

PRIMA NEWS

Winter 2019

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Welcome to the Winter 2019 edition of Prima News.

Over the past six months, we have been working hard on a wide range of projects that all have the same goal in mind; improving the homes, communities and life chances in places where our customers live and work.

We have recruited for our new Customer Board, finished refurbishing Chestnut Court (our over 55s scheme in Bootle), worked in collaboration with other community based housing associations and key partners on exciting projects, and moved customers into their new homes just in time for Christmas at our most recent development, Wheatfield Close in Netherley.

As always, the feedback we receive from you influences the decisions we make in the future. Our new Customer Board will be reviewing all of the feedback we receive and suggesting what we should be working on to improve the services we offer and make the lives of our tenants better. Recruitment to our Customer Board is still open, so if you'd like to get involved then please apply to join by visiting our website or by speaking to one of the team.

Customers have also been helping us out in testing our new Customer App. We are happy to say that you can now access key services such as viewing your rent accounts, requesting statements and reporting repairs all from the touch of a button.

In the meantime, thank you for taking the time to read about what we are working on in this edition of Prima News. I hope you have a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

John Ghader
Group Chief Executive, Prima Group



Contact us!

There are lots of different ways you can contact Prima Group so please use whichever way is best for you!

- 📞 Call us on 0151 227 1001
- ✉ Email us at info@primagroup.org or via our website: www.primagroup.org
- 🐦 Tweet us: [@prima_grp](https://twitter.com/prima_grp)
- 📱 Message us on Facebook: facebook.com/PrimaGroupHousing



Christmas Opening Times

We will close for the Christmas break on Monday 23rd December and will re-open on Thursday 2nd January. During this time, we will only be taking calls to report emergency repairs and you can do this by calling our out of hours service on **0800 587 4480 (LOCAL RATE)**.

Please do not email us emergency repairs or if you need a response before Thursday 2 January 2020.



Our new Customer App is here

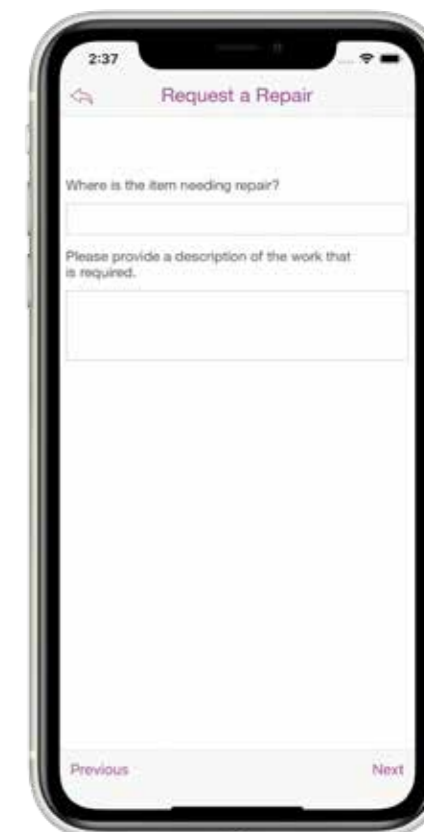
We know that trying to balance family, work and home life can sometimes be difficult, so we have created the Prima Customer App to help make managing your tenancy simple.

With the Prima Customer App, you can now easily check your balance, request a statement, request a home visit, report a repair and report ASB as well as a whole host of other options.

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.

You can download the app now for free on the App Store or the Google Play Store. Please visit our website to find out more.





Chestnut Court opens its doors following refurbishment works

Back in September we held the official opening of the newly modernised Chestnut Court following recent refurbishment works. To celebrate the end of the works at the over 55s scheme, we held an opening event inviting customers, local councillors, board members, colleagues, Wellcare Construction and Homes England for a tour of the scheme.

The event started with Prima Group's John Ghader, thanking residents for their patience while works were ongoing and commenting on how the improvements had made such a difference to the quality of the apartments and the facilities that the scheme now provides for residents.

Christine Hill was in attendance representing Homes England who helped fund the project. She highlighted that the changes in the design of the scheme were going to make a huge difference to the people living there.

The refurbishment has seen 31 apartments completely re-designed to make them

more spacious and comfortable. Residents can make use of the new shared lounge, hair salon, scooter store and hobby room. Visiting family members also have the option to stay in the new guest room.

Lesley has lived at Chestnut Court for over six years now, she said: "I'm absolutely made up with it. It's nicer, brighter and more modern - it's just a breath of fresh air."

Chrissie, also a long-term resident at the scheme, mentioned: "I'm very happy! The people working here were so helpful when they were working on my flat."



Our Wheatfield Close development is nearly here



We are so close to completing our new 38 home development at Wheatfield Close in Netherley. We already have some very happy customers moving in to their new houses just in time for Christmas.



The development is made up of 26 two-bedroom houses and 12 apartments. It is also ideally situated near Liverpool South Parkway train station and Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

We recently held our official opening which was attended by board members, staff, local councillors and contractors that had been working on the site.

Thanks to Homes England, JDA Architects, Markhams, Tyson Construction and Liverpool City Council for working with us to make this development a reality.



Welcoming Our New Customer Board Members

You'll remember from previous editions of the newsletter that we were making changes to how our organisation was governed and one of the key changes was the setting up of a Customer Board.

A number of our residents have worked tirelessly with us to put the new Customer Board together, carrying out recruitment and deciding how it should work.

TPAS, who are tenant engagement experts (tpas.org.uk), have advised us so far and will continue to be on hand to offer support to our newly recruited members.

The Customer Board will be to give assurance to the Board that the consumer and economic standards are being complied with and make sure that our customer voice is being heard. Some of the work the Customer Board will be involved in will be helping us review our tenant involvement structures, the procurement of our repairs contract

and a number of health and safety matters.

Your Customer Board members have had their first training meeting with TPAS and will be meeting in early December to hold their first formal meeting. Being a Customer Board member requires some time commitment, however in return we can help you develop skills which can be beneficial for your CV and if you are looking for employment opportunities. There is also the opportunity to obtain some professional qualifications.

We are very excited to introduce you to our Customer Board members:

- **Chris Sheehy** - One of our leaseholders in Southport.
- **Doreen Williamson** - One of our tenants in Liverpool that is 'looking forward to being more involved in governance and taking a strategic look at how Prima work, and wanting to take a key role in

looking at the quality of the repairs service'.

- **Jeanette Crozier** - One of our tenants in Liverpool that wants to make a difference and help others as she knows what difficulties customers may face.
- **Kenny Thompson** - One of our tenants in Leasowe.
- **Nick Wiffen** - One of our tenants in Leasowe that, 'wants to give something back to the community'.

So, if you meet all of the requirements below then we would love to hear from you:

- A Prima Group tenant
- Live in a Prima Group property
- Are over the age of 18
- Are a leaseholder or shared owner

Please see our website for further details on getting involved or call us on 0151 227 1001. This is your chance to shape the way we work.

Asbestos Awareness

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a strong material which can resist heat and chemicals. It was most commonly used in building materials between the 1950s and 1980s.

Following the discovery of health issues from those who had worked with asbestos, it was finally banned from further use in the UK in 1999. However, a lot of housing was built before this time and as a result many properties have asbestos materials within their construction.

What are the risks?

Asbestos is not a problem if it is not damaged and left alone intact. Asbestos can be dangerous if it is damaged or disturbed by drilling, sawing, sanding or scrubbing, as asbestos fibres are released into the air. If you think a material might contain asbestos, don't work on it and contact us for advice.

What are we doing about asbestos?

We have a long-term commitment to manage materials containing asbestos in our properties.

We are doing this by:

- Surveying homes to find and identify any materials that may contain asbestos and keeping a register of locations and the condition of any asbestos.
- Assessing and managing any risk from the materials containing asbestos in all of our properties.
- Making arrangements to manage the risk arising from materials containing asbestos.
- Making sure anyone who may disturb materials containing

asbestos has the correct information and training to handle this safely.

- Reducing the chances, where possible, of residents and contractors being exposed to asbestos.

Do's and Don'ts

Do contact us straight away if:

- Any materials you think may contain asbestos have been damaged or disturbed.
- Protective coatings or sealants are peeling or breaking off, or if special labels have been removed.
- Asbestos cement-based products (such as guttering or shed roofs) become damaged or badly weathered or waste away.
- Work on, damage or remove materials containing asbestos.

large pieces of materials that could contain asbestos.

- Jet wash or clean asbestos cement products.
- Remove old floor tiles or lino - instead, leave them in place and lay new floor coverings on top.
- Remove textured coatings from ceilings - wash any areas where the paint is flaking before you paint it again.

What happens now?

You do not need to do anything. If you think you might have asbestos in your home, let us know and we will look into it. The important thing to remember is that asbestos containing materials are common in homes built before 1999 and will not cause you harm if you leave them alone.



Working in Partnership with the Eldonians

We've been working on an exciting proposal with the Eldonian Community Based Housing Association to build 66 much needed affordable new homes in the Love Lane area of Liverpool.

With funding from Homes England, the government's housing agency, the Eldonians are about to start feasibility and design work on a piece of redundant land in their ownership. This brownfield site on Love Lane has been undeveloped for decades but with the support of Homes England, the Eldonians can now appoint a professional team to carry out feasibility and design appraisals on the land. The Eldonians are hopeful that this preliminary work, will lead to the development of much needed affordable new housing.

The aspiration is to deliver a mix of 66 high-quality one and two-bedroom apartments bringing city living style at affordable costs. The innovative, sustainable design for the apartments, will bring together a great mix of new and old, with modern spaces located next to existing Victorian railway structures, connecting old and new commercial activity and celebrating the heritage of the docklands area. The Eldonians will be working with their community and key partners, Prima Group and architects Halsall Lloyd Partnership to develop the plans for this modern, sustainable, community-led and green development proposal.

"We can see how this could be a great addition to the area, and we are pleased to be working towards delivering much needed affordable new housing."



Working with Ashley & McDonough

We are delighted to announce that we will now be working with Ashley & McDonough for all future gas repair works and annual gas safety servicing programmes to homes. Ashley & McDonough have over 50 years experience delivering cyclical servicing, maintenance, reactive call out, repairs and installs and we're looking forward to working closely with them in the coming years.

Also, congratulations to Ashley & McDonough on being voted the 'Best Small Business of the Year' at the Knowsley Business Awards 2019.

Remember to check for ID

A quick reminder to customers to always check the identity of callers at your door. Our employees and contractors will always have identification with them and they won't mind showing you their ID cards when you ask. If you're ever in any doubt about the caller, it's always best to be cautious — ask them to wait outside, close the door properly and then give us a call to check that we have asked them to visit your home. Your safety is important and genuine visitors will always be happy to wait for you to check.





Prima in Bloom



Thank you to everyone that entered their gardens in our Prima in Bloom and Leasowe in Bloom gardening competitions over the summer. We were delighted to see such a wide variety of well looked after gardens. After all of the entries had been submitted, we went to see all of the gardens with our expert judges, Roger Forster (Leasowe Allotment Society), Paula Ishtar and Peter Rix.

After viewing all of the gardens, Roger said: "We were so impressed with the standard of the competition entries, people worked so hard in getting ready for the competition and the results are amazing."



Unfortunately we could only pick one winner and two runners up for each competition. Congratulations to all of our winners, we hope you enjoyed your prize vouchers.

Prima in Bloom

1. Carol Mealey
2. Ruth Linton
3. Catherine Clucas

Leasowe in Bloom

1. Janet Shields
2. Margaret Edwards
3. Robert Saddler

We are looking to hold the competitions again next year so keep an eye out on our social media for further details.



Bright Ideas Fund



Earlier this year we introduced our Bright Ideas Fund. This fund has been designed to help community groups, voluntary groups, faith groups, schools and others with funding certain projects that will benefit the lives and neighbourhoods that our tenants live in.

So far, we have helped eight organisations with funding. A couple of examples of the fund being put to good use include helping tenants at one of our over 55s scheme continue with their weekly fitness sessions and helping a community centre in Netherley hold a community fun day.

If your organisation has a project, event or activity that will benefit the communities where our tenants live, then we would love to hear from you so we can discuss potentially helping you with funding. Please head to our website and search for 'Bright Ideas Fund' to find out more and apply.



Stamping out loan sharks

It's the time of year when people are most likely to feel the pinch and turn to loan sharks to stave off Christmas money worries.

The festive season can be a stressful time for many people especially for those on a tight budget who want to make Christmas extra special.

Unfortunately it's also prime opportunity for illegal money lenders to prey on vulnerable victims when cash is tight and mislead them into thinking it is the only solution.

To combat the problem, we have teamed up with Riverside and St Leonards Community Centre in Bootle to raise awareness of the risks of turning to unscrupulous loan sharks so no one falls victim to their tricks.

Posters with the telephone number to report loan sharks have been on the back of buses and stencil prints have been jet washed on to the footpaths in key locations where people are likely to be targeted.

Dean Butterworth, Riverside's Regional Director Liverpool City Region, said: "Christmas can be stressful for many people who worry about paying for presents, food and decorations, and feel the pressure to spend more than they can afford.

It can feel like an easy solution to turn to loan sharks however they may not realise the extortionate interest rates making it impossible for them to pay back. It's important that residents stay away from loan sharks and only borrow from responsible lenders such as a credit union."

John Ghader, Prima Group Chief Executive, said: "It's important for our residents to be aware that loan sharks target the most vulnerable people in society and cause nothing but misery for those who borrow from them. We are extremely pleased to have received the funding from the Illegal Money Lending Team to enable us to work in partnership with other social landlords and community organisations to join forces to help tackle money lending issues in Bootle."

Funding for the Stop the Loan Sharks campaign is thanks to the England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT).

You can report a loan shark to the illegal money lending team confidentially on 0300 555 2222 or visit stoploansharks.co.uk and fill out the online form.



Community Clean Up Days

Over the past six months, we've been continuing on the successes of our previous clean-up days. We have been working with local agencies and strategic partners to highlight and target hotspot areas.

We've recently held clean-up days in Leasowe, Bootle, Aigburth, Birkenhead and Toxteth. All of these days gave tenants the chance to dispose of any unwanted items into the skips provided and clear some space in their homes.

These days also offer you the chance to speak to members of staff in person about any issues you may have. If you see us about in the future then please don't hesitate to stop us and ask a question, we will always be happy to help.

Thanks to everyone that got involved in our clean-up days this year, whether it be helping us pick up litter or offering us a cup of tea, we appreciate it. We're looking forward to holding even more next year.



Helping the Elderly This Winter

Everyone faces difficulties when the weather gets too cold through the winter. The elderly, however, are even more vulnerable to the effects of the harsh conditions.

There are a few things you can do to take care of elderly friends, relatives or neighbours this winter:

- Regular contact - Keep in regular contact with your elderly neighbours and family just check everything is fine. This is particularly important when someone lives alone.
- Grit any paths and walkways - Slips can happen on even the smallest patches of ice. Try and make sure all paths around the house are sufficiently gritted to minimise the risk of any falls.
- Invite your neighbour over for a hot meal - Christmas is a time for togetherness. If you know someone is home alone through the winter then think about inviting them over for a hot meal. Sometimes the most simple gestures have the greatest impact on a person.
- Keep an eye out for any illnesses - Do they seem drowsy? Is their home cold but they don't seem to know? Do they have a bad cough?
- Ask if they need anything when you go shopping - A quick phone call to see if any of your elderly neighbours need anything from the shops means they won't have to venture outside and face the cold.



Halloween in Leasowe

Wirral Development Trust and Leasowe Adventure Playground put on a couple of spooky events for Halloween this year.

Wirral Development Trust held their annual Lantern Parade on the 30th October which was, as always, a fun time for everyone involved. Local children took to the streets of Leasowe with the lanterns that they had made themselves earlier that week. The parade finished at Leasowe Community Centre where food was available for everyone that took part.

The next day, a scary Halloween party was held at Leasowe Adventure Playground. Staff and volunteers made a terrifying haunted house at the back of the building in which local children and parents were led through a dark maze full of ghosts and vampires in the hope of making it out on the other side. Throughout the year, the Adventure Playground offer school children a place to relax and have fun. They currently have over 80 children attending each day that they are open.

We're proud to help fund these kinds of events and can't wait to see what will happen next year. Head to the news section of our website to see a video from the events.



mind

Focus on Mental Health



Every year, Prima Group employees decide on a charity to raise money for throughout the year. This year, we have chosen Mind. Mind is a mental health charity that provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. We campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.

We have been thinking of things we can do to help raise money for Mind. So far we have taken part in the Liverpool Rock 'n' Roll Marathon, embraced our facial hair for Movember and took part in charity quizzes. We're also holding cake sales and raffles over Christmas. We're always thinking of new ideas to raise money so please let us know if you have any ideas. Also, if you want to donate then please head to [JustGiving.com](https://www.justgiving.com) and search for 'primafundraising'.

All Prima Group employees have recently taken part in Mental Health Awareness sessions to help increase knowledge and reduce stigma around different types of mental health conditions. Colleagues also

attended Suicide Prevention Training to learn how to identify a situation where someone may be at risk of taking their own life. Both of the training sessions are already proving to be useful in real-life situations.

As part of our ongoing commitment to mental health awareness, we signed the Time to Change pledge in September. To make sure it remained a key focus for us, we followed it by setting up an employee Mental Health Action Team, so our colleagues can confidentially reach out someone if they need to. The team of nine members of staff have been through further training so they are comfortable with being approached regarding a mental health issue.



Signing the Time to Change Pledge

We've joined over 1200 other organisations across the UK that have signed the Time to Change Pledge, which is a commitment to changing the way we all think and act about mental health in the workplace.

Time to Change is a growing social movement that aims to improve attitudes and behaviour towards mental health.

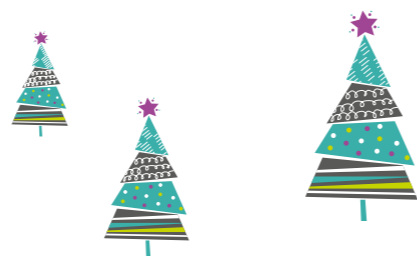
We held an event in our Liverpool office for the signing of the pledge which started off with our Chief Executive, John Ghader, discussing the importance of supporting mental health at work and our Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Jenny Devon, detailing how we will be supporting staff that may require help in the future.

The event was followed by a series of activities that made staff aware of how they can also look after their own mental health both inside and outside of work by exercising regularly, watching what they eat and drink and becoming more mindful.

time to change

let's end mental health discrimination

Useful Mental Health Apps



You may find some of these useful mental health apps helpful. If you are struggling with your mental health, it's important to visit your doctor for advice and support.

- **What's Up** - Free app that uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) methods to help you cope with Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and more.
- **MoodKit** - MoodKit uses the foundation of CBT and provides users with over 200 different mood improvement activities.
- **MindShift CBT** - Mind Shift is one of the best mental health apps designed specifically for teens and young adults with anxiety. Mind Shift stresses the importance of changing how you think about anxiety.
- **Happify** - Need a happy fix? With its psychologist-approved mood-training program, the Happify app is your fast-track to a good mood.
- **Headspace** - The Headspace app makes meditation simple. Learn the skills of mindfulness and meditation by using this app for just a few minutes per day.
- **Calm** - Calm provides people experiencing stress and anxiety with guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing programs, and relaxing music.
- **nOCD** - nOCD was designed with the help of OCD specialists and patients.
- **Stay Alive** - The Stay Alive app is designed to help both those who are having suicidal thoughts and those who are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide.



Do You Need Home Contents Insurance?



Why do I need it?

It's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would cover you for in order to help you make an informed decision on whether you need one. Prima Group do not provide home contents insurance as part of your tenancy agreement.

Home contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen so home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind.

To help you decide whether home contents insurance is

right for you, Prima Group have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks and Allianz Insurance plc who provide specialist Tenants Contents Insurance policies.

This pay as you go home contents insurance scheme can offer you insurance for the contents of your home including cover for items such as furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, electrical items, jewellery, pictures and ornaments.

How do I get further information?

- Ask your local housing officer for an application pack
- Call us on **0151 227 1001**



Five tips for Good Mental Health

A healthy mind is essential for living a positive and productive life.

Below are five tips for maintaining good mental health:

1. **Connect with others** - Having strong relationships is important for your wellbeing as they can help you build a sense of belonging, give you the chance to share both positive and negative experiences and allow you to support others.
2. **Exercise regularly** - Being active gives you a sense of achievement and also increases the chemicals in your brain that help to put you in a good mood. You don't have to be running marathons
3. **Get enough sunlight** - The benefit of exercising out in the open is that you should take in some sunlight. Sunlight is the perfect source of vitamin D. Vitamin D is important as, like exercising, it releases chemicals in your brain that improve your mood.
4. **Get plenty of sleep** - Try and go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day (even on weekends). Most adults need around 7-9 hours of sleep a day. Sleep enables the body to repair

or climbing mountains, simply having a quick walk every day is enough to start feeling better.

and be ready for the next day.

5. **Find a hobby** - Having a hobby is a great way to improve your mood and give you something to focus on. Whether it's learning an instrument, learning how to bake or increasing your knowledge on something you already know, hobbies are the perfect way to increase your self-esteem.

Visit the Prima Support section of our website to find a list of local and national mental health helplines for you to use should you or anyone you need any advice.

Need a space for your business?

As an organisation with our communities at heart, we can offer great deals on our commercial units to social enterprises, local start-ups and community groups.

It might be less expensive than you think to get set up in business premises. To find out more get in touch with our Commercial Officer who can talk to you about what we can offer - 0151 227 1001.

Properties are available to let in:

- **Birkenhead** - Antiques Triangle and Brandon Street
- **Bootle** - Stanley Road
- **Liverpool** - Dovecot Parade





Moving is Easy with House Exchange

There are plenty of reasons you may want to move home. Let House Exchange help you find your ideal swap.

Have you thought about moving home? Maybe it's for a new job, more space for the family or to be closer to loved ones. Whatever the reason, House Exchange can help you.

House Exchange is a national website with thousands of opportunities for you to find your ideal home swap. It is also completely free to register.

Get started with your exchange at - www.houseexchange.org.uk

House Exchange can help you swap your home with another council or housing association resident.

Room going to waste or need more space?
Moving is easy with House Exchange

The website helps you to search, find matches and contact other people looking to move. It's easy to use and you can see the very latest adverts showing the available new homes.

www.houseexchange.org.uk

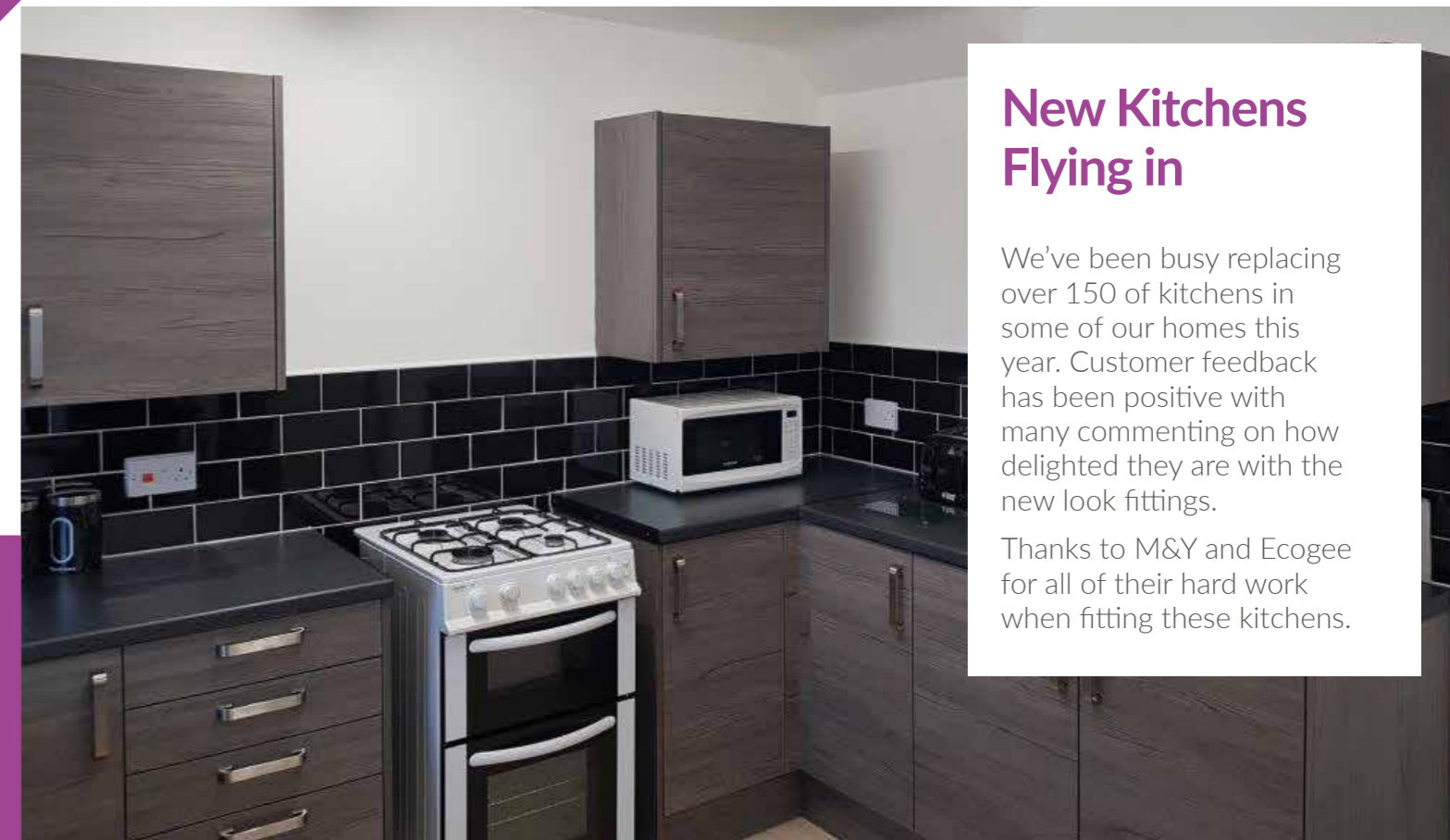


Quality student accommodation in the perfect location

Monument Buildings is our student accommodation located just a five-minute walk from Lime Street station. These apartments are right in the heart of Liverpool's Knowledge Quarter and are ideally located in the city centre with everything you could need on your doorstep. We've recently invested in updating the apartments, they now feature:

- Modern facilities
- 24-hour CCTV
- Free high-speed WiFi
- Bills included in the price of the room

With no hidden extras, these apartments offer great value at only £89 per week. Head to the Student Living section of our website to find out more.



New Kitchens Flying in

We've been busy replacing over 150 of kitchens in some of our homes this year. Customer feedback has been positive with many commenting on how delighted they are with the new look fittings.

Thanks to M&Y and Ecogee for all of their hard work when fitting these kitchens.



Our Annual Report

Our 2018/19 Annual Report is available to view on our website now. In the latest report, you can find details of what we have been working on and how we have been performing over the past year.

You can see how we've been performing with our repairs and maintenance service, how many new customers have moved into a Prima home and how well our rent collection team have worked. There are also sections on our finances, governance changes and updates on our neighbourhoods.



Head to the Corporate Info section of our website to take a look for yourself.

Thank you JC Construction

Massive thank you to JC Construction who have donated 250 selection boxes to us. These boxes will be heading straight out to different schools, community centres and homes in our communities just in time for Christmas.



Thinking of a new career?

We have started to update the Local Jobs page on our website every week with a whole host of interesting jobs and apprenticeships all in Liverpool, Wirral, Sefton or Llandudno.

We post both full-time and part-time roles so there is something for everyone on there.

Head to the news section of our website to find out more.

There are lots of different ways you can contact Prima Group so please use whichever way is best for you.

- Download the Prima Customer App
- Call us: 0151 227 1001
- Website: www.primagroup.org/contact-us or our web chat service
- Twitter: @prima_grp
- Facebook: facebook.com/PrimaGroupHousing



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