

Talk Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 31 of the Talk Housing newsletter, packed with information for tenants and leaseholders. We hope you enjoy it and if you have any feedback or ideas for future issues we would love to hear them.

Please email
**community-participation@
royalgreenwich.gov.uk**

SPRING 2025 ISSUE 31



Welcome to your new home

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community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

ROYAL borough of
GREENWICH

5 minutes with Cllr Pat Slattery



This newsletter tells you how we are improving our existing homes and building and buying new ones so that people on our housing register wait less time to be offered a more suitable property.

Existing homes - for the last two years, and for the next five, we are carrying out major improvement work on our ageing homes and estates; spending hundreds of millions of pounds on roofs, electrics, lifts, kitchens, bathrooms, insulation, and the external look of our estates. We want you to be proud of where you live - it's important.

New homes – Many existing tenants want a smaller or, more usually, a larger home. At the same time, other residents of the borough are registering for council homes in greater numbers than ever because the average rent for a private sector property is way out of the price range of most of our residents at £2,250 per calendar month for a two-bed property. So, we are building and buying more homes to help meet the demand.

This issue includes a piece about just one of those properties we bought recently – a 100-home block on the Greenwich Millennium Village (near The O2).

Because of the high demand for homes, we've had to put some families into hotels. I am delighted that we have dramatically reduced the number of households in hotels from 298 in Autumn 2023 to just 52 households now. This helps the families themselves, and all of us as taxpayers, so we will not let up.

Pat Slattery

Cabinet Member Housing Management,
Neighbourhoods and Homelessness



What does your rent pay for?



repairs to council homes



caretaking and looking after green spaces



upkeep of communal areas



improving homes and estates



housing management
(rent collection, anti-social behaviour, changes to tenancy, staffing and admin)



We have one of the lowest average council rents in London.

To continue to provide these services, from **Monday 7 April 2025** rent would have gone up on average by £2.97 a week. If you rent a garage this will also go up by £1 a week.

Worried about paying your rent?



Contact your Income Officer on
020 8854 8888
or **rent-account-enquiries@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**

Struggling with the cost of living?

Get support
royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwich-supports



Making more council homes safer and healthier



Just over 12,000 council homes have benefitted from work to make sure they are safer and healthier as part of our £430m investment programme to improve some of our existing council homes.

In the first year of the multimillion-pound programme, the biggest in a generation, we invested £48.5m carrying out work as part of our mission to make sure residents have access to homes that are safe and secure.

The programme covers a variety of improvement work including new roofs, new kitchens and bathrooms, electrical wiring and heating upgrades, lift renewals, door entry systems, as well as fire, electrical, gas and water safety improvements.

Below is a summary of works carried out in 2023/24

- 8,000** electrical inspection tests
- 725** new A-rated boilers
- 583** lift refurbishments
- 313** fire rated individual front doors
- 267** double-glazed windows and balcony doors
- 1,102** energy efficiency upgrades
- 1,652** home adaptations for people living with disabilities

Our contractors have also made important social value contributions including the redecoration of the Middle Park Community Centre and opportunities for residents to gain employment and apprenticeships. Read more on the planned refurbishment of a teaching kitchen on page 9.

Cllr Pat Slattery, Cabinet Member for Housing Management, Neighbourhoods and Homelessness said: "As part of *Housing Our Greenwich* we're ambitious about improving and upgrading our homes to help our residents live happy, healthy lives, so I'm really pleased with the outcomes that we've delivered in the first full year of the programme."

If you have any questions about the programme, please email **capital-investment-admin@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**

Welcome to your home!



New council tenants of Greenwich Millennium Village joined the Council Leader and local ward councillors at a special event to welcome them to their new homes.

The event provided tenants with essential support and introduced new neighbours to their ward councillors in the newest community on the peninsula.

Council Leader Cllr Anthony Okereke and Greenwich Peninsula ward councillors, Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald, Cllr Nick Williams and Cllr David Gardner, met tenants at the event and spoke to them about the support on offer from the council.

Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, said: “We’re delighted that 100 households who were previously on our housing register, most of whom are families with children, are now settling in, enjoying their homes and helping to forge a new community on the Peninsula.

“That is more than 300 people who were in difficult housing situations who are now living in high quality, permanent council homes.

“We’re dedicated to making sure our homes are safe and secure, and with the support of our council and partner services we will be there to help and support them throughout their tenancies.

“Whether it’s buying or building, we’re delivering new housing for people who really need it in Royal Greenwich.”

Last year the council bought 100 one, two and three-bedroom flats at Greenwich Millennium Village with its own funds and a grant from the Greater London Authority to let to people on the housing register.

One tenant was introduced to specialist support that will allow her to pay for a carer for her child with autism. This will enable her to hopefully receive direct payments and focus on getting back into training and work.

Other tenants spoke of the positive effect moving into the development had had on their lives.

One couple said: *"The flat is lovely. When we first came to view it, we were really impressed with the quality it has, like underfloor heating. We've just found out the hire costs for the community centre for a children's party so there's lots of potential for activities for children."*

Another tenant said: *"Living in a serene environment has made a huge difference compared to where we were living before. I am very happy with our home here. The location is great, and it is peaceful, nice and clean."*

"It has made a positive impact on our family life."

Although the council are rehousing more people as we make more homes available our housing register continues to grow, with around 30,000 households waiting on it. The households we are happy to have rehoused at Greenwich Millennium Village had been waiting a long time and experiencing severe overcrowding, homelessness and other pressing housing needs.

To find out more about the waiting times for social housing please use our Housing Support Finder at **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing-support-finder**



Tenants move into latest Royal Borough of Greenwich council homes



We know there is huge demand for the 1,750 new council homes we're building, so it's exciting to be able to visit new developments as they are completed and meet happy tenants in their new homes.

The latest scheme to be built is in Greenwich Park, where seven new net zero carbon council homes have been created on a site that was previously occupied by old council-owned garages.

The development at Bliss Crescent provides a mix of one, two and three-bedroom apartments in a modern building with generous balconies and gardens for ground floor homes.

In addition to much needed new homes, the scheme has also delivered improvements for existing residents.

An old ball court has been replaced by a modern multi-use games area, while hard and soft landscaping has improved biodiversity and a new footpath has enhanced access to and from the area.

Tenants were visited recently by the Leader of the Council Cllr Anthony Okereke and ward councillor Cllr Aidan Smith.

Cllr Okereke said: *"We are steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that people in Greenwich have access to a safe and secure home that meets their needs.*

"As the only type of housing linked to local incomes, council developments like Bliss Crescent are crucial to enabling people to escape the vicious cycle of poverty.

"The 1,750 council homes we are delivering across our borough show that councils can and should be at the forefront of delivering truly affordable housing which allows individuals, families and communities to thrive."



Cabinet Member for Planning, Estate Renewal and Development Cllr Majid Rahman said:

"With ever-increasing levels of inequality it has never been more important for people to have the solid foundation of a stable home. Without this they suffer constant stress and unpredictability which can have a devastating impact on their mental and physical health."

"At Royal Borough of Greenwich we are doing everything we can to build as many council homes as possible, giving people on lower incomes access to stable, affordable homes which provide a strong base from which to build their lives."

"We are also creating improvements to local areas as we build, and the upgraded games court at Bliss Crescent, complimenting our beautiful new homes, are a great example of how our developments can benefit the whole community."

Councillors met several tenants who've recently moved in, some of whom had been living in temporary accommodation for long periods and whose lives have been transformed by these brand new homes.

Art from Rubbish: tackling fly-tipping with creative murals

Fly-tipping has long affected Woolwich Common Estate, impacting residents and costing the council over £1 million yearly. A creative project is now tackling the issue, turning discarded rubbish into vibrant art.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich, DG Cities, and local arts group Taru Arts have partnered with estate families to create eye-catching murals from recycled materials. Food wrappers and plastic bottles have been transformed into colourful reminders of the importance of a tidy neighbourhood.

This project aims to reduce fly-tipping and littering, encourage recycling, and promote community responsibility. A council spokesperson said, *“This project is a fantastic chance for families and children to work together to help the planet and improve community wellbeing... These murals are a reminder to residents and visitors to take care of the estate.”*

The murals complement other council efforts, including CCTV in fly-tipping hotspots and resident information on waste disposal. The council is committed to a cleaner, safer environment. Visit Woolwich Common Estate to see these inspiring artworks.

Find out more: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/woolwich-common-murals



Estate celebrates green and clean transformation

Residents of Woolwich Common Estate recently celebrated the success of a year-long, £20,000 community improvement project.

The celebration marked the end of the Woolwich Common Estate Improvement Project, and featured stalls, drumming, and refreshments.

Funded by the council, the Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency (GCDA) worked with residents to create a cleaner, greener, and safer neighbourhood, empowering them to address local issues.

A council spokesperson praised the “community co-operative approach,” highlighting the strong partnership and hope that this model could be replicated elsewhere.

Over 12 months, residents collected 10.5 tonnes of rubbish during clear-up days. The resident-led “Woolwich Warriors” continue working with the caretaking team, significantly reducing litter.



Residents also revitalised green spaces, planting bulbs and tackling overgrowth. Dog fouling initiatives included new dog parks, extra bins, and patrols.

The project also created three jobs and secured nearly £210,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity or Levelling Up Fund for improvements to Leslie Smith Square.

GCDA Chief Executive Claire Pritchard praised the project's impact, highlighting the residents' efforts in transforming the estate. GCDA will continue supporting this transformation with community gardens and outdoor spaces.

Find out more: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/woolwich-common-improvement

Council contractors delivering social value

The council is committed to developing networks with communities, key partners, and businesses to meet needs and address challenges together - a key mission in the Our Greenwich strategy.

One of the latest successes is the Somali Teaching Group in Woolwich, which is set to receive a brand-new kitchen, thanks to the Match My Project platform and the generosity of contractors Amber Construction and their suppliers Premier Showcase.

Supporting a vital community hub

The centre, serving 30-50 residents daily, desperately needed a modern kitchen to continue its essential work. After posting on Match My Project – the Royal Borough of Greenwich's platform connecting community groups with willing contractors – Premiere Showcase, immediately stepped forward to lend their expertise and resources to the community project.

Delivering social value

The kitchen is now ready for installation. This project, part of our £430m Capital Repairs Programme, highlights how collaboration between the council, contractors, and communities can create lasting benefits beyond construction.

Get involved

If your organisation has a project in need of support, visit Match My Project and see how local contractors can help. For more information email **capital-investment-admin@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**

Housing Champions: make a difference in your community

What is a Housing Champion?

A Housing Champion is a Royal Greenwich council tenant or leaseholder who acts as a community volunteer representative and advocate. They support neighbours, help to shape local services, ensure residents' voices are heard by the council, and identify service gaps for community improvement.

Becoming a Champion

The role involves:

- representing the resident voice in your local area
- signposting neighbours to services
- encouraging those you meet to become involved themselves
- working together as a whole community.

Support and training

There are three levels of commitment on offer so there is something for everyone, and in return you will receive:

- a welcome pack and induction training
- access to an extensive training package to support and develop you in the role
- support from the Community Participation & Diversity Team.

If you are a council tenant or leaseholder and would like to find out more about becoming a Housing Champion, please visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing-champion**.

Alternatively, please get in touch with the Community Participation & Diversity Team by emailing **YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**



LGBTQ+ Housing Pledge Pioneer status

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has been recognised for our commitment to equality and support for LGBTQ+ residents in social housing.

The LGBTQ+ Housing Pledge Pioneer Status accreditation, given by HouseProud and delivered by Stonewall Housing, provides a comprehensive framework for social landlords to create inclusive and safe environments for LGBTQ+ residents.

The pledge addresses issues raised in a report called 'No Place Like Home', which looked at the experiences of LGBTQ+ residents in social housing.

The report found that LGBTQ+ residents wanted their housing provider to be more proactive on inclusion and be an openly LGBTQ+ supportive organisation.

To achieve Pledge Pioneer status the council had to demonstrate evidence across three key strands:

1. Increasing LGBTQ+ visibility in the organisation
2. Offering a programme of training for staff to improve awareness of LGBTQ+ lives and interactions with residents.
3. Ensuring that LGBTQ+ residents can have input at executive / strategic level.

Find out more: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/houseproud or stonewallhousing.org/houseproudpledge



Get Involved

The Community Participation & Diversity Team warmly invite you to join our HouseProud Working Group which is a welcoming, safe and inclusive space to share your experiences and help influence and shape key policies affecting the LGBTQ+ community.

You can sign up today by emailing YourView@royalgreenwich.gov.uk



We'll call you: our telephone surveys

Did you know that we use an independent telephone survey provider, Acuity Research and Practice, to conduct several surveys on our behalf?

These surveys include:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) perception survey
- Responsive repair feedback survey
- Gas servicing survey
- New tenants survey (also known as voids survey)
- And other intermittent surveys

These surveys provide a perfect opportunity to tell us what we are doing well and what needs to be improved.

The TSM perception surveys are even used to score Royal Greenwich as a housing provider by the Regulator of Social Housing.

So, if you get a call from Acuity, please be assured it is genuine however if you ever have any doubts, please don't hesitate to call us to be sure.

If you have already taken part in any of these surveys, we'd like to say thank you again for taking part.

You can find out more about Acuity and our TSM perception surveys at **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/tenant-perception-surveys**

Your input matters: ASB policy development

We reached out to residents on the development of our anti-social behaviour (ASB) policy and are very grateful for the meaningful feedback we have received from residents. Watch this space for future engagement activities with you when we develop our ASB procedures and our vulnerability policy.

Do you live in a high-rise building?

If you live in a high-rise building that is at least seven storeys high (or 18m and above) we want your feedback and experiences to help influence our new resident engagement strategy around building safety.

Look out for a letter soon with details about taking part in our survey:

- online via our website
- in-person at an advice hub
- by picking up a hard copy in your building or nearest library
- by calling 020 8921 6139

Debt/Universal Credit

Council rents increased by 2.7% on 7 April 2025, in line with government guidelines.

This was needed to meet the significant increases in costs for the materials, goods, and services required to provide essential housing services such as building safety, caretaking, tenancy services, and improving our repairs service. Royal Greenwich rents still remain amongst the lowest in London.

There is help for residents struggling with ongoing cost of living pressures and experiencing financial difficulties. See our website at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwich-supports or contact your Income Officer.

If you are on Universal Credit make sure you have completed the “to do” list on your online journal to update your new housing charges.

Universal Credit managed migration advice sessions

At our advice session, our advisers assist residents who have been invited to move over to Universal Credit, also known as managed migration.

Our advisers can provide specialist advice on making the move to Universal Credit once you receive a Migration Notice letter inviting you to claim. Find out more about our advice sessions at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/uc-advice

For residents who have been in receipt of Universal Credit for some time and need support with managing their claim or advice on challenging a Universal Credit decision please contact our Universal Support Team on 020 8921 3333 (10am-4pm Mon-Fri).



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