

# Customer Newsletter

December 2025

## Welcome

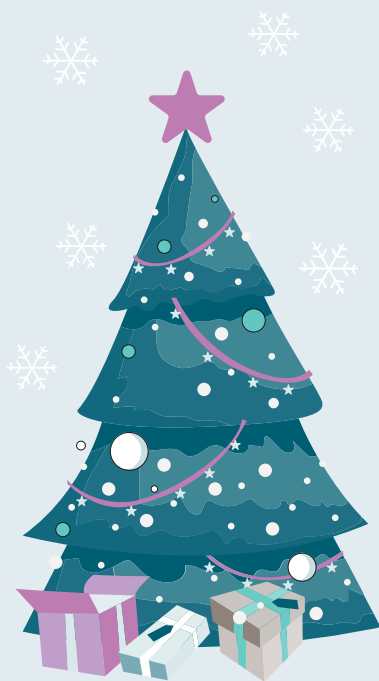
Welcome to the last edition of our Newsletter for 2025. Thanks to everyone who has been involved this year across the amazing activities that have taken place.

- In this newsletter you can find:
- All our Christmas Activities
- An update on our Windows and Doors programme
- Topcliffe Skills Hub launch
- 30 years of regeneration on Castle

Plus much more.



# A Festive Feeling



December is here, and we're proud to share some of the amazing things happening across Castle Vale this season.

This year, we brought back our Christmas Take a Tag initiative, which was a huge success last year. Our aim is to make sure those in our community who need support most receive gifts during what can be a challenging time of year. We're thrilled with the response and a huge thank you to everyone who took part! This year we had over 250 presents donated to us by individuals and local businesses.

Alongside Take a Tag, we've continued with our Christmas Hampers. Thanks to generous funding from Nationwide, we've been able to ensure that families in need have enough food this Christmas. On Thursday 18th December, the team went out and delivered the Christmas Presents and Food Hampers to 70 homes across Castle Vale.

We were also delighted to launch our Christmas Tree again this year! A big thank you to M&BG for donating the tree and to Nationwide Windows and Doors for providing the lights. The switch-on event started at 5pm and featured the Pioneer Choir, delicious doughnuts and hot chocolate, and even a visit from Santa. We were proud to host the lantern parade too, it was a great festive evening for everyone involved.

Once the festive period is over, we'll remove the tree and work with our partners to create something more permanent in the park.

We've worked hard with our partners to share as much information as possible about Christmas events across Castle Vale. If you have feedback or ideas for next year, we'd love to hear from you.



## Windows and Doors Social Value

In 2024, we signed a contract with Nationwide Windows and Doors to deliver an ambitious project: fitting 2,500 homes with brand-new windows and doors.

We're pleased to report that 90% of the work is now complete! Here's where things stand:



### What's next?

We're working hard to complete the remaining homes as soon as possible. Our focus is on securing asbestos reports and resolving access issues quickly.

### Tenant Satisfaction

We're thrilled to share that 98% of customers are satisfied with the programme!

### Feedback highlights:

Excellent pre- and post-installation support

Professional, friendly teams from Pioneer and Nationwide Windows & Doors

A key part of this contract was ensuring social value investment back into Castle Vale and Nationwide has delivered. Here are some highlights:

#### The Sanctuary

A brand-new sensory room with floor projections, soft play, lighting, and other sensory features. They also added soundproofing to the main hall and replaced aging windows.



#### Castle Vale Community Festival

Nationwide funded activity stands, first aiders, toilets, and the Colour Run at our August festival.



#### Castle Vale Stadium

New dugouts for the second pitch and brand-new changing rooms were provided through social value funding.



#### Youngstars

Nationwide contributed to new flooring, making the space fresh and welcoming.



## Damp & Mould

Winter can bring challenges like damp and mould. In October, Awaab's Law came into effect, holding landlords accountable for fixing these issues quickly. Our process was already robust, but here's what you need to know:

### 1 Why Does Damp Happen?

Moisture builds up when it can't dry out properly often from cooking, showering, or drying clothes indoors. It can also come from leaks or blocked gutters. When trapped, it leads to damp and mould.

### 2 Simple Steps to Prevent It

- Ventilate your home – Open windows slightly, use extractor fans, and keep doors closed when cooking or showering.
- Reduce moisture indoors – Dry clothes outside or near an open window, put lids on pans, and add cold water before hot when running a bath (cuts condensation by up to 90%).
- Wipe condensation – Regularly check windows and surfaces.

### 3 Removing Mould

Small patches can be cleaned with a mould remover kit just follow instructions carefully. If mould keeps coming back, report it to us immediately.



## Topcliffe Skills Hub Success

Since opening in September, the Skills Hub at Topcliffe House has gone from strength to strength. It's a space where our Employment Support team helps the community build confidence and learn new skills through courses and activities.

### Community-Led Learning

Every course is shaped by what our community needs most. We work closely with BMet and Birmingham Adult Education to make this happen.

One recent highlight was a session on using AI confidently, led by AI strategist Michael Ramsay. Michael shared practical tips on how AI can help in everyday life and made learning fun with an interactive quiz. The session was a huge success, and we're planning more workshops to show how AI can support jobseekers.

### Fantastic Engagement

The Skills Hub has already welcomed nearly 200 people in just two months whether attending a course, getting one-to-one support, or joining weekly activities. That's an incredible achievement!

## 30 years since Castle Vale's Regeneration

A couple of weeks ago, you might have heard BBC Birmingham were back to visit Castle Vale. On 17th December we featured on BBC Midlands Today as well as a fantastic article reflecting on 30 years of regeneration in our community.

The piece tells the story of Castle Vale's remarkable transformation in the 1990s, when Castle Vale Housing Action Trust (HAT) led the regeneration. Their Board played a vital role in shaping decisions that rebuilt homes, schools and community spaces.

One of those voices was Sue Spicer, a Castle Vale resident who moved to the estate in the 1960s. Sue served on the HAT Board and now sits on our own Board. Speaking to BBC Birmingham, she shared how much the community means to her, saying if she won the lottery, she wouldn't move.

*"I'd spend the money on everyone else. I just love the people."*

Today, the regeneration's legacy lives on as we continue working with partners and residents to keep Castle Vale thriving.

Next year will be a milestone as we celebrate 30 years since Castle Vale's regeneration. BBC Birmingham's article shines a spotlight on the incredible progress we've made, and how we're committed to keeping that momentum going. To see the article scan the QR code below:



### Job Club – Every Wednesday

One of our most popular activities is Job Club, held every Wednesday. It's a place for jobseekers to:

- Build CVs
- Get tailored advice from our team
- Search for opportunities
- Connect with others in similar situations

We're proud that several jobseekers have already found work after using the Hub's services, and many more feel more confident about their next steps.

### By the Numbers

Job Club attendances:	Course registrations:	AI session attendance:	Age range:
142 (including 46 Castle Vale residents)	39 (18 Castle Vale residents)	16	16-67

### Popular courses:

- English with Social Media – BAES
- Handling Life Changes – BMet
- Parenting Skills for Adults – BMet
- Living Life to the Full – The Pioneer Group
- Creative Writing – BAES
- Learn My Way (Beginner Digital Skills) – The Pioneer Group
- Computer Skills (Improvers) – BAES

### What's Next?

We're consulting with the community to find out what courses you'd like to see. Digital skills and confidence-building sessions will continue, and we're planning more vocational training with partners like the BAN Network. We're also working to strengthen links with local employers.

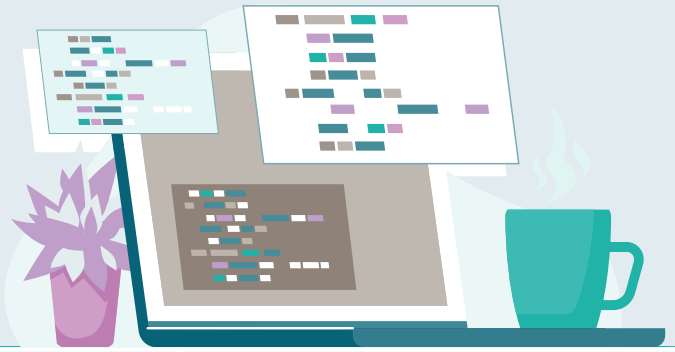


## *We're launching a new website*

Coming Spring 2026, we'll unveil a brand-new website designed to be easier to use and navigate. We've already taken feedback from our Customer Scrutiny Panel and made improvements based on your suggestions.

Get in touch by emailing:

[marketing@pioneergroup.org.uk](mailto:marketing@pioneergroup.org.uk)



## *A December round up*

