

Your latest rent statement

irwell
valley
homes

Here for
you in your
community

Meet your
neighbourhood
officer

Hello, I'm Paul
your neighbourhood
officer.

I'm your first point of contact for
anything to do with your tenancy or
neighbourhood.

I also carry out neighbourhood
inspections every three months to
check on things in your area – find out
the next dates on our website and get
in touch if you'd like to join me. I'd
love to see you there!

We have listened to feedback and
understand you want to see our
colleagues out and about more in your
community.

See **page 11** for information about our
current community drop-in programme.

We're working with our partners to set up
more opportunities for you to meet with us
in your neighbourhoods – connect with us
on social media @IrwellValleyHomes or
visit our website for the latest updates.

You can get in touch with me via:

- Email to
Paul.Laverick@irwellvalley.co.uk
- A message on Live Chat at **www.
irwellvalley.co.uk**, through our
Customer Portal (*log in or sign up on our
website*) or through social media.
- Phone on **0300 561 1111**.

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This newsletter has been uploaded to our website where you can change
the language, colour or size or have it read aloud. See reverse for more info.

Rent worries?

Reach out to see how we can help

If you're worried about your finances or are struggling to pay your rent, please get in touch as soon as your circumstances change.

We're here to support you, and together we can help you manage your situation and keep your rent account on track.

If you're in arrears it's important to reach out to us so we can talk through your circumstances, see how we can help, and set up a manageable repayment plan. If you're already on a repayment plan, please keep to the schedule we've agreed and get in touch if anything changes so we can see what more we can do.

Our friendly and knowledgeable team can help with:

- £ Applying for financial support from trust funds, hardship funds and charities.
- 👤 Making sure you're receiving all the welfare benefits you're entitled to.
- 💰 Budgeting and managing your bills.
- 🏠 Opening a bank account.
- 🏠 Finding affordable credit options.
- 🏠 Saving energy and reducing your household bills.

We may also be able to help with vouchers for food, fuel, furniture, and other essential household items – depending on your circumstances.

Contact us today and let us help you.

Your Specialist Recovery Officer is Tracey Buckels.

If you need any help or support with your rent account you can contact them through Live Chat on our website; by sending a direct message through our customer portal or on social media @IrwellValleyHomes; by emailing contact@irwellvalley.co.uk or calling 0300 561 1111.

Remember, if you need our support, please reach out to us.



How we helped our customer Lucy with her rent

When Lucy took over her tenancy in Bolton following the death of a relative, she had little experience of what was involved in managing a home and tenancy,

The 23-year-old was receiving Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments but was struggling to stay on top of her bills and manage her money.

Her dad moved in to help, but the pressures continued to mount and her arrears carried on increasing – creating more worry and anxiety.

When our Financial Inclusion Officer stepped in to help, she found that Lucy wasn't claiming all the benefits she was entitled to.

We helped Lucy complete the necessary applications for the housing element of Universal Credit and for Council Tax Support.

She now receives an extra £452 a month through Universal Credit and council tax support which reduced her weekly bill from £32 to just £5.61.

She is now managing the tenancy successfully without the worry of rent arrears hanging over her.

💬 **Thank you for your support, it's been a big help for us. – Lucy's dad.** 💬

**name has been changed.*

What is Council Tax Support?

You could be eligible for a reduction in your Council Tax if you're on a low income or receive benefits.

The amount of discount depends on:

- Where you live - each council runs its own scheme.
- Your circumstances (*for example income, number of children, benefits, residency status*).
- Your household income - this includes savings, pensions and your partner's income.
- If your children live with you.
- If other adults live with you.

For more information search your local council's website.

Why paying your rent is important



As a not-for-profit organisation, the rent you pay to us goes directly towards paying for the services we provide you as your landlord.

- For every **£1** of rent and service charges, here's how we spend it:
- **37p** Repairing and maintaining homes.
- **15p** Neighbourhood management.
- **20p** Finance and loan repayments.
- **17p** Depreciation*.
- **10p** Service costs (*e.g. maintenance of communal areas; grounds work, cleaning*).
- **1p** Future investment.

* Depreciation is the reduction in the value of our assets over time as they get older or as wear and tear occurs.





Here for you in your community

This month we launched our new communities strategy focused on delivering what matters most to you in the neighbourhood where you live.

We gathered feedback from customers in various ways to help us focus on your priorities. We did this through a series of focus groups towards the end of last year, dubbed The Big Customer Conversation.

It focuses on:



Promoting safe and peaceful neighbourhoods.

Including launching a new 'good neighbour' campaign (*read more about our toolkit on the next page*); further training for colleagues to help us improve our service for those affected by domestic abuse; and working with our partners including the local authority and police to tackle hot spots of anti-social behaviour.



How we're working to make your neighbourhood cleaner, greener, and safer through our new communities strategy.



Maintaining clean and green spaces.



Including increasing our estates team and giving them specific areas and buildings to manage; revamping how customers can feedback to us about the standard and performance of the grounds maintenance and communal cleaning services; and developing a calendar of clean-up events across the communities we serve which we'll share with you on our website.

Working with you and our partners to make a difference.



Including launching more localised hubs in core areas and neighbourhood drop-in events across our communities; recruiting new customers to the panel of our Irwell Valley Foundation charitable investment fund (*see page 8 for more information*) to help us prioritise funding where it's needed most; and working with customers to develop a programme of community events and initiatives that people want to see in their areas.

Promoting the importance of being a good neighbour

We've worked with our Customer Communications Group to develop a new Good Neighbour Toolkit – designed to help our customers live well alongside each other.

We want to support and empower people to resolve neighbourly issues early, and to stop them developing into more serious anti-social behaviour.

The toolkit includes tips for managing common sources of tension, as well as guidance on when and how to involve us as your landlord.

You can view the Toolkit on our website www.irwellvalley.co.uk or scan the QR code.



scan me

We'll continue to review and improve our toolkit and would love to hear from anyone who has further feedback about what makes a good neighbour and how we can support people to be considerate neighbours. Get in touch by emailing involve@irwellvalley.co.uk or call 0300 561 1111.

You could be entitled to cheaper broadband!

Did you know that many mobile and broadband providers offer 'social tariffs' for people who receive certain benefits, such as Universal Credit and Pension Credit?

Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages and typically cost between £10 and £20 a month. Some providers call them 'essential' or 'basic' broadband.

These social tariffs work in the same way as any normal package, just at a lower price. To find out more, contact your broadband provider, or visit www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-and-broadband/saving-money/social-tariffs.



If you don't currently have a broadband provider, you could visit your local library or Citizens Advice, where you can access support to help you get connected.



#CostOfLiving





Making a difference in your area

Did you know about the Irwell Valley Foundation? It's our charitable investment fund which provides grant funding for our customers and community groups working in the areas where we have homes.

Last year, we created a Winter Support Fund to help charities and community projects which support local people with the cost of living.

To date, 14 food banks, community pantries and other projects have benefitted from top-up donations to support them over the colder months when demand spikes.

Among them was:

Trinity Food Bank in Radcliffe;
Radcliffe Food Club at The Bridge Church and The Attic Project in Bury.

And Brightmet Community Locker, providing school essentials for families and the Storehouse Pantry and Lend A Hand, who both work across Bolton.



Watch this space for future funding opportunities

Visit www.irwellvalley.co.uk/about-us/irwell-valley-foundation

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Money worries?

Citizen's Advice can help.
Come along and speak
to an adviser for free.

We can help you to be
better off this year. Come
along and get involved!

Trafford Job Club

Every Wednesday • 9:30am - 2pm

Sale West Youth centre.

Get help with your CV, plus support
with applying for jobs and preparing for
interviews.

Sale West Advice Hub

Every Thursday • 10am - 12noon

The Hub, Sale West Community Centre.

A range of support services are on hand
to offer advice and support - from housing
issues to stop smoking support.

Community Information Hub

Monday-Wednesday • 9.30-2pm

The Hub, Sale West Community Centre.

Get advice and support on jobs, skills
and employment, benefit/debt advice
and much more.

Citizens Advice surgery

Every Thursday • 9.30am - 3pm

Sale West Youth centre.

Get expert guidance on debt, managing
your money and benefits.

We are here to help

We know that everyone's circumstances
are different and so we will listen to you
and tailor our support to suit your needs.
We will always offer you confidential and
non-judgemental advice.

**citizens
advice**

☎ 0300 561 1111

✉ contact@irwellvalley.co.uk

📘 [/irwellvalleyhomes](https://www.facebook.com/irwellvalleyhomes)

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Celebrating the 'heart' of our communities

Thank you to everyone who nominated someone in our first ever Heart of the Community awards!



This Valentine's Day we were full of love for our communities as we celebrated our first ever awards recognising the incredible work being done by customers and community groups across the neighbourhoods we serve.



A huge thank you to everyone who took the time and trouble to put a nomination forward.

From good neighbours looking out for those living next door, to community groups and eco-champions doing wonderful things to make their area a great place to live, the entries were awe-inspiring.

Everyone who made a nomination was entered into a prize draw. Rachel, who nominated St Mary's Food Bank in Haughton Green for Community Group of the Year, was our winner taking away £100 in shopping vouchers.

Congratulations to everyone who was nominated and of course to our wonderful winners!

Our winners



Bloomin' Marvellous Award

Roger Snowden, who works tirelessly to keep the Sale West estate clean, green and flowering with nature.



Inspirational Person Award

Rayne Wallwork-Hough, aged 10, whose passion and commitment to keeping his community clean and tidy is an exceptional example to everyone.



Good Neighbour Award

Mehmooda and Iqbal Patel, who care so much about everyone on their Bolton cul-de-sac, and show their love through delicious deliveries of home-cooked food.



Community Champion

Cathy Newton, who leads and inspires a devoted band of volunteers in the Forever Green community group in Haughton Green, organising everything from life-saving defibrillators to Christmas afternoon tea.

Community Group Award

The Castle Community Centre CIC in Patricroft, who have created a welcoming home from home for the people of Eccles, giving them a cosy space and diverse activities programme to enjoy in the heart of their community.



Find out more about what they do and why they were chosen in our film – where you can also see the moment we surprised them with the news they had won! Scan the QR code to watch.

scan me



Meet your Neighbourhood Officer

I'm Paul your Neighbourhood Officer and I'm here for you in your home and community.

I host a monthly drop-in where you can call by to chat in person about your home, tenancy or neighbourhood. There's no need to book, you can just pop in.



My drop-in takes place at...



Sale West Community Centre, Newbury Ave, Sale, M33 4QH



The last Tuesday of the month



11am-2pm

Don't forget I also carry out neighbourhood inspections every three months in your area – the next ones will take place in July and you can see the dates on our website: www.irwellvalley.co.uk/for-customers/your-neighbourhood

If you'd like to join me, just get in touch! After each inspection, I'll issue a community newsletter updating you about what I found and the actions I'm taking as a result. I'll send this by email where possible, or text message if we don't have an email address for you. Please add contact@irwellvalley.co.uk to your list of safe senders so that it doesn't end up in your junk folder.

If you'd like to provide or update an email address, or change the mobile number we have on record for you, you can do this quickly and easily through our customer portal. Visit www.irwellvalley.co.uk/contact-us/customer-portal for more information and to sign up / log in. Alternatively, you can contact us via Live Chat on the website; by email to contact@irwellvalley.co.uk or by calling us on 0300 561 1111.



Meet Jennifer – your new Customer Engagement Lead

We're excited to introduce Jennifer Smith, our customer champion who ensures residents are at the heart of what we do by listening and learning from you.

She's keen to get more customers involved in our work and would love to hear from you if you're interested in using your feedback and experiences to help us shape our homes and services in the future.

We currently have spaces on all of our customer groups including:



Resident Scrutiny Panel

Who take a deep dive into different service areas to review how it works and report their findings and recommendations to our board of management.



Customer Standards Group

Who review and challenge how well our services are performing, including performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.



Building Safety Forum

Made up of customers who live in our high-rise buildings who review how we manage and communicate about important building and fire safety matters.



Irwell Valley Foundation Panel

Made up of customers from across our communities who decide where to issue grants through the charitable investment fund.

Need more flexibility? Join us on an ad-hoc basis

We know a customer group isn't for everyone, so we offer plenty of other ways to get involved or share your feedback.

This includes focus groups about specific issues or projects; our policy review group and our customer communications group who review materials from home and provide feedback remotely; and the grounds maintenance and communal cleaning services feedback surveys.

The 'Rate my gardener' and 'Rate my cleaner' surveys are quick and easy to complete online and can be done as part of your daily routine – like checking the stairwell on your way home or looking at the grassed areas while walking the dog.

You can complete them as little or as often as you like. We'll review the feedback every week and share any issues with our contractors directly, so they can be addressed quickly.

To find out more about the different opportunities available and to access the 'Rate my...' surveys, visit www.irwellvalley.co.uk/for-customers/customer-involvement/get-involved

Our Resident Scrutiny panel meets monthly while the others meet every three months. Expenses are reimbursed and we offer shopping vouchers as a thank you for your time. If you're interested in finding out more, get in touch with Jen for a chat: Jennifer.smith@irwellvalley.co.uk / 0300 561 1111.

Tell us how we can tailor our services to you

We want to provide homes and services that meet your needs.

We know everyone is different and some people may need us to do things a bit differently when we communicate with you or provide services to you in your home.

So that we can do this, we're asking you to let us know about any special circumstances or requirements you or a member of your household might have.

You can do this via the "About Me" section in our customer portal or by contacting us through your Neighbourhood Officer or via our Customer Service Team.

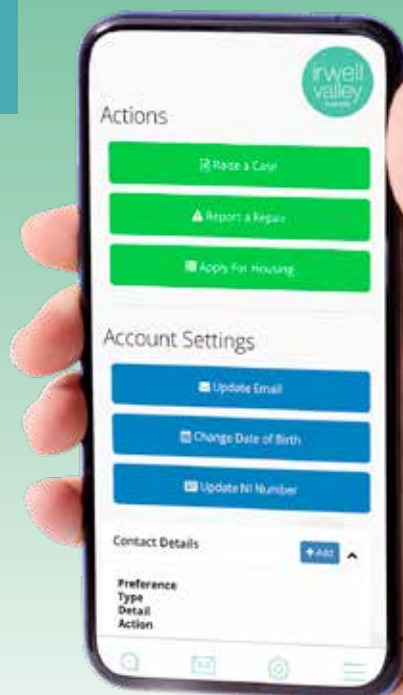
The information you share will be stored securely and in line with General Data Protection Regulations. We'll only use the information to help us deliver a more personal and effective service for you.



Congratulations to customers Susan from Walkden and Lisa from Bury who updated us with their details via our latest survey earlier this year and walked away with a £250 shopping voucher in our prize draw.

Don't have a portal account? Here's how to get one!

Along with updating the details we hold about you, our online portal is a one-stop-shop for managing your home and tenancy – from checking your rent account and raising non-emergency repairs, to keeping track of the information we send to you and contacting our team.



Access neighbourhood services & report ASB

Order and manage your repairs

Check your rent account & make payments

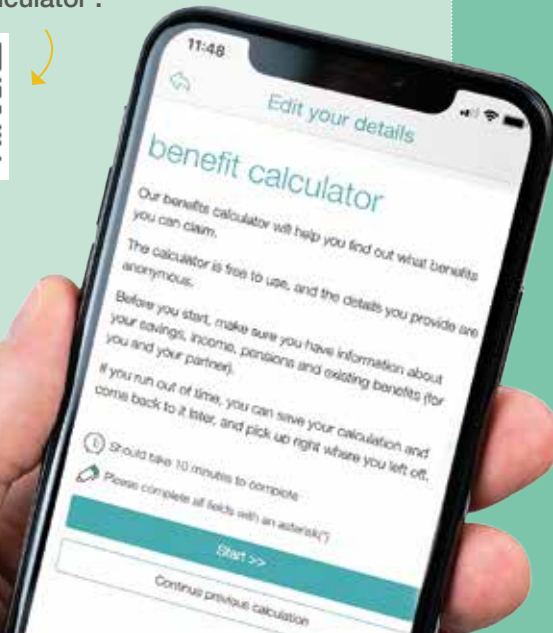
Update your personal details any time

If you'd like to set up an account and join the thousands of other customers already benefitting from this 24/7 service, visit our website:
www.irwellvalley.co.uk/contact-us/customer-portal.

Check you're receiving everything you're entitled to

Our easy-to-use benefits calculator takes just 10 minutes to do a quick financial check – searching for benefits, grants and other support you or your family may be entitled to.

Scan the QR code or search our website for 'benefits calculator'.



If you're struggling to cover your household bills, it's worth checking you're receiving all the benefits you're entitled to.

Last year
we helped our
customers to access
£502,656
in extra income.



#CostOfLiving

Protect your personal belongings with home contents insurance

We take out insurance to cover the structure of your home, but customers are responsible for ensuring they have contents insurance. This ensures personal belongings are covered against damage and theft and provides peace of mind that your possessions are protected.

The My Home contents insurance is a specialist policy for tenants living in social housing. Provided by Thistle Tenant Risks and Great Lakes Insurance UK Limited, it protects household goods and contents – including furniture, electrical items, carpets, clothing, jewellery and ornaments – against specific events, for example fire, theft or burst pipes.

It also covers replacement of external locks if keys are lost or stolen and the contents of the fridge and freezer in the event of a breakdown.

You can also use price comparison sites like **Money Supermarket** and **Compare the Market** to research packages and prices available from other insurance companies.

An update about our repairs service



We're pleased that our repairs service continues to improve, with increased satisfaction rates on the surveys we issue after each job and customers waiting less time for repairs to be fixed.

Our team of tradespeople has now moved to work together in an area-based team which we hope will lead to more improvements going forward.

The service will be more responsive and efficient by reducing travel time between jobs and will also help our colleagues to build up a better knowledge of our homes in their area. We hope it will also enhance relationships between our colleagues and our customers.

Your Homes Team Manager is **Alan Taylor**

Your Repairs Supervisor is **Rob Broaders**

They are joined in this area team by a skilled team of plumbers, roofers, electricians, joiners, labourers and inspectors who are here to manage the repairs we are responsible for in your home.



We know our repairs service is a top priority for you, just as providing safe and well-maintained homes is a top priority for us.



Did you know?

We've produced a series of how-to videos which can help with some of the common issues you might experience which come under your responsibility as the tenant.

From low pressure on your boiler to bleeding your radiators or checking your electrics, scan the QR codes to watch and find out more.

scan me



For a recap on who is responsible for what in your home, search our website for a handy chart or scan the QR code.

scan me





Your safety is our top priority

We're committed to providing safe homes for our customers where they can live with peace of mind.

An important part of this is the programme of inspections we carry out in your home.

Every year we attend to complete a gas safety check of pipework, appliances and flues that we provide and issue you with a gas safety certificate. Where customers live in high rise buildings, we also complete a check of flat front doors every year to ensure they meet fire safety standards. Every five years, we carry out electrical testing in your home.

It is really important to allow our teams access when they attend at your home for these reasons, as highlighted in our tenancy agreement with you. Not only does it help to keep you and your loved ones safe, completing the inspection on the first visit also saves time and resources. As a not-for-profit housing provider, this is also really important.

To help us budget and plan for future improvements work needed in our homes, we sometimes also instruct companies to carry out surveys on our behalf. We really appreciate customers who allow access to their homes to do this, as it helps us to prioritise what work needs doing and when.

Enjoy the summer safely!

To read our summer health and safety update offering information and advice for staying safe at home during warmer weather, visit our website www.irwellvalley.co.uk/media/meem1wz/summer-2024-building-safety-update-general-needs.pdf.

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Making our communications more accessible



This newsletter has been uploaded to our website www.irwellvalley.co.uk where you can use our accessibility tool to read.

The tool will allow you to translate into your preferred language; increase / decrease the font; change the font type and spacing; change the colour contrast or have the content read aloud.



Click on the icon to open the tool and select what you need.

If you need us to communicate or provide services in a particular way, please let us know. Email contact@irwellvalley.co.uk, call us on **0300 561 1111** or discuss with your Neighbourhood Officer.

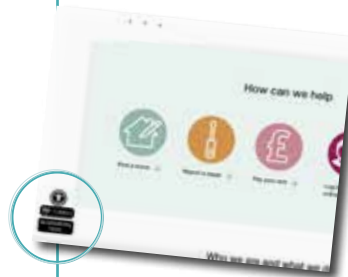
To jest Twoje ostatnie zestawienie czynszu i biuletyn z Irwell Valley Homes. Zeskanuj kod QR, aby przeczytać go w języku polskim, korzystając z narzędzia ułatwień dostępu na naszej stronie internetowej.

Irwell Valley Homes هذا هو أحدث بيان إيجار ورسالة إخبارية من امسح رمز الاستجابة السريعة ضوئياً لقراءته باللغة العربية. باستخدام أداة الوصول الموجودة على موقعنا.

Irwell Valley Homes این آخرین بیانیة اجاره و خبرنامه شما از را اسکن کنید تا با استفاده از ابزار دسترسی در وب QR است. کد سایت ما، آن را به فارسی بخوانید.

ઇરવેલ વેલી હોમ્સ તરફથી આ તમારું નવીનતમ ભાડું નિવેદન અને ચૂકવેલ છે. અમારી વેબસાઇટ પર સુલભતા સાધનનો ઉપયોગ કરીને તેને ગુજરાતીમાં વાંચવા માટે QR કોડ સ્કેન કરો.

Irwell Valley Homes کا نیوز ہ آپ کا تازہ ترین کرایہ کا بیان اور لیٹر ہے۔ ہماری ویب سائٹ پر ایکسیسیبیلٹی ٹول کا استعمال کرتے ہوئے QR کو اسکرین کریں۔



1

Click the Accessibility Tools icon in the bottom left hand corner on our website to turn this feature on.

2

You can use our new accessibility tool to translate, change the font, magnify, adjust the colour contrast and more.

