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MEETING:	Central Area Council
DATE:	Wednesday 6 December 2023
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Reception Room - Barnsley Town Hall

BERNESLAI HOMES PRESENTATION

- 3 Support for Private Tenants and for Berneslai Home Tenants - Lisa Harris, Dominic Dimanna and Sharon Laister (Cen.06.12.2023/3) (*Pages 3 - 10*)

To: Chair and Members of Central Area Council:-

Councillors K. Dyson (Chair), Bowser, Christmas, Clarke, Fielding, Lodge, O'Donoghue, Mitchell, Moyes, Murray, Risebury, Shirt, C. Wray and P. Wright

Area Council Support Officers:

Steve Loach, Central Area Council Senior Management Link Officer
Rachel Payling, Head of Service, Stronger Communities
Sarah Blunkett, Central Area Council Manager
Lisa Phelan, Central Area Council Manager
Peter Mirfin, Governance Manager

Please contact Peter Mirfin on email governance@barnsley.gov.uk

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HARDSHIP FUND

- What is the Hardship Fund?
- What is the criteria to access the fund?
- How can Berneslai Homes tenants access the Hardship Fund?
- What other support is available to tenants?
- Further Information.

What is the Hardship Fund?

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- ▶ The hardship fund is there to help with the current cost of living crisis.
- ▶ It helps tenants who may be struggling to make ends meet and finding it hard to pay for essential expenses.
- ▶ The fund is especially helpful for people on low income, pensioners, families with children and people with a disability.
- ▶ Berneslai homes are able to offer support with gas and electricity bills with pre-payment vouchers, or help with food and toiletries.
- ▶ In some cases help can be given to tenants with energy arrears that are below £750 via a one off payment.

What is the criteria to access the Hardship Fund?

- ✓ The fund has a £750 cap per household within 12 months, and can be used for energy and food or a combination of both.
- ✓ A full application and income and expenditure form is completed by an officer to assess whether a tenant is eligible for the fund.
- ✓ The application process will look at income, employment status, essential spend, household spend, shopping and travel expenses
- ✓ Following a successful application, the tenant is able to access the fund again after 3 months, up to the maximum limit of £750 per household within 12 months.



Energy Vouchers- Prepayment Meters

British Gas: £49 Post Office Prepayment codes for prepay meters. Emailed to tenant

All other providers: £49 paypoint vouchers for prepay meters. Emailed to tenant

Energy Vouchers- Payment Cards

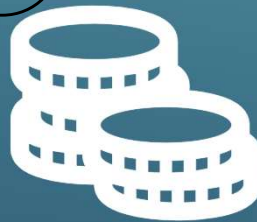
An energy payment card can be purchased to support customers who have a smart meter or credit meter account and are £100 or £50

The energy payment card will be sent direct to the customer via SMS with instructions and can be used for any supplier that accepts mastercard



Energy Arrears

In some cases if a tenant has energy arrears below £750 we may be able to clear these with a one off payment. These cases require an officer to put money on to the tenants cards and in to the meter to ensure the full amount is applied to their arrears



WHAT VOUCHERS ARE AVAILABLE?

**Food Vouchers come in varying amounts:
£30, £60, £75, £100 Etc.**

These can be spent at food retailers such as:

- **ASDA**
- **ALDI**
- **Tesco**
- **Farmfoods**
- **Morrisons**
- **Iceland**
- **Sainsburys**



To access the fund contact can be made as follows:

Telephone: 01226 774270

Email:
tenantsupportservice@berneslaihomes.co.uk

Website (Online application available):
www.berneslaihomes.co.uk/support-for-tenants/cost-of-living-support

Or

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/advice-benefits-and-council-tax/help-with-the-rising-cost-of-living>

How can a tenant access the Hardship fund?



MORE ABOUT TENANTS FIRST:

- Tenants First is a tenancy and family support hub for tenants and offers the following:
- Family intervention support
- Tenancy support – including help with claiming benefits, accessing services and grants
- Referrals to third party services like Citizens Advice, charities and trusts
- Housing coaches
- Mental health housing-related support for adults and families
- Employment training support - helping tenants to get into training, learning skills and employment. (This is funded through the European Social Fund scheme.)
- The service supports tenants with a wide range of tenancy issues. It also offers family support to those who have multiple needs at a complex level.
- The support's targeted to your needs, with practical help and advice offered.



For more information on the Hardship fund or any other Tenants First services, please contact:

Sharon Laister – Cost of Living Advisor
Telephone: 01226 774270 - 07841514700
Email: sharonlaister@berneslaihomes.co.uk

Amy Spencer - Cost of Living Administrator
Telephone: 01226 772791
Email: amyspencer@berneslaihomes.co.uk