

Your tenant and leaseholder newsletter



Proud to launch Proud Places Page 08

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Welcome



Welcome to our summer edition of Resident News. Summer has taken its time getting here but we have finally managed to grab some sunshine this year! The Housing Team have been out and about in all-weather ensuring our residents are safe, healthy and have a decent roof over their heads.

We have had an amazing response to the Covid-19 vaccination programme in the borough and I would encourage all who are eligible but haven't received your jabs yet to book yourself in. There are several convenient sites, across the borough, where you can get vaccinated. Vaccinations not only help keep us safe but also keep the people around us safe too. It is important that we are still vigilant and follow government guidelines at all times, including washing your hands regularly and wearing masks.

With the eventual lifting of the work from home order, our Housing Services Team has been looking at new working models to ensure we provide the most efficient and accessible service to our residents. Find out more on page 3.

This summer saw the official opening of Fellowship Square. The launch had a hugely exciting programme of activities and events. I really enjoyed the performances and seeing the new fountain in all its glory. You can check out the programme of events at wfculture19.co.uk

As the Chair of the Strategic Tenants and Residents (STAR) Panel, I was very excited to meet our six new members. I look forward to working closely with them to improve residents experience and ensure you are getting an exceptional service.

With the gradual reduction of government financial support offers such as the furlough scheme, we expect many more people to be in need of work; which is why our repairs contractors Morgan Sindall Property Services and Aston Group have been providing a variety of employment support opportunities throughout the pandemic. If you are looking for work or know someone living in Waltham Forest that is looking for work, check out page 6 for more information on their offer as well as the Council's own Rapid Employment Support Service.

I am very excited to announce the launch of our new Proud Places programme which is an investment of £1 million over the next five years to our estates. Residents will lead the way on where the funding is most needed and will have the biggest impact. Have a look at page 8 for more information on how to submit your ideas.

Our new parking policy was recently approved by Cabinet. We know many of our residents have been struggling with this issue for a long time and we hope the new policy will allow us to improve the situation. To find out which estates will be consulted first, check out page 9.

I am looking forward to seeing more and more of you in person at community events as we cautiously move out of lockdown.

Thank you

Councillor Louise Mitchell

Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness Prevention

Getting in touch with Waltham Forest Council

After listening to our residents, Waltham Forest Council has put in place new, more efficient ways of getting in touch. This will ensure we support you as effectively as possible.

For the quickest contact with Council staff, visit **walthamforest.gov.uk** and use the **'Chat live with us'** box.

We've also moved our support staff from office buildings to our libraries, so you can visit your local library if you need in-person support. There are eight libraries in Waltham Forest, so none of our residents need to travel far to get the support they need – find your nearest library on our website: **walthamforest.gov.uk/service-categories/libraries**.

You can also contact our Resolution Centre on **020 8496 3000**.

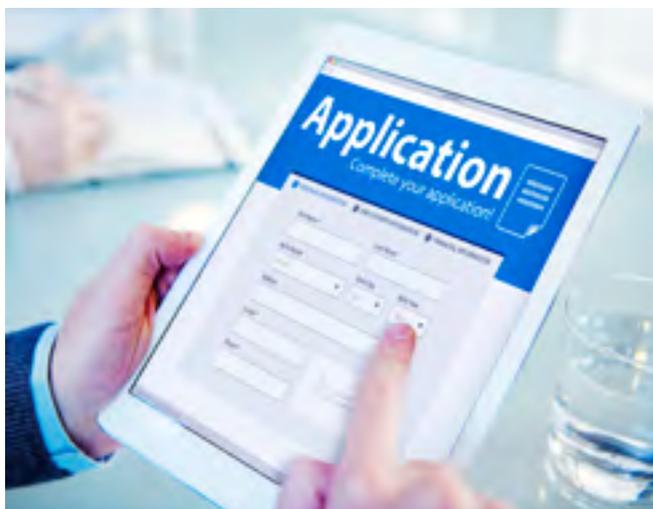


New working arrangements – Cedar Wood House

Over the past year, as we have responded to the pandemic, we've seen major changes in the way you can access our services and how we carry out our day-to-day work. This includes the closure of the reception at Cedar Wood House on Fulbourne Road E17 and more staff working from or out of home in line with the government's coronavirus guidance.

The department has worked very successfully in light of these new changes, and the resident surveys during this period have reflected that. We have increased the convenience availability of services through extended use of our Customer Resolution Centre. The Centre is fully equipped to handle a diverse range of calls at a wide range of times and days (including out-of-hours for emergencies) than we were previously able to do from Cedar Wood House. We've also been updating our website to allow for an increased use of online forms that enable you to access information and request services 24/7.

There are no plans to re-open the reception at Cedar Wood House, but it will continue to improve our service to residents through better access on line and the Customer Resolution Centre, and increased mobile working by our officers and utilising community resources such as libraries.



BUILDING SAFETY UPDATE

Over the past months Surveyors and Specialist Contractors have been carrying out minor intrusive works to high rise blocks – this has been in preparation for the design and planning of the remedial works to be carried out to bring these buildings up to the new Building Safety standards being proposed by Government.

We will be notifying you when these works are about to commence, in the meantime our High Rise Buildings will continue with the **Waking Watch** Service. Their role is to continually patrol all floors and the exterior perimeter of the building in order to detect a fire, raise the alarm, and carry out the role of evacuation management.

If the **Waking Watch** identify or are notified of a fire incident they will attend immediately, assess the situation, and if required call the Fire Brigade. They will raise the alarm with residents, support you to evacuate and liaise with the Fire Brigade when they arrive to provide relevant information.

Please be aware that should the Waking Watch alert you of a fire incident and instruct you to evacuate – you must leave the building as quickly and safely as possible closing your flat door behind you.

Should residents wish to discuss the Building Safety Works or Waking Watch Service, please contact **BuildingSafety@walthamforest.gov.uk**. In the meantime we would like to remind all our residents on basic Fire Safety within your home:

Preventing fires in your home - general advice

Fit smoke alarms:

- **Leaseholders** – please fit smoke alarms on every floor of your home and test them once a week. The Fire Brigade provides FREE home fire safety checks and will provide a free smoke alarm; book your appointment online at london-fire.gov.uk or call 0800 028 44 28.
- **Council Tenants** – smoke alarms should already be fitted in your home. If not, please contact the Waltham Forest Repair Centre on 0208 496 3000 (select option 4 for Housing, then option 1 for Repairs).

Be extra careful with exposed flames:

- **Candles** – never leave lit candles unattended.
- **Matches** – ALWAYS keep away from children.
- **Cigarettes** – ensure these are stubbed out, disposed of carefully and NEVER smoke in bed.
- **Take care in the kitchen** – most fires start here; NEVER leave your cooking unattended and take extra care with hot oil.

Fire safety precautions

- **Keep emergency exit route clear** – ensure all communal areas are free from personal items.
- **Close internal doors** – before bed make sure all internal doors are closed.
- **Correctly store flammable materials** – do not store these in your home, bin store or chutes.
- **Keep electrics safe** – do not overload electrical sockets and do not store combustible materials close to your electricity meter or fuse box.

The London Fire Brigade have helpful fire advice in different languages

www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/



Fit smoke alarms on each floor



Don't leave cooking unattended



Don't overload electrical sockets

Domestic abuse help for residents

Waltham Forest Housing Service has committed to improve the support offer available for survivors of domestic abuse. This involves ensuring staff are equipped with the right training tools to identify and intervene as well as providing a trusted source of help.

Alongside an extensive staff training programme, the service will deliver a communications and resident engagement programme to raise awareness of the support available within the Housing Service and the broader support options available in London and across the country.

The service has prepared a detailed directory of support agencies and organisations from which officers can advise and refer their clients. The table below is a snapshot of some of the information contained within this.

As the programme progresses, more support service information will be added to;

1. The domestic abuse and housing information page; www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/domestic-abuse-help-housing
2. The page for tenants with contact information for key support services; www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/other-key-services

IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER – CALL 999

If you cannot speak, respond to the questions from the call operator by coughing, tapping, or pressing “55”.

Domestic abuse includes any single incident or multiple incidents of those listed below, which take place within a current or past intimate relationship, or within a family, or caring arrangement.

- Someone tries to control you by tracking your actions in person or online, or by limiting access to your money, medicine, or contact with other people,
- Someone makes threats of harm towards you or someone you care about,
- Someone is violent or abusive.

Domestic abuse can include any form of psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone. You are not to blame. You are not alone.

You can contact the services below for free, confidential support and advice.

Call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline if you want to talk about your experience, seek refuge accommodation, or access other support services.

**Call 0800 2000 247
Available 24/7**

This helpline is available for non-English speaking callers.

Visit any of the Council's domestic abuse drop-in centres for immediate advice and support. No appointment needed.	Visit Leyton Children and Family Centre 215 Queens Road E17 8PJ	Available 10am-4pm Monday - Wednesday.
	Visit Chingford Children and Family Centre Hub 5 Oaks Grove, Chingford, E4 6EY Tel: 020 8496 1551	Available 2pm-5pm on Friday.
	Visit Walthamstow Children and Family Centre 313 Billet Road, Walthamstow, E17 5PX Tel: 020 8496 3511	Available 10am to 4pm on Thursday.
Speak to the helpline for male or female survivors of rape or sexual assault.	Tel: 0808 802 9999	Available 12-2.30pm and 7-9.30pm Monday to Sunday.
Speak to the local domestic abuse support service; Waltham Forest Solace Women's Aid for practical and emotional support.	Tel: 07340 683382 Email: walthamforestIDSVAservice@solacewomensaid.org	
Speak to the Financial Support Line for Survivors of domestic abuse.	Tel: 0808 1968845 Web: www.survivingeconomicabuse.org	Available 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday 9am – 12:30pm on Friday

Employment support

Want to learn a new skill, refresh your CV, train for a new career or develop personal resilience?

We know that many residents are worried about the future and about their jobs at this difficult time. That is why Morgan Sindall Property Services and Aston Group, the two main contractors for Waltham Forest Council housing, are offering support to make sure you are prepared for your next employment opportunity. They offer a range of free pre-employment online training courses and workshops to support Waltham Forest residents through the Covid-19 pandemic. Come along to our friendly, informal workshops and learn some tips and tricks to getting employed!

Next sessions:

- **CV writing**
Wednesday 25th August 10am-12pm
- **Interview skills**
Wednesday 25th August 2pm-4pm

What courses are available?

- **CV writing**
We can help you refresh or create your CV, identifying and promoting your key skills
- **Mock & job interview skills**
Learn the best techniques for job interviews and practice with mock sessions.
- **Job search**
Advice on where to look for jobs or help with completing job application forms
- **Online training courses**
Available with a Level 2 certificate in a variety of topics

How do I apply?

Please email Rachel Statter at Ashton Group on R.Statter@astongroup.co.uk to book your place. Or for an enrolment form please visit www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wfemployment

If you don't have digital access call **0208 496 4942**



Looking for employment support? We're here to help

What we offer:

- Your own employment advisor
- 1-2-1 support at your pace
- Help with your CV, cover letter, applications and personal statements
- Help to prepare for interviews

Criteria:

- A Waltham Forest resident over 19 yrs old
- Unemployed for the last year (six months if aged 19-24) or made unemployed due to Covid-19
- Eligible to work and able to claim state benefits
- A valid UK National Insurance number

Email: stepsintowork@walthamforest.gov.uk
Call: 0208 496 4182 • 10am to 4pm, Mon – Fri

Housing Allocation Scheme 2021

Reminder for housing applicants to update their housing register applications

We reported previously that Housing Services had successfully launched the Council's new Housing Allocation Scheme on 04 February 2021. This replaced the earlier policy that had been in place since September 2013.

Following the launch, many vacant Council and housing association properties have since been advertised and allocated to applicants who have been re-assessed and prioritised for accommodation, in line with the new allocation scheme.

The Council had been working on the framework for the new scheme for many months and this included a large consultation exercise with residents and stakeholders before the final details were approved.

The new scheme is fully compliant with all relevant legislation introduced since the implementation of the earlier 2013 policy. In addition, the Council have simplified the priority system so applicants may have a better understanding of their priority levels and possible waiting times for social housing. This will enable them to make informed choices about other housing options.

The scheme features numerous updates which include five new priority bands, revised eligibility criteria, and changes to bedroom assessments for households. Full details can be found at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/housing-policies-and-guidance.

As part of the Council's earlier implementation of the new policy, all existing housing applicants were sent letters dated 04 January 2021 with a request that they update their applications via the online housing registration form.

Unfortunately, there are still a high number of applicants that have not yet completed necessary updates to their applications. We would encourage all customers to ensure their details are fully updated as a matter of urgency. This is to ensure that Housing Services have their correct information and household details on file for rehousing.

The Council are now in the process of cancelling housing applications for those customers who have failed to update their details as requested. This may result in the loss of any previously awarded priority for housing and associated waiting time for those applications that are cancelled and removed from the housing register.

Further assistance

For Council's housing register applicants if you require further advice, help and support in updating your application please contact the Waltham Forest Customer Services Team on:

Tel – **020 8496 4197**

Email – wfdirect@walthamforest.gov.uk



Our Proud Places programme

On Wednesday 23 June 2021, to celebrate the launch of our **Proud Places** programme, Waltham Forest Council held a small event for residents on the newly refurbished Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) on Stocksfield Road.

What is the Proud Place programme?

Our aim is to improve how our residents feel about their communities; the Proud Places programme is one part of our vision to build pride in your community. We are looking forward to working with residents to create Proud Places, improving the look and feel of housing estates ensuring communities thrive and where residents want to live and enjoy.

£1 million will be invested into the Proud Places programme; the funding will be divided over five years, making £200k available for resident led improvement works to the environment in and around our housing estates each year.

At the event, approximately 25 residents attended alongside the local ward councillors and Cllr Louise Mitchell, Portfolio Lead for Housing. Sports management consultancy company, 2% Sports Group, invited young residents to join a taster session in the MUGA ahead of the 12-week multisport programme which started in July. This is just one of the many activities Waltham Forest Council is organising at the MUGA on Stocksfield Road during the summer.

Our contractors, Morgan Sindall and Astons, kindly provided free sports equipment, such as footballs, basketballs, and netballs, to encourage residents to use the MUGA's. The event was also supported by Wood Street First.

Cllr Mitchell said *“Our home is not just the four walls we live inside, it is our estate, streets and neighbourhood. The last year has shown us all how important our home is, and this is why we are launching the Proud Places programme. I am really pleased to hear how excited residents are to have this improved MUGA and all the activities we are planning to take place on it.”*

Residents were very pleased with the improvement works on their estate. One resident, Juli Ozer said *“A great event by the housing team to celebrate the opening of the new MUGA!”*



Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) on Stocksfield Road



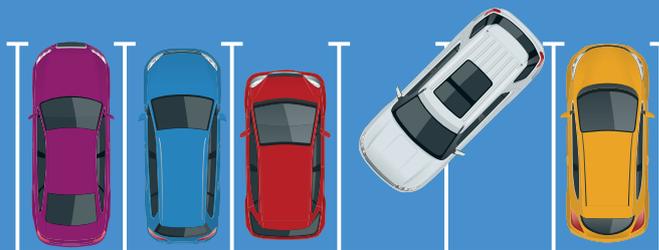
Long Leys Park

Got an idea for our Proud Places programme?

We would like to hear from YOU! If you would like to see some investment in your area, for example a new community garden, better paving, improved facilities for young people and families, please email Proudplaces@walthamforest.gov.uk including name of your estate and idea.

Please note: We will be consulting residents and Councillors on all Proud Place improvements to ensure you, as a Waltham Forest resident, has a clear voice in how we make your community a 'Proud Place'.

Parking update



The proposed parking policy consultation ended on 22 January 2021. A report went to Cabinet on 22 April 2021 and the policy was adopted. The Cabinet report is available to read on the Council's website. You can also find more information on our estate parking webpage at walthamforest.gov.uk/content/housing-estate-parking

Estate permit parking

During the Summer we will be engaging with residents on the following estates to find out their views on a permit parking schemes for their estate:

- The Drive Estate
- Essex Close Estate
- St George's Court & Whipps Cross House
- Burrell & Rayner Towers
- The Avenue Estate
- Tristram & Nagle Closes
- Northwood Towers & Hopson House – Marlowe Road Estate

We will then carry out consultation to confirm if residents want permit parking controls. If 51% or more of people that respond are in favour of a permit parking scheme, we will seek permission to introduce such a scheme.

If you live on any of these estates and are interested in being involved please contact our Inclusion and Engagement Team at engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk and state that you are interested in parking engagement.

Other estates will be consulted over the next two years with the intention of introducing permit controls to more estates where residents have told us there are problems with non-residents taking up valuable parking spaces.

If you have any questions about our plans for parking permit schemes or emergency access parking controls, please contact estateparking@walthamforest.gov.uk, or go to our website www.walthamforest.gov.uk/content/housing-estate-parking.

Emergency access parking controls

Work has started on new parking restrictions to ensure emergency vehicles can always get access to our estates. These works may reduce the parking availability or remove it completely, but only because parked vehicles have been blocking access routes which have never been designated as parking areas. These works are essential to keep you safe – allowing ambulances, fire engines and other emergency service vehicles to get to your home.

Estates included in the programme for emergency access controls in 2021/22 are listed below:

- Bakers Almshouses
- Vicarage Road 266-276 (Faulkener Mews)
- Bisterne Avenue 102-120
- Carlton Road, 49-67
- Cherrydown Avenue
- Ellen Miller House, Raglan Road
- Ellis House, Shernhall Street
- Hoe Street 315 (corner Grove Rd)
- Hungerdown & St Egberts Way
- Old Church Road
- St Margaret's & St Columba, Cruikshank Road
- St Marks House, Evelyn Road
- Stocksfield Road
- Stoneydown House, Stoneydown
- Tenby Court
- Tom Smith House, Raglan Road
- Valley Side Parade
- Wadham Avenue
- Westbury House, Westbury Road
- Wood street 86-98

We will write to you with a plan showing where the double yellow lines will be and to let you know when works will commence.



Eid



To celebrate the end of Ramadan, Morgan Sindall and Aston Group in partnership with PL84U AL-SUFFA helped to kick start the festivities.

Eid is one of the biggest celebrations in Islamic faith, a religious holiday celebrated by Muslims worldwide. Eid marks the end of the month-long sunrise to sunset fasting during Ramadan.

All residents of Essex Close were welcome to enjoy the festive afternoon. They were treated to sweet hampers and colouring fun for the little ones.

As giving to others is an important part of celebrating Eid. Residents donated food parcels to the food bank run by Saira from PL84U in Wood Street.

Councillor Louise Mitchell was a special guest and enjoyed the well-attended socially distanced celebration.

She said: "This has been a fantastic event and it is so good to see the local community come together and celebrate and learn so much about this holy month for our Muslim friends."



The Gigabit Borough

Waltham Forest Council recognises the importance of digital connectivity and how digital inclusion can help transform the lives of our residents.

Thousands of our social housing residents will soon benefit from access to faster, more reliable broadband services, following newly signed wayleave agreements with gigafast broadband providers Community Fibre and Hyperoptic.

These partnerships will see new connections to Waltham Forest's social housing properties via a selection of full fibre networks. Our strategy is to enable the delivery of fibre broadband at affordable prices to every resident and business in the Borough. We see this as the foundation for a digital borough and to prepare us for 2030 and beyond.

Waltham Forest has a long-term view for the borough that is centred on businesses and residents being able to benefit from high-speed connectivity.

Currently, just 18% of properties in the UK have access to full fibre services, which is the 'gold standard' of broadband

infrastructure. Because a full fibre connection goes all the way into the property, the residents can enjoy a step-change in their internet speeds and experience.

Rollouts started in June, with over 2,600 properties due to be connected by December 2021. A range of flexible packages will be available offering up to 1Gb, with average speeds of up to 900Mbps – that's over 12 times faster than the UK average.

To further support the community, the providers are also providing lifelong complimentary connections to our Council-run community rooms and sheltered accommodations which means residents can access free internet services. They are also working with the council to gift several free laptops for communal use, alongside these complimentary connections.

We will also be training Digital Champions and arranging workshops for residents to improve their IT skills.

Get involved...

If you would like to become a Digital Champion or simply improve your IT skills, contact the Inclusion and Engagement team at engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk or by calling **020 8496 4942**

Greener homes

improving the energy efficiency of housing in Waltham Forest

Work is underway to deliver energy efficiency improvements to 40 council homes using funds secured by Waltham Forest from the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme.



Installation of external wall insulation at Guildsway, E17



This is an important part of our Climate Emergency pledge to be a zero-carbon borough, with local buildings contributing almost half of carbon emissions in Waltham Forest. It is also a vital way of ensuring our residents can keep down their fuel bills.

The improvements being made are mostly external wall insulation, but also include smaller, lower-cost measures such as loft insulation and underfloor insulation. An example of a property

which has received external wall insulation is shown in the picture above. Applying this measure to a standard mid-terrace property will lead to a typical yearly saving of £400 on energy bills.

We hope to secure additional funding in the future, so we can continue similar works improving more homes across the borough. Not only will this benefit our residents but also the environment as well.



Aston Group unveils first electric vehicle

We're delighted Aston Group, our buildings and maintenance contractor, has introduced a brand new, state-of-the-art electric van to its fleet of vehicles. This is in support of Waltham Forest Council's ambitions to become a net-zero borough by 2030.

The Renault Kangoo ZE, which is wrapped in bright green graphics, is based at the company's Wood Street office and costs just 4p per mile to run. The vehicle can achieve 125 miles per charge in the summer and 75 in winter, which makes it ideal for nipping about Waltham Forest!

The investment comes as the company develops its sustainability credentials with the aim of significantly reducing its carbon footprint in response to the climate emergency. The Kangoo ZE currently sits alongside the company's existing fleet of vehicles, which are being modernised to meet Euro 6 emissions standards by October 2021. If it performs well, however, it may be the first of many electric vehicles to join the fleet.

Aston Group is currently working in partnership with Waltham Forest Council on a number of projects designed to enhance energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions within the local community. The company has already installed external wall insulation and solar panels at properties throughout the borough, while overseeing a whole house retrofit project, which will demonstrate the benefits of improved energy efficiency.

Aston Group's Gas and Repair Manager – and the driver of the electric vehicle – Luca Carstea says: "When I first received the phone call about driving Aston Group's first electric van I was a bit worried. It was probably the natural fear of the unknown; I've been driving for 26 years but I had never driven an electric vehicle!



Cllr Louise Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Housing & Homelessness Prevention with Luca Carstea from Aston Group



I needn't have worried, though. Within 10 minutes of driving the van I felt familiar with it. It couldn't be much simpler. Plus, the quietness within the cabin makes driving feel more relaxing. What really amazes me, though, is the braking; I barely need to use the brakes because the electric motor slows the van on its own!

I am delighted that Aston Group has taken this step towards joining the electric revolution. It will help reduce the carbon footprint of our company and hopefully be the first of many!"

A brand-new multi-use games area (MUGA) launches at Feature17 in the heart of Walthamstow

Waltham Forest Council in partnership with Countryside, have officially unveiled the multi-use games area (MUGA) at Feature17, the £190m-regeneration scheme of the 50-year-old Marlowe Road estate in Walthamstow.

The MUGA is a 345 sq. m, floodlit multi-use play park offering space for a range of sports including basketball and football. The area is split into three sections to target different age ranges. The first section is a large toddler play area, the second is a fixed play area with equipment for 10-year olds and above and the third is an exercise gym equipment area available for all ages.

Feature17 is already an established community with a number of residents calling it home. We recently launched Scene 2, comprising of 98 stylish one, two and three-bedroom apartments across three blocks where distinctive architecture meets landscaped, open spaces and play parks.

Cllr Simon Miller, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Waltham Forest Council, said: "Our Public Service Strategy underlines the need to keep developing our borough so that every one of our residents can easily access what they need to live a fulfilling and healthy life within their local area. This multi-use game area as part of the Feature17 development is a high quality space that can help foster a more local healthy and sustainable way of life that many residents are calling for."



Daniel Layton, Managing Director, Partnerships North London, Countryside, said: "Having worked closely with Waltham Forest Council, it is great that we can finally open the multi-use play area at Feature17. This another key milestone in the development journey as residents can now make the most of the facilities on their doorstep. The challenges of the past year have really highlighted the importance of being part of a community and the need for outdoor space – and this is a timely addition for the residents."



The opening was attended by Cllr Simon Miller, Cllr Louise Mitchell and Mike Woolliscroft, Chief Executive Partnerships South, Daniel Layton, Managing Director of Partnerships North London, and Dan Kelly, Construction Director from Countryside.



Residents of Turners Court with Julie Haughton, Housing Engagement Officer and Aston contractor

Turners Court

Resident gardeners, at one of our sheltered housing schemes, were pleased to receive an extra addition to their communal garden. Our contractors Aston Group installed a solar powered water fountain to enhance the garden. The fountain was grant funded by the Housing Engagement Team at Turners Court.

During lockdown, the garden has been a relaxing haven for residents to enjoy and watch wildlife.

The fountain has been a big hit for bird watching; residents are enjoying seeing the birds drinking and splashing in the water.

Keen gardener and resident, Chander, said: "The water fountain has made such a difference to the garden. I enjoy doing a bit of gardening it's very therapeutic."

Performance on key parts of our services to residents

■ Target ■ Performance

Average number of days to complete a repair

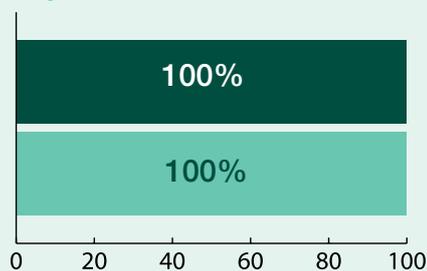
Performance 15 days.
Target 10 days.
Target missed.



Performance was impacted by the lockdown this year and the first lockdown last year. We would ask you to bear with us as much as you can until we are able to safely carry out routine repairs as we move out of lockdown.

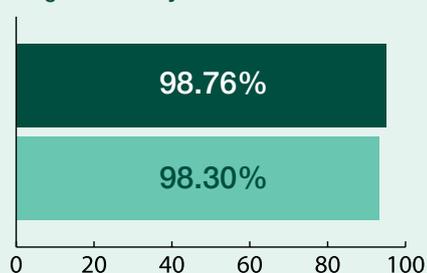
Number of high priority safety checks completed

Target 100%.
Performance 100%.
Target met.



Rent collection

Performance 98.30%.
Target 98.76%.
Target narrowly missed.

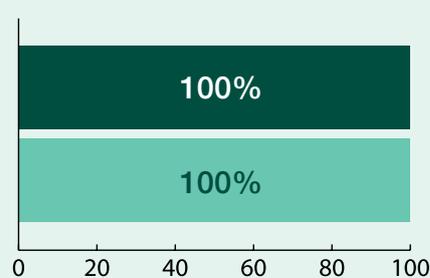


Rent recovery performance deteriorated during the first lockdown as people began to lose their jobs and were furloughed. Covid restrictions have also meant that the Council has not been able to take court action to recover the debt. The debt recovery level is now close to target but it will need to be monitored closely as if levels of unemployment rise and restrictions on court action continue this is likely to make debt recovery more difficult.

■ Target ■ Performance

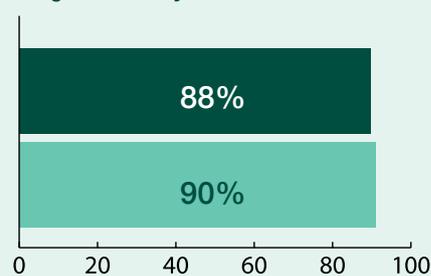
Gas safety checks

Target 100%.
Performance 100%.
Target met.



Decent Homes standard

Performance 88%.
Target 90%.
Target narrowly missed.



The Covid-19 crisis meant that most decent homes works were put on hold. Plans are in place to resume delayed works this year.

Average number of days to re-let a Council home.

Performance 30 days.
Target 26 days.
Target missed.



Performance was impacted by the first lockdown, but performance improved during the year and the number of empty properties were kept at a low level.

STAR panel update

STAR is Housing's Strategic Tenants And Residents panel. They have played an influential role in the scrutiny and review lots of housing areas such repairs, building safety, parking, rents. We would like to thank all the members for their commitment and valuable contributions over the past few years.

Sadly, it is time for some of the panel members to step away. We would like to say a big thank you to **Jurgita Stirnaite** and **Terresa Spratt** for all they're hard work on the panel. They have challenged Waltham Forest Council on behalf of fellow residents, which has driven change and improvements to the lives of many tenants and leaseholders. Thank you!

We recently held a recruitment drive to find new members to the STAR panel. We are happy to announce four new members – **Heather Gardiner, Josie Lewis, Ahmed Hussain** and **Lesley Cartwright** In addition, our Tenant Management Organisations (TMO), Friday Hill TMO and Sams TMO have both nominated two new members, **Arsalan Tariq** and **Stephen Jeffrey**, to represent their interests at STAR panel meetings.

Our latest STAR panel meeting was emotional with heartfelt goodbyes but also excitement for the future. The new panel members got stuck in reviewing our latest performance information and satisfaction data. They also looked at our draft Building Safety Engagement Strategy.

If you would like to find out more about STAR or are interested participating in our next recruitment drive, please email: engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk, call **020 8496 4942** or send a text/WhatsApp message to **0771553 6865**.



Cllr Mitchell with Jurgita Stirnaite



Cllr Mitchell with Terresa Spratt

You Said We Did

You Said	We Did
Sheltered housing residents have requested for the communal lounges to be opened back up as Covid-19 restrictions are eased.	Unfortunately, due to the pandemic our Sheltered Housing communal lounges had to close. As our sheltered housing residents are of a higher age group with potentially an increased risk, the decision to close the lounges allowed us to stay within the Government guidelines and ensure residents were socially distanced. We are now organising a few small-scale events in communal lounges to allow residents to meet socially, make use of the space whilst still staying safe and maintaining social distancing.
Sheltered housing residents have enquired for more wellbeing activities, enabling them to get advice for lots of different issues or concerns.	We are partnering with Age UK on a new a pilot project, a foot care clinic. This service is only offered to our residents in sheltered housing schemes. The pilot scheme will start in Boothby and Holmcroft House and utilising treatment rooms in our hubs.
Residents from St Egberts Way and Hungerdown estate were having issues with fly-tipping and vermin. They also said the bin area was very unsightly.	To help combat these issues, we installed a discreet, fenced off bin enclosure which has considerably improved the look of the area, while reducing the vermin and fly-tipping problems.

Complete our resident involvement survey and you could win £50!

The Housing team is committed to putting residents at the heart of service design and delivery. We want YOU to have a voice, to be heard and we would like your homes and neighbourhoods to be safe and of a standard that we can all be proud of.

Help us to develop our **Resident Involvement Strategy 2022-25** by completing the short survey below. The strategy will set out how we will involve you in the decisions which impact your homes and communities.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Residents-2021>

The survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete and you will be entered into a prize draw for £50.

Surveys must be completed by **16 August 2021** to be entered in the prize draw.



If you would like some help to complete your questionnaire, please email the engagement team; engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk phone **020 8496 4942** or text/WhatsApp **07715 536 865**.



Waltham Forest

Contact Us

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E17 4GG

Waltham Forest Council Housing, Resident Services Billericay Office

16a Morris Avenue
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CM11 2JR

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

RESIDENT  NEWS