

Talk

Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants

Winter 2018 Issue 2



Fire safety in high-rise buildings

Residents living in buildings with six or more storeys have already received advice on fire safety in high-rise buildings. Further information can also be found on the Royal Borough's website.

The Council has brought forward its programme of electrical safety inspections. These have begun and will be rolled out as part of a five year programme for all high-rise blocks starting with the highest. The Council is committed to reviewing fire safety on an on-going basis as the safety of its residents is our greatest priority.

Residents are reminded that it is vitally important that they allow staff access to carry out these safety inspections which will cover wiring and smoke alarms. Visit:

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/firesafetyFAQ

***“Keeping our estates and neighbourhoods clean and tidy is vital for the quality of life and well-being of our residents.*”**



This is why we have created the Royal Borough of Greenwich Caretaking Service Charter. The Charter sets out the responsibilities of our staff and how you can do your bit to help care for where you live.

We are so determined to further drive up standards that we are inviting the best judges we possibly can to inspect our work. In August a group of tenants from the Royal Borough took part in the first of these special caretaking inspections and their findings will play a key role in our work to make improvements.

Over the winter months it is even more important that people feel warm and safe in their homes. This is why we have decided to bring forward our programme of electrical checks and why we are reminding tenants of our annual gas checks.

Anti-social behaviour by a few can impact heavily on many people's quality of life and so it is vital that residents report any incidents so we can take action. I am really proud of the great team-work between residents and staff which has successfully tackled unacceptable behaviour as reported in this issue of Talk Housing.

It is really important that we work hand-in-hand with all our residents to ensure Royal Greenwich continues to be a wonderful place to live. I look forward to meeting you at the next round of Better Together meetings in January and February.”

Councillor Averil Lekau
Cabinet Member for Housing
and Anti-Poverty

Talk Housing

Anti-social behaviour - report it



Anti-social behaviour by a minority can ruin the peace and harmony of a community and have a devastating impact on people's lives.

This is why we encourage residents to report any unacceptable behaviour in their neighbourhoods to Royal Greenwich Tenancy Services. Evidence given by residents has played a major role in recent successful actions to tackle serious anti-social behaviour.

The Council works alongside other agencies to resolve issues and can offer support to both victims and perpetrators. As a last resort

action can be taken to evict tenants or leaseholders who persist with behaving in ways which cause distress to others.

Tenancy Services have worked with residents of Barnfield and Woolwich Common Estates, along with the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team and Caretaking Service, to serve closure orders on two addresses. Both tenants were allowing their homes to be used for drug taking and gang activity which had a serious impact on the other residents in their block.

The orders gave residents three months' break from the behaviour which was blighting their lives. This was later extended by another three months.

Similar action led to the closure order for a home in Charlton where the tenant and his visitors were frequently seen drunk in communal areas shouting and arguing.

Contact your Tenancy Enforcement Team on: **020 8921 6371** or email: **central-neighbourhood-office@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**

Gas checks: Be safe this winter

Once a year, for safety reasons, the Council checks all the gas appliances, flues and fittings provided for our tenants.

We would like to remind tenants that they must let staff into their homes to carry out these checks under the terms of their tenancy agreements. The Council has

a legal duty to carry out this inspection work and can take legal action if required to get access to fulfil its duty.

Letters will be sent to tenants with appointment dates for the checks shortly before they are due. Appointments can be rearranged but must be within a year of the

Room going to waste or need more space?

Moving is easy with House Exchange

Come along to our event in January to find out how the House Exchange Scheme and the Council's Under-Occupation Scheme can help you find a suitable home within Greenwich or elsewhere. The event is taking place on 25 January 2018 in rooms 4, 5 & 6 at Woolwich Town Hall, Wellington Street, SE18 6PW. Feel free to drop in between 10am and 4pm to find out more. Lift access available.

Rent can be paid via a payment card at 110 outlets across the Royal Borough. A card can be requested by calling **020 892 4147**.

Payment can also be made by Direct Debit which can be set up at **www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housingchargesdirectdebit** or by calling **020 8921 3201**.

For support call **020 8854 8888** or email **rent-account-enquiries@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**

Tenants can request repairs to their home and communal areas while leaseholders can request repairs to shared areas by visiting: **www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/repairs**

If urgent call **020 8921 8900** or **020 8854 8888** during out-of-office hours.

last check. Anyone sent to work on gas appliances will be Gas Safe registered and carry identification with them.

Call **0800 317 715** to rearrange a visit.

Call Transco on **0800 111 999** to report a gas leak but for other problems call **020 8921 8900**

Tenants start caretaking inspections – get involved!



Caretaking standards in the Royal Borough now face the most important judges of all – the residents.

Tours for tenants to grade standards of our caretaking work have now begun. The Council has also launched a Caretaking Service Charter as part of its work to further improve the service.

Tenants who took part in the first inspection of caretaking work on estates chose the places they wanted to visit and kept the places earmarked a secret. On the

inspection day the residents awarded scores using the Council's A-D grading system and made comments. All information was fed back to the Council to help work on on-going improvements.

The Charter has been created to give you information on how the Estate Caretaking Service works to keep estates clean.

It highlights what the caretakers are responsible for as well as the responsibilities of residents. The Charter also flags up the many other roles caretakers do from supporting vulnerable residents, reporting anti-social behaviour and

liaising with building contractors.

To view the Charter visit www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/caretakingcharter

If you have any suggestions or enquiries about the caretaking service or if you would like to meet your Caretaking Supervisor email housing-caretaking@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

To take part in the next training session for tenant inspectors contact participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Do you have damp in your home?

If you report damp, condensation and mould, the Council's Damp Team can give tips on how to reduce the problem and they can visit you in your home if you need help.

Mould can increase over the winter months and so the Council suggests:

- Heat homes to recommended temperatures of 21 degrees for living areas and 18 degrees in other rooms, as when the temperature cools water vapour in the air condenses on walls and ceilings encouraging mould growth.
- Contain moisture by closing kitchen and bathroom doors and keep windows slightly open in these rooms to help disperse the moisture outside.
- Ventilate rooms by opening windows slightly for short periods when not using the heating.

For help or advice call:

020 8921 4141

or email:

AMDampTeam@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

Need a hand – contact a handyman

The Greenwich Handyman Service offers to carry out a wide range of essential jobs for residents at affordable rates.

The workers are directly employed by the Council and will carry identification. They will always wear the Handyman uniform and provide a friendly and professional service.

The jobs they can undertake include:

- minor plumbing, electrical and carpentry jobs
- hanging or taking down curtains or blinds
- putting up shelves
- replacing toilet seats
- setting central heating programmes
- bleeding radiators
- cleaning out gutters.

Estimates for the work can be

given over the phone or in writing and invoices for payments are sent once the job is completed satisfactorily. Some jobs can be carried out free of charge if you are over 60, disabled or receive an income related benefit. To contact the service email handyperson@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or phone **020 8921 2614.**

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/handyman



Have your say

Read on for five different ways to get involved

1. All residents are invited to share their views and influence key decisions in the areas they live at a new series of Better Together meetings in 2018.

Four meetings across the Royal Borough will give local people a chance to talk to their ward councillors and key Council staff. The meetings feature informal drop in surgeries about Council services and discussion groups. Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Housing & Anti-Poverty, is to give presentations on the Royal Borough's Housing and Tackling Poverty strategies at the events. For more information visit www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/bettertogether email better-together@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or phone 020 8921 5588.

Area	Venue	Date
Eltham and Shooters Hill	Eltham Hill School, Eltham Hill	Tuesday 30 January 2018
Blackheath and Greenwich	The Forum at Greenwich, Trafalgar Road SE10 9EQ	Tuesday 6 January 2018
Charlton and Woolwich	Woolwich Town Hall, Wellington Street. SE18 6PW	Thursday 8 February 2018
Abbey Wood, Plumstead and Thamesmead	St Paul's Church Bentham Road	Thursday 13 February 2018

All meetings will be from **7pm** until **8.45pm** with surgeries from **6.15pm**.

2. Join your Local Housing Panel – vacancies for tenants and leaseholders

The Council holds Local Housing Panel meetings four times a year. They are chaired by tenants with a Councillor taking the role of vice chair. We are currently seeking tenants and leaseholders to join the panels as local representatives. Your role would be to attend the panel meetings, to ensure local concerns are raised and accurately reported, as well as giving feedback on the services you receive. The meetings are a great opportunity for residents to work with the Council to improve the area they live in.

No experience is necessary as full support and training is available. For more information contact participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
To check meeting dates visit www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/meetings

3. Service Charters for repairs and major works

We are also looking for residents interested in giving their input into the charters we are drawing up for the work we carry out in the homes of our residents. For more information email

Tenant-Contact-Data@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

4. Online Reading and Communications Group

If you are interested in giving your feedback on Council publications email

Tenant-Contact-Data@royalgreenwich.gov.uk
to join the Online Reading and Communications Group.

5. Keep updated by email

For weekly news updates on issues relevant to tenants and leaseholders visit www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/ealerts and tick the 'Housing and council tenants' box.



Remember you can pay your housing charges online using a debit or credit card at www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk

You can also check your housing charges and account on line. To register for this service go to www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housingselfserviceguide