Winter 2022 | Issue 18

# Housing Matters

Holiday opening times Major works update

Your 'Get involved' themed pages

Have a say on your tenancy agreement

Caretaker of the year winner announced!



6



Welcome from Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith	2
News in Brief	3
Mayor's Award	3
Major works update	4
Meet the Fire Safety Team	ר <b>6</b>
Managing condensation in your home	7
Wellbeing Markets	8
Priority Services Register	8
<b>Get involved</b> – Summit update	9
Have your say on proposed changes to your Tenancy Agreement	10
Disability Forum	11
Community Chest	11
Get involved in procurement	12
Help us get building safet engagement right	y <b>12</b>
Get together and get online with CHUMS	13
News and updates for homeowners	14
Caretaker of the Year winner!	15

### Welcome



### Hello

Welcome to the winter edition of Housing Matters.

In the last edition, we provided information about how the Council is supporting residents with the rising cost of living. Whilst there will be unavoidable increases in bills over the next few months, I do want to reassure you that the Council is working to support its residents and has recently created a £8million Cost of Living Support Fund to help. You will also be able to find out about the wellbeing and financial support events being organised by the financial inclusion team in this edition.

Earlier this month, I was shocked to read the heart-breaking story of Awaab Ishak who died in Rochdale as a result of a severe respiratory condition caused by prolonged exposure to mould in his home. This is an appalling tragedy and should not be happening in 21st Century Britain.

For anyone involved in social housing, it is a devastating reminder, if one was needed, of the responsibility that we hold to our tenants and the importance of providing safe and decent homes.

This is a responsibility that I take incredibly seriously and has been my driving vision since taking this role in 2017. It is why as a council we are committing over  $\pounds600$  million into renovating and greening our housing stock and why we are building 600 new homes.

As the Coroner in the case said, this should be a defining moment for the housing sector and I hope that this is the last time we hear of such a tragedy.

There are also steps that we can all take to manage mould and damp this winter and you can find information on this and an update on our major works programme in this edition.

Finally, I would encourage you all to get involved in our many resident engagement initiatives as it is so important that we hear from all corners of the community. Best wishes for the Christmas period.



Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith Deputy Leader of the Council



### You've got mail

Would you like to receive your next Housing Matters by email instead of by post?

You'd be able to read it on all your digital devices, at home or on the go, and there would be zero postage or recycling when you're done reading. Let us know via email or give us a call.

Contact the Housing Matters team at housing.matters@rbkc.gov.uk or give us a call on 0800 137 111.





#### Housing Response Contact Centre and public receptions opening times over Christmas and New Year

Date	Housing Response Contact Centre	Neighbourhood Management Public Receptions
Friday 23 December 2022	8am to 6pm	9am to 5pm
Monday 26 December 2022	Public Holiday	Public Holiday
Tuesday 27 December 2022	Public Holiday	Public Holiday
Wednesday 28 December 2022	8am to 6pm	9am to 5pm
Thursday 29 December 2022	8am to 6pm	9am to 5pm
Friday 30 December 2022	8am to 6pm	9am to 5pm
Monday 2 January 2023	Public Holiday	Public Holiday
Tuesday 3 January 2023	8am to 6pm	9am to 5pm

The Housing Response Contact Centre operates from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. If you have an emergency outside of these hours, please call our out of hours service on **0800 137 111**. Our public receptions are located at **The Network Hub 292a Kensal Road, W10 5BE and Blantyre Office, Blantyre Street, SW10 4AT**.

#### Mayor's Awards 2023

Do you know someone who has made a significant difference to the lives of residents in Kensington and Chelsea? Someone who has gone above and beyond to serve the community?

Now's the time to nominate them for a Mayor's Award in one of the four categories:

- Individual Contribution
- Young Person
- Coronavirus Response
- Local Community Organisation

For more information and to submit your nomination, visit **rbkc.gov.uk/mayors-awards** 

Nominations close 5pm on Monday 23 January 2023.

#### We're only one click away

Keep up to date with what's going on in your area on our dedicated Housing Management web page **rbkc.gov.uk/housing/ housing-news** 

Just log in with any of your mobile devices to find information on community events and meetings, introductions to new staff, awareness

campaigns and much more.

Articles are all tagged so that you can search by date, topic, or area.



### Your home first

## Major Works Update

### Keeping up the momentum on capital works

Hello,

I am happy to report that this year we have successfully carried out a wide range of improvements to your homes. This includes installing new lifts, smoke and heat alarms, new flat entrance doors and CCTV. We've also replaced windows and made repairs to the external fabric of some blocks.

In the new year we will continue the momentum we have built up delivering improvements to your homes.

I am all too aware that the rising cost-ofliving means heating your home has become increasingly difficult and that we need to ensure that every home runs as efficiently as it can. We are looking at how we can use the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to help with the cost of replacing roofs and windows which would improve energy efficiency. As soon as we have more information we will share it with you. You will see below and on the following pages an

### **Completed works**

Notting Barn Estate Treverton Estate Hesketh Place/Runcorn Place/ Walmer Road Fawcett Street/Redcliffe Gardens Caversham Street/ Danvers Street Avondale Park Gardens and Mary Place

Russell Gardens Mews/ Hornton Place/Sunningdale Gardens and Glebe Place Exmoor Street/Kelfield Court/ Bassett Road/Downing House and Oxford Gardens

Borough wide roof handrail project 137 Holland Road, 12 Hansard Mews, 8a Hansard Mews update of the progress we have made and when we are planning to come to your estate to make upgrades.

If you would like to be involved in making important decisions about the health and safety of your building or estate, you would be welcome to join us on the Resident Safety Panel. Email **derrick.samuel@rbkc.gov.uk** for details on how you can get involved.

There are also lots of opportunities to get involved in developing the projects that affect your homes. Contact the Capital Delivery Team at capital.investment@rbkc.gov.uk

#### Peta Caine

– Assistant Director, Property Services



Major works is a catch-all term for the large repair projects we are undertaking to whole buildings. This could include:

- repairs to brickwork roofs and guttering
- new windows, heating systems, bathrooms and kitchens
- decoration of communal areas

### **Projects under way** and due to be completed by the end of 2023

Grove House Edenham Way Brickbarn Close/Netherton Grove/Fulham Road/ Burnaby Street/Kings Road Arundel Gardens/Faraday Road/Adair Road

Adair and Hazlewood

### What's to come in 2023

Ansleigh Place, Stoneleigh Street, Nursery Lane, Dalgarno Gardens, Oxford Gardens, Golborne Road, Craigie Villas, Tadema Road	Elm Park Gardens The Sandhills Manchester Drive	
Pond House	Borough-wide front entrance	
Henry Dickens Estate	door programme Borough-wide kitchen and bathroom programme	
Swinbrook Estate		
Silchester Estate tower blocks		

#### Mechanical and electrical works completed in 2022

#### Lift works at

Whitchurch House	
Talbot House	•••••
Acklam Road	
Elm Park Gardens, partially	•••••

Ingelow House Lowerwood Court Boiler and plant room at Mulberry Close Door entry systems at Worlds End Estate

Mechanical and electrical is the term we use to describe works carried out to lifts, door entry systems or CCTV, or heating systems.

### Getting to know you

### Ever been curious about the people who actually deliver your capital works and mechanical and electrical projects?

Then say hello to two of the project managers overseeing their delivery.



James Heritage – Capital Delivery Manager, Major Works

I have worked in the built environment for my whole career, both in Australia where I was born and in England.

My current role is extremely rewarding, and I thoroughly enjoy working with the team as part of the Capital programme. James is currently overseeing work on Silchester Estate and Edenham Way, amongst many others!



#### John Margenghi – Capital Delivery Manager, Mechanical & Electrical

I joined the Council 10 months ago and manage a team of experienced project

managers. I oversee the smooth running of projects such as, boiler and plant room refurbs, lifts, fire safety and fire safety equipment plus associated electrical works.

### Fire Safety **Update**



### A new Head of Fire Safety for Kensington and Chelsea



In October we welcomed Kabbe Njie to the borough as our new Head of Fire Safety.

Prior to joining us at Kensington and Chelsea, Kabbe spent 15 years working for the London Fire Brigade. He shared his aim to make Kensington and Chelsea the safest borough in London:

"We have new legislation coming into effect in 2023. Resident safety reform on this scale has never been imagined, let alone programmed before, so there is a lot of work for us as a team to do.

" I know that we will be measured not by our words but by our deeds and we will all be working ever more diligently to ensure that we achieve what we set out to do... make homes safer for everyone."

### **Meet the Fire Safety Team**

Our Fire Safety Team is touring the borough as part of a series of roadshows. The Building Safety Manager, along with representatives from our Health and Safety Teams will be on hand to answer any questions and listen to any feedback you have on how to make your homes more fire safe!

#### Tips for staying fire safe this winter

As fuel costs skyrocket, we will all be looking at ways to stay warm within a shrinking budget, but please put safety first.

Ensure you have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

Ensure you buy any electrical products from reputable retailers – and always sign up to the national product safety alerts and recalls and register appliances.



- Do not dry clothes on storage heaters, as they are a fire hazard. It will also increase moisture in your home and cause dampness and mould growth.
- Do not use paraffin lamps or portable gas heaters in your home. They are a major fire hazard and can cause carbon monoxide poisoning when used indoors.
- Do not run electrical appliances such as tumble dyers, washing machines and dishwashers overnight. If a fire should start it might go undetected for longer, giving occupants less time to respond quickly and safely.

For guidance on fire and carbon monoxide safety, visit **Iondon-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home** Contact the Fire Safety Team at

firesafety@rbkc.gov.uk

### Managing condensation in your home

The tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak who died in Rochdale as a result of prolonged exposure to mould, is a stark reminder of our responsibility to our tenants, and the importance of providing safe and decent homes.

The Council takes the presence of condensation and mould in our properties very seriously and we remind you to report early signs of excessive condensation to the Council's repairs team on

rbkc.gov.uk/report-housing-repair

Our surveyors will visit your home to assess the cause and find a solution.

Condensation starts when moisture in the air, caused by everyday activities such as cooking, bathing, washing and drying clothes, cannot escape.

The early signs of excessive condensation will be mould appearing on your walls, windows and skirtings. Left unchecked, it could spread to furnishings and inside cupboards.

#### There are some simple steps we can all take to manage condensation in our homes.

- Place lids on pots and pans and keep the kitchen door closed when cooking. This will help to prevent moisture escaping into the rest of the home. Open the window or put the extractor fan on if you have one.
- If possible, dry clothes outside or on a clothes airer in a bathroom with the window open. If you use a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented so that the air escapes to the outside.
- Close the bathroom door when bathing and allow moisture to escape by opening the window or using an extractor fan.

### Visit our website for more information on condensation and mould at **rbkc.gov.uk/repairs-condensation**

If you have questions about condensation or your responsibilities for repairs in your home, please contact us on 0800 137 111 or email **hm-customerservices@rbkc.gov.uk** 

If you are struggling to heat your home and need advice on how to stay warm and save on energy bills, please contact Green Doctors at **london.greendoctors.org.uk** 

### Wellbeing Markets help residents brace for winter

Wellbeing markets delivered a heartening start to the winter for residents in November. With one held in the north of the borough and the other in the south, they provided reassurance in the face of the many uncertainties we all face as increases in the costs of living start to bite.

The aim of both markets was to provide local residents with a 'one-stop shop' where they could seek expert advice about managing the increasing costs of living, and information around good physical and mental health.

Around fifteen partner service providers including the Big Local Community Hub, Green Doctors, World's End Neighbourhood Advice, a Cycle Taxi Project and Digital Inclusion joined the Council's Housing Management service. The Crosslight Debt Advice stall staffed by specialist officers offered guidance on residents' particular circumstances and how their concerns might be addressed.

Financial Inclusion Project Manager Jim Kirkham commented "It was moving to witness the solidarity of residents enjoying the events, socialising with neighbours, exchanging information and supporting each other as the winter approaches" Feedback from residents was positive with many commenting how useful it was to have so many experts in the one place at the same time. STARTS

Following the success of the event, the Financial Inclusion Team is looking at ways to make these markets a permanent fixture. We'll let you know if there is a wellbeing market in your area nearer the time. In the meantime, if you are struggling to make ends meet, visit our support hub **rbkc.gov.uk/cost-livingsupport-hub** 

### **The Priority Services Register**

Fortunately, power cuts don't happen very often and for most people they are unpleasant at the most. However, for more vulnerable people, including those who rely on medical equipment or refrigerated medicines, live with dementia or have young children, a power cut could be dangerous.

If you are in any of the categories listed above, registering on the UK Power Network's Priority Services Register will ensure you receive the extra support you need if you experience a power cut. It could be anything from receiving a text message update, to tailored support such as home visits, hot meals, advice and keeping your friends and relatives updated.

Find out if you qualify and what help you could expect by visiting

ukpowernetworks.co.uk/priority email psr@ukpowernetworks.co.uk or call 0800 169 9970

Would

you need

extra support if you had a

power cut?

### Welcome to your 'Get Involved' themed pages

We're taking a look at some of the ways residents are helping to shape the way services are delivered and developing closer communities. We hope you'll be inspired to jump aboard and make a difference.



On a beautiful sunny Saturday, in October, almost two hundred tenants and leaseholders joined us for the Residents' Summit. It was an enjoyable and productive afternoon.

We've been looking closely at your feedback from the day and it has showed us that you feel we have made definite progress this year. Many of you have told us that you feel more listened to and respected, and that you feel staff are friendlier and more approachable.

However, your feedback also reveals there is still much work to do. Repairs featured heavily as an area where you would like to see improvement, as is communication. Staff attitude and process was similarly an area where residents want to see greater change for the better - specific examples were given around gaps in communication with residents, and lack of acknowledgement of queries. Points were also made about the need to publicise meetings better, and the need to cascade information beyond Resident Association level.

This feedback is all helpful and will allow us to initiate changes in our housing service. Some immediate actions have already been taken, such as the restructure of the resident engagement team and widening our communications by better use of social media. We're continuing to make progress on other elements of the feedback you gave us.

We enjoyed a few lighter aspects to the day too, not least a delicious lunch cooked by a resident and the eagerly-awaited raffle, drawn by none other than the Pearly Queen of Cheslea!

Want to know more? Contact us at hm-residentengagement@rbkc.gov.uk

### Proposed changes to your Tenancy Agreement

We want to make changes that will bring your tenancy agreement up to date and help us protect you and your homes.

The main changes we

propose will help us:

- strengthen our stance against antisocial behaviour
- clarify the rules on subletting
- Detail your responsibilities in keeping noise to acceptable levels
- You will find more information and the consultation form online at
- consult.rbkc.gov.uk/housing/tenancy-agreement-proposed-changes

Hard copies and other formats are available on request.

Let us know if you would like clarification of any points or support to complete the survey.

Email us at hm-neighbourhoodresidentservices@rbkc.gov.uk or call 0800 137 111. The consultation is open until Monday 27 February 2023.





### **Disability Forum**

### An important forum for people with a disability

In September this year we re-launched the Residents' Disability Forum with lunch and inspirational guest speaker Lucy Webster. Lucy is a disabled activist and journalist who contributes to several national papers.

Lucy reminded the group about the importance of online resources, and communities for disabled people, and shared tips on effective ways of combatting prejudices.

While there is a wide range of committees and meetings in the borough that residents can choose to attend, the Residents' Disability Forum is one that is particularly valued.

Following its re-launch, the Council is working towards developing the forum into a place

where residents with all disabilities, including those that are hidden, can discuss housing related issues from the specific focus of those with a disability.



Please email

hm-residentengagement@rbkc.gov.uk for details of the next meeting and joining instructions.

### **Community Chest**

### Help to get your project off the ground

Those long months of lockdowns during the Covid pandemic taught us the value of community life. We know that many of you have great ideas for projects or events that would boost community spirit on your estates and bring people together.

You may be itching to host a coffee morning, start a composting club, get a book exchange going or kick start a pilates class, so you may need to buy in equipment or hire a space.

To help you make this happen we have established a community chest. This is a pot of money you can apply to for small grants that will help get things off the ground. You can apply for sums between  $\pounds100$ and  $\pounds500$ , and we will try to keep the form-filling to a minimum.



If you have an idea- get in touch with the Resident Engagement Team hm-residentengagement@rbkc.gov.uk and start the process with a nice chat!

### **Procurement Panel**



### Have a say on who provides maintenance services to your home?

Every year the Council invests millions of pounds in making sure all our residents have a safe, warm, and modern home. We hire contractors to deliver specific projects such as replacing fire doors, maintaining smoke and fire alarms, door entry systems, CCTV, gates, and barriers.

Contractors submit tenders, or detailed

proposals, on how they will conduct the works, and how much they would cost. Contracts can last several years and serve all Council homes across the borough.

As a tenant or leaseholder, you can take part in the technical evaluation process and help decide who the contract is awarded to.

Depending on the number of bids received, the tender evaluations can take between one and three hours to complete. They usually take place online, in the evening or at weekends. You don't need experience – we can help you get online and provide any training you may need.

Get involved and you may learn something new, make connections, and feel that you have made a useful contribution to your community.

If you would like to join us, contact the Council's Procurement Manager, Ernest Raw, at **ernest.raw@rbkc.gov.uk** 

### Getting the strategy right together

#### Do you live in a building over 18 metres or seven storeys high?

You could help us define how we engage with residents. The new Building Safety Act requires us to set out a strategy that details how we engage with residents living in our high-rise buildings. We need residents like you to help us review a draft document to ensure we maintain a resident-focused approach.

We want to hear from as many residents as possible to capture a cross-section of views people who live in our buildings, and to make sure we include every voice.

Plans are coming together to make a start in February 2023 and with your input we hope to complete the project by May 2023. Getting involved and telling us what you need helps us get our strategies right.

To find out how you can join the Building Safety Resident Engagement Task and Finish group or, how to join our Resident Safety Panel and share ideas about keeping your estates safe, email your Building Safety

Manager daniel.sheridan@rbkc.gov.uk



# Get together and get online with your CHUMS!

ounder Jill Brown describes CHUMS as a voluntary service that tackles the isolation of lone elderly, vulnerable and those who are 'digitally excluded'.

"CHUMS stands for Care, Help, Unite, Meet and Support, and that is what we do. We're the missing link that brings people together and makes them feel they are a valued member of their community.

"I was inspired to start the group when I saw how devastating isolation and loneliness can become for those living alone; especially for those without family nearby to watch out for them. I was committed, dedicated and



passionate about finding a way to tackle what I saw as a critical issue - and that is how CHUMS was born! "Initially I organised

a leaflet drop to blocks where I knew

that many of the lone elderly, and vulnerable residents lived. The number of people who responded was amazing. Just knowing that someone was prepared to call them, care about them, and be there to support them has given so much hope and joy.

"I set up CHUMS purely as a voluntary project expecting it to run for a year. We're three years old now with sixty-seven resident members. I run the group with the support of a small, dedicated group of volunteers. We've achieved so much since setting up, from identifying isolated residents and keeping in regular contact with them, to making referrals to Adult Social Care services and the Aids and Adaptations team who help keep people living independently in their own homes.

"We've liaised with GPs and raised safeguarding issues, collected medication, delivered food shops, and helped keep people warm in the winter months by delivering hats, scarves, and blankets, and even mini-Christmas hampers. The list of individual support we offer is endless.

"Just this month we launched our fantastic new IT Hub, made possible by the passion and commitment of CHUMS and with help from the Morley College who provided us with equipment and a tutor! The IT hub will really help us tackle digital exclusion, especially amongst our elderly and vulnerable residents.



#### How can I get involved?

We always need volunteers, to help with anything from delivering leaflets to organise social gatherings, or sharing IT skills with those wanting to enhance their limited knowledge. Volunteers do these things in their free time – committing a couple of hours, sometimes more, but founder Jill is there every day with her phone at the ready. Email: **helpunite.chums@gmail.com** Tel: **07407 258 738** 

### News and updates for homeowners



### Homeowner event hits the right note

Although a while ago now we want to thank those who came to the annual homeowners' event at the Town Hall in October.

Attendees were able to browse more than 30 stalls and get expert advice from specialist teams within Housing Management and external organisations, including the Leasehold Advisory Service and Citizens Advice.

Your feedback on the day was positive, letting us know that many of you would like attend future events for leaseholders. We're currently exploring ways to continue the event annually and make it even more engaging next year.

### Thinking of selling your home? - Your solicitor will need to order a pre-sale pack

A nyone who has ever bought or sold a home will know that there is lot to take care of, from choosing a solicitor to booking the removal van.

The buyer of your property, and their solicitors, will usually have a lot of questions, and wish to see documents like recent service charge statements, or a copy of the lease.

Our pre-sale information pack or 'management' or 'pre-assignment pack' as it is also known. streamlines this process by including a wealth of information in a single place.

If you are thinking of selling, we strongly recommend that the pack is ordered as early as possible during the pre-sale process, to avoid any last minute rush.

For more information visit rbkc.gov.uk/buying-orselling-your-home

### **Considering seasonal** property rental? Think again!

Renting your property out through a commercial company, such as Airbnb, Housetrip, Gumtree and Booking. com amongst others, may seem like a good way to increase Income. However, your lease places conditions on the use and occupation of your property and short-term letting is considered a breach of the terms.

Noise nuisance, over-occupation and damage to communal areas can all result from the use of properties as short-term lets. If you're a Council freeholder, you should check the terms of your covenant.

The Council does not give approval for short-term let arrangements and may take legal action against you, so if you are in any doubt about your responsibilities, please seek independent legal advice.

For more information visit **rbkc.gov.uk/ sub-letting** 



### 'I'm absolutely chuffed' Marcus is Caretaker of the Year!





We know our caretakers often go the extra mile to ensure they provide the best service possible to the residents they serve. Your caretakers are very much part of your community and we want them to know that you appreciate them as much as we do.

That's why we asked you to nominate the person you felt deserved the Caretaker of the Year award 2022.

We received a virtual sackful of nominations telling us how your caretaker is kind and caring, how they take pride in their work, and how nothing is too much trouble. And, it was your votes that decided on a very well deserving and surprised Marcus Anderson being the one to scoop up the award.

Marcus was presented with the gleaming trophy by Director of Housing Management Doug Goldring.

I am absolutely chuffed. It means so much that the residents I serve nominated me for this award - thank you!

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to vote.

Your caretaker is part of the Estate Care service. Find out more about Estate Care at **rbkc.gov.uk/estate-care** 



# Housing Matters

### CONTACT US



0800 137 111 or 020 3617 7080 For all enquiries



Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea 292a Kensal Road, London W10 5BE



HM-CustomerServices@rbkc.gov.uk



www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management



Finished reading me? Recycle me!

### YOUR LOCAL HOUSING OFFICES

**Network Hub** 

292a Kensal Road London W10 5BE Open weekdays 9am to 5pm

#### **Blantyre Office**

Blantyre Street London SW10 0DS Open weekdays 9am to 5pm

#### Lancaster West Estate Office

Unit 7, Baseline Studios Whitchurch Road London W11 4AT Open weekdays 9am to 5.30pm Email: LancasterWestoffice@rbkc.gov.uk

#### Arabic

يمكن توفير المعلومات التي وردت في هذا المستند بصيغ بديلة ولغات اخرى. إذا كنت في حاجة إلى مزيد من المساعدة، الرجاء استخدام بيانات الاتصال الواردة أدناه.

#### Farsi

اطلاعات حاوی در این مدارک به صورتهای دیگر و به زبانهای مختلف در دسترس می باشد. در صورت نیاز به کمک بیشترلطفا از جزئیات تماس ذکر شده در ذیل استفاده کنید.

Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and in different languages. If you require further assistance please call us on 0800 137 111 or 020 3617 7080.

#### French

Les informations présentées dans ce document peuvent vous être fournies dans d'autres formats et d'autres langues. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide complémentaire, veuillez utiliser les coordonnées ci-dessous.

#### Portuguese

A informação presente neste documento pode ser disponibilizada em formatos alternativos e em línguas diferentes. Se desejar mais assistência, use por favor os contactos fornecidos abaixo.

#### Tagalog

Ang impormasyon sa dokumentong ito ay maaaring makuha sa iba't-ibang format at wika. Kung kailangan niyo ng karagdagang tulong, mangyari lamang na kontakin kami gamit ang mga detalye sa ibaba.

#### Spanish

La información en este documento puede facilitarse en formatos alternativos y en diferentes idiomas. Si necesita más ayuda por favor utilice la siguiente información de contacto.