

# Housing Matters

**Design**  
COMPETITION

News from your Council



## Pulling together

**Covid Support Hub** – here to help you

**Welfare calls** – checking you're OK



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

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Since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic our staff, residents and partners have all played a part in keeping our most vulnerable residents looked after and our community safe.

It has taken its toll on us, our loved ones and our freedom, it has shown us all that our community is made of kindness, bravery and unity. It has brought our community closer together.

Whether you stayed home to avoid catching or spreading the virus, resisted meeting up with friends and family when you so wanted to, whether you travelled into work to provide essential services, contributed to food banks, collected medical supplies or called a neighbour for a chat, thank you!

By continuing to follow Government advice, even though it is tough, we will soon be able to get back to the people and the things and the freedom we love.

Stay safe.

## Sorry we were late

We're sorry that you received your spring edition of Housing Matters magazine far later than we had planned. We know that by the time your issue came through your letterbox, some of the information it contained was no longer useful and we understand how frustrating this would have been.

Although the problem was brought about by the lockdown measures, we could have been better prepared. We've now expanded our delivery options so that we can respond faster if we hit a problem and found a more streamlined way to deliver. We're thinking of going digital and would like to hear what you think about receiving your Housing Matters by email (see more on page 16).

We hope you continue to find Housing Matters a useful and interesting read. We're always very keen to hear from you.

If you have any comments or contributions for Housing Matters please email us at **Housing.Matters@rbkc.gov.uk**

The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to print. We know the Covid-19 situation is moving fast and we are responding to Government announcements. Please check our Covid-19 web portal for updates [www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus)

# Delivering services differently

Throughout the pandemic we've continued working to maintain an effective service to keep you safe in your homes and support our more vulnerable residents.

**W**ith some Government restrictions lifted, we tentatively opened our public reception at 292a Kensal Road on 15 June with new safety measures in place. The reception is open for appointments only for the time being to allow us to resolve complex matters that cannot be dealt with by phone or email.

If all is well, we will open the reception at our Blantyre office later this month.

Some of the measures we have put in place to keep our visitors and staff safe include:

- limiting access to those with appointments only
- protective screens on our reception counters and in interview rooms
- floor walkers to assist with maintaining social distancing

Social distancing measures severely restrict the number of people we can see at reception. If you don't have an appointment, we will not be able to see you at this time. Please continue to contact us by telephone or email if you can, and only request an appointment if it is absolutely necessary.



You may find it quicker and easier to arrange a virtual appointment with your Neighbourhood Management Team via smartphone, tablet or PC. Please consider all other options before booking a face-to-face appointment.

**If you need to book a face-to-face appointment, please call 0800 137 111 or email [hm-customerservices@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:hm-customerservices@rbkc.gov.uk)**

As well as opening our reception areas we are beginning to tackle some of the repairs that we were unable to do during lockdown so that we can get your homes back in top condition.

Plus, we have embraced new ways of working, such as holding virtual meetings, providing services remotely and making wider use of the technology available to us.

Thank you for your continued co-operation, it helps us to help you while working safely within the Government's social distancing guidelines.

For information on all Council services visit **[www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk)**



## A message from Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith

# Hello

Sunday 14th June marked three years since the Grenfell Tower tragedy. This is a particularly tough time for residents made tougher by the fact that people cannot hug each other, cannot comfort each other, and cannot meet each other. My heart goes out to everyone who lost a loved one, escaped the tower on that night or were impacted by what they witnessed. It is incumbent on us to always remember the 72 people who lost their lives, learn the lessons of the tragedy despite the delay to the inquiry, and make sure that a tragedy like that does not happen again.

**T**he community spirit that has been built up is second-to-none, and I have been really encouraged and touched by the kindness residents have shown towards each other during the Covid-19 pandemic. I always knew how supportive our communities were of one another and I know so many of you have continued to step up to support vulnerable and shielding residents with food deliveries and medical supplies or volunteered with the local volunteer centre. It is this kind of neighbourly spirit that makes me proud to be a Councillor for this borough.

Sadly, many of our residents have lost their lives. Our thoughts go out to everyone whose family has been affected. We also know that many more livelihoods will be affected and therefore we have started working towards delivering the best possible recovery for this borough in partnership with our communities.

**Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith, Deputy Leader of the Council**



Now more than ever, we need to work together to both reduce the spread of the virus in Kensington and Chelsea.

As a result of the pandemic we have had to change the way we work. This includes everything from setting up brand new services, most notably the Covid-19 Hub. We know that you too have had to adapt and change the way you receive services or communicate with us and we thank you for your patience and flexibility.

Housing Management hosted its first online meeting, the Tenants Consultative Committee, in May, which presents opportunities to reach a greater audience when engaging on our plans for the future. We will expand upon that through our new resident engagement strategy which we hope will be delivered by the end of the year. It will be incredibly important to get your views on how effective the measures we've put in place have been in keeping you informed.

This is particularly important as we will only return to face-to-face meetings when it is safe to do so. This may take some time, and in the meantime we cannot stand still.

The capital programme is particularly important. If we are to reach our shared ambition to improve the standards of our homes, then we need to start scoping the works and preparing to deliver. We will have written to you initially and will keep in touch to ensure that you have the ability to shape the programme as we move along.

So thank you very much for everything you are doing to prevent the spread of the virus. Please do continue to be vigilant, and hopefully I will be able to see you soon.



# Capital works update

Despite the impact of Covid-19, we've been able to make some progress with our capital works programme which will see an investment of £267 million to ensure that all Council homes are modern, safe and warm. This is a priority for us and we know that it is for our residents too.

**T**o overcome the restrictions on public meetings, we've worked with Resident Associations via conferencing apps.

Together we have developed a new approach to consulting on major works. As part of this new process we'll be sending a draft scope of works to residents on the estates in our capital works programme for 2020-2022. This will detail the work suggested for individual homes and blocks and we'll be asking you to feed back to us via our dedicated email address.

If you don't have internet access, we'll provide you with alternative ways to respond when we write to you. We know that some residents are concerned about work continuing during the Coronavirus pandemic, however we want to reassure you that if we need to come into your home to carry out any work, we will strictly adhere to the latest Government guidance – for your safety and that of our staff. If you are self-isolating or in a high-risk group, we can arrange to visit at a better time.

## Fire Door installations

The majority of entrance doors to flats act as fire doors and current building regulations require 30 minutes fire resistance on both sides.

At Silchester Tower, we've completed installation of compliant flat entrance doors. At Adair and Hazlewood Towers and on the Worlds End Estate, we've completed the installation of all communal fire doors.

We're currently installing communal fire doors in our sheltered housing schemes and this is due to be completed by the end of July – thanks for working with us on this we're currently on track to meet the completion target. We'll be going back to complete installations for residents who are in high risk health categories as soon as it's safe to do so.

## Lift replacement programme

We know that lift breakdowns cause major inconvenience for residents and that is why we have focussed our efforts on keeping the programme on track. The lift replacement programme has been impacted by the closure of the factories that supply parts. Fortunately we have been able to source parts from other suppliers. Now that factories are beginning to open in a controlled way, we are able to go ahead with the installation of new lifts in Hazlewood Tower in North Kensington in July. More installations are scheduled for 2021.

We never forget that the capital works programme is important to all our residents and we'd like to thank you for working with us to tackle the challenges Covid-19 has brought to these planned works.

For more information on the capital works programme email [capital.investment@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:capital.investment@rbkc.gov.uk)

# Support for people sleeping rough

Like other London boroughs, Kensington and Chelsea has people who, for a range of reasons, sleep rough on the streets.

The vulnerable people our Street Population Outreach Team support are facing even greater uncertainty because of the Coronavirus.

The team has been working to ensure people who are sleeping rough have access to facilities that help them adhere to current public health guidance. This includes ensuring they can safely self-isolate.

Working with the local police, voluntary organisations and housing providers, the team has helped more than 50 people who were sleeping rough on the streets.

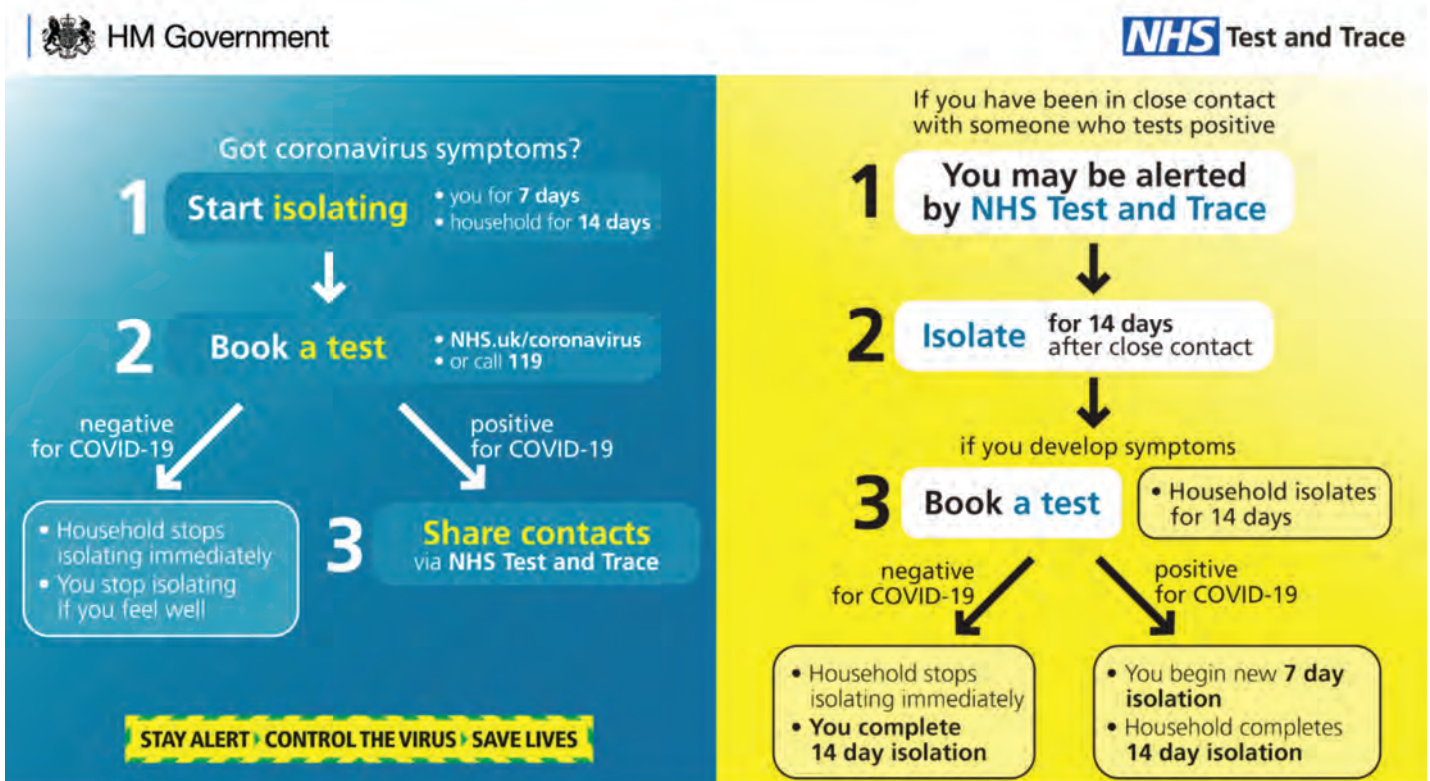
If you see someone sleeping rough, please let us know. Call **020 7341 5210** or **020 7361 3008** or email **Streetoutreach@rbkc.gov.uk**

We'll take those first steps to get them the support they need.

## NHS Test and Trace

Last month the Government launched the NHS Test and Trace. This has been introduced to control the rate of reproduction (R) and reduce the spread of infection. The service will include 25,000 dedicated contact tracing staff working with Public Health England.

1. If you have one or more symptoms of coronavirus you must immediately self-isolate.
2. You then must book a test using **nhs.uk/coronavirus** or call 119.
3. If you test positive, you will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace who will help you identify who you have been in contact with and will gather their contact details.





# How we're doing

## Performance indicators

Taking an overview of the Council's performance from 2019 to 2020.



### Customer service

Our customer service team received 94,303 calls from customers this year and answered just over 96 per cent.

This figure takes us over our target of 92.5 per cent for this year. Answering your calls got speedier too. More than 71 per cent were answered within 30 seconds. Both sets of figures are an improvement on last year.

Another positive outcome is in our response to complaints. Last year we responded within an average 20 days, this year we have improved that figure to 15 days. Stage one complaints answered within target showed a significant improvement – up from 60 per cent last year to 87.63 per cent and a drop in the number of complaints escalated to stage two, dropped from 25 last year to just 12 this year.



### Making your neighbourhood safe

A total of 1,984 residents completed satisfaction surveys for grounds maintenance and cleaning services during the year. Respondents reported satisfaction levels of 83.25 per cent with grounds maintenance, 77.14 per cent for external cleaning and 74.74 per cent for internal cleaning. Results varied across our estates and we are reviewing this feedback to identify areas for improvement.

Your satisfaction with handling antisocial behaviour cases stands at 65 per cent. This is below our target of 75 per cent, however it is similar to the average for all London landlords. We continue to carry out enforcement action on cases that we have been unable to resolve through informal measures, such as warning letters, third party referrals and mediation. For 2019-20 these actions included four acceptable behaviour agreements, nine Notices of Seeking Possession, seven injunctions served, and one eviction.



### Repairs

Resident satisfaction with the repairs service ended the year at

just under 80 per cent which is short of our target of 85 per cent. There have been improvements in the number of repairs completed in one visit and emergency repairs completed within target. However, other key areas have not seen significant change since last year. Recent changes to the structure of the service and the embedding of our new IT system has resulted in increased resident satisfaction, bringing it to 85 per cent for the month of March 2020.



### Tenancy

During the year we let 395 homes – an 80 per cent increase in lettings when compared to the previous year. As a result, the number of vacant and available homes has continued to

decrease throughout the year.

The rollout of Universal Credit continues to impact on rent collection and arrears. The number of households in receipt of Universal Credit has more than doubled during the year, ending March at with a total of 816 claimants. The impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on household incomes also affected rent collection in late March and has continued to be reflected in increasing debt levels going into 2020-21.

Despite both these factors, current tenant rent arrears ended the year at £1.619 million, compared to £1.654 million in March 2019. This reflects the ongoing work to improve our processes and the work being undertaken to ensure that households are maximizing benefit entitlements.

# The Covid-19 Hub

## – we're here to help you

The Covid-19 Hub is part of the Government's Local Support Scheme for the 2.2 million people identified by the NHS nationally as being "clinically vulnerable". This includes those at highest risk of severe illness from Coronavirus and for those whom self-isolation is most critical.

**H**ere in Kensington and Chelsea it's the coordination point where a range of services to support our most vulnerable residents takes place.

The Covid 19 Hub is a one stop shop where residents who have been identified by the NHS as 'clinically vulnerable' and have been asked to shield themselves by staying at home for 12 weeks, can request food, medical supplies and other support to get them through this difficult time. It's also a point of contact for residents who are not shielding but are otherwise vulnerable due to the Coronavirus and need some support.

Many Housing Management staff have been redeployed from their regular roles to work at the Hub. Redeployed repair operatives Peter Dowey, Dean Sheppard, Peter Elwood and Lawrence Calder, have set aside their day job and are now responding to requests for food parcels. Their vehicles and knowledge of our borough have been invaluable in enabling them to deliver more than 400 food parcels directly to the doors of residents.

Peter Dowey told us: "Everyone at the Covid-19 Hub is making a tremendous effort, and it's a wonderful privilege to be part of the team helping our most vulnerable residents. If you're elderly and live on your own it must get very lonely, so I do hope a brief bit of human contact – at a safe distance – is as welcome as the food parcels!"

Staff from other areas have been redeployed to make the essential welfare calls that ensure everyone who needs help knows where to find it. Even if that's only a chat.

Read about welfare calls on the next page.

Contact the Covid-19 Hub  
Email: [C19Hub@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:C19Hub@rbkc.gov.uk)  
Telephone: **020 7361 4326** –  
**Lines are open 7 days a week from  
Monday – Sunday from 9am-5pm.**





# Welfare calls checking you're ok?

Our welfare calls have offered a lifeline to some of the most vulnerable members of our community – making them feel safe, supported and cared for during this time of crisis.

**A** team of redeployed staff set about making calls to every one of the 3,654 residents listed, making sure they had what they needed, even if it was just to know someone was checking they were OK – and even if that was at the weekend.

So far the team have made contact with more than 3,000 residents, made more than 350



referrals and signposted residents to partner organisations such as Age UK, K&C Forum, Covid-19 Hub, Under 65 Foodbank, and the NHS Volunteer Scheme who delivered food, collected medicines or helped with shopping. They also arranged essential repairs, financial support and importantly, they helped deal with the loneliness and isolation during lockdown. The team are still providing a call back service for those who require support.

The feedback from residents has been overwhelming and staff have reported finding the role the most rewarding experiences they have encountered.

"You have helped with food and for someone to take my rubbish out. You have been wonderful and even contacted me over the weekend as well. It makes me feel good that someone cares."

"The Council called me and they have already sent somebody and they fixed my door, it was coming off the hinges. I'm happy now and I feel safe."

"I was suffering from severe pain and needed a doctor, and I was in desperate need of help. You called for heating in the house and found me help with house chores like cleaning. They called me too. Thank you very much with all my heart."

"I would love to offer feedback. 11 out of 10 plus 5 Golden stars"

"The service that we have received has been beyond and above from HM and Age UK. If it was not for SF and her continuous ongoing support, that made my load lighter to support my father, the service was really appreciated. Thank You".

"Housing Management got in touch, we had a good chat and it brightened my day, Housing were able to arrange a weekly delivery from AGE UK and give me advice on my rent. The officers call back every week to check up on me and I look forward to their calls."

"I've have felt very isolated and anxious as none of my family live nearby, the weekly calls from housing management are great, I enjoy the chats with officers and they arrange the support I need'.

If you need support or are struggling to manage, contact the Neighbourhoods team at [HM-NeighbourhoodBusinessSupport@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:HM-NeighbourhoodBusinessSupport@rbkc.gov.uk) or call **0800 137 111**

# Supporting you through the Coronavirus pandemic

We realise the Coronavirus pandemic has meant very difficult times for many residents, both on a personal and family level, and often on a financial level too.

Therefore, we would like to reassure tenants that we will not be taking enforcement action for rent arrears at this time.

## Support with rent

To help our residents who are not able to use phones and are not online, who may be struggling to keep up with rent payments during the pandemic, we have set aside a support fund. At the time of going to print we have provided grants to 59 residents. If you want to find out more about this, please email **HM-Rentincome2@rbkc.gov.uk** or call **0800 137 111**. Staff will then advise you on how this works.

You should continue to pay your rent if you are able to and avoid unnecessary arrears accumulating. Rent payments are expected if you are in receipt of Universal Credit, Housing Benefit or if you are working and your employment status has not changed.

The Council relies on rental income to run its housing management services, which includes providing caretaking, repairs and maintenance services to your home, block and estate.

## Government support

The Government has issued advice on support available for benefit claimants. Jobcentre appointments have been suspended since the 19 March. However, Jobcentres remain open and will continue to support people who are not able to use phones and online, including homeless people. If you do not currently claim, you may be entitled to help through benefits if you need to self-isolate.



## Support for leaseholders

We realise that many leaseholders will be affected by the pandemic and may be worried about paying service charges. Contact our Home Ownership team on **020 7605 6464** or email **HM-Homeownership@rbkc.gov.uk** for more information.

## Local support payments

If you have been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic and feel you need further financial support you may be entitled to support through the Council's Local Support Payments. We have boosted this by £500,000, on top of funding from central government.

You can also apply over the telephone on **020 7745 6464** between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

## Food delivery service

This service helps residents of any age who are able to buy their own food but are unable to leave the house because they are self-isolating, are vulnerable or have an underlying medical condition and no support network. It has been particularly set up to support those who do not have access to the internet and therefore cannot buy or pay for shopping this way.

To access the service please call **020 7361 4025** and if you meet the criteria, a local organisation will contact you to arrange a shopping list and method of repayment. A volunteer, who has been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service, will do your shopping and drop it off to your doorstep.



# Don't fall for a scam!

Sadly, fraudsters are exploiting anxieties about Coronavirus to gain your personal information.

**T**hey'll target you with fraudulent emails, phone calls, text messages or social media posts. You'll see fake news articles on the internet and in the press promoting remedies, cures and false advice around Coronavirus.

If you are in any doubt, there are three websites you can trust: the Government's website at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) or the World Health Organisation website at [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) and for more localised updates and information visit the Council's website at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## General advice

Always take a few moments to think before you part with any money or information.

The police or your bank will never ask you to withdraw money or transfer it to a different account. Neither will they ever ask you to reveal your full banking password or PIN.

Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud – [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

**Take Five** is national campaign offering straight-forward, impartial advice. It has a specific section about criminals exploiting the spread of Coronavirus in order to carry out fraud.

Visit Take Five at:  
[takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/  
coronavirus-fraud-and-scams](http://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/coronavirus-fraud-and-scams)

## Money matters –

### Help shape our Financial Inclusion Strategy

The right financial advice and support at the right time can make all the difference to anyone who is struggling with money.

**F**inancial worries can impact heavily on health, wellbeing and relationships. The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that access to good advice on benefits and knowing what you're entitled to has become even more important.

We have some ideas for how we can help residents to maximise their income, manage priority debts, and budget effectively. These include:

- Working more closely with the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide additional specialist advice for residents and training for staff
- Support for residents to find employment and training
- Help with managing household budgets

We want to make sure that we focus on the things that matter most to you and your input could make all the difference!

If you think this sounds like something you'd be interested in, email [amanda.morait@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.morait@rbkc.gov.uk)





## In conversation with Jermaine Sterling, **Neighbourhood Team Leader at RBKC**

The good, the bad and the ugly (but mostly good)

**W**e had a chat with Jermaine Sterling, Neighbourhood Team Leader, to get a glimpse into his world at work in the borough.

**Tell us about your job working for Kensington and Chelsea?**

I start most days checking my casework and the welfare of my team. I manage a team of six Neighbourhood Officers and I need to make sure they are all OK so they can be effective as they are on the ground working extremely hard to support our residents and each other.

Kensington and Chelsea is an interesting and unusual borough with great wealth but its fair share of social deprivation. It makes me feel proud to be part of the many worthwhile projects that improve our housing stock and our engagement with the communities we serve. It's what our residents deserve.

My team are great and I love working with them, we're a busy team and I love being busy. I enjoy the fact my job also gives me the opportunity to develop and take on additional roles. For example, I was the Housing Management lead for Notting Hill Carnival 2019. This borough is extremely diverse – I love that.

### What type of issues do you deal with as a Neighbourhood Team Leader?

My team and I deal with very vulnerable residents every day. We come across issues such as safeguarding, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour. At the moment, noise nuisance is a big issue for us. Three quarters of our antisocial behaviour cases relate to this.

### You work closely with local police in tackling antisocial behaviour – can you tell us some more about this?

I speak with the police daily to share intelligence. This helps us to tackle antisocial behaviour together. We are lucky in this borough that we don't have sustained serious crime, but that's not to say there aren't issues.

We recently secured a Closure Order where we took legal steps to safeguard a resident following reports from the police that a group of young males had been using the flat to take and sell drugs and drink alcohol.

### What are the challenges you face at work?

It's challenging when you walk into someone's home and they don't have the most basic

items to live. We put our residents in touch with a range of services that can provide the relevant support, whether that's rent advice or training and support to get into employment. We're all human and it can be hard to stay removed from the situation. We are rebuilding trust with residents – this is a big job and as a housing provider we have a lot to learn, we are trying our best and I see this improving every day.

Sometimes the situations we deal with at work can be quite intimidating. We make sure we look after our staff when they face these challenging situations.

### Finally, how has the Covid-19 pandemic affected your work?

It's been tough! We are still on the frontline and we are still working, however we're on a rota and I'm just lucky my team haven't fallen ill.

We are still providing the best service we can to our residents in innovative ways by trying to be available to residents and our colleagues as much as possible, on phones and digitally. We are still here to help.

## Antisocial Behaviour update

Life in lockdown has meant that most families have been spending more time at home and are unable to access their usual recreational activities. This can mean increased noise levels and sometimes an increase in tensions. For anyone feeling anxious or isolated, it may be difficult to adapt to these changes.

Now, more than ever, residents need to be tolerant of noise levels and considerate of how noise in our homes can affect our neighbours. We understand that residents may be concerned about how antisocial behaviour complaints will be managed at this time. We are committed to supporting any resident who is affected by noise nuisance, harassment, illegal activity or any other form of antisocial behaviour.

As restrictions are slowly lifted, our investigations may be different, but we will continue to work with residents, while being guided by Government advice and our antisocial behaviour procedures.

If you experience serious antisocial behaviour or criminal activities, please report it to the Police by dialling 101 or 999 if it is an emergency.

To report antisocial behaviour speak to your Neighbourhood Services Co-Ordinator, on **0800 137 111** or **020 3617 7080**

To report noise nuisance, please contact **020 7361 3001** or email **environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk**





# CALLING resident artists!

Here in Kensington and Chelsea we want to welcome every new household to their home with a welcome pack.

When people move into a new Council home we'll provide them with useful tenancy information such as our service standards, when your bins will be emptied or where to find your nearest library. We will also be adding a few extras to help the move go as smoothly as possible. We'll include some teabags, toilet rolls, bin liners and our new, soon to be, exclusively designed tea towel and cotton tote bag. That's where you come in.

We'd like you to help us with a design to grace our tea towel and tote bag based on the theme of 'Home'. The winner will receive a £50 voucher to spend on art supplies. We'll also be giving away two runner-up £25 vouchers, also to spend on art supplies. The winning entry will adorn the tea towel and tote bag.

Create your design in ink, or paint, pencil, crayon, felt tip, charcoal or any other medium you wish, then take a digital photo of your masterpiece. Send it to [amanda.morait@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.morait@rbkc.gov.uk) and quote 'Tea towel competition' in the subject line. Don't forget to tell us your name, age and email address so that we can contact you if you win.

The competition is open to tenants and leaseholders of any age who live in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Entries must be received by **Monday 20 July** and the judging will take place by **Monday 10 August**. The panel's decision will be final and there will no cash alternative to the prize.

Please keep your original artwork safely as we may ask you to send it to us so that we can reproduce it. We'll feature the winning designs in the next issue of Housing Matters. We hope to have the welcome packs ready by the end of August 2020.

Good luck!

## Notting Hill Carnival 2020

Organisers of the Notting Hill Carnival made the difficult decision to cancel this year's event after extensive consultation with partners. The Council has welcomed this decision, which takes into account the potential risk to public health caused by large crowds gathering in close proximity.

However, all is not lost...Carnival organisers and the Council will be working together to bring the Notting Hill Carnival spirit to people from the safety of their homes and

make them feel connected and engaged. Notting Hill Carnival was founded to bring people together during trying times, and the alternative arrangements will try to continue that legacy.

The Council is committed to supporting carnival, the communities and businesses it inspires and will be working with organisers to plan a spectacular event for 2021.

Please contact [Jermaine.sterling@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Jermaine.sterling@rbkc.gov.uk) for more information on Notting Hill Carnival.

**WE'RE WORKING  
ON AN ALTERNATIVE!**





## Community ideas brought to life

Would you like to make the communal areas in an around your homes greener, more welcoming or more sociable places for you and your neighbours?

**M**aybe you think the playground for the little ones is due an update or you'd like to see some lush new plants or some fancy landscaping for your green space. Your Estate Improvement Budget might just bring your ideas to life.

Set up in April 2018 as part of the Council's commitment to giving you and your neighbours direct input into how your local environment is improved, every Council managed home is allocated £67 each year towards their Estate Improvement Budget.

The allocation for each home on your estate is added together to give an annual budget. For example, if your estate has 200 homes, then £67 multiplied by 200 gives a total of £13,400 to spend. Each estate or block can have its own account and you, and your neighbours can decide how to spend your yearly budget.

You can also accumulate it over a few years to increase the amount.

Some estates have used their Estate Improvement Budgets to install new planting or to landscape their green spaces, others have upgraded playgrounds, installed new garden furniture, external lighting or CCTV systems.

In the past, we have helped estates to use their budget to attract additional income from other funders to increase their spending power.

When circumstances allow, get together with your neighbours, virtually or in person, through your Compact or Residents Association. Then get in touch and we'll help you bring your ideas to life for the benefit of the whole community.

To find out more contact Patrick Sullivan, Environmental Projects Officer on **020 8968 2795** or email **[HM-EnvironmentalServices@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:HM-EnvironmentalServices@rbkc.gov.uk)**

## Resident Engagement Strategy

**W**orking together, a group of residents and officers are developing a strategy to help and encourage everyone to get involved in how our homes are managed.

Five key themes underpin the strategy:

- You influence the decisions that affect your homes
- Clear communication is essential
- We improve services together

- Transparency and accountability in everything
- Encourage community building and cohesion

There will soon be an opportunity for every resident to be consulted on the strategy. Your input will be invaluable. We will let you know how and when you can comment.

For more information email **[amanda.morait@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.morait@rbkc.gov.uk)**

## Meet you online

**K**ensington and Chelsea was one of the first to jump on board when Government gave councils new powers to hold public meetings ‘virtually’. We have already held successful meetings online using video or telephone-conferencing. This ensures openness and transparency by allowing residents to listen-in to meetings and/or recordings of any virtual meeting via the Council website. Visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk) and search ‘council meeting webcast’.

To find the date of the next virtual Council meeting visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk) and search ‘council meetings’



Please check in advance if you plan to attend a meeting as dates or times may change. For more information on how we make decisions, visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy.aspx](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy.aspx) or call the Governance Services Team on **020 7361 2477/2265**

## Inbox or letterbox?

We held our first editorial panel recently on Zoom! We were all able to connect and put forward ideas from the comfort of our kitchen tables, our home offices and our sofas. A big thank you to our editorial panel for all their input.

If you'd like to join the editorial panel and discuss content for Housing Matters, please email [Housing.matters@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Housing.matters@rbkc.gov.uk)



**W**e've been thinking for a while now that it would be quicker, cost less, and virtually free to deliver Housing Matters to your inbox rather than through your letterbox.

And, as you told us that you would like more digital services - we're thinking of going digital! So, before we go ahead with any plans we would like to know what you think.

We know you like the design, so we would keep that as it is. You would still get all the news, updates, and information that you do in your printed version – you would just have less

to recycle when you finished reading.

We would make sure everyone has had a chance to sign up for their copy by email before our printed version disappears and as always, we would upload a version to our website.

We'll always be happy to pop a print version in the post to you if you would like us to as we know some residents just want to read a hard copy. Please drop us a line at [Housing.Matters@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:Housing.Matters@rbkc.gov.uk) and let us know if you would like Housing Matters by email or give us a call on **0800 137 111** and we'll add you to the list.

# Piloting electronic estate noticeboards

We're always looking for ways to communicate more effectively with residents, especially on day-to-day issues concerning their home.

**W**e know paper posters are not always ideal, and while our website holds a wide range of news, information and advice we know people tend to visit it for specific issues.

That's why we are testing four electronic noticeboards in the lift lobby areas of blocks on the Silchester estate. Each noticeboard screen is split into different sections, with the main section displaying up-to-date information about your home, estate and local area.

This can be anything from letting you know about a lift outage due to planned



maintenance, but also local events and training opportunities. The screen's individual 'pages' display on a rotating loop and can be searched using buttons at the bottom of the screen. Other sections display local information such as weather updates and live bus countdown timetables. The plan is for residents to contribute relevant content via their Residents' Association representatives in the near future.

If the screens are successful and liked by residents, we'll install more screens at other locations. If you want more information or to comment about the screens email [housing.matters@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:housing.matters@rbkc.gov.uk)

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## New maintenance contracts – we'd like to hear your views

The Council is looking for new maintenance contractors to carry out repairs, maintenance and other works in your homes, blocks and estates.

**W**e'll be appointing around 30 experienced companies specialising in different trades and will be asking them to enter into a four-year Framework Agreement with us. Broadly speaking this means that the prices for materials, labour and related expenses will be agreed in advance, with only limited changes allowed. When we need work completed, we'll pick whichever company offers the best deal from

within the framework. Because we won't need to negotiate a new contract each time, works can often be completed quicker. Frameworks often result in competitive prices from companies keen to do the work.

The estimated budget for the four years is £19.6m, and over June and August we will evaluate the companies bidding for the work. We would like residents to participate in interviewing bidders, and we'll provide the guidance to do so. All this may be via video link because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

For more information call Michael Robson on **07554 662 806**.



# Fire safety works

Since the Grenfell tragedy we've reviewed – and continue to review – the fire safety of your homes to ensure it is up to the highest standard.

Coronavirus has presented additional challenges. However, the cooperation and understanding of residents has enabled us to complete this vital safety work while maintaining social distancing measures. Thanks for your patience in these challenging times.

Our work to install automatic fire detection systems in communal areas continues.

We're also installing new fire doors sets to flats and ensuring all flat entrance doors (old and new) have working self-closers. Fire alarms and smoke detectors are also being fitted in homes that don't have them.

Before attending homes, we've been contacting residents to establish if they are self-isolating or in a high-risk group. We are happy to discuss whether the works are carried out immediately or when the pandemic situation improves.

If you are worried about fire safety in your home, please let our Housing Management team know by calling **0800 137 111**.

# Gas and electricity checks – keeping you safe

It is our job to keep you safe. As your landlord, it is our duty to check the gas appliances and pipework in all tenanted homes every year and make electrical safety checks at least every five years. When your next gas or electrical safety check is due, our contractor will write to you to make an appointment.

We know that some residents are concerned about work continuing during the Coronavirus pandemic, however we want to reassure you that if we need to come into your home to carry out any work, we will strictly adhere to the latest Government guidance for your safety and that of our staff. If you are self-isolating or are in a high-risk group, we can arrange to visit at a better time.



Please remember, it's part of your tenancy agreement to allow us reasonable access to your home to carry out these checks and if you have any concerns about this do get in touch.

Help us to keep you safe by allowing us access to your home to complete our gas and electrical safety checks quickly and efficiently.

For more information visit [www.rbkc.gov.uk/safety-checks](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/safety-checks) or call Rubi Taylor on **020 7605 6339**.

If you are **worried about domestic or sexual abuse at home**, we are here for you.

**The Angelou Support Service** is available to provide help for anyone aged 13 or above.

For help call: **0808 801 0660**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 10am - 4pm

Wednesday: 10am - 4pm and 6pm - 9pm

# Please no barbecues on your balcony



- Barbecues on balconies cause fires
- If you light a barbecue you will face enforcement action
- You should report others lighting balcony barbecues at **HM-NeighbourhoodBusinessSupport@rbkc.gov.uk** or call **0800 137 111**

# 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](http://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](mailto: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.

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.