

RESIDENT NEWS

Issue 17

walthamforest.gov.uk/housing

September 2020

Your tenant and leaseholder newsletter



Let's help keep each other safe

Page 8 & 9

What's inside

 Win a bike

Page 5

 Help to kickstart your career

Page 10 & 11

 Help to sort out your finances

Page 13

Welcome



As we emerge from the summer of lockdown, our teams in housing and our contractors are getting back to some of the important work we are doing around the borough.

If Government guidelines allow, our contractors are returning to carrying out non emergency repairs and the work programmes we had to delay during the lockdown, and doing so safely (see page 7).

I was delighted to be a social distancing guest of Mr and Mrs Hobbs whose Leyton home was the 50th property we have transformed into a larger family house (see page 6).

There have been few positives from the Covid-19 crisis but one has been the increase in the number of people taking up cycling, which improves people's health and reduces traffic congestion and air pollution.

So it is timely that we have installed Bikehangars on 11 of our estates, providing safe, secure places for residents to park their bicycles (see page 5 and enter our contest to win a bike!).

Going forward we are changing and improving the way we deal with resident queries, right from their initial contact, in a way that we believe will mean a faster and more efficient service.

And congratulations to our rent service which has been awarded HQN Accredited: Income Management status. The independent assessors visited us and examined the team's work to support the financial wellbeing of our customers, to minimise the risk of rent arrears and other debt.

Please continue to follow the latest Government guidelines on keeping safe, and make sure you know what you need to do if you develop any of the symptoms for Covid-19 (pages 8 and 9).

Thank you

Councillor Louise Mitchell

Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness Prevention

Front Cover: Residents on Essex Close got the final say on a brilliant new mural on the Walthamstow estate, part of the London Mural Festival.

Street artist Faunagraphic created three designs for residents to choose from and The Kestrel & Magnolia came out on top.

Resident Louisa Bergese said: "We are so pleased having something beautiful and light and colourful added to this estate. Everyone was involved in choosing the final design and It has really brought people together."

How to get in touch with us

Our Housing Teams have introduced a robust online reception service designed to better serve our residents.

This new service delivery is more flexible, agile and will enable us to quickly adapt to meet any future demands and challenges.

When a resident has a housing query

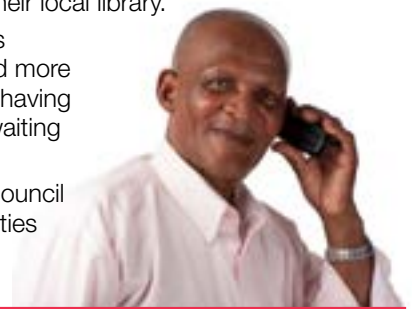
- Resident calls our Customer Resolution Centre (CRC) on **020 8496 4197**.
- The first person they speak to will ask them a set of questions to help determine the level of housing assistance and/or advice required.
- If the issue is urgent, the adviser will have the option of giving the resident a same-day appointment with a Duty Officer to progress their query. This can be over the phone or by video conference.

- If the situation is less urgent the advisor will schedule an appointment and advise what documents may be needed before the meeting.
- Supplying those documents ahead of the appointment will help housing officers deal with the query more efficiently and faster.
- If residents need a scanner or support to supply documents, they will be able to access an assisted self-service facility at any one of our libraries..

Our most vulnerable residents will also be able to have interviews with a Duty Officer via a video link or conference in a private room from their local library.

Our aim is that residents receive an improved and more efficient service without having to leave their home or waiting for hours to be seen.

This is part of a cross-Council review of reception facilities across all departments.



Rent Team award



The Housing Rents Service has been awarded HQN Accredited: Income Management status. This makes Waltham Forest the first and only London borough with an accredited Income Service.

It is a sign that our Housing Rents service meets good practice standards. The accreditation is designed to recognise those organisations which maximise their own and their customers' income.

As part of the on-site assessment, the Housing Quality Network assessor spoke to a group of tenants to learn about their experiences. This included the team's work to support the financial wellbeing of our customers, to minimise the risk of rent arrears and other debt.

If you have lost your job or are experiencing any difficulties paying rent, speak to the Rent Team at the earliest opportunity. They will be able to advise on benefits and help available.

Rent is the most important bill you and your family have. Let us help you keep on top of it. Email rents@walthamforest.gov.uk



Our Independent Living Team can help you find out if you should be claiming.

Are you missing out?

Pension Credit is a benefit for people over state pension age. It is extra money that could top up your retirement income and help with the cost of living.

People who receive Pension Credit can get free dental treatment and possible help with other bills. And the free TV licence for people over 75 is now only available for those who claim Pension Credit.

Call **020 8496 4197** and ask for your details to be passed to the Independent Living Team and we will contact you directly, or email independent.livingservice@walthamforest.gov.uk

Teatime chats and dancing

Residents at Longfield House were guests of honour at a very special Covid-secure festival to celebrate neighbourhoods, run by volunteers from the neighbouring streets close to the Walthamstow independent living scheme, in conjunction with the Independent Living Team.

Neighbour Nadia Hartley, who helped organise the event, said: "Many of the residents had been isolated during the Covid-19 crisis and seemed to have a great time."

The weekend of events, supported by the Council's Community Ward Funding, included Covid-safe Teatime Chats and a Teatime Dance; party bags for all over 70s and gift stall with donations from neighbours and local businesses for all residents.

Longfield resident Marian said: "To be joining in with the Festival was such a delight, it was nice and refreshing especially after the experience of lockdown. Can't wait for the next one."



Worried about paying your rent?

Have you lost your job or a source of income?
Don't ignore the problem. Contact the rent team now and talk to us.

We can provide practical advice on what help is available, how you can apply and we will do what we can to help support you through the application process.

Rent is the most important bill you and your family have. Let us help you keep on top of it.

Direct Debit is a simple, efficient way of paying your rent and takes the worry out of keeping your account out of the red.

To set up your Direct Debit account call 020 8496 4197 or email rents@walthamforest.gov.uk

Sign up to our online portal to access up to date information on your rent account and make payments. Go to walthamforest.gov.uk and click the 'My Account' button at the top of the home page.

■ You can also get advice on Universal Credit and benefits from Citizens Advice. You can call Miguel, Mondays, 9.30am to 1pm on **07534 644 629** or Raheel, Thursdays, between 9.30am to 1pm on **07947 276 714**.

Making alterations to your home

Please remember you may not make improvements, alterations and additions to your home unless you first receive the Council's permission in writing, as the landlord.

You also need to apply for any other necessary planning permission and building regulation approval where these are required from the Council as the local planning authority.

If you carry out an improvement, alteration or addition to your home without the Council's permission, the Council may request that you remove it and reinstate your home to its previous condition. Installing a satellite dish is such an addition.

You may, at your own expense, carry out repairs to the structure or the outside of your home and carry out painting to the outside of your home if you first obtain the Council's permission in writing.

If you are in doubt, please speak to your surveyor by contacting **020 8496 4197**.

■ If you are a Council leaseholder and considering making any alteration or improvement to your home, please contact the leaseholder team first and they can advise you. Email rtblease@walthamforest.gov.uk

Win a Bike!



To celebrate the installation of Bikehangars on 11 of our estates, we are giving away bikes to two lucky residents

The Bikehangars are part of the Council's commitment to improve the health of residents and to tackling pollution and congestion in the borough.

They provide residents with a safe, secure place to leave their bicycles close to their home. Residents living on the estates will be given preferential status for hiring the spaces.

As well as the health and environmental benefits of encouraging cycling, the Bikehangars will help reduce the issue of residents parking their bikes in corridors, which creates building safety issues

Lajos (pictured above with fellow estate resident Jo) said: "This is really good news. People can park their bikes without worrying now."

Bikehangars are installed on the Avenue Estate, North Birkbeck Road Estate, Aldriche Way Estate, Essex Close Estate, Tenby Court, Attlee Terrace, The Grange Estate, Stocksfield Road Estate, Granleigh Road Estate, St Andrews Court Estate and the independent living scheme Downland Court.

Councillor Louise Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness Prevention, said: "Encouraging cycling is not only about improving the health and well-being of our

residents and young people, it is improving the health and environment of our estates, with fewer cars, less parking congestion and less pollution."

Cyclists can go online to book one of the spaces which are available for a low annual charge.

Go to: portal.walthamforest.gov.uk/service/Bike_Hangar_Register_Interest

Our Win a Bike competition is open to all our residents. There are two categories; one open to adults and one for children aged 16 and under.

To enter simply tell us where you would like to cycle in Waltham Forest in 15 words or less. Send your entry to engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk and include your full name and address. Closing date for entries 19 October 2020.

The winner in each category will receive £200 in Halfords vouchers to buy the bike, helmet and safety gear that perfectly fits their needs. Both winners will also receive a free Bikehangar space for a year, worth £30.

The winners will be announced in the next issue of Resident News.

Thank you to our contractors Morgan Sindall Property Services and Aston Group who are sponsoring our competition.

New measures to help Attlee Terrace

Waltham Forest Council and the Metropolitan Police are using new powers to tackle drug dealing and anti-social behaviour affecting residents of the Attlee Terrace in Walthamstow, through a partial closure order.

The order prohibits anyone except residents, Council staff, and its contractors, and emergency services, from gathering in the communal areas of the estate. It is the first such 'block' order on a housing estate in Waltham Forest.

The order was applied for after numbers of young people – some of whom were believed to be gang members – began to gather in the communal spaces of the estate. There were reports of smoking, dealing drugs, and leaving litter. Their presence was intimidating and impeded residents' access to the stairwell. The order states that anyone found in breach of the order may be arrested. If found guilty, they are liable on summary conviction to imprisonment or a fine, or both.

If they are found to be connected to any resident of the estate, appropriate tenancy-related actions will be considered against the resident in question.

Youth engagement workers have been deployed to engage the young people in question and structural improvements are being considered in order to discourage further anti-social behaviour in the estate's communal areas. Police talked to residents at an open air forum held earlier this month and the move was welcomed by residents.

One said: "We've already noticed a big difference. It has been very quiet and we are not seeing these young people, most of whom don't live here, hanging around."

Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Cllr Ahsan Khan, said: "What residents have had to endure is totally unacceptable and the action taken by police and Council officers working together will make a real difference."

Lofty ideas

The Council has completed its 50th home extension, part of a £60 million programme of improving living standards across the Council's housing stock.

Councillor Louise Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness Prevention, visited the Leyton home of the Hobbs family, the 50th residence to be extended by the Council.

Robert and Linda Hobbs, and their two sons, were living in an overcrowded two bedroom home.

The loft conversion has created a new bedroom and second bathroom, which is a great help to Robert who is disabled.

Robert said: "It is absolutely brilliant. What the Council has done is made life easier for me and my family. It has given us more room and it's like a different house."

The shortage of family homes is a challenge for local authorities, including Waltham Forest.

Cllr Mitchell said: "This programme of loft conversions and extensions addresses a pressing need for families, providing them with the additional space they need to live comfortably and relieving overcrowding without them having to move home. This is one part of our ambitious housing strategy."

Contractors Aston Group has developed a method to complete the extension works which minimises the disruption to the families.

Dominic Woodford, Construction Manager, Aston Group, said: "We

are sympathetic to residents' needs. We ensure that most of the work is carried out from the outside of properties, with only final breakthrough and service extensions requiring internal access during the final two weeks of work. This allows families to remain living in their homes throughout the construction process."

As part of the works, fire and building safety standards in the properties are upgraded and insulation work completed to improve energy efficiency, providing safer and more energy-efficient homes, which is part of the Council's commitment to tackle the Climate Emergency.



Maintaining your home

During lockdown our contractors focused on emergency repairs and essential maintenance. We are now returning to carrying out other repairs and major works - but doing so safely.



Our key priority during lockdown was ensuring the continued delivery of emergency repairs and the maintenance services necessary to keep you safe in your home.

Over the past few months our partner repairs contractors - Morgan Sindall Property Services (MSPS) and Aston Group - have been steadily increasing the level of repairs service we are able to provide to you.

Resident safety is extremely important to us and we have continued to carry out Gas Safety checks as well as working to ensure buildings comply with Fire Safety regulations.

We've undertaken repairs to common areas, gas heating and electrical repairs and you'll have seen many other trades returning to work on your homes.

Subject to any changes in Government guidelines around Covid-19, from Thursday 1 October 2020 you will be able to report all repairs as normal.

The staff will still be following safe working practices to ensure they minimise any risk of infection, so some jobs may take slightly longer to complete.

We expect a large volume of repairs to be reported, so we ask for your continued patience and understanding as we deal with requests that may have built up over the past six months.

Thank you to all residents for your support during recent. For repairs contact us on 020 8496 4197.



- To help support our customers MSPS has developed a COVID-19 portal. When a customer books a repair appointment with MSPS, a link to the site is sent out with their confirmation of appointment by text or email.

As well as being able to search under the FAQ's section on the page, customers will also be able to access a video that explains what they can expect when the contractors carry out work in their home.

Go Wild at Home Carnival

The Go Wild at Home Carnival hit the streets of Waltham Forest over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Carnival performers from Mandinga and Mahogany Arts joined with choreographer Manuela Benini and local dancers to create a boutique Carnival-style street show, socially distant for performers and residential audiences.

The Carnival visited the Chingford Hall Estate; Stockfield Road, Walthamstow; Beaumont Estate. Leyton and Cathall Road, Leytonstone. For more on cultural events in the borough go to <https://wfculture19.co.uk/>



Test and Trace

What you need to know

Here in Waltham Forest, we want to ensure every resident knows how to prevent the spread of the virus; understands how to get tested and how the virus is affecting us locally.

Keeping you informed will help us all work together to prevent further deaths from this virus and ensure we don't lose the freedoms we have all worked so hard to get back.

We need to be aware that the coronavirus is still around and we all need to take responsibility for stopping the spread. Our main aim is to prevent the spread, and we still need your help to do this.



Yusuf (pictured), chairman of Noor UI Islam, a local charity looking after the social, educational and welfare needs of our community, wears one of our #KeepWalthamForestsafemasks

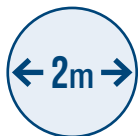
As Waltham Forest residents, please stay vigilant and remember to:



Wash your hands - for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser



Wear a face covering - on all required venues (shops, public transport, enclosed spaces)



Watch your distance - try to stay at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from anyone you do not live with

If you experience any of the following coronavirus symptoms, you must self-isolate immediately with your household and order a test by calling 119 or visiting [NHS.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

A high temperature



A new, continuous cough



A loss to sense of smell or taste



We still need to work hard to keep Waltham Forest safe, so please join us in staying alert to tackle this virus.

KEEP WALTHAM FOREST SAFE  **NHS** Test and Trace

كورونا وائرس كى علامتلىرىغا nhs.uk/coronavirus بىلەن 119 غا ئالدىڭىز كىرىڭىز، تېلېفون قىلىڭىز

Protect your friends and family

KEEP WALTHAM FOREST SAFE  **NHS** Test and Trace

Koronavirüs semptomları mı gösteriyorsunuz?
nhs.uk/coronavirus adresini ziyaret ederek veya 119'u arayarak hemen test yaptırın"

Protect your friends and family

KEEP WALTHAM FOREST SAFE  **NHS** Test and Trace

كورونا وائرس كى علامتلىرىغا nhs.uk/coronavirus بىلەن 119 غا ئالدىڭىز كىرىڭىز، تېلېفون قىلىڭىز

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Protect your friends and family

KEEP WALTHAM FOREST SAFE  **NHS** Test and Trace

A keni simptoma të koronavirusit?
Testohuni tani duke vizituar faqen e internetit ose duke telefonuar në nr. 119

nhs.uk/coronavirus Protect your friends and family

KEEP WALTHAM FOREST SAFE  **NHS** Test and Trace

Aveți simptome de coronavirus?
Testați-vă acum vizitând pagina

nhs.uk/coronavirus sau sunând la numărul 119 Protect your friends and family

KEEP WALTHAM FOREST SAFE  **NHS** Test and Trace

Pajutote koronaviruso simptomus?
Užsisakykite testą apsilankę

nhs.uk/coronavirus arba paskambinę tel. 119 Protect your friends and family

KEEP WALTHAM FOREST SAFE  **NHS** Test and Trace


Ma leedahay astaamaha korona-fayras?
Ha lagu baaro hadda adiga oo booqanaya

nhs.uk/coronavirus ama wacaya 119 Protect your friends and family

KEEP WALTHAM FOREST SAFE  **NHS** Test and Trace

**COVID SYMPTOMS?
GET TESTED NOW.**

nhs.uk/coronavirus OR CALL 119 Protect your friends and family

KEEP WALTHAM FOREST SAFE  **NHS** Test and Trace

Masz objawy zakażenia koronawirusem?
Przebadaj się, postępując zgodnie z informacjami na stronie

nhs.uk/coronavirus lub dzwoniąc pod numer 119 Protect your friends and family

For translated guidance, head over to our website: <https://bit.ly/WFCovidTranslations>

Careering down the right path

The two main contractors for Waltham Forest Council housing, Morgan Sindall Property Services and Aston Group, have been running a range of free online career advice, either one to one or in small friendly groups, as well as offering a range of fascinating, informative and free online courses available to all our residents.

These local residents got our help improving their CV, learning new skills and better preparing them for the job market.

Could we help you too?



Paris, Walthamstow

“I’m about to enter my third year of university for graphic design but felt I needed help with my CV as I was struggling with finding part time work.

“I attended both career workshops and a one to one session and I found these extremely helpful and I think I now have a better understanding of how to look for work. In the one to one session we discussed in more detail ways my CV could

improve and I was also given advice on how to look for work in my local area and for job interviews. At the end of the session I was also given a new more improved CV.”

The trainers put Paris in contact with another resident, Folake, who is launching an online cake baking business. Paris is gaining valuable volunteer experience designing a logo for the new venture.



Christopher, Walthamstow

“I’ve been on furlough due to Covid 19. I used to work in retail but always wanted to work in the banking industry.

“I took part in the CV Writing, job search and Interview Skills sessions. They were very educative.

The one to one session was extremely

welcoming since everything was tailored to suit my exact needs.

“After going through the training and gotten my CV well written and reviewed I applied for job at Barclays as a community banker.”

Christopher is currently awaiting Barclays’ response.



Muhammad, Chingford

“I’m about to finish the last unit of AAT level 2, run by the professional body for accounting technicians.

“Normally this would be an ideal time to gain an apprenticeship position as I would not be able to carry on studying AAT level 3 without an employer’s support.

“I’m really happy about the help I’ve received. Online video sessions helped boost my confidence. I listened to and acted upon all the

advice I received, I updated my CV and now when I apply for jobs I know my CV won’t let me down.

“This session helped me realise I should practice speaking in-front of a camera so that I could present myself better.”

“I would recommend anyone looking for a job to attend these sessions.”

Aston Group have offered Muhammad an interview for an accountancy apprenticeship.



Mary, Walthamstow

“I recently gained a Level 2 Business Administration Apprenticeship at Walthamstow School for Girls. It was an amazing experience but, as it was a maternity cover, there was no role for me from this August.

“I signed up to a series of Employability Workshops, one to one Coaching Sessions, and courses offered by South Essex College and Learning Curve. All of these are free and online.

“I attended an online workshop on Interview Skills and the Job Search and a one to one

pre-interview coaching session. Both trainers, Rachel and Suzi, gave advice which was really useful.

“They were very positive and encouraging and the session has given me an enormous amount of understanding of the interview process and confidence for any subsequent interviews. I know they are available should I have any further queries or need any further help.”

Mary has been successful at interview and has been offered full time employment starting Monday 5 October 2020.

Since the employability programme was launched in Waltham Forest at the end of May:

- 66 residents signed up for online training across both online learning providers
- 14 residents have currently completed their courses
- 65 residents have applied for employability support
- 20 one to one virtual coaching sessions delivered + multiple telephone support calls
- Ten workshops delivered
- One job club/catch up session
- One resident offered volunteer experience with Aston Group on local LBWF school gardening project in July

To find out more about getting career advice and guidance or how to access free online courses that could help you kickstart on the path of a new career go to: <http://bit.ly/wfskill>

Free online courses and career help at Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service

Accounting, art, ceramics, childcare, English, hair and beauty, gardening, maths ... the Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service has hundreds of courses to help you get a new job or improve your wellbeing.

Job hunting? Our courses and free job clubs will help boost your self-confidence and job skills.

Most of our courses are free or up to 70 per cent off depending on your circumstances. We also offer free course assessments to help you find the right course to meet your goals.

Find out more and enrol: call us on **020 8496 2974** or visit https://bit.ly/WFALS_enrol2020-21

Leasehold Update

End of Year Statements of Actual Service Charge 2019/20

This is one of the busiest times of the year for the Home Ownership Team.

The team is working to ensure that statements of actual service charge expenditure for 2019/20 are prepared, certified and dispatched to all our leaseholders by the end of September.

The team now manages over 2,100 leasehold properties so sending out this many statements generates a lot of correspondence and calls which are logged and handled on a first come, first served basis.

At this peak time of demand this can mean that customers may sometimes have to wait longer than normal for their reply. We try to respond to as many queries as we can by November. This is to ensure that when we then apply the actual charge to your account that the charge will reflect the outcome to any matters we have investigated.

Where we have spent less than we estimated at the start of the year a credit adjustment will be made to your service charge account. If we spent more than we estimated for the year a debit adjustment will be applied to your account.

We apply debit adjustments to accounts in November. If you have received notification in your statement of actual expenditure of a debit adjustment we will send you a payment request for the extra amount you need to pay us. If you received notification of a credit adjustment you will not receive a credit note.

Whether you receive a credit adjustment or a debit adjustment you will need to change the amount you pay to keep your account in balance.

If you have any queries about your statement of actual expenditure please contact the Home Ownership Team:

E mail: Rtb.lease@walthamforest.gov.uk

Phone: 0208 496 5204 / 5206 / 5207

You can also write: Home Ownership Team, Cedar Wood House,
2d Fulbourne Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4GG

Is a Credit Union right for you?

In these difficult times, becoming part of a credit union makes more sense than ever.

Joining a credit union can help build your finances. If you want to start saving, if you need access to affordable credit, or if you're looking for a current account to manage your money, a credit union account can be the right choice for you.

Credit unions can also support those who can struggle to access financial services from the big banks.

London Community Credit Union (LCCU) is a local organisation, helping local people.

FAQs FOR RESIDENTS

What is a credit union?

Credit unions (CU) are member organisations made up of people who share a 'common bond'.

Credit union members are encouraged to save money, and from the shared savings pot, CUs finance loans for members at affordable rates. They can also provide banking facilities including full current accounts with a debit card.

How do I join London Community Credit Union?

You can join online, or join and request to borrow via a single application online or join by visiting one of their branches.

What information will I need to join?

LCCU will need to confirm your identity and your address. If you don't have all of these documents speak to the LCCU, and they will try to help.

Do I have to pay a membership fee to join the credit union?

Membership of London Community Credit Union is free. But you need to make a minimum initial saving deposit of £10. LCCU also recommends you commit to saving regularly if you can.

Will my money be safe in a credit union?

London Community Credit Union is part of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. This is the same scheme that protects your savings in a High Street bank.

Mohamed, 47, lives in central Walthamstow. He has been a member of LCCU for over 10 years.

He receives benefits, including Disability Living Allowance, which are paid into his credit union account and from that he puts away £5 a week in a savings account.

In April he requested a loan of £1,500 to be repaid over two years. He had an outstanding loan of £500 which was almost fully paid off.


His new loan request was for a relatively large sum of money but because Mohamed had almost fully repaid his previous loan on schedule, and his history of saving with the credit union, his new loan request was approved.

He will repay the loan at a rate that he can afford from his benefit payments and he will continue saving too.

Irene lives near Blackhorse Road and joined the credit union in 2019 because she wanted to start saving.

She receives Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) benefit payments and from this she is able to save £20 per month via a direct debit.

Earlier this year, her washing machine broke down and it was too costly to repair. Irene asked the credit union for a loan to cover the cost of a replacement. A loan of £600 was agreed to purchase a new machine and pay for delivery and installation. With her loan she can spread the cost over a full year, and because she is continuing to save, next time there is an emergency, she will have the funds to cover it.

 **London Community
Credit Union**

To find out more:

go to <https://londoncu.com/join-us>

Email: info@londoncu.co.uk

or call: 020 7729 9218

How are we doing?

Every year we survey tenants to measure their level of satisfaction in key areas. We examine the results in detail and come up with a plan to improve where satisfaction levels are low. Here are the latest satisfaction figures:

	2019/20
Tenants	
Tenants who were satisfied with most recent repairs	78%
Tenants' satisfaction of repairs and maintenance services	66%
Residents' overall satisfaction rates	69%
Views are listened to and acted upon	49%
Tenants who felt the Council was good at keeping them informed	61.72%

You Said We Did

During the lockdown it was not possible to organise face to face meetings or Tenants and Residents Associations events on estates. However residents told us that they still wanted to maintain that contact and dialogue with housing.

We set up WhatsApp groups for estates to keep them informed on key issues and have organised online forums for residents on the Oak Hill Estate, Highams Park and Essex Close, Walthamstow, as well as taking our regular Housing Forum online and there are plans for more online forums.

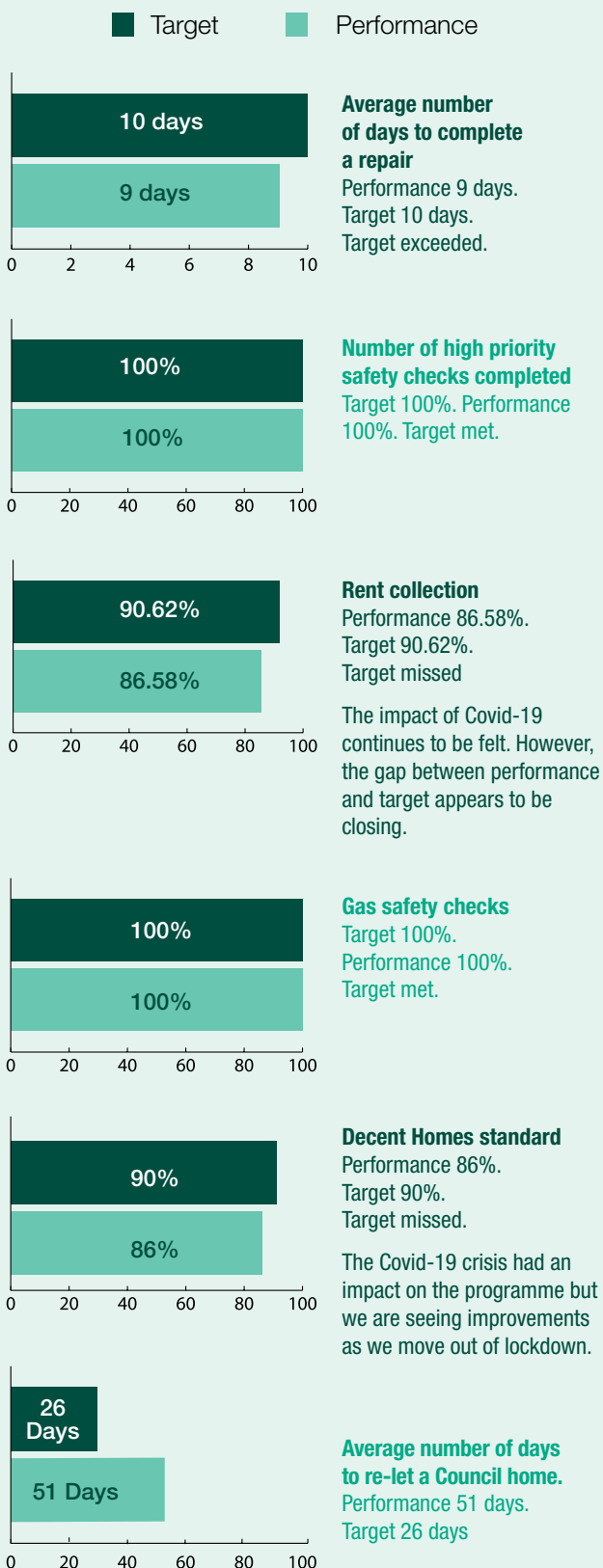
Residents on Attlee Terrace, Walthamstow, said they wanted help to create a Tenant and Resident Association (TRA).

We helped organise a socially distanced meeting open to all residents at the Sunken Garden on the estate which is helping kickstart the new TRA.

Residents on Essex Close, Walthamstow, wanted to create their own garden area but needed water butts installed to provide for the plants and vegetation.

Our maintenance crew helped clear an area safely to ensure water butts could be put in place to catch and provide water for the new garden area.

Performance on key parts of our services to residents as of June 2020



There were very few lettings in April and May, as a result of the lockdown. Numbers are starting to pick up and we are doing all that we can to increase the speed with which properties are let.

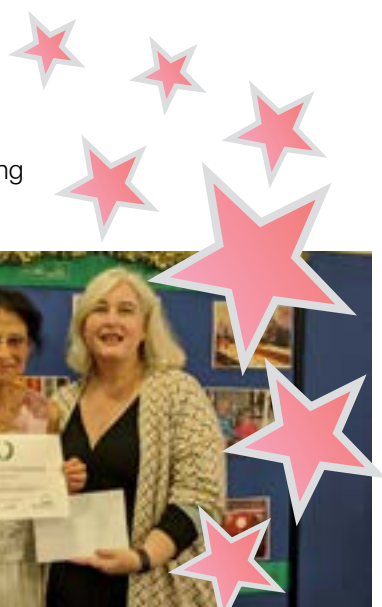
Join our STAR Panel

Our Strategic Tenant and Residents' (STAR) Panel has been running for nearly three years now and in that time the Panel has provided resident insight and helped bring about positive changes in many service areas.

Recently the panel helped the engagement team to set up our remote engagement offer. Panel members assisted in testing out conferencing platforms for the online Housing Forum.

To make sure we get views from as many residents as possible panel members must reapply at the end of three years alongside any new applicants who wish to join.

We are holding selection sessions in the next few months so if you are interested in joining the STAR Panel, email engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk or call **0208 496 4984**.



Terri (pictured, with Cllr Louise Mitchell) is one of our residents who has been part of our STAR Panel. Terri says "I really enjoyed being with other residents and working together with them. It has been an interesting experience and hopefully through the work we've done things are improving."

As well as the STAR Panel, Terri has taken part in our scrutiny reviews of services. "Really, Scrutiny is about understanding how residents see particular areas of housing, collating that information and come up with a plan and recommendations for the Council."



Lockdown Video Competition Winner

In our last Resident News, we did a shout out asking you to send us your lockdown videos.



Our winners had to be Andreena and her daughter Renee, who volunteer to distribute birthday boxes to help struggling families celebrate children's birthdays during lockdown.

If you have feel-good pictures, videos or stories that you'd like to share about your friends family or neighbours, send them to engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk or Whatsapp them to **07715 536 865** and you could win yourself a £50 shopping voucher.

Resident Scrutiny Review: Leaseholder Services

Leaseholder Services was chosen by the STAR Panel as the next area for scrutiny by the Resident Scrutiny Team.

The team were given training and supported by the engagement team as well as an independent consultant to carry out the review and make recommendations.

The STAR panel will ensure Housing Services implement an action plan based on the recommendations. The team will be speaking to leaseholders across the borough as part of their review. Register your interest in being part of future reviews by emailing engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk or calling **0208 496 4984**.

Building Safety Task Force

The Building Safety Task Force has been meeting monthly to help us develop our Building Safety Engagement Strategy. At the last meeting, we heard from task force members who had been out and about looking at the building safety information readily available to residents on estates.

Green fingers keeping busy

Our independent living residents have been busy sprucing up the garden areas on their schemes.

The residents, aided by the housing engagement team; Organiclea, a workers co-operative growing food in Chingford, and our contractors, Aston Group, have transformed the open spaces on our schemes.

Organiclea supplied organic seeds, potted plants and garden tools to the residents to brighten up their flats and the communal spaces and Aston Group volunteered to help carry out the deliveries. Plaxton House, Leytonstone, resident Shahida said: "It has been really lovely to create our small gardens in the open spaces."

Housing engagement has been running a contest for the best display and best photos.

July winners

Brenda Akinsemoyin (pictured, middle left)

**Soma Varatharajasarma/
Brenda Akinsemoyin**

Shahida Mughall (pictured, bottom left)

August winners

Brenda

Rita Buttifant

Congratulations to all the winners.

Special end of summer prizes will be announced by Cllr Louise Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness Prevention.



Contact Us

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E17 4GG

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16a Morris Avenue
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Please contact our housing teams via phone or email.

Sign up to get news about Waltham Forest housing by email at walthamforest.gov.uk/StayConnected

For general enquiries, reporting anti-social behaviour and repairs:

☎ 020 8496 4197

✉ wfdirect@walthamforest.gov.uk

➡ www.walthamforest.gov.uk/housing

Phone lines are open from 9am–5pm Monday to Friday.

For help and advice on paying your rent:

☎ 020 8496 4197

For feedback and comments on the newsletter:

Please email engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk