

Talk Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 9 of the Talk Housing newsletter. We have packed the newsletter with information for our tenants and leaseholders and hope that you find it enjoyable to read. We would love to have your feedback and ideas for future editions.

Please email
community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

AUTUMN 2019 ISSUE 9



Transforming housing repairs

Inside

2. Celebrating Black History Month 4. A day in the life of the repairs team 6. Save electricity to earn rewards

 @royal_greenwich  royalgreenwich

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing


ROYAL borough of
GREENWICH



Five minutes with Kojo

Kojo Sarpong, Head of the Housing Inclusion and Support Service, speaks to Talk Housing about the support available.

How does the housing inclusion and support service work?

The service is split into three parts. There's housing inclusion which works with residents to prevent and assess homelessness. Then we have disability home improvement and housing procurement teams who adapt homes for people with disabilities and source private homes for residents. Finally, our allocations and temporary accommodation function, is where we allocate homes to people on our housing register and find temporary accommodation for people who are homeless.

What are you doing about homelessness and rough sleeping?

We work with specialist agencies and have a Street Pop Project that identifies rough sleepers to help them recover from homelessness. Our support ranges from helping them get accommodation to helping them access health services. We've also got some grant funding from central government to help continue our work in this area.

What if we see someone rough sleeping in the area?

If you spot someone rough sleeping call StreetLink on **0300 500 0914** – they help rough sleepers connect with our services.

What homelessness prevention support is available for council tenants and leaseholders?

If you contact us, there are a number of options and interventions we can explore to help support you and prevent homelessness. We can advise on how to get help with employment or you could get referred for a discretionary housing payment to help pay your rent and clear arrears, amongst other things. For more information or advice contact

housing-inclusion@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

Talk in Brief

1 We're bidding to become the London Borough of Culture in 2021 – so let us know what you'd like to see and do across the 12 months, visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/culture-2021**.

Volunteer to become a mystery shopper! You can help check the quality of the services we provide and receive vouchers for your time. For more info and to apply email **community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**. **2**

3 Get involved with the Music Space Woolwich Choir at Clockhouse Community Centre! This will take place on Mondays at 11am. Visit **www.musicinspacewoolwich.com** for more info.

Visit the GLLaB bus! Come and visit if you're looking for work, training or apprenticeship opportunities. It takes place on the first Tuesday of every month and it's free. For more, visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/gllab-bus**. **4**



5 If you're a member of the LGBTQ+ community, we are holding a focus group on 17 October. We would like to hear your views as part of an ongoing programme, to ensure all our residents feel supported by housing services. Email **community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk** to register and find out more info.



Carbon Monoxide and Gas Safety Checks

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly gas that can be produced if gas appliances such as cookers, gas boilers and gas fires, are not working properly. It can also be present in things such as boiler flues.



You can't taste it, or smell it, but it can be deadly within a few minutes.

How can I make sure that the gas appliances in my home are safe?

Our gas team will contact you every year to carry out a safety inspection. Engineers will carry out this check, to make sure the appliances are working safely.

When you receive a letter from us with an appointment, please contact us immediately. You can contact our team on **0800 317 715** or by email, **gas-section@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**.

What if I'm a leaseholder?

We would not normally carry out any safety inspections to gas appliances. Get your gas appliance serviced and checked every year by a qualified, Gas Safe engineer.

Do I have a carbon monoxide detector fitted?

Our gas team install a battery powered unit which has a seven-year life. The alarm has a 'test' button on it, and we recommend that you test the alarm weekly to check it's working properly.



Celebrating Black History Month

October is Black History Month, and it's celebrated every year to recognise and appreciate our diverse communities, the role models that are inspiring the next generation, and the rich heritage that has shaped the borough.

People from all different walks of life live in Royal Greenwich and it's important that we see and hear stories that reflect this diversity.

You can join the celebration of stories from the past, present and future of Greenwich residents at our free Black History Month event on Wednesday 9 October at the Woolwich Town Hall, SE18 6PW, 7pm.

There are lots of other events happening throughout the borough this month celebrating black and minority ethnic history, for event listings visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/blackhistorymonth**.

As we're bidding to be London Borough of Culture 2021, help us create a buzz around culture in the borough by posting photos, videos and comments on social media from any of the events you attend using the hashtags **#MyLocalCulture** and **#GrinforGreenwich**.

Brexit - what do you need to know?

There's still a lot of uncertainty around Brexit and whether the UK is definitely leaving on 31 October, or if the leaving date will be delayed. However, we're working with a number of partners, including the NHS and emergency services, to minimise the impact of a possible no-deal Brexit.

If you are a non-UK EU citizen who wants to continue to live in the UK after 30 June 2021, you can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. Find out more about applying for the EU settlement scheme at **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/brexit**.



A day in the life of the repairs team

Our typical day is

7.30 am – 4.30 pm

The thing we like most about our job is

the finished product.

Especially when we've completed all the repairs

in a vacant property and it's ready for new residents to make it a home.

Or we've

completed some work in a tenant's home and you see the lovely look on their faces when they see the work we've done. And of course, all the banter we have with our team!

Or we've completed some work in a tenant's home and you see the lovely look on their faces when they see the work we've done. And of course, all the banter we have with our team!

Our typical morning starts with us collecting the materials we will be using for the day, and then heading to

the property we are working on.

Every day we do a variety of repairs jobs from plastering, painting, carpentry, plumbing, to collecting waste and taking it to the tip. It's nice to do different jobs every day.

We're really proud of the work we do and it's important to us that when we close the door on a finished property, the repairs work we have done is always of a high standard.

It can be frustrating when we're on our way to complete a job and there's so much traffic!

Sometimes we have to bring more than one van to a job, but we will always avoid blocking any roads – it's just that some big jobs require a lot of materials!

For more information about building work, repairs and improvements, visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/repairs.



Improving the service

You said that you prefer when our services are delivered and completed by our own staff rather than external contractors.

And you also mentioned things we need to do better:

- It's not always easy to get through when we ring
- Appointments aren't always kept and too many are missed
- More appointments are needed

We are improving the service based on your feedback and are working to offer more appointments and get more jobs right, the first time round.

We hope to make these changes by the end of 2019.



Our 2018-2019 performance

Here's a reminder of our targets and performance over the last year.

Target 90%

94% of urgent repairs were completed by the target time.

Target 95%

93% of our appointments for responsive repairs have been kept.

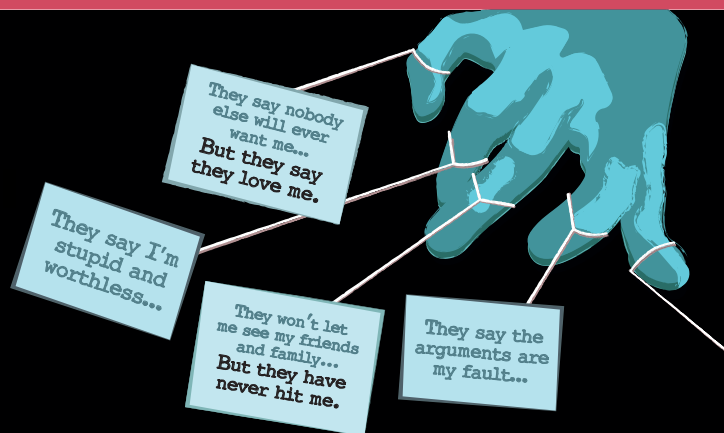
Target 90%

88% of non urgent repairs have been completed on time.



Talk Housing

You have a right to live free from violence and abuse



Domestic abuse isn't always physical and many people don't recognise that coercive control is also abuse. Coercive control takes away someone's independence and controls their everyday behaviour. This could be isolating somebody from friends and family, manipulating them, monitoring their social media or controlling their money.

Coercive control was made a criminal offence in 2015, carrying a maximum five-year prison sentence, a fine or both.

Help and support is available. If you are experiencing abuse or want to help someone you care about who may be in this situation, please contact the Greenwich Domestic Violence and Abuse Helpline on **020 8317 8273** (Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 8 pm), or visit **www.gdva.org.uk**.

Your Tenancy Enforcement Officer can also provide support and connect you with the help you need. In an emergency always call **999**.

Investigating fraud

We have a statutory duty to investigate allegations of fraud, corruption and bribery to protect the public funds we ad-minister and we are committed to tackling fraud and corruption.

We will share personal information held across the Council, where appropriate, with other public bodies and fraud prevention agencies to prevent fraud and money-laundering and to verify your identity.

If fraud is detected, you could be refused certain Council services, finance, or employment. Further details of how your information will be used by us and fraud prevention agencies, and your data protection rights, can be found at **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/privacynotice**.

If you think someone is committing fraud against the Council, please call **0800 169 6975** or email **fraud@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**. All information will be treated in confidence.



Are you dedicated to dance, fanatical about film, hungry for history? Or do you want to share something about your own heritage or culture?



We're bidding to become the **London Borough of Culture in 2021** – a fantastic opportunity to win funding to host a year-long celebration of our borough and everyone who lives and works in it. We need your help to win the crown. Find out more and back the bid at **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/boroughofculture**

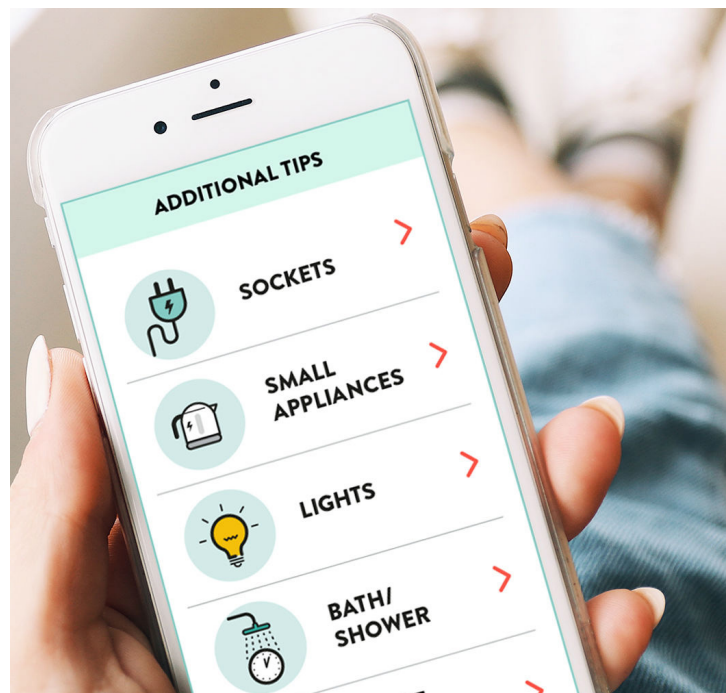
? **The big question:** How do I get support as a carer?



Many carers do not self-identify as a carer, and may not be aware of the support they can access. If you think this could be you, the Greenwich Carers Centre provides a wide range of support to unpaid carers across the borough, which includes emotional and practical support, breaks, activities, social events and more. We also have dedicated support officers who provide individually tailored support.

Get in touch by email, info@greenwichcarerscentre.org or call **0208 102 9649**. You can also visit us to speak to a member of the team at the Stables, **Greenwich Carers Centre, 76 Hornfair road** (next door to Charlton House), **Charlton, London SE7 7BD**. Got a big question? Send it to community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

If you need general info on social care, health, wellbeing or advice services in the borough, visit the free directory www.greenwichcommunitydirectory.org.uk or call **0800 470 4831** for help on how to use the directory. Got a big question? Send it to community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.



Save electricity to earn rewards!

Greenwich Energy Hero is a new trial helping residents use less electricity, earn rewards and is paving the way to a greener energy market. The app provides live electricity usage data, and will ask users to reduce the usage of non-essential electrical appliances for 1-3 hours, until an alternative time, once or twice a month. The app also offers energy saving tips, indicates which appliances are using the most electricity, and displays a leader board so residents can see how well they are doing in the borough. Visit to sign up greenwichenergyhero.org.

London Fire Brigade home visit

Book a free home safety visit with the London Fire Brigade to keep your home safe from fire.

They can help you prevent accidents, give advice on high risk rooms and activities and keep you safe from fire in your home.

Call **0800 028 4428** to arrange a visit or email: smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk or text on **07860 021319**.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT - Get The Right Support

WELFARE RIGHTS SERVICE –

advice on benefits, challenging decisions, check you need to claim UC **0208 921 6375** Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays 10am-1pm.

WELFARE RIGHTS SERVICE –

help with UC up to first payment Woolwich Jobcentre 10am 3pm, **0800 144 8444**, www.citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim

ROYAL GREENWICH UNIVERSAL SUPPORT TEAM –

help with difficulties with UC, payments, deductions, budgeting, online account **0208 921 3333** 10am-4pm, universal-support@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

UC RENT VERIFICATION TEAM –

council tenants only – advice on UC, rent payments, and support **020 8921 3129** 9am-5pm, universal-credit-rent@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Gain a recognised qualification!

Would you like to expand your skills and gain more of an understanding into housing? Would you like to enhance your CV? Phoenix training may be for you! The Community Participation Team will be funding training qualifications for two council tenants or leaseholders who must be YourVIEW members. Please see below a short statement from one of our previous attendees.

The nine-week course developed my understanding of what social housing is and how it works. All that was required was a keen interest to get more involved with the community. The course, focused on the history of social housing, asset management, housing finance, models of governance and more. I would encourage anyone thinking of following this course to go for it. I have also secured a job within Greenwich Council in one of the Housing Teams.

Anon, 2019

For more info email the community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or phone **020 8921 5149**

Previous Winner



Congratulations to Mrs Nixon for winning the last wordsearch prize!

Enter to get the chance to win supermarket vouchers!

The words from the last wordsearch were:

Activities	Recycle
Together	Brigade
Susan	Barnfield
Target	Flytipping
Pet	Downsizing

There are 10 words in the wordsearch. The clue is that these are standard 'tools' used for repairs! Email the 10 words to YourVIEW email YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

Tear out the back page with your full name, contact number or email and return it to the Participation Team at the Woolwich Centre by 30 November 2019.

J I O V D K X Z P N V S D S S
W K Y W N Z N T O T N R C G W
G V L A O I N B M G V R J R V
D D E H R U H H F E E N P S W
D U S Z E L T V S W H L M Y A
U F I G S I O O D H I S A L S
H G H I Y A B R H E L D L L K
J E C I V N I A R R G N C I C
Z A J S P V I S S O E I E R A
Z A E A E E N Y Z B K M F D H
K U N R X H N K A N D J M S G
W K I O K W D C C E M S E A E
P E X E T J B O I V E R O R H
D W Y X D T O P G L T D R J L