

Your tenant and leaseholder newsletter



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Generation Gap**

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Welcome



Councillor Louise Mitchell
Cabinet Member for Housing
and Homelessness Prevention

For the last four years Waltham Forest Council, like all local authorities, has had to reduce our rents by one per cent a year. In recent weeks, our tenants will have received letters telling them that council rents are to increase by 2.7% this year.

The decision to increase council rents is not one that we take lightly, but the proposed 2.7% increase will increase the weekly rent by an average £2.74 in a two bed and £3.17 per week in a three bedroom property.

The cost of living in a Council home still remains substantially lower than renting in the private sector. Following the 2.7% increase, our rents will, on average, be just 33.37% of private rents in the borough.

The benefit is seen particularly for families - for example renting a four bedroom Council home costs just 29.35% of the average private rent in Waltham Forest for this sized home.

However, we all acknowledge that the value of a Council home goes far beyond lower rent levels. A Council home provides greater security. Provided they abide by the terms of their tenancy agreement, a tenant can stay in their home for as long as they choose.

Tenants have the security of knowing they can contact our contractors about repairs. They can benefit from upgrades to their home, like new bathrooms and kitchens, as well as to their estate.

That Government policy over the last four years has cost us £16m. That is £16m we would have used to reinvest in our housing stock and improve people's homes.

The decision to reintroduce the ability for local authorities like ourselves to increase rents is essential for the long-term financial viability of our housing stock.

The small rent increase will help finance our ongoing Major Works programme of improvements across our housing stock, including bringing in new measures to enhance fire and building safety.

As part of our commitment to improve building safety we want to ensure more transparency in how we deal with the issue and we want greater involvement from our residents.

That is why we are currently looking for residents who would be interested in being part of a Task Force examining fire and building safety **(see pages 10 and 11)**.

The Task Force is open to all residents and we are particularly eager to hear from residents who live in any of our high rise blocks or sheltered housing schemes.

Ensuring access

New parking restrictions to ensure emergency vehicles can always gain access to our estates are on their way.

The first estates in the programme will see new signs and clear street markings on the emergency routes introduced in May.

If your block is included in that first group, you will already have seen notices about the restrictions posted around your estate and received letters telling you about the changes.

Vehicles blocking access on estates are a major concern for the emergency services who need clear routes in case of an emergency. It's also an issue that many residents have told us is a worry to them.

Once the restrictions are in place, enforcement officers can issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) when vehicles park on the emergency access routes or in front of garages, and we can tow vehicles away if they are blocking access for emergency vehicles.

Waltham Forest Council is strengthening its commitment to building safety. This is just one of many ways we are working to ensure residents are safer in their home. **To find out more – and learn how you can get involved – go to pages 10 & 11.**



Your bin collection day

You may have noticed a change to the day of your bin collection this month.

Most households now have a new bin collection day. The reason for the change is to make our waste and recycling collection service more efficient.

If you are unsure of your new bin collection day you can find it by going to walthamforest.gov.uk/mybinday

Your rubbish and recycling are still collected every week, with garden and food waste continuing to be collected every two weeks for most of the borough.

If you live in a flat with communal bins, and you previously had a fortnightly food collection service, you will now receive a weekly food collection.

Waste and recycling will all be collected on the same day, but by separate vehicles meaning more can fit on the vehicles allowing the crews to collect more for longer.

Residents can also recycle more than ever as the Council expands its collection services.

To have small electricals, clothing and household batteries collected, leave these items out on top of your green and brown recycling bins on their normal collection day, inside a plastic bag.

They should not be placed inside any of the wheelie bins but left out in plain view on top of them.

These items cannot be collected from flats with communal bins at this time and should be taken to a public recycling bank instead. To find your nearest public recycling bank, go to walthamforest.gov.uk/recyclemore

Housing Forum

Want to talk to housing officers about repairs, anti-social behaviour, rent or other housing issues?

Or find out more about our building safety plans?

Or how the Council is going to deal with the challenges of the next decade?

Our next Housing Forum, open to all our tenants and leaseholders, will be held on **Wednesday 25 March 2020.**

See back page for details

Keeping warm and saving money

Are you struggling to pay your energy bills and keep your home warm?

You could save money by reducing your energy use and making your home more energy efficient.

A good place to start is to visit walthamforest.gov.uk/save-energy for advice on reducing your bills.

You may be able to save money by switching energy supplier. The Mayor of London recently launched a new energy company called London Power, which offers affordable electricity and gas to all Londoners.

It estimates the average London household could save around £300 a year by switching. If you're interested, visit mylondonpower.com

If you're a council tenant, our Income Maximisation team offer free basic financial advice including help with managing your bills and rent account, and accessing benefits. Contact rents@walthamforest.gov.uk or call **020 8496 4197**.

Our Property Services team may also be able to carry out works to make your home more energy efficient.

Contact buildingservices@walthamforest.gov.uk or call **020 8496 4096** to find out more.

If you are a leaseholder and you're struggling to keep your home warm, the HEET Project can provide free advice and support. Call **020 8520 1900** or visit theheetproject.org.uk to see if you are eligible for support.



Happy 102nd Doris!

Congratulations to Doris Clarke, resident of Lime Court sheltered housing in Walthamstow, who recently celebrated her 102nd birthday.

Doris was born in the final year of World War One and was bombed out of several homes in World War Two.

Her children are now in their seventies and eighties and the family includes three great-great grandchildren. She puts her longevity down to family genes.

Doris said: "My great grandfather lived to be 103 and was a preacher who kept working until he was 102." Although she added: "Plus I have a very small glass of sherry every day."

Are you or do you know a vulnerable resident?

As part of our commitment to building safety, the Council is developing personal emergency evacuation plans for our most vulnerable residents.

If you feel you or a neighbour could benefit from chatting to one of our officers about how we can ensure you are safe in the unlikely event of an emergency let us know. See page 10 for contact details.





Insure your peace of mind

Congratulations to Leytonstone resident Joan Loney (pictured with Shayem Pervez, Head of Housing Rents, Waltham Forest Council), who won £50 of High Street shopping vouchers, simply for signing her home up to our Home Contents Insurance Scheme.

When you rent a house from us, your rent payment does not include insurance for your home contents. It is your responsibility to insure your furniture, belongings and decorations against theft, fire, vandalism and burst pipes.

Home contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your possessions could be broken, damaged or stolen so home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind should the worst happen.

We can arrange home contents insurance for you, underwritten by Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance plc.

The cover is new for old cover, which means your belongings would be replaced as new, except for linen and clothing.

Prices start from 61p per week for tenants aged 60 and over or those in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit which includes housing costs, for a £4,000 sum insured or just £1.37 per week for tenants aged under 60, for a £9,000 sum insured. To apply, your rent account must not be in arrears.

For more information, including policy terms and conditions, request an application pack by contacting us on **020 8496 4197** or email **rents@walthamforest.gov.uk**



How we fight housing fraud

Waltham Forest's housing officers and Fraud Investigation Team received an allegation of the illegal subletting of a council tenancy in Walthamstow.

Enquires were made including a visit to the property. The occupant confirmed they had been renting from our tenant, believing that she was the property owner, for the past three years.

We tracked down the tenant who was living outside the borough. She was contacted and invited to attend an interview to discuss the issue of subletting.

The evidence we had gathered during the investigation was presented to her and she immediately surrendered her tenancy. The two-bedroom flat is now home to Sally* and her daughter who had been housed by Waltham Forest in temporary accommodation in Enfield for several years. Sally suffered domestic violence issues from her former partner.

Sally was born and raised in Waltham Forest; her job is in the borough and her mother, who she helps care for, also lives here. Her new home means she and her daughter now feel safe.

"Living back in Waltham Forest makes a big difference to our lives," says Sally. "My rent now is more affordable and I can help my mum more. And my daughter is happy to have a permanent home."

Every illegally sub-let Council property deprives a genuine Waltham Forest housing applicant the chance of a home. Help us stamp it out. If you have a genuine suspicion that a council property is being sublet, then please contact a member of our Fraud Investigation Team by calling **0300 003 1099**, email **fraud@walthamforest.gov.uk** or online **www.walthamforest.gov.uk/reportfraud**.

- According to government figures, the average temporary housing cost to councils for people who are in genuine need of social housing per year is £18,000.
- People who apply for housing to Waltham Forest Council are on the waiting list for an average of three years and three months.
- From April 2019 to February 2020 the Council recovered 30 properties that were illegally sub-let, with a further four succession applications having been refused. This equates to £1,989,000 notional value savings.
- The Anti-Fraud Team directly stopped 28 Right To Buy applications as a result of investigations which equates to £3,094,000 in maximum discount savings.

*Resident name changed



Olga gets honoured

A sheltered housing resident who transformed the exterior of the Walthamstow scheme where she lives, has been honoured by her community.

When Olga Adamson moved into her new home in Lime Court 15 years ago, the grounds around the scheme were an unloved space, and attracted fly-tipping from neighbouring houses.

Olga started clearing up the garden herself and, with a little help of a few other residents, has transformed the front and back exteriors.

“Working on the garden helped me to settle in here,” said Olga. Her efforts make the scheme a better place to live. It’s also appreciated by neighbouring residents, who signed a petition to get her work recognised.

A plaque, made by Shane Marshall, an employee of our contractor Aston Group, was put up to honour Olga’s work.

Olga said “The neighbours stop and chat and children love to look at the flowers. Every day there’s always something in the garden to surprise you.”

Help the homeless

**See someone sleeping rough?
Don't just walk on by.**

Send an alert to our dedicated outreach team via StreetLink.

StreetLink is contactable via website, mobile app and phone and means you can alert local authorities and street outreach services about people you see sleeping rough.

It's the first step to ensuring that rough sleepers know about, and are connected to, available support.

How to send an alert

Go to: www.streetlink.org.uk

Ring: **0300 500 0914**

**Or let us know via the Streetlink mobile app:
available for download for Apple and Android devices.**



New to Universal Credit?

If you make a new claim or are moved across from another benefit onto Universal Credit, in order to proceed with your claim you need an **email address**, a **bank account** and, to process your claim more easily, **access to the internet**.

The application form for Universal Credit has to be completed online, or failing that, over the phone by calling the Universal Credit helpline.

If you do not have access to the internet at home, you can register at one of our libraries and use the computer terminals there.

If you require further assistance in making a claim Citizens Advice runs a Help to Claim service.

They will support residents in the early stages of applying for Universal Credit, from application through to first payment.

You can contact an adviser on **0800 1448 444**, or you can chat online with a Citizens Advice adviser by going to: citizensadvice.org.uk

The advisers are available 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Celebrating Dignity

In February, we marked the Dignity in Care campaign by hosting a series of events at our sheltered housing schemes.

This national campaign highlights the importance of putting dignity and compassion at the heart of care services.

Residents at Longfield House, Walthamstow, did their bit to help bridge the generation gap. Year five schoolchildren from the local South Grove Primary spent the afternoon at the scheme. (Pictured middle right and below).

Britain is one of the most age-segregated countries in the world with divisions between generations increasing over the last decade, according to a recent report from the social enterprise United for All Ages.

The older residents and children played games, shared stories and helped create art works.

Councillor Louise Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness Prevention, joined in the fun: "It is absolutely fantastic we have some pupils from South Grove Primary here with us today. We are all part of one big community and we need to get along together."

Brigid Montgomery, Extended Schools Manager, South Grove Primary, said: "Our children really enjoyed the session, the children can learn so much from the residents and I think we all loved the games, art and chat. We're hoping to make this a regular event."

At Boothby Court, Chingford, residents were able to pick up some tips about indoor and outdoor gardening with experts from local community experts OrganicLea. Our contractors Aston Group helped residents plant an apple tree in the scheme's garden. (pictured bottom right).

The Dignity celebrations also involved a healthy cooking seminar, including freshly cooked healthy lunch, with useful advice on avoiding food waste from North London Waste Authority (pictured top right).



Cllr Mitchell with South Grove Primary pupils and residents at Longfield House





Major Works in numbers

Waltham Forest is busy all year round working to improve your homes.

These are just a snapshot of some of the Major Works carried out by the Council on our housing stock from April 2019 to December 2019.

This is not a complete list and our current major works programme continues until the end of the financial year to March 2020.

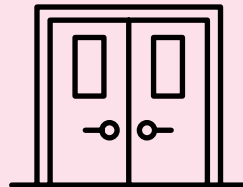
If you would like to know about the works planned for the coming 2020/21 year go to walthamforest.gov.uk/housingpolicies

What if you are expecting works to your home, such as kitchen/bathroom installation and have not yet had that work done, and can't see it listed in the programme for this year or next year?

Please be aware that we are developing planned programmes for the next four years. We will publish this programme on-line as soon as possible.

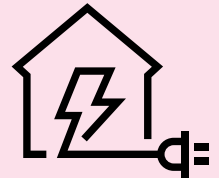
138

Fire Doors have been replaced



2,347

domestic electrical upgrades completed



Resurfacing and environmental improvement works completed at the Lawns, E4

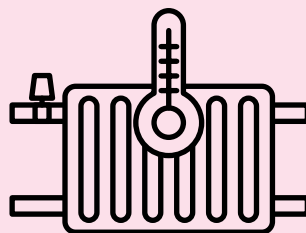


288

bathrooms completed

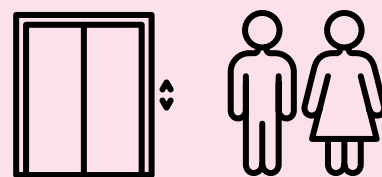
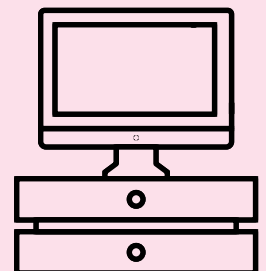
470

central heating systems replaced

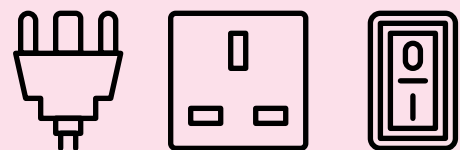


New TV aerial system

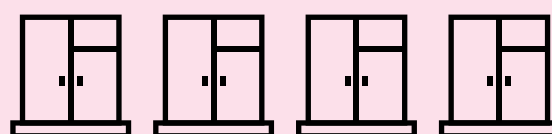
completed at Clifton House



Lift installation completed in Devon House, Everglade House and Upshire House

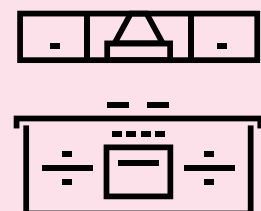


Communal electrical upgrade completed at 109 blocks



Windows replaced at Gilbert House and Gaitskell House, E17 and at Stocksfield Road estate, E17

137 kitchens completed



Your Housing Portal

The Council launched its new Housing Portal in February this year.

This is an important development in how you, our tenants and leaseholders, can manage your rent and service changes.

As it develops and grows, the portal will also be the main way that you will be able to talk to the council about a range of issues, including setting up direct debits and dealing with repairs

To help you get started on using the housing portal here is a simple guide:

What is the Housing Portal?

The Housing Portal is a simple and convenient way for tenants to check their rent balance and pay rent online.

It can be used by our leaseholders to pay their service charges simply and easily. Tenants can also use the portal to set up arrangements to pay off arrears.

How do residents sign up?

The portal can be accessed by clicking on the 'my account' button at the top of the home page of the Council's website **walthamforest.gov.uk**

Some residents of Waltham Forest already use this portal to pay their Council Tax.

If a Council resident already has an account set up for Council Tax, they will be able to log in to the My Account area and link their Housing account without the need to re-register. If the resident has not used the portal before they can create an account easily and quickly.

What about the 'See My Data' section on the website?

The 'See My Data' section on the Council's website will disappear in March and users will be directed to the new housing portal, where they can access their information.

What is further down the line?

Online rent accounts and payments is just part of a wider programme of work to introduce new digital ways for you to access our services.

Forthcoming projects will be looking at repairs and maintenance, resident engagement, and tenancy management.

Can residents set up Direct Debits on the Portal?

Not at the moment, but we hope to have that service available online soon.

How does this benefit residents?

The portal provides residents with a simple way to pay their rent easily and online and ensure they are not getting behind in payments.

Being able to check their balance at any time helps them stay on top of their rent and avoid going into arrears.

It means less time on the phone trying to speak to members of the rent team and other housing officers about issues relating to their rent and home.



Paying your rent by Direct Debit?

An easy way to pay your rent is Direct Debit. It is simple, efficient and takes the worry out of keeping your account out of the red.

We are working to include a function on the Housing Portal for residents to go online and set up a Direct Debit account to pay their rent.

Until that goes live, you can set up your Direct Debit account by requesting a Direct Debit form by calling **020 8496 4197** or email **rents@walthamforest.gov.uk**

More and more Waltham Forest Council tenants pay their rent by Direct Debit.

Why not join them?

Building in safety

Waltham Forest Council has always put the safety of its residents at the heart of the management of our housing.

New legislation is currently going through Parliament to bring in national changes to the way social landlords like councils manage their housing stock, especially high rise properties. Those new laws will be informed by the recommendations made by the Hackitt report following the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

However, we are not waiting for government legislation before we start implementing changes to the way we manage building safety.

The Council has a strong record on building safety. For instance we have had a 100 per cent record on carrying out gas safety checks to schedule for the last nine years.

The changes we are bringing in are about strengthening and enhancing our approach to building safety.

Some of that work has already started.

We're half-way through a programme of retrofitting sprinkler systems in every individual home in all of our 14 Sheltered Housing schemes (story bottom right).

Plans are underway to retrofit sprinklers to all our high rise properties. These are blocks of six storeys and over. This is only part of a long term programme of other safety measures and improvements to these blocks.

These range from ensuring emergency access routes on our estates are clear at all times (see page 3) to strengthening our relationship with the local fire brigade to ensure greater cooperation on fire safety.

Other recommendations of the Hackitt report deal with the relationship between large landlords, like us, and their residents. It recognised the need for greater engagement with tenants, involving them in the discussion and decision making process of managing building safety.

As well as that there should be greater transparency about building safety and the issues in individual buildings, especially our high rise blocks.

That is why we are asking residents to be part of a Task Force on Building Safety (see article opposite).

The Task Force will help us develop a resident engagement programme which will include giving residents a voice on building safety.

We regularly carry out fire risk assessments (FRAs) on our housing.

Part of that engagement programme will involve deciding with residents how we go about publishing key elements of those FRAs and our subsequent actions on our website so tenants can see the risk assessment for their block.

This is major programme of change in Waltham Forest and we will keep you up to date with more details as the programme is rolled out.

You and building safety

The Council is doing what it can to ensure building safety but we need your help to make this happen.

All our residents, whether they are tenants or leaseholders, need to be aware of the crucial role they play in building safety.

What you can do:

- Don't park your vehicle in a way that blocks emergency routes onto your estate at any time
- Keep your landing or other emergency pathways clear of plants, bicycles, prams, toys or any other obstruction
- Ensure your gas appliances are checked every year if you are a leaseholder.
- If our contractors, Aston Group, makes an appointment to check your boiler please be at home to let them in
- Replace faulty electric appliances
- Only use registered heating engineers and electricians
- Know what you and your family need to do in an emergency



Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs)

As part of our commitment to ensuring residents are safe we are looking to develop personal emergency evacuation plans with our most vulnerable residents.

A resident might be vulnerable because they have mobility issues or a condition that might affect their ability to respond to an emergency. If you think that might affect you or a resident you know, let us know by emailing engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk or call 0208 496 4984.

Get Involved



We are looking for volunteers to join a resident Task Force on Building Safety.

The Council's housing service is working with tenant engagement experts TPAS on getting residents involved in building safety issues.

What's involved?

The Task Force will:

- Meet five times over the next few months
- Provide an opportunity to learn all about building safety and provide input on how we can improve building safety
- Explore the best way to raise awareness of safety in blocks and educate residents on what they can do to ensure safety in their homes
- Look at the information the Council should provide to tenants and leaseholders on building safety
- Hold the Council to account

No prior knowledge is necessary - just your experience and your time! This is a great way to make a real contribution to your community as well as meet new people and boost your CV.

If we get more volunteers than there are spaces available then we will use a criteria to select people on to the group. The criteria will take into account:

- Where you live (area as well as type of block e.g. high rise, sheltered etc). Priority will be given to those that live in high rise blocks and sheltered housing schemes
- Whether you're a tenant or leaseholder (so we have appropriate representation from both)

For those who take part, expenses will be paid.

For more details or to express your interest please call **0208 496 4984** or email **engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk**

Retrofitting sprinklers



The Council programme of retrofitting sprinklers systems in all 485 homes in its 14 sheltered schemes is now reaching the half way mark

Sprinkler retrofittings have been completed or near completed at six of the sheltered housing schemes, with Holmcroft House in Walthamstow and Boothby Court in Chingford next on the list.

The programme is part of a larger commitment to building safety measures being planned for its high priority and high rise properties. John Hansen was the first resident in Dilwyn Court, Walthamstow, to get the system fitted.

John (pictured) said: "It gives you peace of mind. I'm alright moving about but some older residents are more likely to find it comforting to know the sprinklers are there." As well as the safety measures, some homes like John's are benefiting from renovations like new kitchens and bathrooms.

The improvements involve necessary building work. Our contractor Aston Group carries out surveys to check on how residents feel about the works. Surveys at Plaxton Court, Leyton, found 97 per cent satisfaction rate and 100 per cent satisfaction at Dilwyn Court and Longfield House, both in Walthamstow.

HOUSING PORTAL

The new Housing Portal for the Council's tenants and leaseholders is now live on our website. The Portal can be used by leaseholders to pay their service charges simply and easily. For more information go to page 9

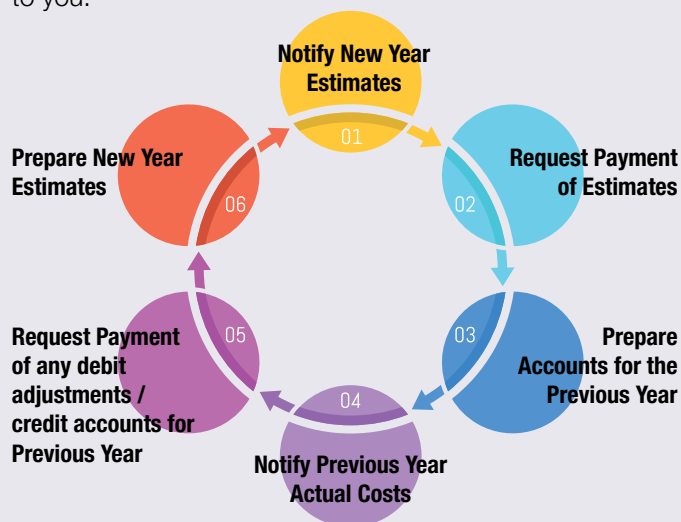
Estimates 2020

The Home Ownership Team is in the process of preparing the service charge estimates for the coming financial year 2020/2021 and the invoices that follow.

Service charge estimates for the new accounting year beginning on Wednesday 1 April 2020 lay out how much leaseholders are required to pay for services in the coming year.

The estimates and accompanying breakdown of charges provide an opportunity for leaseholders to raise any queries they may have.

Meanwhile the Home Ownership Team continue to carry out audits of services to ensure that the estimates you receive reflect the level and costs of services provided to you.



We are working to shrink the difference between estimated and actual charges to make it easier for leaseholders to budget.

For the Home Ownership Team the estimates represent only part of a body of work in the annual cycle of service charge accounting which means that as soon as estimates are issued they begin work preparing for the prior year annual accounts.

New long-term agreement for leaseholder's building insurance

In 2019 we consulted all our leaseholders about a proposed new arrangement for the supply of building insurance cover and of our intention to enter into a new long-term qualifying agreement for the supply of this service.

We received a lot of calls in response and several leaseholders took the time to provide written observations about the details of the proposed policy schedule.

In February this year we sent a second consultation notice to leaseholders in which we summarised the observations received and our responses to them. We also named our proposed insurer and provided estimated charges based on the proposed agreement.

We will update you about of the outcome to this second round of consultation. In the meantime, we wish to thank leaseholders for their comments and especially those who submitted written observations. All feedback we receive will ultimately help us to shape a service that best meets your needs.

Don't get caught out

There are companies and individuals that offer money upfront to Council tenants in tempting deals to buy their council homes.

Be cautious and seek legal advice before entering into any agreement. They can charge a higher rent than the Council, you may not get enough money to buy another home, you may have to pay back your Right To Buy discount and you could end up being homeless.

If you or a neighbour get contacted about a scheme like this, contact the Fraud Team on **0300 003 1099** or email fraud@walthamforest.gov.uk

Ground Rent Notices

Ground Rent falls due after the service of Ground Rent Notices. The Ground Rent for most of our leaseholders (leases sold under the Right to Buy) does not change from year to year. However, leaseholders who pay for a lease term extension no longer pay ground rent as this requirement is removed from the remaining term of the lease.

Welcome to the Neighbourhood

Moving to a new area can be both exciting and challenging; now an online service has been launched to help new Waltham Forest residents feel right at home.

For many who move to Waltham Forest it's a fresh start and chance to live in one of the most diverse parts of the UK.

Finding your feet in a new place means different things for different people.

For a young family it might mean opportunities to progress in your career while accessing childcare, researching schools or finding fun activities for the kids.

For someone new to the UK it might involve getting a national insurance number, beginning the citizenship process and finding housing.

For a graduate it might be about finding a sports or arts club to join in order to meet new people at same time as you start your career.

Whatever the circumstances, Waltham Forest's new online resource - which provides information to new residents - is a one stop shop for people who want information on their local neighbourhood, finding local services like your GP and dentist, getting set up in the UK if you are new to the country, or claiming housing or mental health support.

Although this resource was primarily created to help residents new to the area to find all of the information they need, it is also helpful for existing residents.

There are plans for the website to have a translation function into Urdu, Polish, Romanian, Lithuanian and Turkish as these are the top five languages spoken by residents who speak English as a second language.

To access the Welcome Pack visit:

<https://ourplacewf.org/newresidents>

To see how Waltham Forest is Connecting Communities in Our Place, follow **@WFOurPlace** on Facebook



Just a taste of what you can find @ourplacewf

- Attend a Feel Good Walk
- Enjoy a free Welcome Meal by contacting **events@hornbeam.org.uk**
- Get involved in the community by attending a network meeting
- Join a conversation club
- Sign up for free Our Parks classes

The Council is always striving to make changes to our service based on your feedback. A few recent examples of **You Said, We Did**

You Said

Residents on our estates were repeatedly complaining that non-residents were parking their vehicles illegally on the estate.

We Did

The only way we can stop non-residents parking on estates is by introducing parking permits for estate residents.

So from May 2020 we will start consulting with residents on the first group of estates about whether they want to see the introduction of parking permits on their estate.

If enough residents tell us that they want to see parking permits introduced, we can move forward with introducing them.

So if you receive a letter and questionnaire asking for your opinion on parking permits, make sure you fill it in. Your vote really matters.

The programme of consultation and, if residents agree to it, implementation of estate parking permits will be rolled out over the next 18 months on all our estates.

You Said

Residents complained that when they needed repairs or work done on their home our contractors would give them a day for the necessary work to be carried, but not a time, which meant they had to stay at home all day.

We Did

As part of our new contract with Morgan Sindall Property Services we asked them to ensure that they would offer an AM or PM option for residents to choose for all repair and maintenance work. That means residents are not stuck inside their home for an entire day waiting for our operatives to arrive.

You Said

Waltham Forest Council was carrying out a programme of planned works scheduled for Oak Hill Court, Highams Park. The works were discussed with residents at the regular meetings of the Tenants and Residents Association, who told us that there were a number of issues with leaks and damp from the roof.

We Did

After these discussions with the residents, we agreed to include replacement of the roof as part of the works programme for the estate.

Engagement Party

A special Thank You party was held for members of Waltham Forest Council's housing strategic panels.



Cllr Louise Mitchell, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness Prevention, hosted the dinner at the Priory Court Community Centre.

It has been a particular busy year for the volunteer residents. The scrutiny team examined the work of the ground maintenance department and how the housing department communicates with residents.

The STAR panel considered the Council's rents and charges proposals, commented on our building safety strategy and provided input on our allocations policy.

Other work included examining our complaints process and procedures.

Cllr Mitchell awarded certificates to all the volunteers and paid tribute to their contribution: "All of the reports are fed back to the departments being examined. Your hard work and contribution helps shape our policies going forward."

We are currently looking for new volunteers to our STAR Panel.

It is not a huge commitment timewise; a few hours every couple of months, but your contribution is a valuable asset to the Council and it is a chance for you to help shape our housing policy going forward.

To get involved call **0208 496 4984** or email engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk

How are we doing?

Every year we survey tenants to measure their level of satisfaction on 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	72%
Views are listened to and acted upon	49%

We are determined to make good use of satisfaction data and we looked carefully at the results.

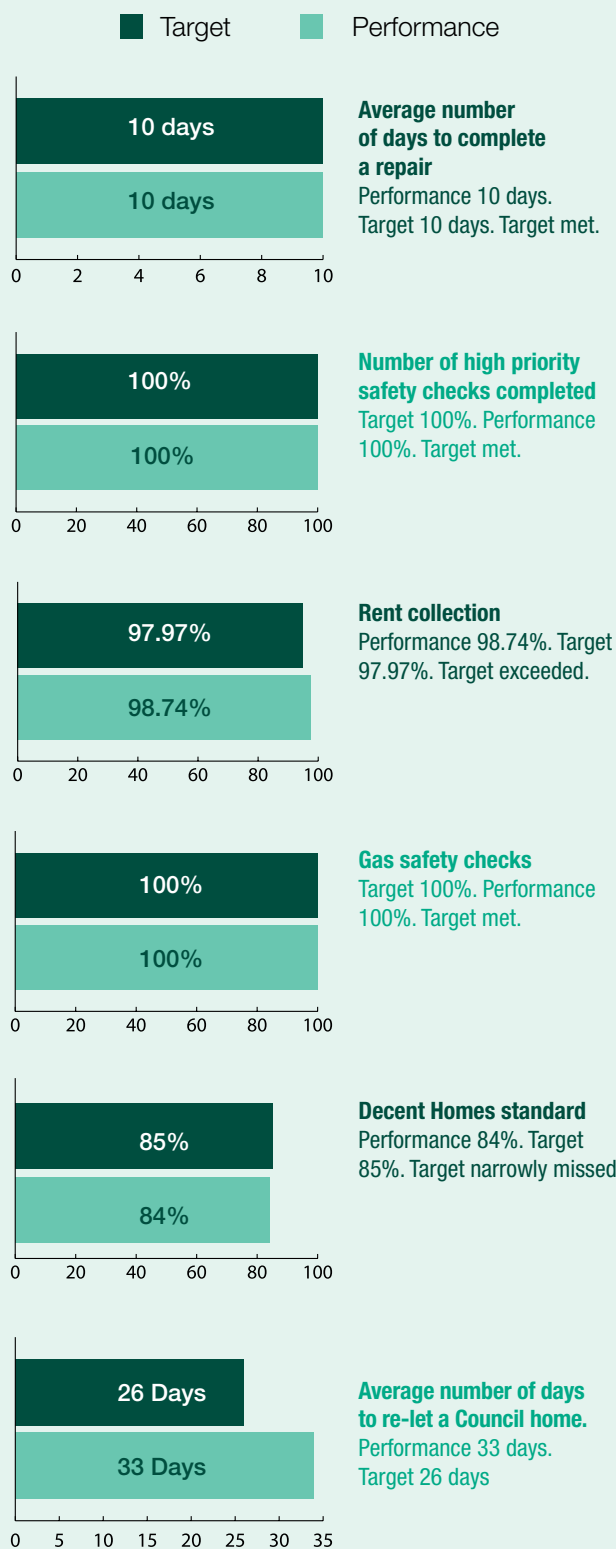
We are looking at ways of improving younger persons participation in the surveys, as they were under-represented amongst those who responded.

We are asking more detailed questions about why people were dissatisfied with ease of contact and staff helpfulness to try to better understand the issues involved.

We use the data that we receive to help improve services.

If you receive a survey form please complete it. As well as helping us improve services you will be entered in a prize draw.

In December 2019 we carried out a check on how we are doing on key parts of our services to residents.



Target not met. Performance dipped particularly in the last quarter of 2018/19 in the run up to the end of the previous repairs contract. Improvements to processes have been agreed and performance is improving.

Have Your Say

Come along to the Housing Forum...

Wednesday 25 March 2020 6 - 8.30pm
Ghousia Grove Road Hall
119-123 Grove Road
Walthamstow E17 9BU

Free
refreshments
will be provided

All residents attending will be entered into a prize draw.
Book your free ticket in advance via bit.ly/housingforum2020
and you will be entered into a further draw

Disability Forum, 4.30 - 6pm

The Disability Forum will be held ahead of the Housing Forum at the same venue
All residents affected by disability welcome
Transport can be provided for people attending the Disability Forum
Contact engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk
or call 0208 496 4984

Housing Surgery 6 - 7pm

A chance for residents to speak to officers and with our contractors, Morgan Sindall and Aston Group, about any queries regarding repairs, anti-social behaviour, services charges, rent, etc.

Housing Forum 7 - 8.30pm

Learn about our new programme of building safety and how you can get involved, and the launch of Vision 2030, the Council's strategy for addressing the challenges of the next decade.

If you have any questions or need support contact the Inclusion and Engagement team on 0208 496 4984 or email engagement@walthamforest.gov.uk

Contact Us

Waltham Forest Council Housing, Resident Services

Cedar Wood House
2d Fulbourne Road
Walthamstow
E17 4GG

Cedar Wood House
Reception Opening Times
9.00am - 4.30pm (except
Wednesday 1 - 4.30pm)

Waltham Forest Council Housing, Resident Services Billericay Office

16a Morris Avenue
Billericay
Essex
CM11 2JR

Office open Tuesdays
10am-1pm

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

Or visit us at Cedar Wood House and ask to speak to Income Services

For feedback and comments on the newsletter:

Please email wfdirect@walthamforest.gov.uk

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

RESIDENTS NEWS