



whg
Round
YOUR
Way
Winter 2023

Your winter wrapped up

Page 4

8

In your area

Discover what's on near you

12

Focus on fly-tipping

How we are cleaning up your neighbourhoods

18

How did we do?

Find out in our annual report

Welcome to Round Your Way

- 4 Winter special:** Read our tips for a warmer home, make your own easy draught excluder and feed the family with our recipe for turkey leftovers.
- 8 In your area:** Events and activities near you.
- 10 Your stories:** Meet Samantha, who's crochet-bombing Walsall to make people smile.
- 11 You said, we did:** How we acted on your feedback.
- 12 Focus on fly-tipping:** Find out how we are cleaning up your neighbourhoods.
- 14 Ask whg:** We answer your antisocial behaviour questions.
- 16 Working together for a greener planet:** Take our quick quiz and test your knowledge.



Count how many of these snowflakes are hidden inside this issue (**including this one**) and you could win a £100 voucher. See the back cover.



- 17 Discover:** The New Art Gallery, Walsall.
- 18 Our annual reports:** Find out how well we are doing.
- 22 Get involved:** Introducing our online customer community – the loop.
- 24 Competition:** Enter to be in with a chance of winning a £100 voucher.



You can keep up to date with all our news on Facebook.



Our Christmas closing times

Friday 22 December 2023
closed from 5pm

Saturday 23 December 2023 to Monday 1 January 2024
closed

Tuesday 2 January 2024
open from 9am

Manage your home online, even when we are closed at whg.uk.com

Book a repair

Use our live booking system and get your appointment in the diary

Pay your rent

Keep on top of payments in our platform

New! Set up a direct debit

Regular rent payments made easy



Stay safe and warm this season



1) Make sure your boiler is in good shape

We test your boiler every year as part of your annual gas safety check. If your appointment's due, make sure you're home for it, or rearrange it by ringing us on **0300 555 6666**.

2) Check you have home contents insurance

Make sure your home contents insurance covers winter-related damage. You can find out about our home contents insurance scheme by ringing **0300 555 6666**.

3) Look out for damp and mould

Damp and mould can appear in winter. This could be due to condensation, but it could also be due to leaking pipes or broken guttering. It's important you let us know if you spot any signs of damp or mould in your home so we can work together to manage or eliminate issues.



Wipe out damp and mould

Scan here to watch our tips



4) Get help with your heating costs

Warmer Homes West Midlands offers free and impartial advice on your household energy and could save you money. You can give them a call on **0808 1968298**.

You can also talk to our money and bills team at whg.uk.com



Scan here to talk to the wellbeing team



5) Speak to our health and wellbeing team

If you have children and are struggling this winter, our ACE project could help. Our health and wellbeing team work with eligible households to provide warm coats and shoes for children as part of a package of support.

You can contact them at whg.uk.com

6) Be fire safe

During the winter the potential for a fire increases. It's really important to check your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working.

If you live in a flat, your entrance door will be a fire door which helps stop the spread of fire and smoke. Please keep fire doors closed and do not remove the closing mechanism. Report any faults or damage to doors immediately to us.



7) Take care with electrics

Overloading plugs is dangerous at any time of year, but at Christmas there is often a lot more plugged in than is safe – don't be tempted to overload your sockets!

Electric bikes or e-scooters should not be charged overnight or unattended due to the fire risks of lithium-ion batteries. Ideally charge them outside.



Make your own draught excluder out of clothes headed for the bin

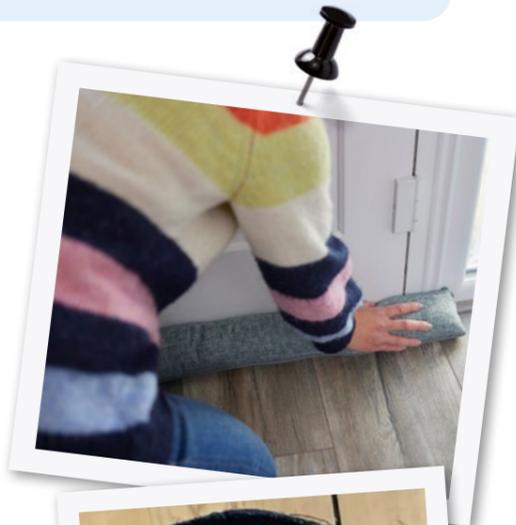
You will need:

- A rectangle of leftover material, at least 30cm wide and just longer than the width of the door
- Needle and thread or iron-on hemming tape
- Stuffing – old jumpers, t-shirts, socks or other fabric
- Sewing pins
- Iron and ironing board
- Any decorations – buttons, ribbons



How to make your draught excluder

- 1 Measure your material – it needs to be about 4cm longer than the width of your door. Cut off any excess length.
- 2 Iron the material flat.
- 3 Fold the material in half along the long edge so any pattern is on the inside and pin together along the long edge and one of the short edges.
- 4 Sew together along the pinned edges, or use iron-on hemming tape to fuse the pinned edges together.
- 5 Turn it inside out through the open end.
- 6 Stuff your tube with your unwanted fabric, leaving enough space to sew up the open end.
- 7 Sew up the open end.
- 8 Add any decoration – Claude here has a beret made from an old shoulder pad, some sewn-on eyes and a little ribbon scarf.



Leftover turkey pasta bake

Makes 6 portions
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 40 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tsp tomato purée
- 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 400g leftover roast turkey (or other meat), shredded
- 400g dried pasta
- 125g of grated cheese
- Any other leftover vegetables

Method

- Heat the oil in a pan over a low to medium heat and fry the onion until golden-brown. Stir in the garlic and tomato purée and cook for another 1-2 mins.
- Add the chopped tomatoes and oregano and bring to a simmer. Partially cover the pan with a lid and cook for 15-20 mins. Add the turkey and any other cooked meat.
- Cook the pasta. Drain, keeping behind a mugful of the pasta water.
- Combine the pasta with the sauce, adding some of the pasta water if it's too thick. Transfer to a baking dish, add in any other leftovers, and scatter the cheese on top.
- Heat the grill to high and cook for 8-10 mins until the cheese is bubbling and golden.



What's on?



Telford Christmas Market

Southwater, Telford TF3 4EJ.

On until 23 December 2023

Explore the beautifully decorated traditional wooden cabins selling gifts and edible treats from the market's range of independent traders.

Stafford Walking Street Music and Food Festival

Market Square/town centre, Stafford ST16 2BE.

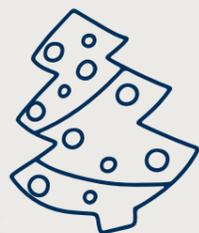
14 December 4pm to 9pm

Mini music and food festival.

Worcester Cathedral Christmas Tree festival

8 College Yard, Worcester WR1 2LA.

On until Sunday 14 January 2024 (excluding Christmas Eve and Christmas Day), during normal visiting hours.



Find out what's happening in your community by signing up to **WMNow** for updates about crime, safety advice and road closures. www.wmnow.co.uk



Christmas Craft Fair

Forge Mill Needle Museum, Needle Mill Lane, Riverside, Redditch B98 8HY.

10 December 11am to 3pm

Step back in time and celebrate a traditional Victorian Christmas.

Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas Market

Victoria Square, Birmingham, Birmingham B3 3AA.

On until 24 December 2023

Enjoy the largest authentic German Christmas market outside of Germany or Austria. City centre, Birmingham.

Walking trails

Have fun exploring Birmingham, spotting things you've never noticed before, with two quirky heritage walks in a treasure hunt style. Enjoy a safe, fun and affordable way to experience the fresh air.

Go to curiousabout.co.uk or scan the QR code below:



You said, we did



Glazing repairs

You said: Window and glazing repairs were taking longer than you would like.

We did: Following your feedback, we bought additional specialist equipment. This means more of our colleagues can work on these repairs, reducing waiting times and making your home more energy efficient.



Moving home

You said: Sometimes things aren't quite right when you move in.

We did: We are improving our welcome form so your Community Housing Officer can pick any issues up sooner and arrange for them to be resolved. This will make moving into your new home easier and more pleasant.

Making a complaint

We aim to provide high-quality services to all our customers but recognise that sometimes things do not go as well as we might want.

If this happens, it is important that you tell us so we can make changes and put things right.

- You can find out about our complaints procedure by visiting our website at www.whg.uk.com and typing "complaints procedure" into the search bar.

Don't miss our call! You can also tell us what you think by taking part in our Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey when we contact you.



"I'm crochet-bombing Walsall to make people smile"

Customer crocheter Samantha is raising a smile across the Midlands thanks to her amazing crafting skills.

The 35 year old has crocheted more than 1,000 tiny creatures which she leaves dotted around Walsall and Birmingham for people to find.

Over the last five years she has hidden fluffy bumble bees, Pokemon characters and flowers around the region.

Samantha taught herself to crochet six years ago by following YouTube tutorials. She decided to start leaving her creations around her area to cheer up her neighbours and spread a bit of kindness.

She said: "I just wanted to do something nice and it's spread from there. It's so lovely to think that I might brighten up someone's

day. I even decorate my shopping trolley with crochet and that always gets a lot of comments from people saying how it has cheered them up."

And Samantha has no plans to stop.

"I just love it," Samantha added. "Not only am I improving other people's wellbeing it's also helping me and my mental health."



If you have a story to tell let us know at RYW.Magazine@whgrp.co.uk and you could be in our next edition.





Keeping your area clean and safe

Dumping unwanted rubbish in the wrong place is a crime. We've joined forces with the local council to target hotspots and investigate crime scenes so we can take action against offenders.

Here are some examples of what we've been up:

We cordoned off an area of dumped waste in Leyland Croft, Pelsall, where furniture and other household items cost us **£1,500** to remove. The offenders were identified and recharged for the cost of removing the waste.



We cleared up dumped rubbish left in and around 12 sheds at Wordsworth Rd, Willenhall. The whole clean up cost us **£10,000** – money that could have been spent on providing services for you. We also blocked up the sheds to stop this happening again.



After sectioning an area off with crime scene tape at Farmbridge Close near Bentley, the rubbish was removed by the fly-tippers.



Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of items



Fly-tipping is dumping waste anywhere it shouldn't be:

- A bag of rubbish left by a bin
- Furniture or toys left outside for someone to collect
- Stuff you need to get rid of left in a communal area
- Items left next to full recycling banks
- Fridges or mattresses dumped on the street
- Donations left outside a closed charity shop



Check your bin dates over Christmas – visit your local council's website to find out more



Log in to your account to report fly-tipping



We are targeting fly-tipping in your area and are doing all we can to keep your neighbourhood clean, safe and tidy. If you spot anyone dumping litter or fly-tipping, we will need as much information as possible to help us prosecute the offenders. You can report it to us online at whg.uk.com

Your ASB questions answered

Antisocial behaviour (ASB) is when someone's behaviour makes you feel harassed, frightened or distressed.



Dear whg,

My next-door neighbour has parties every weekend, where he plays loud music until the early hours of the morning and the next day the communal spaces are full of rubbish. I barely get any sleep, and his rubbish makes the area look dirty. I hate to be a party pooper but I need help.

Thanks, Kamal

Hi Kamal,

If you feel comfortable in doing so, you could have a polite conversation with your neighbour so they are aware of how the situation is making you feel. We find this approach works most of the time.

If you are not comfortable speaking to them, or if you have already tried this, your Community Housing Officer (CHO) can investigate your complaint. They may ask you to record the noise. They would also investigate the rubbish issue for you.

Dear whg,

I used to be good friends with my neighbour, but recently she's started being verbally abusive towards me and other neighbours. She bangs on our windows and the other day she threw a stone at me before threatening to harm my daughter. This has all started very unexpectedly, and I feel scared in my own home, what should I do?

Regards, Aaliyah

Hi Aaliyah,

I'm sorry to hear about this. The first step is to report this to the police because your neighbour has assaulted you, caused criminal damage and made threats of violence.

You should also report this to us, and we will investigate the matter.

There may be a reason for your neighbour's sudden change in behaviour, so we will work with other agencies to see if your neighbour requires any help and support.

Dear whg,

There is a dog on my road who barks all hours of the day. When the owner takes him out, he never picks up his poo and it has made the alley by my home very unpleasant. I often see the dog running around without a lead on and snarling at people in the communal garden. I'm anxious that he might bite someone. Can you help me?

Thanks, Meera

Hi Meera,

All our tenants have a responsibility to keep their dog under control. Your CHO can talk to the owner about the noise and remind them to keep their dog on a lead in all the communal areas and to pick up after their dog.

Dear whg,

I'm really concerned about the couple who live above me. I often hear crying and arguing and the other day I heard loud thuds. I don't want to overstep any boundaries, but I think my neighbour is being abused by their partner and I want to help.

Yours, Paul

Hi Paul,

I'm glad you got in touch; this could be serious. Domestic abuse is a criminal act and should always be reported to police on 999, as soon as possible.

You should also report incidents like this to us, as we can provide the person affected with confidential and sensitive signposting and advice. We can work with partners and specialist services such as Women's Aid to get them further support.

You can report non-urgent ASB to us on 0300 555 6666.

If you believe a crime is being committed, or you have been threatened or assaulted report it to the police immediately. In an emergency call 999 or for non-emergencies call 101.



The carbon footprint quiz



Scan the code to calculate your carbon footprint:



From going shopping to using your phone, nearly everything you do releases carbon dioxide into the air, which contributes to pollution and climate change. This is called your **carbon footprint**.

It is very difficult to have no carbon footprint at all but there are things we can all do to reduce our carbon footprint. Take our quiz to find out what small changes you can make.

Which do you think creates a bigger carbon footprint?

- 1 1kg of bananas **or** 1kg of tomatoes grown in the UK
- 2 1kg cheddar **or** an average pair of shoes
- 3 Washing clothes at 60 degrees and line drying **or** a generously filled bath
- 4 2kg of red meat **or** a week's vegan food shopping



To find out more about our sustainability work you can read our Sustainability Report at www.whg.uk.com/sustainability

This article has been written using the 'How Bad Are Bananas' Carbon Footprint Game cards: bananasgame.co.uk/

Bath – Taking a bath produces almost three times as much carbon as washing your clothes because of the amount of water that needs to be heated up. Switching to showers can reduce your carbon footprint AND your bills.
Red meat – Red meat has a massive carbon footprint. Substituting beef for soya, pork, chicken or fish once a week, can make a huge difference to the environment.

Tomatoes – Eating in-season reduces carbon emissions massively. Swap to tinned tomatoes during colder seasons, or buy varieties from nearby warm countries, like Spain, rather than those grown locally using artificial heat.
Cheddar – Surprisingly, cheddar contains more carbon than an average pair of shoes! Buy cheese with resealable packaging and a longer use-by date. Or try cream cheese, which uses less milk.

Answers



Discover the New Art Gallery Walsall



Sunday Art Club: Pine Cone Creatures
Sunday 10 December 2023
 12-3pm. Ages 4+. Free, drop-in
 A weekly art club for children and young people



Baby & Me:
Wednesday 13 December 2023
 10.30am-12pm & 12.30-2pm £3 per child
 Multi-sensory for 0-24 month olds, parents and carers



Wednesdays For All:
Wax resist and watercolour
Wednesday 3 January 2024
 11am-4pm. Ages 4+. Free, drop-in
 A fun, creative workshop for all the family



Thursday Skills:
Basic Hand Stitching
Thursday 4 January 2024
 Age 4+, 11am-12.30pm and
 Age 7+ 1.30-3pm. £4.50 per child
 Learn new techniques in a mix of mediums and take away a masterpiece



Photo credit Jack Spicer Adams



Explore the gallery's full programme by visiting www.thenewartgallerywalsall.org.uk or scan the QR code. Sessions run throughout the year.



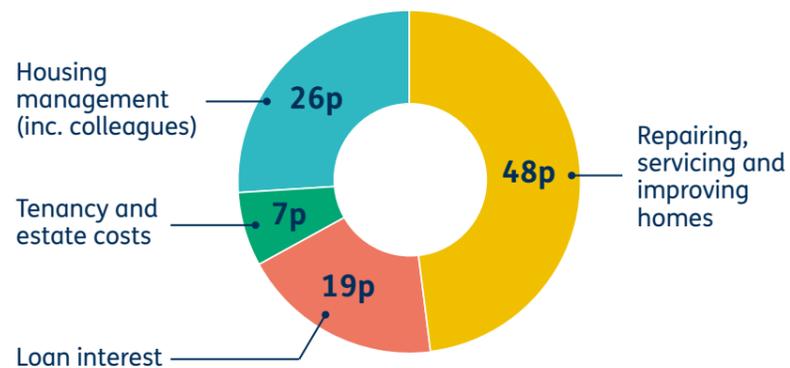


Annual report 2022/23

Our annual report explains how well we delivered our services, how our performance compares with other landlords and our future plans to improve.

Spending and investment

How each £1 of your rent was spent



Improving homes	Routine repairs	Planned maintenance	Major works
£50.5m	£12.5m	£18.3m	£19.7m
(2021/22: £53.2m)	(2021/22: £12m)	(2021/22: £16.2m)	(2021/22: £24.9m)

As a non-profit business, we spend your rent on improving homes, running our housing services and supporting our communities and neighbourhoods.

The largest portion of your rent was spent on **repairing, servicing and improving homes**.



Putting safety first

Gas compliance 100% <small>(2021/22: 100%)</small>	Asbestos checks 100% <small>(2021/22: 100%)</small>	Electrical compliance 100% <small>(2021/22: 100%)</small>
Lift checks 100% <small>(2021/22: 100%)</small>	Water checks 100% <small>(2021/22: 100%)</small>	Fire checks 100% <small>(2021/22: 99%)</small>

We carry out **regular checks** to our homes to ensure they are safe. We do this according to the standards set by the government.

It's **vital for the safety of your family and neighbours** to make sure someone is home to let us in for your scheduled appointment.

Keeping your area clean and safe

Customers satisfied that whg makes a positive contribution to where they live 49.7% <small>(2021/22: no data)</small>	Number of ASB incidents reported 773 <small>(38 per 1,000 homes)</small> 2021/22: 1164 (57)
--	---

Our neighbourhoods team support the smooth running of your building, local area and more, ensuring they are well-maintained and fit for purpose.

We work closely with local councils and the police to tackle fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. We have added a new **online reporting tool** for fly-tipping so you can easily tell us about issues in your area.

We have also **invested an additional £1m** into improving our CCTV network to help keep communities safe.

Keeping homes in good repair

Repair appts. kept 94% <small>(2021/22: 91%)</small>	Customers satisfied with repairs service 84% <small>(2021/22: 78%)</small>
---	---

Average time for repair 29 days <small>(2021/22: 23 days)</small>	Repairs within timescale 64% <small>(2021/22: 96.83%)</small>	Homes meeting Decent Homes Standard 100% <small>(2021/22: 100%)</small>
--	--	--

The percentage of customers **satisfied with the repairs service increased by 6%** from last year. This data was gathered with our new repairs satisfaction survey which is helping us to improve, alongside an additional **£1.6m investment** into the service.

While all repair appointments were attended, the 6% 'not kept' were attended earlier or later than planned.

Having your say

whg listens and acts upon views 61% <small>(2021/22: 71%)</small>	Customers satisfied with services 62% <small>(2021/22: 78%)</small>
Customers who would recommend whg 74% <small>(2021/22: 80%)</small>	Satisfied that their rent provides value for money 84% <small>(2021/22: 84%)</small>

We are creating more ways for our customers to get involved in what we do, and have their say on how we do it.

We have launched **the loop**, our new customer voice platform, which gives you more opportunities to tell us what you think.

You can find out more about the loop on page 22.



Putting things right

Expressions of dissatisfaction 1,298 (63 per 1,000 homes) 2021/22: 2,446 (120)	Formal complaints 345 (17 per 1,000 homes) 2021/22: 265 (13)
--	--

If you aren't happy with our services we want to know, so we can put this right and make sure it doesn't happen again.

We have simplified our complaints process to make it **quicker and easier** for you to come to us with any problems. You can find our full complaints procedure on our website.



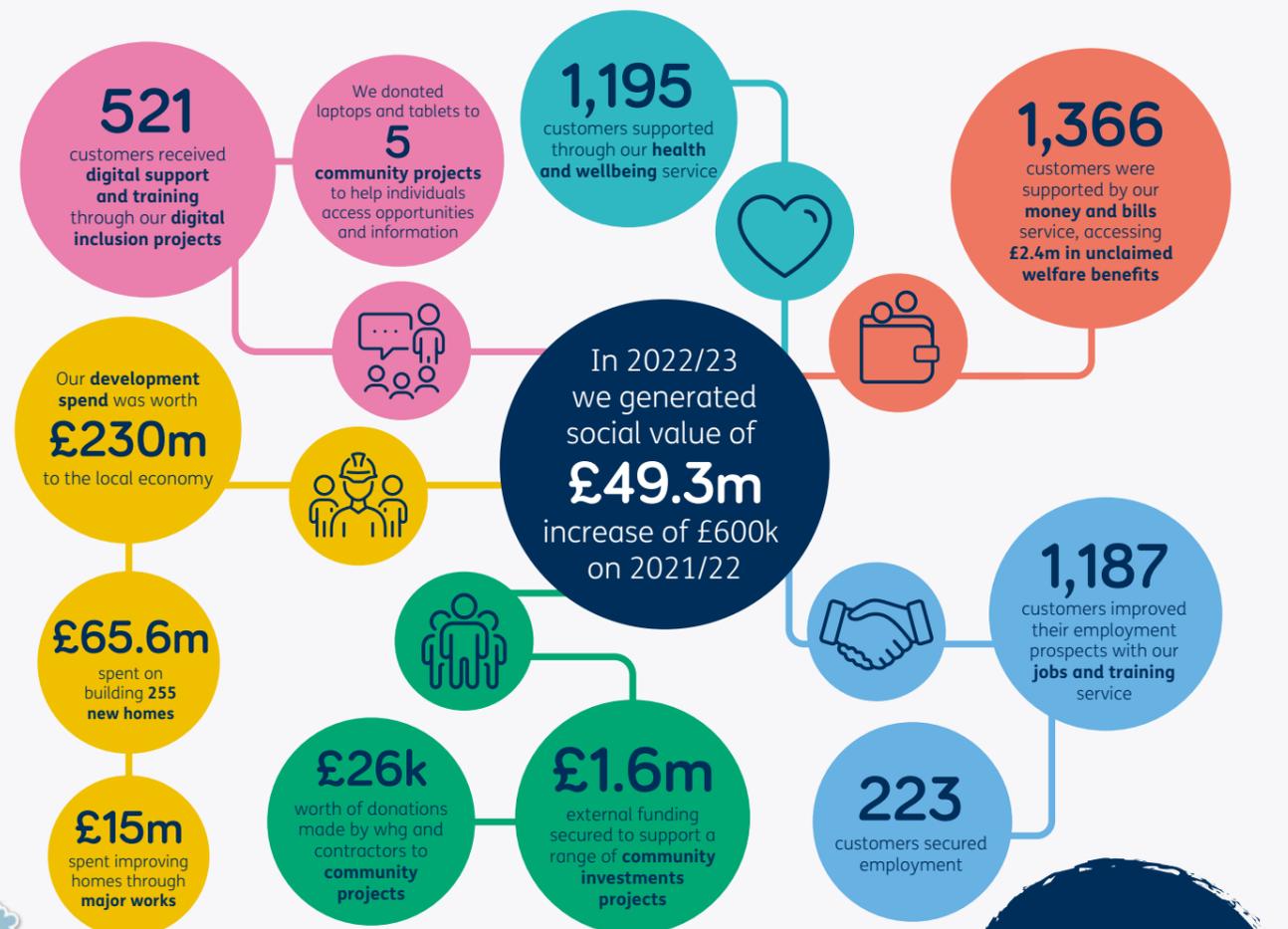
Getting the best value for money

We want to make sure your rent is spent appropriately; it's about getting the most out of every £1.

We aim to:

- 1 **Spend less** to minimise our costs while continuing to deliver quality homes and services to our customers.
- 2 **Spend well** to stretch our resources as far as possible without compromising quality.
- 3 **Spend wisely** to achieve what we say we will.
- 4 **Spend fairly** and be open and accountable about our spending decisions ensuring we use our resources to reduce inequality in our communities.

Social Value report 2022/23



Social value is the additional value that we create in our communities.



Get involved



Stay in *the loop* with our new online community...

the loop is your new online customer community, where you can get involved in what we do.

Share your ideas with us, take part in projects that interest you, hear what we do with your feedback and be the first to learn about new opportunities to have your say.



Sign up before **15 December 2023** to be entered into our competition to win a tablet.

Scan here to stay in the loop



To access *the loop* simply sign in or sign up to manage your home online at whg.uk.com

Cut here

Second fold



First fold

Freepost RUCU-GZUG-ZUJE
whg
Round Your Way
100 Hatherton Street
Walsall
WS1 1AB



Third fold & tuck in

Model call

How would you like to see your face on the front of a magazine? Or feature in one of our upcoming short videos?

We are looking for customers to feature in some of our campaigns. If you would like to be added to our database of volunteers please let us know.

Simply send us your name, contact details, area where you live and any other family members that could be photographed with you – whether that's a partner, child or even a pet!
Email RYW.Magazine@whgrp.co.uk



Just for fun

Win £100 in shopping vouchers

How many snowflakes can you find?

Dotted through this magazine we have hidden lots of these snowflakes! Count them up and you could win a prize (**don't forget this one**).



For your chance to win, return this form for free by cutting this page out, following the instructions on the back and popping it in the postbox.

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

Contact email: _____

I give my permission to be contacted by phone about sharing my views on whg Yes No

I give my permission to be contacted by email about sharing my views on whg Yes No

Please see how we process your personal data by reading our privacy notice whg.uk.com/privacy-policy

If you wish to withdraw consent you can do so by contacting customervoice@whgrp.co.uk

To be in with a chance of winning £100 in shopping vouchers

How many snowflakes are hidden in this issue of *Round Your Way*? _____

Get your entry in before the deadline of 12 January 2024.

Congratulations to Michelle

who correctly counted 45 bees in our last edition of *Round Your Way*.



What these logos mean for you
We're keeping it greener. It's a responsibility we take seriously, so our print partner uses paper from responsibly managed forests and the emissions from the paper and printing have been offset too. Nice!

whg.uk.com