

# Talk Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

## WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 26 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](mailto:community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

WINTER 2024 ISSUE 26



## Looking to the future

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ROYAL borough of  
GREENWICH

## 5 minutes with Pat Slattery



I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy 2024. The last few years have been tough for many people – from COVID-19 to the cost-of-living crisis. I hope this coming year is kinder to us all.

I am delighted that we can share a little bit more detail about our large programme of improvements to our homes. These are big contracts, and they will take five years to roll out all the work proposed. We will let you know more details of which homes are to get what and roughly when as soon as we can. You will also be individually written to if work is proposed to start in your home or block.

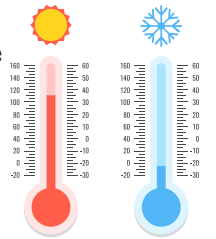
Finally, I hope you are finding that it is quicker to get through to the repairs phone lines now and are not having to wait too long. If you are reporting any repairs for the first time, please call the Repairs Freephone number on **0808 175 6915**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

**Pat Slattery**  
Cabinet Member for Housing,  
Neighbourhoods and Homelessness



## Damp and mould in your home

**As the winter months are now upon us and many people are looking to keep their homes warm, we thought we would remind you about how you can help keep damp, mould and condensation at bay in your home.**



### Condensation and mould

Condensation happens when warm or moist air touches a cold surface; for example, if you have a hot bath and the steam does not escape. Every home has some condensation. If there is a lot of condensation or it happens repeatedly, it can settle and cause mould on walls or ceilings. Mould can also affect furniture, clothes and curtains.

### Damp

If you can see patches of moisture with a 'tidemark' effect, this has probably been caused by damp rather than condensation. Damp could be caused by rainwater damage or plumbing leaks.

If you want to find out more, visit the council website at [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/damp-and-mould](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/damp-and-mould) for information on how to identify damp, mould and condensation, as well as how to prevent and treat it.



## Housing allocations survey

We ran a 12-week consultation on possible changes to the housing allocations scheme, which ended on 13 October 2023. There was an online survey and we also did several in-person events across the borough with residents' groups and other organisations representing the housing sector. We promoted the consultation via our website and on social media. We are very pleased with your response, as we have received more than 1,200 online surveys.

We are currently working through all the feedback and are preparing to take a proposed new scheme, based on your feedback, to the Council's Cabinet in February 2024. We will also be improving the process for applying for rehousing, again based on your feedback.

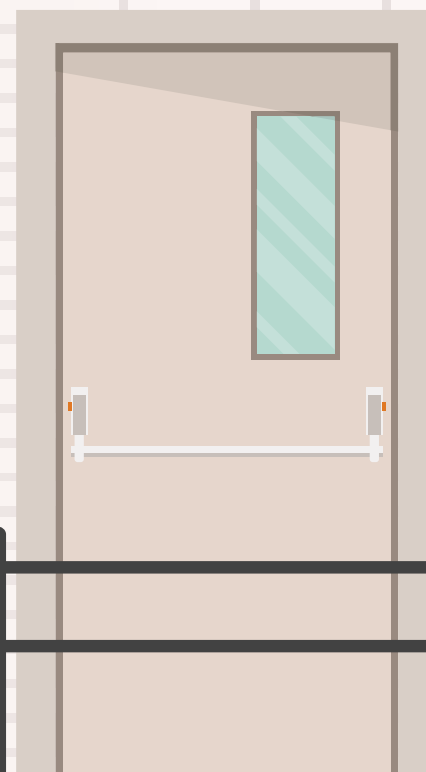


## Smoke alarms and fire door safety

Working smoke alarms in your home are essential as they provide vital early warning and allow extra time to escape if there is a fire. They may also alert neighbours to a possible fire. Smoke alarms save lives, but only if they are working. Test yours every month, including the ones in your home. It's as simple as pushing the button.

Doors in your home or doors in the communal area to your block should not be tampered with. If there are any faults or damage, these should be raised immediately by email to [housing.repairs@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:housing.repairs@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) or call **020 8921 8900**.

If you are reporting this for the first time, please call **0808 175 6915**. For more information on smoke alarms and fire doors, please visit [www.london-fire.gov.uk](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk)





## Greenwich Invests: homes to be proud of

**We are committed to ensuring that you have a safe and secure home that meets your needs. As part of this we will be embarking on our biggest investment in council homes for a generation through our £430 million capital repairs programme.**

### Investing in our homes

Between now and 2029 this programme will see some council homes benefit from a range of internal and external improvements including, new roofs, as well as new or improved kitchens and bathrooms, and electrical wiring and heating upgrades.

Huge investments will also be made in lift replacements, upgrades to CCTV and door entry systems, as well as fire, electrical, gas and water safety improvements.

The programme includes the Council's first large-scale external refurbishment programme for 12 years. This includes concrete and timber repairs, walkway and balcony repairs, new gutters and communal outdoor spaces, and will now encompass houses, bungalows and estates, as well as blocks.

The work will be prioritised on council homes and neighbourhoods that need it the most, and if your home is to be included then you will be written to nearer the time.

Last October, contracts were awarded to Axis Europe PLC, United Living (SOUTH) Limited and EQUANS Regeneration Ltd, who will each deliver the work in three parts of the borough (north, south and south-east wards) at an estimated value of £60m each.





### Improving energy efficiency

In addition, we are investing £21 million, including a £5.3million grant from the Government, to make council homes more energy efficient and reduce carbon emissions.

The grant funding was awarded through the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and will target 665 predominantly street properties that currently have an energy performance rating of C or lower.

The types of work carried out in each home will vary but could include window replacements, cavity wall insulation, ventilation upgrades, which in turn could save tenants between £200-400 a year on their energy bills.

### Keeping you informed

As we embark on this transformative journey, we will keep you informed with regular programme updates in future editions of Talk Housing.



# Hundreds of homes for people on the housing register near completion



## **Councillors have celebrated the final concrete pour on a development of apartments and houses for people on our housing register.**

Of the London Affordable Rent homes, 175 are part of our 1,750 home Greenwich Builds programme, while the rest are PA housing association properties. London Affordable rent is defined as 73% of the market rent.

Each home will meet the Future Homes Standard and will use sustainable technologies like air source heat pumps and solar panels. One in ten properties will be adapted for wheelchair users.

Trinity Park is being built on the site of the former Morris Walk North estate as part of the Woolwich Estates regeneration project, which will create a total of 1,615 new homes.

686 homes will be made available to people on the housing register, while a further 145 homes will be shared ownership. The remaining homes will be for private sale.

The regeneration has come about as a partnership between the Council, PA Housing and developer Lovell.

Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, Councillor Anthony Okereke, said: *"I am immensely proud of the role the Council has played in driving forward the partnership with Lovell and PA Housing, to maximise the provision of affordable homes for those most in need in our borough."*

*Trinity Park will provide 262 high-quality homes for local families and individuals currently on our housing register, with more available for affordable shared ownership. This is just one example of how we are delivering on our commitment to make sure everyone in Royal Greenwich has access to a safe and secure home."*

The Woolwich Estates regeneration will also bring in £8m from Lovell for local area improvements, and the Council is ensuring that extra value is provided in the form of employment opportunities for local people.

For some months on the now-completed Trinity Walk development, this resulted in over 80% of those working on the site being Royal Greenwich residents.





## PROUD TO BE SHORTLISTED



### Royal Borough of Greenwich

Affordable Housing Awards 2023

Council or combined authority of the year

Friday 17 November 2023, The Point, Manchester

## Royal Borough of Greenwich shortlisted for Local Authority Homebuilder of the Year

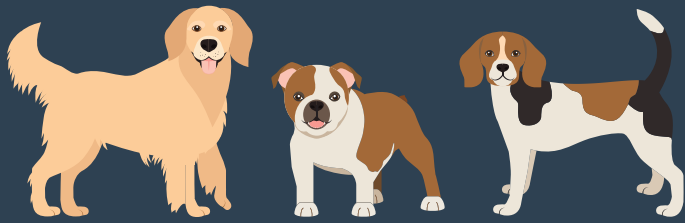
Our work to create as many new homes as we can for local people has been recognised by the Affordable Housing Awards, who shortlisted us for their Homebuilder of the Year Award.

While we didn't win, it was great to be recognised for the many different methods we are using to create as many new homes as possible.

These methods include the 1,750 council homes we are creating with Greenwich Builds, our partnerships with private developers and housing associations, the provision of intermediate rented homes for those suffering from spiralling private rents, and the development of community-led affordable housing through Community Land Trusts.



# Talk Housing



## Do you have a dog?

If you're a council tenant or leaseholder, you need to tell us if you want to keep a dog, or extra dogs, in your council home. Please remember:

- You must not bring a dog to live in your home before we give you written permission, as this is a breach of your tenancy conditions.
- It's a legal requirement for all dogs to be micro-chipped and you'll need to give us the microchip number to complete registration.
- We'll usually give you permission for one dog, especially if your home has a garden. If you want to have more than one dog, we'll need to consider the size of your home and how many dogs you want.



We register dogs in council properties to encourage responsible dog ownership and to help if a dog is causing a nuisance. Call **020 8921 6383** or email **tenancy-enforcement-teams@royalgreenwich.gov.uk** for more info.

For more information about your obligations under your tenancy agreement, please email **Tenancy-Enforcement-Teams@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**.

## XL Bully ban

Following a concerning rise in attacks caused by XL Bully dogs, the government has added this breed to the list of dogs banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. Please visit

**www.gov.uk** and search for 'XL Bully Dogs' to learn about the new legislation.



## Javan Coker Foundation celebrates new kitchen refurbishment

The refurbishment was project managed by the Council's Repairs and Investment Team who enlisted several contractors to transform their kitchen as part of their social value work.

Vital kitchen equipment, surveys and services were donated by Council contractors and suppliers, Greyline Ltd, Howdens, Tersus and Wolseley. Greyline Ltd also provided staff to remove the old kitchen, fit the units and electrical equipment, lay new floors, rewire the electrics and redecorate the room.

Working closely with the Council and contractors over six weeks, the Foundation now have a modern and fully accessible kitchen which will enable them to continue to provide meals for up to 65 children and families with special education needs and disabilities (SEND).

They are currently inviting donations of a range of non-perishable supplies including tin food, toiletries and long-life food for the food bank. Donations can be dropped off Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm at 47 Abbey Grove, London SE2 9EU.

For more information visit **www.javancokerfoundation.org** or call **020 3062 6001**.





Photographer credit Amris Kaur

## New community garden

Residents of Hughes House in Greenwich Creekside ward joined local councillors to celebrate the official opening of their new community garden in August 2023.

The community garden was funded by the Greenwich Neighbourhood Growth Fund and is a unique project that involved local children helping to design and build the garden infrastructure, under the guidance of the charity Build Up Foundation which runs practical construction projects for young people.

The children spoke enthusiastically about their involvement with the project and how it has given them ideas for the future. Kerry Ugboma, is one resident who was the driving force in conceptualising the garden. She said, *"Everyone dreams of having a house and a garden. Well, we just have a flat, but now we have our garden!"*.





## Distraction burglars and rogue traders

**Distraction burglars aim to distract you and trick their way into your home to steal your money or valuables.**

Some of the methods they may use:

- calling at your door posing as officials, claiming to be from the council, police, a market research agency and other roles
- taking advantage of your good nature by saying they are collecting for charity or need something in your house such as a pen or paper to leave a note for the neighbour
- creating urgency or panic to enter your property. They can appear official and may be smartly dressed in uniforms, use official-looking paperwork, and fake IDs.

They can be young, old, male, female or even young children.

If in doubt, keep them out

1. **LOCK** - keep your front and back doors locked, even when at home
2. **STOP** - are you expecting anyone?
3. **CHAIN** - if you decide to open the door, put the chain on first
4. **CHECK** - ask for the caller's ID and check it by phone.

You can protect others by reporting incidents like this to the police as soon as they happen on **101**.

Report suspicious texts you have received but not acted upon, by forwarding the original message to **7726**. Report suspicious emails you have received but not acted upon, by forwarding the original message to **report@phishing.gov.uk**

If you, or anyone you know, have been affected by fraud or any other scam, report it to Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040** or visit **www.actionfraud.police.uk**



## Free gas safety checks

As your landlord it is our legal obligation to carry out a gas safety check annually in properties with a gas supply. It is a condition of your tenancy agreement that you allow access for this check to take place. This is so we can help to keep your heating system energy-efficient and safe for you and your neighbours. If your appointment is inconvenient, contact us to rearrange it on **0800 317 715** or **gas-section@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**.

## Don't lose your voice in future elections

If you don't have a valid form of voter ID – apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate today. Check if you have a valid form of photo ID before the next scheduled elections on 2 May 2024 – don't lose your voice! Apply for a Voter Authority Certificate: **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/voter-id** Register to vote: **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/registertovote**

## Environmental Improvement Budget

This budget is designed to empower you or your residents' association to come forward with schemes to enhance your estate. Whether it's sprucing up communal areas or creating a vibrant garden, this budget is able to support your ideas. Register your interest at **community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk** and we will send you an application form.

## New boroughwide Public Space Protection order (PSPO) for Royal Greenwich

PSPOs were introduced under the Anti-social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014, to ensure public spaces are areas that are free from anti-social behaviour. The boroughwide PSPO in effect in Royal Greenwich is designed to improve the quality of life of all residents and visitors to the borough. The Orders will remain in force for three years from 31 October 2023. For more info visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/boroughwide-pspo**

## Struggling to pay off debt?

Pay your rent first before credit cards, loans, catalogues and other bills or debts.

If you are worried about debt it's important to seek advice as soon as possible to make sure you prioritise your money wisely. You can get free, independent and confidential advice at [www.nationaldebtline.org](http://www.nationaldebtline.org) or

[royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefits-and-financial-help](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefits-and-financial-help). You can also talk to your Income Officer who will be able help and suggest further options.

**REMEMBER** – if you don't pay your rent you could lose your home.

## Find out more about Greenwich Supports

We know times are tough, and as we approach winter you may be concerned about your financial situation or wellbeing. You can find lots of information on our Greenwich Supports homepage about support from the council, local charities, and community groups.

If you need help now, call our advisors at Live Well Greenwich for free on **0800 470 4831**. Find out more at [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwich-supports](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwich-supports).

GREENWICH   
**SUPPORTS**



## Find the missing item!

The winner of the golden spanner competition from Issue 25 was **Graham**. Congratulations Graham!

We had 71 responses to the last competition in Issue 25.

The deadline for the next competition will be Friday 29 March 2024.

Please tell us how much is the Council's capital repairs programme worth?  
Email [YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) with your answer.