

Talk Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 15 of the Talk Housing newsletter, packed with information for tenants and leaseholders. 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.

SPRING 2021 ISSUE 15



Vaccination Bus

Inside

2. All aboard the vaccination bus! 3. COVID-19 reflections 4. Equality and Equity in the borough 6. Greenwich Build Homes 8. Keeping your children safe at home

 @royal_greenwich  royalgreenwich

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing


ROYAL borough of
GREENWICH

Roadmap out of lockdown



*It's hard to believe it's been over a year since the **beginning** of the COVID-19 pandemic. From heart-breaking personal tragedy, to coming together as a community to look after each other, this has been a time like no other in recent memory.*

The government's roadmap out of lockdown has been a welcome beacon of hope during a particularly difficult year. But as restrictions start to ease, and we look forward to seeing our loved ones, we must continue to follow COVID-19 regulations. Let's get back to doing the things we love as soon and safely as possible.

In this issue of Talk Housing, you will find out about our vaccination bus, which is travelling across the borough to make the vaccine easier for people to access, as well as our commitment to equality and equity in Royal Greenwich.

As ever, we welcome your feedback on the services we provide, so please get in touch and share your views.

Jamie Carswell,
Director of Housing and Safer Communities

YOUR VIEW

It is very important to us that we continue to listen to your views. Sign up to YourVIEW at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview to receive information about ways you can get involved. You may also be asked to take part in our quarterly Kwest surveys so that we can learn from your experiences and improve our services.



All aboard the vaccination bus!

In mid-February, we helped launch a new NHS **vaccination** bus which has been touring Greenwich and providing the lowest-vaccinated areas in the borough with easier access to COVID-19 vaccines.

The converted double-decker bus, which houses two clinical booths inside, has been customised and decorated in NHS colours.

Patients are taken in one at a time, keeping everyone socially distanced on board and in the queues, and all clinical hygiene standards and deep clean procedures are being followed.

The bus will enable us to reach areas of the borough where take-up of the vaccine has been lower. We are now working through the different phases of the vaccination process and have completed the over 70's vaccination (first phase).

The success of the vaccination bus is the result of a wide range of partners working together to support Greenwich residents: South East London CCG, Greenwich Health (GP Federation), our primary care networks, Royal Borough of Greenwich, Charlton Athletic Community Trust, University of Greenwich, Voluntary Services Greenwich.

The Council is strongly encouraging everyone to get vaccinated as soon as it becomes available to you – it's the best thing you can do to protect yourself, your loved ones and everyone in Royal Greenwich.

If you are aged 50 and over, a frontline health or social care worker, a carer (you get a Carer's Allowance*) or clinically extremely vulnerable (high risk) and haven't yet been invited for your first COVID-19 vaccine, you can book it online at nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or by calling **119** for free without needing an invitation.

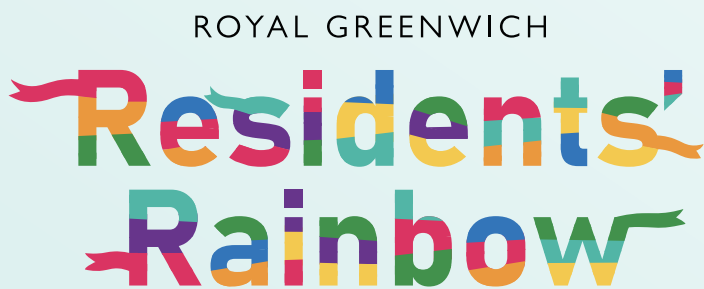
COVID-19 reflections

From the community spirit that's sprung up across all corners of Royal Greenwich, the countless residents who are dedicating their time and energy to food shopping for those shielding, to those volunteering at COVID-19 testing and vaccination centres and other community projects, the past year has also been full of human strength and **compassion**.

Here are a few highlights:

April 2020: Community Hub launches

Thousands of people in Royal Greenwich displayed enormous community spirit to volunteer with the new Community Hub, doing all sorts of things to help out residents who need the most support. The Hub is still available to help those who need it. Visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/communityhub or call **0800 470 4831**.

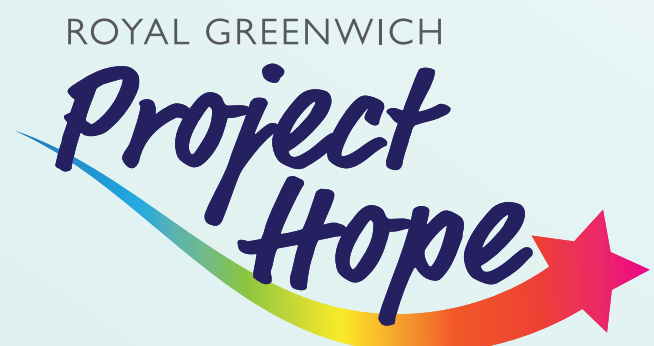


September 2020: Resident's Rainbow

Colour burst across the borough with the Residents Rainbow. Eight locations were transformed by light installations, art pieces and ribbons hung on trees, which shared residents' heartfelt thanks and well wishes for our community's future.

January 2021: Project Hope launches

Project Hope launched and donations flooded in from individuals and businesses to support the wellbeing of our amazing local NHS staff. Dedicated volunteers ran trolley rounds, café service and a Wellbeing Hub to give staff the chance to take a much-needed break.



Talk Housing

Stephen
Lawrence
Day 2021

Don't
live with
Domestic
Abuse

Ending
gender-based
crime

Say no to
Hate Crime

Greenwich
Hate
Crime
Community
Forum

Recognition
on handling
Domestic
Abuse

Equality
and Equity in
the borough

Dementia
support in
Greenwich

What are we doing,
what can you do?



Say no to Hate Crime

We know that sharing your personal experiences of Hate Crime and discrimination can be traumatic and difficult to relive but reporting these incidents can help. Complete our Hate Crime survey by 28 April 2021, and help us improve how we tackle abuse and discrimination in the borough:

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/hatecrimesurvey

Love Royal Greenwich? Say no to Hate Crime



ROYAL borough of
GREENWICH

Join the Greenwich Hate Crime Community Forum

As well as taking part in our Hate Crime survey, we're asking residents to sign-up to the Greenwich Hate Crime Community Forum and help us end discrimination in the borough.

The Forum is run in collaboration with the Greenwich Inclusion Project, Metro and MetroGAD, to support victims, raise **awareness**, and feed into how we address Hate Crime in the borough.

The forum is a group of individuals who:

- Have experienced Hate Crime and community safety issues
- Have an interest in improving the response to Hate Crime incidents in the borough.

The group meets every three months. For more information and to join contact;

marc.lorenzi@griproject.org.uk

Stephen Lawrence Day 2021 and standing against racism

A legacy for Change

The 22 April 2021 was Stephen Lawrence Day and marked 28 years since his horrific murder. Stephen's mother Doreen stated that Stephen Lawrence Day would be "an opportunity for young people to use their voices and should be embedded in our education and wider system regardless of the government of the day."

The Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation lists a number of ways children and young people can make a difference, and contains a number of useful resources including posters, social action toolkits, assembly scripts, reading lists and more. Find out more stephenlawrenceday.org



*Does your partner or family member:
Put you down? Ever frighten or hurt you?
Control your movements, friendships or money?*

Domestic abuse, non-physical and physical, from an intimate partner or family member is unacceptable.

For specialised support services for yourself or someone else you are concerned about visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/domesticabuse or call our Domestic Violence and Abuse helpline: **020 8317 8273**.

Recognition on handling Domestic Abuse

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has been awarded accreditation from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA), acknowledging our

commitment to supporting victims of abuse across the borough. Please visit www.gdva.org.uk or call **020 8317 8273**.

The DAHA accreditation is the UK's benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse cases. It is recognised in the government's Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy: 2016 to 2020, and consists of eight priority areas to address domestic abuse responses.

Ending gender-based violence

The Royal Borough of Greenwich condemns violence against women in our borough and is committed to ensuring our community is a safe place for everyone. That's why we've launched a survey to hear from local women about your experiences of harassment, violence and abuse in the Royal Greenwich.

For more info visit

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/violenceagainstwomen



Dementia support in Greenwich

Royal Greenwich's Housing department was awarded the dementia-**inclusive** Greenwich accreditation in March. The award was given by the Dementia Reference group and recognises our continuous commitment to providing a service that is inclusive of people living with dementia and their family carers. We have more to do, but are committed to improving our services.

In Royal Greenwich alone, nearly 3,000 people are living with a diagnosis of dementia; this includes people under the age of 65.

If you or a loved one has dementia, we can help. Dementia support groups meet on Zoom, our local dementia advisers are here to help you, and further support is provided by the Greenwich Carers Centre.

For more information, visit

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/dementiahub



118 more Greenwich Builds council homes approved

Our Greenwich Builds council home building programme is going from strength to strength with another 118 homes approved for construction since the last issue of Talk Housing.

The new schemes include an ambitious 80 home development across three sites along Rochester Way in Eltham, collectively known as the Brooks. The scheme includes a mix of one, two, three and four bedroom houses and apartments across all three sites, with eight homes being wheelchair accessible. In addition we are investing £750,000 in improvements to the local area, with a new play area, pocket park and 172 trees for the benefit of new and existing residents alike.

A further 32 Greenwich Builds homes are being built near Maze Hill, with four further homes including two five-bedroom properties approved for Eltham and Plumstead, all of which will be available at social rents to those on our housing waiting lists.

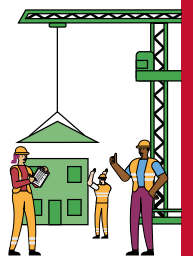
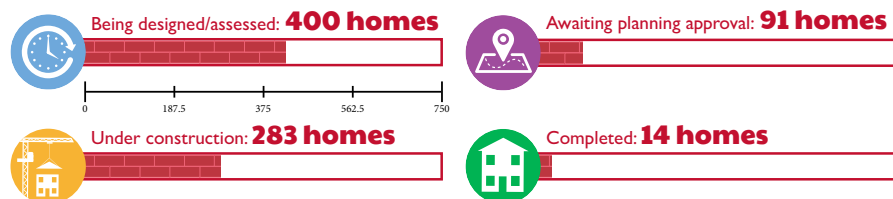
In total 750 new council homes will be built in this phase of the Greenwich Builds programme.

Greenwich Builds: our progress so far...



MARCH 2021 UPDATE

We're building over 750 sustainable council homes for local people. This is the progress we've made so far:



royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwichbuilds



10 new Greenwich Builds homes completed



Despite a challenging year more Greenwich Builds council homes are now reaching completion, with 10 new properties recently finished across two sites in Coldharbour and Kidbrooke. All of these homes use sustainable technologies like heat pumps and solar panels to achieve zero carbon rating, which both helps in the fight against climate change and reduces energy bills for tenants.

Responding to the needs of those on our housing waiting lists, wheelchair accessibility is a focus of these developments, with three of the 10 family homes featuring wider corridors, doorways and a lift. All the homes have their own garden and parking space and will be available through Choice Based Lettings soon.

Modular construction: the new building technique saving time and money

The housing crisis has created huge demand for affordable homes, so it's essential that construction on Greenwich Builds council homes proceeds as fast as possible. That's why we're using cutting edge modular building techniques on many of our projects, with whole sections of our homes constructed off-site in factories before being craned into place, resulting in a much quicker and less disruptive build. Modular homes are built to higher standards of electricity usage, heating and cooling than traditional homes, and are rated to last at least 60 years. They also boast great sustainability credentials as many of the materials used are recycled, with up to 67% less energy is used during construction and a carbon footprint up to 90% lower than traditional homes.



We need your help!

Get in touch to find out how you can assist us in *achieving* our goal of building hundreds of new council homes: greenwich.builds@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

Talk Housing



Keeping your children safe at home

Every year, children are seriously injured from accidents in the home.

Here are some simple safety tips to **protect** your child:

Balconies

As the weather becomes warmer, we are tempted to leave balcony doors open. To minimise the risk of injury, keep your balcony clear of any dangerous items such as:

- Tables and chairs which children can climb on
- Loose plants or plant pots
- Suitcases and other items of furniture
- If you smoke, ensure that cigarettes are fully extinguished
- No barbeques are permitted on balconies

Windows

Most windows are fitted with window restrictors which prevent them from opening fully. (typically limiting gaps to 100mm).

We will check before you move into a new home that the restrictors are in good working order.

All types of window restrictor are fitted with an override mechanism, enabling the window to be opened fully for cleaning or to increase ventilation.

You must ensure the restrictors are re-engaged when you are not in room, especially where children sleep.

Stairs and banisters

- When your baby starts crawling and until they are 24 months old, fit safety gates to stop them climbing up or falling downstairs
- Make sure that stairs are free from clutter like toys or clothes

Babies

Babies have limited mobility, but they can still wriggle, kick or roll themselves into dangerous situations. Follow these tips to help keep them safe:

- Don't leave a baby unattended on any raised surface
- If your baby is in a car seat or a bouncing cradle, put it on the floor, not on a high surface
- Remove large cot toys from a baby's cot once they can sit up or get on all fours, as babies can use toys to climb out of the cot
- If you carry a baby downstairs, always keep one hand free to use the hand rail – in case you slip or lose your balance

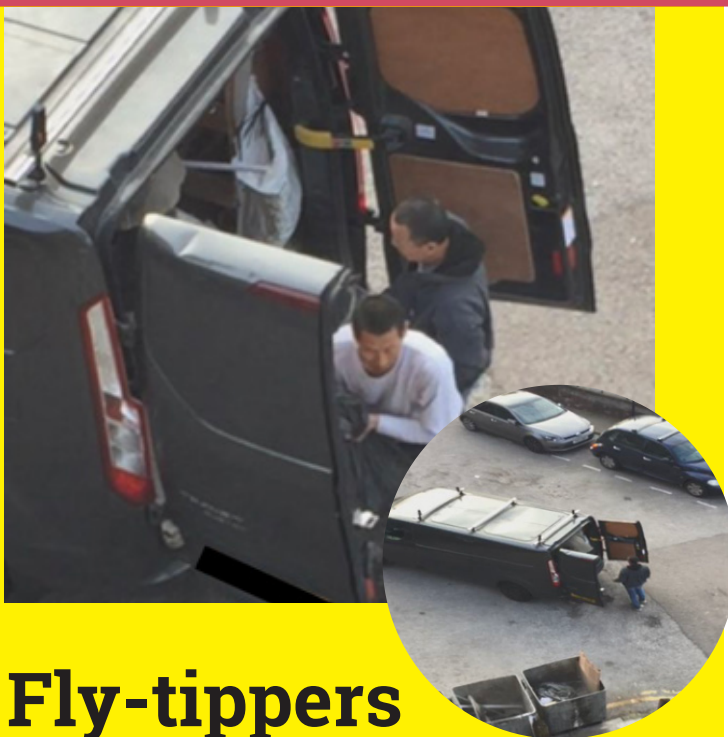


In an emergency

- Dial 999 immediately and ask for an ambulance
- Let the ambulance service know if your child is conscious or unconscious – they will tell you what to do while you are waiting
- If your child becomes conscious while you are waiting, tell them to stay as still as possible.

First aid courses

It is a good idea for all parents and carers to learn first aid. For further information on **free** first aid courses, visit sja.org.uk.



Fly-tippers caught in the act!

People recently spotted removing a large amount of waste from a van and dumping this into the communal bins at Ellison House have been fined £800 for fly-tipping. The vehicle was traced to an address outside of our borough, and the registered owner was invited to attend an interview under caution and fined, which he paid immediately in lieu of prosecution.

Fly-tipping is the deliberate dumping of rubbish in a place where it shouldn't be left. A fly-tip can be a single bag of rubbish, mattress or large amounts of builders' rubble. Fly-tipping is illegal and we will take action against anyone we catch dumping rubbish.

If you spot someone fly-tipping on your estate, you can help by giving us details. Please email us at envirocrime@royalgreenwich.gov.uk with these details:

- The name and address of the individual(s) committing the offence if you know who it is
- A description of the individual(s)
- Details of any vehicles involved including make, colour and registration if possible
- Any company details (i.e. name of the site of a company van or vehicle)
- The time and where you saw them committing the offence.

The typical cost of fly-tipping on housing estates is £845,000 a year.

Are you blocking your bin collections?

Every week our waste crews come to your estate to empty your communal bins. Unfortunately, in some areas, safe access to the bins is becoming increasingly difficult and in some cases impossible. This is because of poorly parked cars and vans in areas that should be kept clear.

When we can't empty your bins, it causes a whole range of issues. Chutes get blocked, bins overflow, bags are dumped and fly-tipping occurs. We are asking all of our residents to please be mindful when parking your vehicle to make sure our crews can get to your bins. This means:

- Park in the designated parking bays
- Keep access roads to the bin cupboards clear at all times
- Don't park in front of the bin cupboards
- Observe road markings such as yellow lines, yellow hatched boxes, no parking signs
- Avoid parking on tight corners
- Make sure your visitors also park responsibly.

With your help, we can maintain a welcoming and **clean** living environment by ensuring your waste is cleared regularly.

You can help us by:

- parking in the allocated bays
- parking close to – but not on top of – the kerb
- making sure your wheels are straight
- not parking on yellow lines



We really appreciate your help.
Thank you!



Get Trained in Housing

In January, we supported two residents to successfully complete a Chartered Institute of Housing (level 1) qualification and are now looking for two new residents to start the course in the summer.

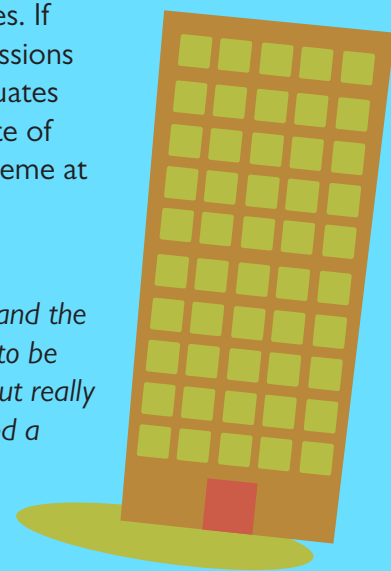
It's a free nine-week course which gives an overview of how social housing operates. If you are successful, you would be expected to commit to the whole course. The sessions are delivered online by field experts Phoenix Community Housing Academy. Graduates from this course will receive a certificate of recognition from the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and there is no exam. The Phoenix Academy won Best Training scheme at the 24Housing Awards in Oct 2019.

Alicia, who took the course in January, says:

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the course. I was looking forward to learning something new and the interaction with the other participants, however when I learnt that the course was going to be online due to COVID-19, I was not sure that I was going to enjoy it as much. It worked out really well. I was able to manage my own time from the comfort of my home and I have gained a whole new appreciation of social housing and look forward to using my knowledge."

To register your interest email YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

YOUR VIEW



Asbestos Awareness



Asbestos Awareness Week was 1 to 7 of April 2021. In the UK, the use of all asbestos was banned in 1999. Asbestos can be found in any building built before 2000 as it was widely used in building materials. Materials containing asbestos are only hazardous when they are disturbed or damaged, and as long as asbestos materials are in good condition, and in a place where they are unlikely to be disturbed, then they should not cause any harm.

Where asbestos remains within properties, those responsible have a duty to manage it safely, and the Royal Borough Greenwich takes this obligation very seriously.

If you find asbestos in your home, contact our repairs team via switchboard (**020 8854 8888**).

Repairs service update

During the last national lockdown, which began on 5 January 2021, the repairs service has only been able to deal with emergency and urgent requests to minimise visits to residents' homes.

To make urgent requests, call the council's contact centre on:

- **020 8921 8900**, Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5.30pm, and Friday, 9am to 4.30pm
- **020 8854 8888** at all other times

We are constantly reviewing our service alongside the government guidelines, and hope to be back up and running a full service as soon as restrictions allow.



Family Fun Sports & Games

Have fun this spring and join in with our **family** fun sports and games sessions. For more information, including ongoing weekly family fun sports and games sessions, please contact **Greenwich.getactive@royalgreenwich.gov.uk** or visit the website **greenwichgetactive.com**

Children's Centres

We have 30 amazing children's centres in borough that provide free activities for parents of children below school age. The centres are run by highly trained staff, and offer families access to a range of services in one location. For more information visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/childrenscentres**

Fire safety

In the event of a fire in your block call **999** and close all doors. Stay put, it is usually safer to stay in your flat. During a fire, you can't use the lifts and the stairs could be overcrowded with firefighters who need the stairs to be clear.

The London Fire Brigade are not 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** or text on **07860 021319**.

Royal Greenwich welcomes LGBTQ+ foster carers

LGBTQ+ individuals are warmly invited to join our vibrant team of foster carers, whether they are in a relationship or not. We are proud of our diverse community here in Royal Greenwich and it is important that this is reflected in our dedicated team of carers.

To learn more and sign up to our fostering events, visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/fosteringevent**



Leaseholder Working Group

The **new** Leaseholder Working Group held its first meeting with Councillor Okereke (Cabinet Member for Housing) and officers in February 2021.

This group is tasked with improving the service offer to leaseholders and was set up following the Digital Listening Campaign. Priorities include communal repairs, customer care and improving the look and feel of the estates.

We have 10 leaseholder reps on the Working Group; if you are interested in finding out more or getting involved, please email **home.ownership@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**. You can also stay informed of different activities by signing up at **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview**. We'll include updates in future editions of Talk Housing.

This is a good initiative to understand the needs of leaseholders and hopefully will enable service improvements if our views are taken on board.

Aline, who attended the first meeting

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 to explain your situation and we will get back to you. You can also speak to your Income Officer, whose telephone number is on your rent statement and arrears letters.

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.

The courts are reopening for serious arrears, anti-social behaviour and other cases. If you have high arrears and have not discussed this with your Income Officer – contact us now for advice and to make a repayment plan otherwise you could risk eviction.

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.

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: gov.uk/coronavirus and turn2us.org.uk.



Wordsearch

Have a go at completing our wordsearch, and you could be in with a chance of winning a prize.

There are 10 words in the wordsearch below which will be in bold 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.



There were no winners from our last wordsearch.

The words from the last wordsearch are:

Digital, Training, Vegetables, Generation, Construction, Nepal, Autumn, Music, Wildflowers, Financial