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## **An avalanche of calls is no match for dedicated Herefordshire Housing colleagues**

Freezing temperatures and heavy snowfall brought out fighting spirit among Herefordshire Housing colleagues who have shown their grit for the benefit of customers.

Teams worked to handle the surge in calls and repair requests, prompted by the cold snap. The sudden and prolonged drop in temperature caused boilers to break down, ice to render communal areas impassable and water to freeze and burst pipes.

8,600 calls were made to Herefordshire Housing's out-of-hours service over one weekend, compared to the normal level of around 650 calls received during normal weather conditions.

The housing association's out-of-hours service is manned by trained and professional operators who work within Herefordshire Housing's Careline service, which provides 24 hour assistance to people across the country at the touch of a button.

Simon Herdsfield, Careline Operations Manager said "We were inundated with emergency calls from customers who had problems because of the extreme weather. Colleagues in the Centre did a fantastic job answering the calls and passing on emergency jobs to trades colleagues. These calls were in addition to those from our Careline customers."

Calls to the Repairs Contact Centre within normal working hours also rose sharply. Colleagues in the centre logged 675 repairs in a week and 355 of those were emergencies. During the same period last year 498 repairs were logged and only 122 were emergencies.

Handling the surge in repairs was made possible thanks to our gas engineers, plumbers, grounds maintenance and other trades colleagues working additional hours to help residents. As well as fixing heating systems and repairing pipes, teams also gritted communal areas and cleared paths. Emergency heaters were also distributed to vulnerable customers.

“Our dedicated colleagues have met the challenges brought about by the bad weather. They’ve shown fantastic team work, dedication and customer focus during difficult conditions. I’m proud to see colleagues going that extra mile for our customers.

“I would also like to thank our customers, who were incredibly patient in the challenging circumstances and were only reporting genuine emergencies, which meant that we were able to get to those in need as quickly as possible.”  
Paula Kennedy, Director of Customer Services.

**Notes to editors:**

Herefordshire Careline is a nationally recognised community alarm service. The service has over 26,000 connections across the country, which provides an invaluable lifeline to people. The 24 hour Personal Emergency response service is connected to residents’ homes through an alarm unit linked to their telephone line.

The Careline Service is one of the leading providers in the country and has an excellent reputation.