

A week in the life...of a housing officer

As lockdown continues, Dean Vinter, a Housing Officer for Broadacres Housing Association talks us through his week.

Monday

I cover an area where we have around 700 homes so normally on a Monday there is a very good chance you will find me on our estates, talking to residents about any issues they may have and making general observations.

Lockdown means this is no longer possible, but it is still important to me to keep in contact with our residents, so I spend a great deal of time currently on the phone or responding to emails.

I received a complaint that one of our residents were playing their music too loudly. Normally I would visit the resident in question to remind them of their responsibilities and nine times out of ten, this would be resolved. On this occasion, I mentioned it to the police who then visited the resident and subsequently the music stopped, so this is a good example of how we work in partnership with other agencies.

Tuesday

I live near one of Broadacres extra care schemes so each lunchtime I pop in for an hour to support staff working there. Given it is mainly older people living in these schemes, to protect them we have reduced access to the scheme, closed all communal areas and restaurant facilities and asked residents to stay in their rooms wherever possible.

So, at lunchtime, wearing the appropriate PPE, I help to deliver meals to the residents in their rooms, as well as ensuring they have the everything they need, such as basic essentials such as bread, milk and fruit and that any prescriptions they may need are being picked up and delivered.

Wednesday

Due to the current climate, we have suspended general new tenancy handovers, but we are still doing emergency sign-ups and, on this day, I was required to undertake one in my area. This was to help an individual who had been made homeless. We had a property ready to move into, so whilst observing the required social distancing I met the resident at the property



to handover the property and then left them with the keys whilst they waited for the gas to be reconnected to the home.

Welcoming residents to one of our homes is one of the best parts of my job but even though this particular handover had to be carried out a little differently, it was still nice to walk away knowing we had helped to take someone off the street.

Thursday

After helping with lunches at the extra care scheme again, I spent time providing some companionship, again at a safe distance, with one of the oldest residents, a 93-year-old man. He loves to talk, and I was fascinated to hear his take on the current situation and how this compared to another difficult time in the nation's history, namely World War Two. He was a child during the War and had the attitude that once you have been something like that, then anything else is a piece of cake.

I found the chat very inspirational and came away feeling a lot better about things in general. Perhaps it takes someone like that to put everything into perspective.

Friday

Friday is my day off. I have been doing a history degree over the last 3 years and am about to complete it. Prior to lockdown I attended lectures at university on Fridays, but since the Covid-19 crisis, these are now being carried out online. I have just completed my dissertation and my last essay, so it is fair to say I have put my free lockdown time to good use. My week doesn't end there, though because on Sundays, I have still been going in to the extra care scheme to help out at lunchtimes.

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