

# Talk Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

## WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 12 of the Talk Housing newsletter. We have packed the newsletter with information for our tenants and leaseholders including an update from services during lockdown. We hope you enjoy it and if you have any feedback or ideas for future editions we would love to hear them.

Please email  
[community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

SUMMER 2020 ISSUE 12



### Living through lockdown

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[www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing)

  
ROYAL borough of  
GREENWICH

## Introducing your new Cabinet Member for Housing: Cllr Anthony Okereke



I wanted to introduce myself to you as the new Cabinet Member for Housing, I am responsible for building new council homes and ensuring that Royal Greenwich is a great place to live for our tenants and leaseholders. Since stepping into this role, I have launched a digital listening campaign hosting a series of online meetings with

tenants and leaseholders, as I want to hear about your experiences of housing and the housing service in Royal Greenwich. To get involved please email [YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk).

As the world has been battling with the impacts of COVID-19, as a council we've been focusing our efforts on keeping our community safe and delivering essential council services in the process. From the onset of the lockdown, we knew that with all the issues our residents would be facing, we needed to make sure essential repairs wouldn't be one of their worries. The essential repairs service has been running 24/7.



We've freed up hospital beds for the NHS, by ensuring a sheltered housing scheme was up and running and could be used for hospital discharges. And we've been supporting residents who are discharged from hospital, so they can move back into their homes safely and are comfortable. In these times more than ever it

is important that NHS hospital beds are made available for those who need them.

We established the Royal Greenwich Community Hub, which continues to be a key source of support for people who are most in need. Through the hub, we've been delivering food boxes and prescriptions to people who were self-isolating, offering mental wellbeing support and befriending - you can read more about this on page 4.



Without a doubt, this has been a difficult time, but we have also seen communities unite together, thousands of Royal Greenwich residents have volunteered to support neighbours, friends, loved ones and people who are vulnerable, at a time where support is most needed. The community spirit in Royal Greenwich has been astounding. We are truly in this *together*, and that's how we will get through these hard times, together.

**Cllr Anthony Okereke,**  
**Cabinet Member for Housing**

# YOUR VIEW

The need for social distancing has restricted how we engage with you, so we're hosting a series of virtual events with Cllr Okereke, where you can

share your views on housing services. To get involved, email [YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk). If you need any support to get set up - please email us. To receive our monthly update calendar, sign up to [YourVIEW](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview) at [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview).

## Rent advice during the pandemic

We understand that the COVID-19 crisis has created financial difficulty for many people.

We want to do all that we can to support you, so if you are unable to pay your rent, please contact us immediately to discuss your situation and we will work with you to address any issues.

You can email **rent-account-enquiries** [royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:royalgreenwich.gov.uk) to explain your situation and we will get back to you. You can also telephone **0208 854 8888** and ask to speak to your Income Officer.

If you are currently experiencing financial difficulties, we can renegotiate *payment* plans and help you claim financial support and benefits that you may be entitled to.

If your income has been reduced, you may be entitled to Universal Credit and/or other benefits. This may include help with your rent payments. If you think you are entitled to any support, take action straight away.

## Benefits advice and hardship support

If you need advice on your benefits entitlement, support to manage your claim or to complete an application, contact our Welfare Rights and Universal Support Team on **020 8921 3333** (Monday – Friday, 10am – 4pm) or visit [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefitsupport](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefitsupport).

The team is experiencing a very high volume of queries and will get back to you as soon as possible. If asked, please leave a message and they will get back to you.

Employment and financial support can also be found at: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) and [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk).



## A pledge for equality across Royal Greenwich

COVID-19 has further highlighted the inequalities faced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, as there has been a disproportionately high number of BAME deaths from coronavirus. And in the midst of the pandemic, the world witnessed the appalling murder of George Floyd, which is another stark reminder that racism and inequality still exists. Over the last year, we have been working with the Runnymede Trust to understand and address racial inequalities, prejudice and discrimination within our communities. There is no place for racism or any form of discrimination in Royal Greenwich, and we are wholeheartedly committed to ensuring that our borough is fair, inclusive and safe for all of our residents. If you experience a hate crime or incident (refer to the backpage for more), please report this to the police and your tenancy officer. The diversity in Royal Greenwich is one of our greatest strengths and to make sure this is a place where everyone can succeed and prosper, no matter your background, we are developing an Equality and Equity charter. Find out more at [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/equalitycharter](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/equalitycharter).

## Community Hub is a lifeline for residents

We launched the **Community Hub** to support residents during the **COVID-19** pandemic and thousands of volunteers came forward to offer support to vulnerable people who are most in need during this time.

We have had an incredible response with over 1000 residents volunteering their time. They're helping with everything from food shopping and dog walking, to delivering prescriptions and calling people for a chat to help with loneliness.

Olayinka, who lives in Abbey Wood with his wife and two children, became a volunteer with the Community Hub after being furloughed from his job as a Business Development Manager. He said:



*"I wanted to give back to the community and knew that vulnerable people would need help. My main volunteer tasks are to pick up and deliver prescriptions from the pharmacy and picking up and delivering people's shopping."*

*"This has been a sobering experience. I remember my first task with the hub was to help an elderly lady in Thamesmead who needed her prescription medication but hadn't been able to leave the house due to the pandemic. When I delivered her medication she was teary-eyed and so grateful."*

Paul, who works at the Council, has been redeployed to help with the Community Hub, said:

*"I have been struck by the volunteers' willingness to get involved and give up their time to help others. Collectively they have exemplified the very best of human nature. They are truly a force for good and serve as a timely reminder of what a community can be and what it can achieve."*

Trudy from Plumstead has been in regular contact with our Community Hub to make sure her auntie Jackie was getting the essential support she needs to get through the pandemic safely. Trudy said:



*"The Royal Borough of Greenwich Community Hub has been fantastic! My auntie has learning disabilities and without them she would have gone out as she doesn't understand rules. She's also undergoing treatment for cancer and the Community Hub has been a lifeline. I know my auntie is safe."*

Chandip from Woolwich has also been able to access support and said:

*"The whole experience with the Community Hub was very positive and the staff were really helpful."*

Ian has been self-isolating and said that the Community Hub has been "incredibly helpful" in getting him all the essentials he needed.

To request support or find out more about the Community Hub, visit [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/communityhub](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/communityhub).



## Looking after yourself

Taking care of your mind and body is especially important right now. It's normal to experience feelings like anxiety, stress, sadness, loneliness and frustration - everyone reacts in their own way.

But there are things we can all do to look after ourselves and loved ones. It's okay to ask for help, and lots of support is available.

**Connect with others** - stay in touch regularly by phone, video or online. Catch-up with friends or family or talk about your worries with someone you trust.

**Focus on what you can control** - plan a daily routine and set small goals to give you some structure and sense of *achievement*. Limit news/media exposure to help reduce anxiety, and only use reliable sources like the NHS and government websites.

**Learn a new skill or try to do things you enjoy or find relaxing** - this can help with worries and boost your mood.

**Look after your body** - staying active, eating a healthy, balanced diet, getting enough sleep and cutting down on alcohol and smoking can all help you feel good.

For more information and support visit [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/lookafteryourself](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/lookafteryourself).

You can also visit [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters).



# A year in review



We have dealt with **1,220 complaints**



**Target 100%**  
100% of Fire Risk Inspections on high rise blocks have been completed



**Target 95%**  
94% of urgent repairs were completed by the target time



**Target 95% and 90%**

We have kept **93%** of our appointments for responsive repairs and have **completed 91%** of non urgent repairs on time

**Target 50 days**  
The average time to re-let a council property is **76 days**

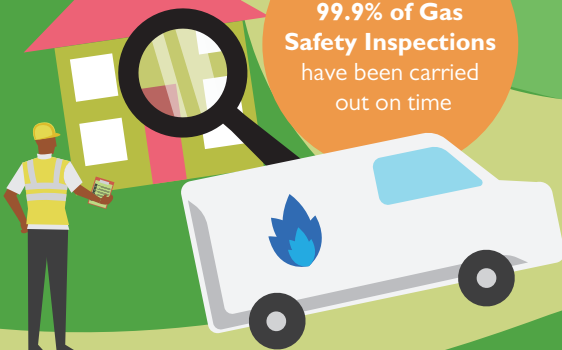
**Target 99%**  
99% of rent was collected



**Target 95%**  
93% of caretaking inspections have met the required standard



**Target 100%**  
99.9% of Gas Safety Inspections have been carried out on time



**Target 400**  
432 tenants and leaseholders have signed up to YourVIEW



We work hard to maintain our standards.

For more information contact the Community Participation & Diversity Team.

Phone 020 8921 5149 or email [community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)



If you have an existing noise complaint that you have raised with us, you will be referred to the app once we have assessed the suitability of your case.

The Noise App can be downloaded for free on Google Play or the App Store.

**You can contact us about noise complaints in the usual way, by calling 0208 921 8921.**

**Find out more at [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/noise](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/noise).**



Whirlpool has announced a further recall of 21 washing machines among its Hotpoint brand range.



**Check your appliance by visiting [washingmachinerecallwhirlpool.co.uk](http://washingmachinerecallwhirlpool.co.uk) or contact the Whirlpool customer service team on 0800 316 1442.**

Due to COVID-19, the Repairs and Investment team is providing a reduced service, focusing only on urgent needs. To find out what repairs are classified as urgent, and how we are keeping you and our repairs officers safe, **please visit: [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/requestrepair](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/requestrepair).**

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing domestic abuse, there is support and help available.

**For confidential support, call the Greenwich Domestic Violence and Abuse Helpline on 0208 317 8273, in an emergency always call 999.**

# Fire Safety



**If you know anyone that would answer yes to two or more of the following they would benefit from a London Fire Brigade home visit.**

- Smokes in the home
- Over the age of 60
- Lives alone
- Has limited mobility
- Would have difficulty in responding to or escaping from a fire
- Has had a previous fire or there are signs of scorching around the home
- Has learning difficulties
- Needs a carer
- Has a mental health condition or dementia
- Has drug or alcohol dependencies
- Does not have a smoke alarm
- Collects or hoards in the home

## London Fire Brigade home visit

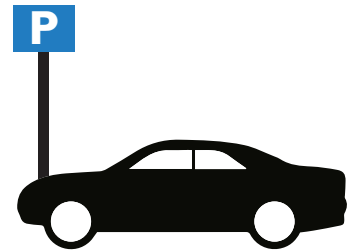
The London Fire Brigade will visit residents within their home and provide essential fire safety advice in an informal manner and respond to any concerns they may have regarding fire prevention and action to be taken should an incident occur. Smoke alarms will be fitted where required.

The London Fire Brigade have ceased cold calling during this time of lockdown. Residents can request a visit via the details below, as long as they can confirm they are not self-isolating or showing Covid-19 symptoms.

Please call **0800 028 4428**, email: [smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk](mailto:smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk) or text on **07860 021319**.

## Wing Parking Patrols

While current service has been greatly reduced during lockdown, we are working towards resuming a full *parking* enforcement service on our estates. If you have an out of date permit, please continue to display it clearly in your vehicle to avoid getting a ticket. We will write to permit holders to advise you when we are able to issue new permits or please check Royal Greenwich's website for latest information.



## Royal Greenwich stands together



## United against hate crime

A hate crime is any criminal offence that is motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone's religion, race, sexual orientation, sex, disability, transgender identity or any other perceived difference.

Hate crime doesn't always include physical violence; someone using offensive language towards you or harassing you because of who you are, or who they think you are, is also a crime.

We value and celebrate *diversity* in Royal Greenwich. We believe no one should be targeted because of who they are, and we remain committed to tackling hate, extremism and intolerance in whatever form it takes.

As part of our work to end hate crime and anti-social behaviour, earlier this year, alongside eight housing associations, we signed the No Home for Harm Pledge. The pledge aims to increase joint working amongst social landlords to tackle any criminal/unacceptable behaviour that is likely to breach a person's tenancy.

To *support* people who have experienced hate crime, we've commissioned a number of services that provide free support and advice:

- Call the Stop Hate UK 24-hour helpline, available in more than forty community languages, on **0800 138 1625**.
- Contact Greenwich Inclusion Project on **020 3747 9862** or visit **www.griproject.org.uk**.
- Contact METRO by emailing **safer@metrocharity.org.uk** or call **020 8305 5003**.

If it is an emergency or you are in immediate danger, always call **999**.

## Prize Draw

Congratulations to **Isobel Malcolm** for winning the last YourVIEW prize draw!

## Wordsearch

Have a go at completing our wordsearch, and you could be in with a chance of winning a voucher from a local supermarket.



There are 10 words in the wordsearch below which will be in italics within this newsletter. You can either:

Email the 10 words to

**YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk** or tear out the back page with your full name, contact number or email and return this to the Community Participation & Diversity Team at the Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street, SE18 6HQ.

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

Congratulations to **Abimbola Taiwo** for winning the last wordsearch!

The words from the last wordsearch are:

Rockmount, Carnbrook, Glyndon, Brooklands, Barnfield, Armstrong, Coldharbour, Meridian Kidbrooke and Flowers.