

Housing Matters

News from your Council



Grenfell

Leads to change

Your voice

Tell us how you want your home managed

Improving services

Tackling repairs



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA



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Welcome

Welcome to the Council

This is my first chance to introduce myself to you. As you know, the Council has taken back housing management services from Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) and, as the councillor who leads on housing in the borough, I am responsible for improving services.



In this magazine, you will get a flavour of how the Council will be tackling repairs and fire safety improvements and can read about parking, benefits and more.

I know that the service you have received has not always been great. My job is to lead the Council to try to make things better as quickly as possible.

I will be working with Doug Goldring, Director of Housing Management, to tackle some of the problems you are facing. They will not be solved overnight but my promise to you is that you – tenants and leaseholders – and your homes are now the Council's number one priority.


You can hold me to account personally for our services and for hitting our targets which we will publish in future editions of this magazine.

But I want to be clear, the Council is only running your housing services on a temporary basis. We are now planning a consultation with you on how you want your homes to be managed in future. You will decide, not the Council. To find out more, see page five.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ki'.

Deputy Leader, Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith



The Grenfell
tragedy on 14 June
has changed the
lives of residents in
and around the
tower, and beyond,
forever.

Grenfell

It has also changed attitudes here in the Town Hall. One of the changes, requested by many residents and demanded by the Prime Minister, was for the Council to take back housing management services from the TMO.

It was a decision taken by the Council on 25 October 2017, later agreed by the TMO itself, that the TMO would hand back management to the Council on a temporary basis.

Speaking at a council meeting, Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith said he recognised that many tenants and leaseholders had lost faith in the TMO and called on the TMO to hand back housing management to the Council.

He added that there had been a letter from 14 residents' associations and a further meeting of 25 residents' associations expressing a lack of confidence in the TMO.

Cllr Taylor-Smith continued: "This Council undertakes to ensure that everyone subject to the TMO's management... can fully participate from the outset in the process of deciding and co-designing how their homes and estates are managed in the future."

This is where we are today and this magazine is a part of the change. It is a new opportunity to start a conversation with you to explain what we are trying to do to make things better and to hear from you about what you want us to do.

To contact the Council and to have your say you can: Tweet us @RBKC or email us at **Housing.Matters@rbkc.gov.uk**



TMO staff join the Council

Some residents – unhappy with the service provided by the TMO – have asked the Council why it is taking on its former staff. There are two reasons for this.

First it is our legal obligation to let any TMO staff who want to, to work for the Council. While some TMO colleagues have already decided to move on including senior managers, many have come over to the Council.

Where a member of staff has a permanent contract of employment and the services they are working on are being transferred to another company or organisation, the law states that they have the right to transfer to the new organisation.

It is important that the Council obeys the law and it is equally important that we act in line with the Council's values.

This means we have to be fair to all our employees and ensure they have a genuine opportunity to work with the new leadership to transform and improve the services to our residents.

Many TMO staff have worked hard to deal with the Grenfell tragedy and to begin to tackle the areas of poor service delivery and this has been recognised by comments from some residents in support of some TMO colleagues.

The second reason is that without them, the Council would not be able to provide your housing services. At the time of the handover there were a significant number of unfilled posts being filled by temporary staff.

We will be launching a campaign to recruit new staff to the current vacancies and reorganise the services to enable all our staff to deliver a better service. As part of the change in employer we will be immediately setting out the standards of service we expect from any employee of the Council.

Our staff are passionate and care about the job they do and the Council's aim is to ensure we keep good people.



The Council is only managing your homes temporarily until you tell us what you want the future to look like.

Residents'

consultation

The Council is only managing your homes temporarily until you tell us what you want the future to look like.

In December 2017, the Council restarted the Tenants' Consultative Committee (TCC) to begin discussions with residents about the future housing management service.

The Council presented a draft plan for how the process could work, putting residents at the heart of the programme. The plan is based on the following principles:

- The Council recognises its responsibility as landlord to consult and engage
- The Council will actively listen to and respond to residents on their views about the future of their estates in an accountable and transparent way
- Consultation and engagement will include all sections of the community – every voice will be heard

The TCC asked that a resident-led consultation panel be created to shape and oversee the consultation process, to establish regular communications and to select external advisors to support the consultation.

A smaller group of residents will meet monthly as an interim group to discuss the selection of an elected tenant consultation organisation that will work with residents.

For those residents who live in street properties or small blocks, who do not have formal representation, a letter was sent to them to ask if they would be interested in getting involved in the consultation process and their preferred method of being consulted.

The presentations, notes of the meeting and dates of the TCC and meeting for residents in street properties or those without formal representation can be found on the Council's website

www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management

The presentations include details of the consultation and engagement exercise and the proposed timetable. If you wish to make any comments or have any queries about the meetings please email **housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk** or write to us at Housing Commissioning, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Town Hall, Hornton Street, W8 7NX.



Repairs improvement plan

At the beginning of March the Council took back housing management services from the TMO and we will be working hard to improve the level of service you have received in the past.

We know that the service has not always been as good as it should be. One big problem among others is the delays many residents have experienced when it comes to getting repairs done, so my team has plans to address this.

The amount of time it has taken to fix many of the repairs is not acceptable. Many residents have told us about some common complaints and we are introducing steps to put things right.



- We are introducing new systems to avoid the current high number of missed appointments by changing the way appointments are made.
- When repairs are completed there will be more checks to make sure residents are happy with the work completed.
- We will change the way that emergency work is carried out to help make sure it is completed quickly.
- Finally, if we miss our targets tenants will have the right to compensation.

But doing repairs better is not enough. We will also be rolling out a big improvements project costed at £115m over the next five years.

Chris Furlong
Interim Managing Director, Repairs Direct

In the meantime, to report a repair please call  0800 137 111

Fire safety



The Council is working to make sure all your homes are fire safe. Since the Grenfell tragedy we have – and are continuing – to review the fire safety of our homes and to bring them up to the most stringent standards wherever there are issues.

Since the Council took responsibility for fire safety work from the TMO, we have been thoroughly reviewing the existing Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs). An FRA is a routine review of a building's fire safety, its particular fire safety issues and whether any improvements are necessary.

A big part of our fire safety plan for 2018 is our major new programme of FRAs that will assess the fire safety of all relevant Council properties. These will be completed by fire safety specialists at the property services firm Turner and Townsend. These reviews will then be placed online so residents can check the fire safety of their home and hold the Council to account for our performance.

As fire safety improvements are identified, we have been working directly or with building owners to implement them. In future we're clear we will keep residents informed and updated on our fire safety plans and the related work we are completing.

As the new fire risk assessments are completed, we will continue to work closely with the London Fire Brigade to promote fire safety.

To find out more please visit: www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management



Home Ownership

24/7 payment line



You can pay your service charges over the telephone 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

To do this you will need a credit or debit card. Please note you will need your 11-digit payment reference number, which you will find on your latest statement or on your swipe card; this number will start with 22.

To make the payment call 020 3859 6087, chose option 6 and then follow the instructions.

Setting up a Direct Debit by phone

We can now set up your Direct Debit or make any amendments to your Direct Debit mandate over the telephone. To do this please call the Home Ownership Team on 020 7605 6464 and we'll be happy to help.

Advantages of paying by Direct Debit:

1. It's secure and guaranteed

All transactions are processed through highly secure technology and covered by the Direct Debit guarantee.

2. It spreads the costs

Paying your bills by Direct Debit allows you to spread costs over an agreed period safe in the knowledge payments will be made automatically.

3. It gives you peace of mind

Direct Debit is one of the safest and most reassuring ways of paying your bills.

1. Payments are made automatically, so bills are never forgotten, lost in the post or delayed by postal problems.
2. It saves you time. It takes away much of the hassle associated with paying bills, and puts an end to queuing at the bank and filling out cheques. You'll find it easier to stay on top of your bills, and you'll know exactly how much money is going out each month.

Update on parking permits



If you have an estate parking permit, please keep using your current permit after the stated expiry date of 31 March 2018. Traffic wardens will accept it as being valid up until the date when we issue you with a new permit. We hope to issue new permits in June, but we will keep you updated.

For visitor parking scratch cards from April onwards, please contact the Customer Service Centre on 0800 137 111 and ask to speak to the Parking Team.

If you have any questions about estate parking, please see the parking section of our website at www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management or contact the Customer Service Centre on 0800 137 111 and ask to speak to the Parking Team.

Universal Credit will start in North Kensington in December 2018

Universal Credit, the new welfare benefit for working age people, starts in the North Kensington Jobcentre area in December 2018.

North Kensington Jobcentre covers the W8, W10 and W11 postcodes. From December, anyone who wants to make a new claim for any of the benefits listed below, will instead claim Universal Credit:

- **Housing Benefit**
- **Income Support**
- **Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance**
- **Income-related Employment and Support Allowance**
- **Tax Credits**

However, people who are already on one (or more) of these benefits, who do not have a change of circumstances, will not have to claim Universal Credit for the time being.

Universal Credit is different to current welfare benefits: Universal Credit can only be claimed online, and the benefit is paid to you as a monthly lump sum. If you are a tenant, your monthly payment includes the money for your rent, and you are then responsible for paying this amount to your landlord.

There is help and support at the Jobcentre, and at the Council, for people who are moving on to Universal Credit for the first time.

You will still be able to get support to pay your Council Tax from the Council, when you are on Universal Credit. You should ask the Council about claiming Council Tax Reduction, when you claim Universal Credit.

To find out more about Universal Credit, visit www.rbkc.gov.uk/advice-and-benefits

Find out here if there is an RA or compact in your area.

Residents' association	No. of homes
Balfour of Burleigh	250
Bramley House	45
Chelsea Manor Court	94
Clydesdale House	30
Cremorne Estate	246
Danvers Street	64
Edenham Way	80
Elm Park Gardens	455
Grove House	60
Henry Dickens Court	330
Kensal House	68
Lancaster West Estate	994
Longlands Court	102
Nottingwood House	100
Pond House	124
Portobello Court	158
Silchester Estate	442
Sir Thomas More Estate	241
Swinbrook Estate	500
Talbot House	20
Tavistock Crescent	121
Tregunter	78
Trellick Tower	217
Warwick Road Estate	117
Wiltshire Close	212
World's End (WERA)	747

Social Group	No. of homes
Jean Darling and Chelsea Farm House	34
World's End Over 50s' Social Club	37

Compact	No. of homes
1 Clydesdale Road	10
11 Chepstow Crescent	8
14 Colville Square	12
16-19 Penzance Street	28
18-25 Basing Street	8
32 Golborne Road	26
34 Oxford Gardens	39
60 Slaidburn Street	10
63 Finborough Road	16
65 Finborough Road	16
70 Tavistock Road	35
82-84 Redcliffe Square	11
437 Fulham Road	26
Appleford House and Bosworth House	40
Brick Barn Close	16
Broadwood Terrace	26
Cecil Court	22
Chesterton Square	91
Convent Estate (Clare Gardens and Lowerwood Court)	127
Galsworthy House	16
Hereford House	30
Hortensia House	56
Holmfield House	184
Hudson House	12
Hunter House	16
Ingelow House	33
Knights House	20
Mulberry Close	40
Southern Row	190
St Mark's Grove	48
Stable Way	20
The Sandhills	30
Walnut Tree House	38
Wandon Road Estate	68
Whitchurch House	42

Translation and interpretation services

The Council uses a translation and interpretation service. Get in touch if you need these services or extra interpretation support and we'll be happy to help.



Call us on 0800 137 111 or 020 3617 7080

How can we improve *Housing Matters* magazine?



This first edition of *Housing Matters* provides information to you from the Council about the handover of services from the TMO and explains how this handover will affect you.

We would like to take on board feedback from residents on how to improve content and design. Please tell us how we can improve *Housing Matters*.

In future editions we will include more news, photos and stories about residents and we would like anyone with ideas to contact us. Please share your photos and stories and we will publish the best of them.

For now, we hope you'll understand that our focus in this edition is to provide information and important updates.

If you would like to share stories, photos, ideas and feedback please email us on **Housing.Matters@rbkc.gov.uk**

Housing Matters



CONTACT US



0800 137 111 or 020 3617 7080



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 2, Baseline Studios
Whitchurch Road
London W11 4AT
Open weekdays 9am to 5pm
Email: LancasterWestoffice@rbkc.gov.uk

Arabic

يمكن توفير المعلومات التي وردت في هذا المستند بصيغ بديلة ولغات أخرى. 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 بیشتر لطفاً از جزئیات تماس ذکر شده در ذیل استفاده کنید.

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.

Somali

Macluumaadka dokumentigan waxaa lagu heli karaa qaabab kale iyo luuqado kala duwan. Haddii aad u baahan tahay caawinaad intaas dhaafsiisan fadlan isticmaal xiriirka faahfaahinta hoose.

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.

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