

# PRIMA NEWS

SUMMER 2020



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## Welcome to the Summer 2020 Edition of Prima News

The past six months have been difficult for all of us as coronavirus made its way across the world. As soon as we were aware that the outbreak was going to drastically change the way we live and work for the foreseeable future, our priority became keeping all of our tenants, staff and contractors safe and healthy.

It has now been three months since the government-enforced social restrictions began and it still looks as though our return to normal ways of living is still a little while away. The next few pages in this newsletter detail how we have been responding to the virus and what we are looking to do in the near future.

Despite the coronavirus outbreak having an unprecedented impact on the way we operate, a lot of good work has taken place, both before and after the restrictions began. We successfully rolled out our new Customer App, invested significantly in a number of our properties and celebrated the official opening of Wheatfield Close, our new 38-property development in Netherley.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of the hard-working NHS staff, carers and other key workers that are working tirelessly around the clock to keep our people safe and making a huge difference during these challenging times. I'm sure that many of you reading this are key workers yourselves or have found yourself taking on duties that you wouldn't normally do recently, so on behalf of everyone at Prima Group - thank you.


**John Ghader**  
Group Chief Executive, Prima Group.

## Contact Us





The quickest and easiest way of reaching us is by using the Prima Customer App. Details on how you can download the app can be found on our website.

There are also many other ways you can contact us here at Prima Group. All of which are listed below:

 Download our app by heading to [www.primagroup.org/customer-app](http://www.primagroup.org/customer-app)

 Via our website by heading to [www.primagroup.org/contact-us](http://www.primagroup.org/contact-us)

 Our webchat service can be found in the bottom right corner of our website. This service is available during the office opening hours listed below.

 You can phone us on **0151 227 1001**



### Head Office

8 Columbus Quay  
Riverside Drive  
Liverpool  
Merseyside  
L3 4DB

### Opening Hours

Monday - 9am to 5pm  
Tuesday - 9am to 5pm  
Wednesday - 1pm to 5pm  
Thursday - 9am to 5pm  
Friday - 9am to 5pm

## Always Check for ID

Please remember to always check the identity of callers at your door.

Our employees and contractors will always have identification with them and won't mind showing you their ID cards if you ask. As part of the increased safety measures, we will most likely be wearing face masks when we visit your home.

If you are still in doubt then please just ask the person to wait outside and give us a call so can confirm their identity.





# Latest Update on Coronavirus

We have reviewed our services as government advice and guidance around coronavirus has changed over the past few of weeks.

The Housing Minister, Christopher Pincher, has written to all social housing residents to explain his expectations of us as landlords. You can view that letter on the News section of our website.

We still need to work carefully and take extra precautions to ensure the safety of our customers, employees and contractors, so we have assessed how we can best provide services.

## Customer Contact

We have dealt with over 8000 contacts from customers since lockdown began. We've made 2000 welfare calls to customers who live alone, are over 70 or have health concerns.

We are still here to answer your phone calls, emails, webchats and Customer App contacts as normal, although our offices remain closed for now.

We are still providing support on any tenancy issues and offering advice as we normally would. We've been able to help over 200 people who have been finding things difficult with support such as signposting to shopping services, emergency food parcels and employment advice.

We have also been delivering tenancy management services to customers and are carrying out appointments over the phone, rather than through home visits.



## Repairs

We have continued to provide essential services such as emergency repairs and health and safety checks, visiting over 700 homes over the last few weeks. Now, when you contact us to report any non-urgent repairs, we will be considering whether these can be carried out safely too.

When you report a repair, our team will check that it is safe for us to visit your home. To protect our customers and contractors, we will carry out any works in a sensitive and safe manner and we have extra measures in place to ensure safety and hygiene guidelines are met at all times.

If you reported any non-urgent repairs to us during the lockdown, we will be in touch with you soon to see if it's now possible to carry these out safely for you.

Our planned improvement work, which involves replacing kitchens and bathrooms, is also on hold during this time. We will try and reschedule these works once we are sure that it is safe to do so.

We will be progressing with our external painting programme as much as we can and will only carry out pre-painting external repairs where it is safe to do so.

## Gas Servicing and Electrical Safety Checks

We are still legally required to carry out annual gas safety and electrical safety checks to make sure you remain safe in your home.

If you receive a letter with an appointment for either of these checks, please let us know whether you are self-isolating or are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus so that we can re-schedule appointments.

## Environmental Services

We are pleased that we have continued to provide grass cutting and cleaning services as normal, or with some small changes to the usual arrangements. We thank our customers

in Leasowe for allowing us time to put measures in place to enable grass cutting to continue, and we're pleased that this service is now being delivered again after a short break.

## Supporting You

If you are worried or experiencing difficulties with isolation such as managing your finances or being able to get shopping, please get in touch so we can see what we can do to help.

## Moving Home

We're able to help you if you want to end your tenancy and we will let you know the process to follow and how to return your keys to us safely. You can still apply to move home using Property Pool Plus or apply directly via our website to go on our waiting list as normal. There may be a delay to moving as we prioritise urgent moves at this time.

Help is still available should you need to leave your home for your safety. Please contact us and we can act quickly to put you in contact with specialist domestic abuse services.

## Customer Engagement

We are still working closely with customers, carrying our satisfaction surveys and successfully held our Customer Board meeting by video call earlier this month.

Customer Board reviewed the new Tenancy Agreement and Safeguarding Policy. They are also taking part in online training during the lockdown. If you are interested in joining our Customer Board and shaping the way we work then please get in touch to let us know.



# Support During Lockdown

The safety and security of our customers will always be one of our top priorities.

We've been busy making sure our customers are receiving the support they need during the lockdown.

-  27 homes allocated to families needing to move
-  £2800 in grants given to charities that are supporting customers in our communities
-  8000 contacts made with customers
-  Now using video viewings to make it safer for customers looking to move home
-  659 emergency and urgent repairs undertaken for customers
-  Continued to carry out gas safety checks to keep our customers safe

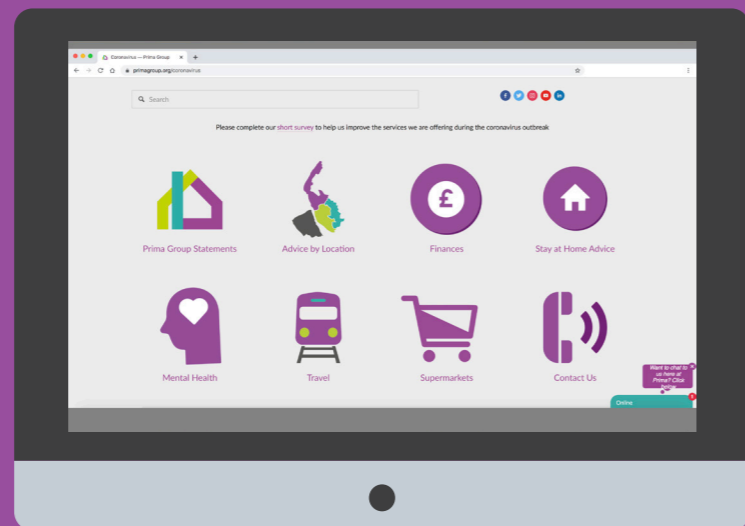
If you need any advice or support during the coronavirus outbreak then please don't hesitate to get in touch with us using the contact details on page 3.

## Coronavirus Website Info

We have a dedicated coronavirus section set up on our website so you can view all of the latest local information.

Find out up-to-date advice from local councils, tips on managing your mental health and all the latest travel updates.

Head to: [www.primagroup.org](http://www.primagroup.org)

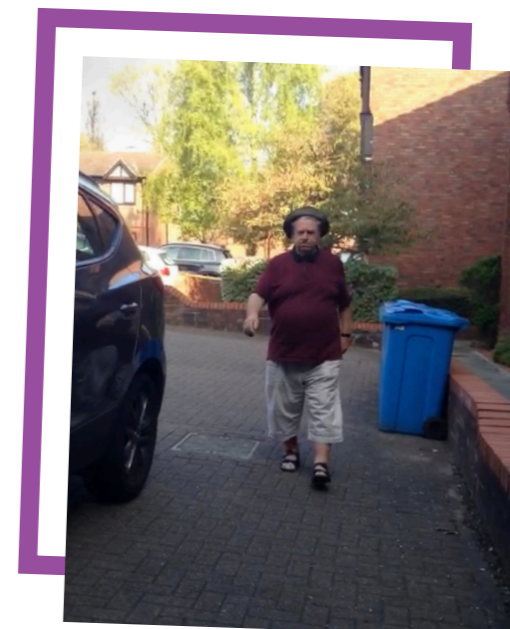


# Raising Money for the NHS

We've heard of a few brilliant ways some of our tenants are raising money for the NHS and other worthy causes recently.

After watching Captain Tom Moore raise millions for charity in the run up to his hundredth birthday, Mr Murphy of Jericho Court in Aigburth felt inspired to raise some money himself. Mr Murphy (89) has been walking laps of Jericho Close every day and asking family, friends and neighbours to sponsor him and donate to the NHS.

We'd love to hear from anyone else that has been fundraising recently so please get in touch so we can share your good news.



As part of the **#HomesAtTheHeart** campaign, we want to see how you have been coping with the extra time spent at home recently.

This could be home-schooling at the kitchen table, working on your gardening skills or doing a bit of decorating; we want to see what you've been up to!

There are two £50 Love2Shop vouchers up for grabs so get your pictures in via our website.

## Domestic Abuse at Home

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline has seen a 25% increase in calls since lockdown began.

If you or anyone you know is suffering from domestic abuse, help is available.

**Sefton IDVA Service** - 0151 934 5142

**Wirral Police Helpline** - 0151 777 2689

**Liverpool DV Helpline** - 0800 731 1313

**Llandudno DV Helpline** - 01492 872992

# Managing Your Mental Health



It's essential that you take good care of your mental wellbeing as well as your physical well-being during these difficult times.

The change of routine may leave you frustrated, worried and anxious. You may also be concerned about your finances, your health and the health of your family and friends.

It is completely ok to feel this way. Everyone will be dealing with the effects of coronavirus differently. **Below are some tips on managing your mental health:**

- **Keep active** | Enjoy a walk or a jog each day - even if it's just around the block!
- **Build a routine** | Try to wake up and go to bed at regular times every day.
- **Switch off** | Sometimes the news can be overwhelming - take the time to enjoy a good book, listen to your favourite album or watch a film and enter another world.
- **Plan future events** | Think about what you're going to do once normal life resumes.
- **Learn a new skill** | Baking? Guitar? French? Keep your brain occupied by learning something new or developing a skill you already have.
- **Keep in touch** | Reach out to friends and family and see how they're doing.

Visit our website to find out more tips on managing your mental health and access services you can use if you need to discuss any problems you might have.



# Coronavirus Advice by Location

Different councils are offering different pieces of advice at the moment.

All of the councils listed below have a wide variety of advice on their websites but if you still need to call them for any reason, their phone numbers are also listed.

## Liverpool

[www.liverpool.gov.uk](http://www.liverpool.gov.uk)  
0151 233 3066

## Wirral

[www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk)  
0151 666 5050



## Sefton

[www.sefton.gov.uk](http://www.sefton.gov.uk)  
0345 140 0845

## Knowsley

[www.knowsley.gov.uk](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk)  
0800 073 0043

## Llandudno

[www.llandudno.gov.uk](http://www.llandudno.gov.uk)  
01492 879130

# Watch Out for Scammers

Unfortunately, some scammers are trying to use the coronavirus outbreak as another opportunity to steal your money or your data. Some recent scams include:

- **Text messages** | Most text message scams tend to include a link to a fake website that asks you to fill in your personal details. If you are suspicious of a text message then do not click on any links and just delete the message.
- **Emails** | Similar to scam text messages in many ways. Again, do not click on any links if you are wary of the message.
- **Door to Door** | This scam involves people knocking at your door claiming to be from an organisation that will do your shopping for you. They simply take your money and never return.
- **Test and Trace** | If you're contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service, you will not be asked to provide any passwords, bank account details or pin numbers.
- **Fake HMRC Tax Refunds** | These messages direct you to fake websites which request your personal and financial details.

Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, then it most likely is.

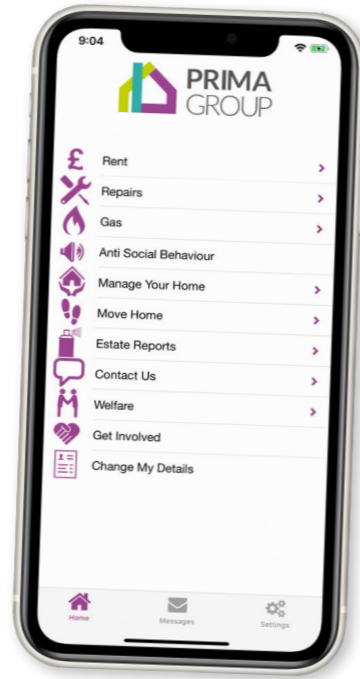
# Prima Customer App

Manage your home at a time that suits you

With the Prima Customer App, you can now easily check your balance, see mini-statements, request a statement, report a repair, request visits and report ASB as well as a whole host of other functions.

Using our app means you can reach us a lot faster than you would if you were to phone us. To report a repair or ASB, you simply have to fill in your information and a member of the team will be in touch if we need to know more.

As you can now access your rent account 24/7 using the Customer App, we've moved away from sending rent statements out with our newsletter. If you're not online, you can call the office to request a rent statement to be posted to you at anytime to check your balance.



Search for **Prima Group**



# Employment, Skills & Training

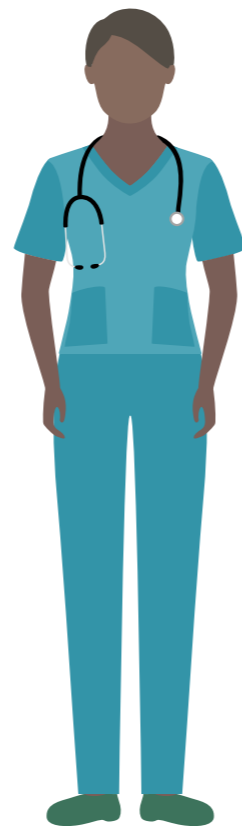
We have started posting local jobs and training opportunities on our website.

There are opportunities available for everyone with a wide variety of industries regularly listed, such as:

- Health & Social Care
- Construction
- Retail
- Education
- Hospitality
- Transport & Logistics

You can also sign up to our **email bulletins** that send local jobs directly to your inbox. You will be able to unsubscribe from this list at any time.

Head to [www.primagroup.org/local-jobs](http://www.primagroup.org/local-jobs) to find out more.



# Thanks for the support

We'd like to thank Bell Group who recently painted The Hut in Leasowe and both JC Construction and Wellcare Construction who kindly donated selection boxes that were distributed to some of our local communities just in time for Christmas.

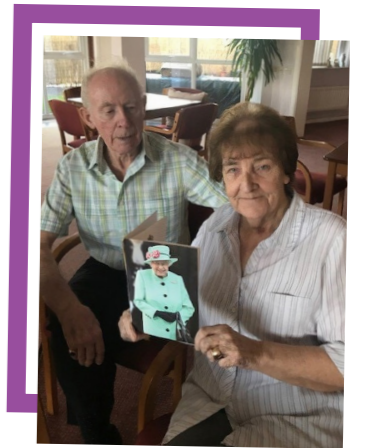


# Diamond Wedding Anniversary

Huge congratulations to Freda and Neville on their 60th wedding anniversary.

The happy couple live at Maud Roberts Court, our over 55s scheme in Litherland where they celebrated their special day with family and friends.

The picture to the right shows them with their Diamond Wedding anniversary card off The Queen.



# Dickinson Court Community Events

Last summer, residents at Dickinson Court in Southport were treated to a BBQ organised by Mr Wardle (83).

Now we've made it through the winter and the weather is looking better, Mr Wardle is hoping to hold another BBQ soon, once social distancing rules have eased to the point where it is safe to do so.

When speaking about why he organised the event last year, Mr Wardle mentioned: "I held it as it's an opportunity to bring everyone together and meet some of your neighbours that you never really get to see."



# Raising Money for Mind

Over the past year, we have raised over £1150 for the mental health charity, Mind.

We raised the money through a number of events and activities, such as fun days, sponsored runs and quizzes.

Mind provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They have an infoline, which offers callers confidential help for the price of a local call and a legal line which people can use to receive information on mental health related laws. You can find out more about Mind by visiting: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk).



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# Applying for Universal Credit for the First Time

With recent events sometimes forcing an unwanted change in circumstances, many people are applying for Universal Credit for the first time.



If you need to apply for Universal Credit then you will have to set up an online account at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). You will use this account to apply and manage your claim.

In your account you will be asked to complete a to-do list. Before doing this, make sure you have your rent and housing situation, income, childcare provider and bank account details available. You don't have to complete your to-do list in one sitting but try your best to finish it as soon as you can.

You will then be asked to confirm your identity, book an appointment and finally, attend your appointment. At the minute, the government has cancelled all face-to-face appointments and interviews at the Jobcentre Plus. The Jobcentre Plus may still call you though.

It will take five weeks to receive your first Universal Credit payment once all of these actions have been completed and you are fully enrolled. You can ask to receive some of your claim sooner if you need to.

# Avoiding Loan Sharks During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Residents struggling to make ends meet during the coronavirus pandemic are being urged not to turn to loan sharks. Prima Group is supporting a campaign by the England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) amid concerns loan sharks now may be looking to take advantage of those who have found themselves in a vulnerable position during the pandemic and feel they have nowhere to turn for help.

Loan sharks are unregulated, often give cash loans without any paperwork and charge extortionate interest rates. They may offer what appears to be a quick-fix small loan, but in the long term, any money borrowed will come at a very high price and may lead to threats and intimidation.

The England IMLT have helped more than 30,000 people escape the clutches of loan sharks, with the figure including people in the North West.

If you've already found yourself dealing with a loan shark, you're not alone and there is help available. You can contact IMLT by calling the confidential helpline on 0300 555 2222, by visiting [www.stoploansharks.co.uk](http://www.stoploansharks.co.uk) or by using their new webchat service available Tuesdays 9am-5pm.

You can also get debt and financial advice from RAISE. They are an independent charity that give free, confidential, high quality advice on welfare benefits, debt, and money guidance issues.

Their advice is available to any Prima Group customer living in Merseyside. RAISE will also represent clients at tribunal hearings. This is a great free service for tenants to use to help them manage their finances.



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# Cash Payments

We are not currently accepting any cash payments due to an increased risk in the transmission of coronavirus. However, we have a number of other methods available for you to make payments.



- **Direct Debit**
- **Recurring Card Payments**
- **Allpay App** - You can download this free from the AppStore or Google Play.
- **Allpay Payment Card** - You will receive an Allpay payment card that will allow you to make payments via the Allpay App or at any PayPoint locations. Please note that by paying using this method, it can take up to two days for the payments to appear on your statement.
- **Text Payments** - You can register for this method of payment on the Allpay website.
- **Debit Card** - You can pay using your debit card via the automated payment line.

Please contact us if you require any support setting up new ways to pay.



## Settling in at Wheatfield Close

On Wednesday 27th February 2020, we celebrated the official opening of Wheatfield Close; our new 38-property development in Netherley.

John Ghader, Prima Group CEO, opened the event by thanking everyone involved in the completion of the development and welcoming new tenants to their homes. He went on to say: "This is the first of many developments that we have planned. We are delighted with the quality and standard of these new homes."

Tracy, one of the new residents at Wheatfield Close, has recently moved out of her old flat and into her new home. She said: "The house is beautiful, the finish is gorgeous and the neighbours we've met all seem lovely. We really couldn't be happier."

"You haven't just given us a house, you've given us a home we can feel proud of. It will make a huge difference in our lives and for that, I'm so very grateful! Once again, a massive thank you from us both."

We hope all of our new tenants at Wheatfield Close are settling in well and we hope you have a happy time in your new homes.



## It only takes one accident to start a fire

Did you know that you should test your smoke alarms at least once a month?

Or that you should have smoke alarms on every floor of your home?

Or that your local fire and rescue service do free home visits to make sure your home is fire safe?

The Fire Kills campaign has been put together by the government to promote fire safety behaviours to adopt around the home.

- Cooking fires are the main causes of fire in the home
- Every six days someone dies in a fire started by smoking materials
- Two accidental dwelling fires a day are started by candles
- Faulty electrics cause about 4,000 fires in the home each year

Visit the website for more helpful tips and advice: [firekills.campaign.gov.uk](https://firekills.campaign.gov.uk)

**Fire Kills. Let's prevent it.**





# Rent Prize DRAWS

If you have a clear rent account then you will automatically be entered into a quarterly prize draw to win either a £100 or £50 Love2Shop voucher

£ 1x £100 Voucher

£ 2x £50 Voucher

**BE CLEAR TO WIN**

Full terms and conditions can be found on our website:  
[www.primagroup.org](http://www.primagroup.org)



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