-bed houses and 18 x 3-bed houses
- Phased completion from 2022 to 2024

Beattie Avenue

- 71 properties
- 37 affordable rent - 3 x 1-bed bungalow, 16 x 2-bed bungalows, 12 x 2-bed houses, 2 x 3-bed dormer bungalows, and 4 x 3-bed houses.
- 17 rent to buy - 12 x 2-bed houses and 5 x 3-bed houses
- 17 shared ownership - 1 x 2-bed bungalow, 6 x 2-bed houses, 2 x 3-bed dormer bungalows, and 8 x 3-bed houses
- Phase 1 due to be completed - June 2021
- Phase 2 starts - July 2021
- Phase 2 due to be completed - May 2022

Dark Lane, Broseley

- 24 houses
- 14 affordable rent - 1, 2 and 3 bed houses
- 10 shared ownership - 4 x 2 bed and 6 x 3 bed
- Ready early 2022



See our Shared Ownership homes



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