

atHome



REPAIRS SPECIAL

**INTRODUCING: BARNET HOMES'
NEW REPAIRS SERVICE**

In this issue

3	Welcome from our CEO	18	The Big Lunch
4	Repairs special	19	Gardening
12	Your rent	20	First Time Access Fund
14	Work and training	21	Burnt Oak Womens’ Group
16	Performance Advisory Group	22	You said, we did
17	Customer Awards		

How to contact us

020 8080 6587 (8am - 6pm, translators available)

Email	talk2us@barnethomes.org
Online	barnethomes.org
Contact Centre/Repairs	020 8080 6587
Leaseholder repairs service	020 8368 6017
Leaseholder Services Team	020 8359 6020
Right to Buy applications and enquiries	020 8359 6020
Pay your rent or service charges	0845 356 3456 (24 hours) or barnet.gov.uk
Our offices	Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, N20 0EJ 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW
Assist service	020 8359 4841 or assist@barnethomes.org

Complaints

The Barnet Group is committed to continuously improving what we do and the way we do it as a result of feedback from customers, and the people we support and their families. The Barnet Group aims to listen to and learn from our customers, enabling us to address any service failures, identify areas for improvement or areas of good practice, and monitor services in a customer-focused way.

We welcome complaints and feedback from our customers to help us do this. Feedback can be given to us by email, in writing, by telephone, and in person. Please visit barnethomes.org/complaints or use the information above to contact the Complaints Team.

Welcome from our CEO

Introducing Barnet Homes Repairs and Estates Services

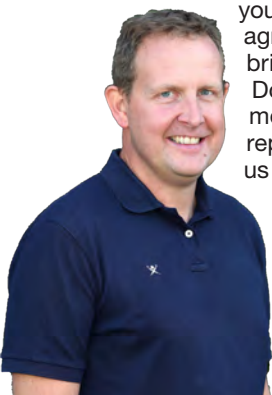
Our Customer Experience Project Team has been working hard with teams across Barnet Homes, as well as the Performance Advisory Group, to launch an in-house repairs service for our tenants and leaseholders.

This means that Barnet Homes Repairs and Estate Services will be providing your repairs service from 1st April 2020. This issue of atHome focuses on the details about how the new repairs service will work.

Customer Experience Project

We made the decision to bring the repairs service in-house as a result of findings from our ongoing Customer Experience Project. The aim of this project is to improve the services we deliver to you.

Our Performance Advisory Group worked with us, using feedback from your resident survey, and agreed that we should bring the service in-house. Doing this will give us more control over your repairs and has allowed us to redesign a range of solutions to make repairs work better for you.



What can you expect?

From 1 April 2020, you will start to see

new Barnet Homes Repairs and Estate Services branding on uniforms and vans, as well as a text message system and new appointment slots.

We have invested in a new repairs IT system and sourced local materials suppliers. We have also invested in mobile working technology that will allow operatives to carry out repairs more efficiently and effectively.

All this means that Mears will no longer be responsible for your repairs. They will now be carried out by Barnet Homes Repairs and Estates Services as well as subcontractors that we may have to appoint for more technical repairs.

These changes will improve the quality of our repairs service. We know the service provided by Mears has not been good enough over the last few months and our aim is to turn this around as quickly as possible. We plan to make the transition as smooth as possible, but it may take a few months for the new service to bed-in, so we thank you in advance for your patience.

In the meantime, everything remains business as usual. From page 21, you can find out about how to enter the Finest Flowers competition and be a part of community improvement by applying for the First Time Access Fund.

Tim Mulvenna,
Chief Executive
The Barnet Group

About atHome

If you have any comments or questions about atHome, please write to: Communications Team, 3rd Floor, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale NW9 4EW, or email atHome@barnethomes.org. You can also find an electronic copy at barnethomes.org.

Editor: Tamara Wright | Design: Andrzej Perkins

Leaseholders!

We will be writing to you separately with an update on what this change means for you

Welcome to your new repairs service

Since we announced that the Mears contract for the repairs service was coming to an end, the Customer Experience Project team have been busy putting all measures into place to deliver these services directly from 1 April 2020.

What's changing?

- One new phone number to contact us about repairs **020 8080 6587**
- A new repairs IT system
- New branding, uniforms for Barnet Homes Repairs and Estates operatives
- New vans
- More flexible appointment slots
- Enhanced text message communication
- A robust code of conduct
- Repairs advice for Leaseholders
- New in-house plumbers, electricians and other operatives.

This issue of atHome is dedicated to sharing everything you need to know about the new repairs service. We recommend that you keep this issue as a guide to the service.



The branding

Workshops were held with both residents and staff to help shape the new repairs service. During these workshops, we asked people to generate ideas and comment on a range of names for the new service, before voting on their preferred choice of name.

Residents' feedback was that the word 'Barnet' should be included, and that the name should be clear and simple.

Staff echoed the desire to include Barnet Homes in the name as they also strongly identified with the history of the organisation and felt it better represented themselves.

Staff added that they would like the name

to include both repairs and estates to show that the service does not just cover repairs and will include a range of other services such as caretaking, grounds maintenance and bulk refuse collection.

The agreed name was therefore Barnet Homes Repairs & Estate Services.

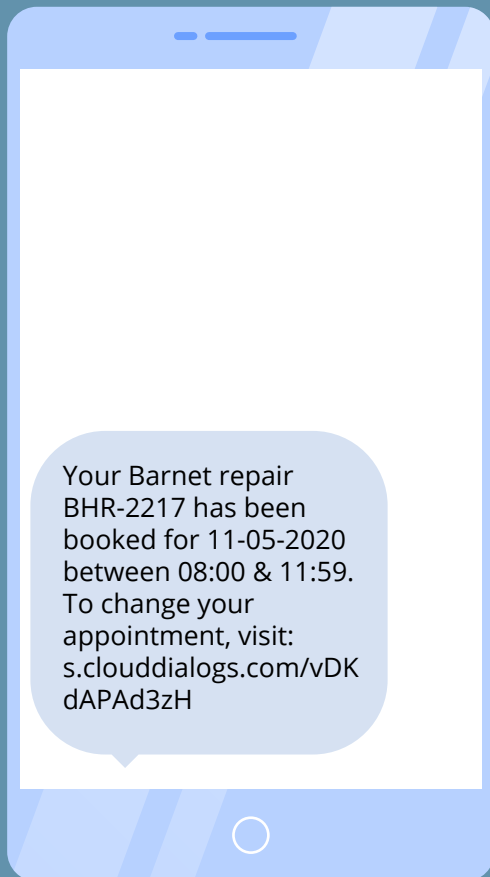
You will soon start seeing the new branding across our fleet of vans, the uniforms that operatives wear and the ID badges that they will carry with them at all times. If you are still unsure of the identity of an operative who needs to gain access to your home, please call 020 8080 6587.

Keeping in touch with you

We can now send you a text message which will have clear confirmation that your appointment has been booked, what time the appointment has been booked for and updates at various stages of the job.

Five texts

There will be five text messages sent to you at various stages of the repair. You will also have the opportunity to click on a link and rearrange your appointment if you need to.



After your repair is completed, you will be able to fill out a survey to tell us if you were satisfied with your repair and the service we provided.

The new text message system and the content of each message was approved by both residents and staff at the workshops held at the end of 2019.

Message 1

Appointment confirmation text

Message 2

Holding text awaiting confirmation of appointment (where job must be sent out to a subcontractor)

Message 3

Reminder text 24 hours before the appointment is due

Message 4

Text on the day of your appointment to advise you that the operative is on their way to your property

Message 5

Job completion text with satisfaction survey

Each message will be sent by 'Barnet' and will include the job number, and, when en route, the name of the operative reviewing your repair.

Improved appointment slots

The new appointment slots are designed to better serve your needs, with the goal of increasing the number of first-time fixes that we complete – we want to complete your repair the first time we visit and within the time slot we have given you.

To do this we changed the appointment slots that we provide to increase the likelihood of completing repairs in these time-frames, and so that our new IT system can work efficiently in appointing operatives to a repair. We believe this will provide you with a better experience during your repair(s).

Barnet Homes now has four repairs appointment slots, which you will be able to choose from:

- AM (8am to 12pm)
- PM (12pm to 5pm)
- School Run (10am to 2pm)
- All Day appointment (8am to 5pm)



Who is responsible for each repair?

As your landlord, we have a duty to carry out certain repairs when they are needed. As a tenant, you have a responsibility to keep your home in good condition and will be expected to carry out some minor repairs yourself.

We also strongly recommend that you take out contents insurance for the personal belongings in your home. Please visit the Barnet Homes website for more information about insuring your belongings, and click on the 'Insurance' page.

As legislation and policy changes, the responsibility for repairs may also change. This means that there may be times when we have carried out a repair in the past, but it is now your responsibility.

If there is a repair issue not covered here, or you have any queries about a specific repair, then please contact us. There may be some occasions when we carry out a repair for which we are not generally responsible. This will usually depend on your circumstances. We refer to this as a discretionary repair.

Our repair and maintenance responsibility		Your repair and maintenance responsibility	
Wall and floors and property structure			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">External walls, external doors, window sills, and framesThe internal structure, such as walls, floors, ceilings, and stairsRoofs and chimneys (chimneys will not be swept)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Surface cracks to wall and ceiling plasterInternal decorationFloor coverings, carpets, carpet thresholds, and carpet grippersSkirting boards and architraves	
Fixtures and fittings			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fittings for the storage and preparation of food, including kitchen sink, worktop, and cupboards		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Window blinds, rails, hooks and fittingsInternal door hinges and handles	
Doors and windows			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Front door and frameDoor entry systemsWindow framesBoarding up broken glass in external windows and doors		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Letter boxes and other door furnitureReplacing lost or damaged keys or fobs for door entry systemsChanging your locks if you lose or damage your keysInternal doors and framesReplacing glazing, unless due to criminal damage or fair wear and tear	

Our repair and maintenance responsibility**Your repair and maintenance responsibility****Heating, hot water, and plumbing**

- Annual gas safety checks
- Fittings in properties which supply water and sanitation including sinks, basins, baths and toilets
- Fittings for water and heating that we supply

- Clearing blockages to baths, toilets and basins
- Chains and plugs on basins, baths, and sinks
- Toilet seats
- Boxing in pipe-work
- Shower heads and hoses

Electrical

- Electrical wiring, sockets and light fittings
- Maintaining mains wired smoke alarms
- Shared (communal) TV aerials

- Replacing light bulbs
- Resetting consumer units (fuse boxes)
- TV aerials and sockets, unless communal
- Telephone lines and points

Pest control

- Infestations of rats, mice, cockroaches, and Pharaoh ants

- Infestation by pigeons, bedbugs, moths or garden ants

Outside your property

- Footpaths and steps to properties
- Sheds that form part of the structure of your home
- Shared areas including entrances, halls, stairways, lifts, rubbish chutes, and bins
- Drains, gutter and external pipes

- Garden maintenance including trees, boundary hedges and garden paths
- Hard standings (if a tenant has sole use or it is shared with no service charge for maintenance)
- Wooden sheds
- Washing lines (unless communal)
- Garden fences
- Keeping drains and gullies clear
- Removing minor drain blockages



No access

If you aren't at home when you have an appointment booked with us, we can't gain access!

Whilst the new appointment slots and text message system are designed to reduce the instances of this happening, we have designed a new process to inform you when we have been unable to access your property.

You will have a 'No Access' card placed through your letterbox which will state:

- that we have been unable to gain access,
- the name of the operative and the time that they attended,
- how to get in touch with us to discuss this.

You will also get a phone call from both the operative and a planner to inform you that we have not been able to get access to attend your repair, and we will rebook the appointment for the next available day.

We will repeat this process twice before we stop informing you that we have been unable to gain access to your property.

Finally, you will no longer be receiving a text message from Barnet Homes to say that we have not been able to gain access. The repair will be cancelled, and you will need to contact us to book another one.





We're hiring

Barnet Homes Estates and Repairs is looking for plumbers, electricians and other operatives who have strong customer service skills, to deliver various trades as part of the new service.

What specialist trades are we looking for? Plasterers, bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, locksmiths, uPVC fitters, electricians, gas engineers, drivers, labourers, roofers, multi-skilled operatives, ground workers

Recruitment checklist

- ☐ Do you have several years' experience as a specialist tradesperson, or do you know someone who is?
- ☐ Would you (or they) like to join a growing, local repairs team serving the local community?

If you can answer 'yes' to any of the above, please forward a CV to: **recruitment@barnethomes.org**.

Specialist contractors

Part of improving your service means that we are now managing estates and repairs services directly, rather than outsourcing the job to a contractor.

These will now be delivered by Barnet Homes and not by Mears.

However, to ensure that a high quality of customer service standards will be met, we will still use some specialist contractors for certain jobs, including:

- general building
- electrical works
- door entry systems
- jetting
- roofing

- scaffolding
- garage doors
- TV aerials
- uPVC Windows and Doors
- metal works
- pest control

All contractors should be wearing a uniform and will carry an ID badge at all times. However, this may not be a Barnet Homes uniform. They should always display their company's ID for you to be assured of their identity.

If you have any concerns about letting people into your home, please call **020 8080 6587** immediately

Paying your rent

Your tenancy agreement says you must pay your rent in advance. Therefore, you must make your first weekly, fortnightly or monthly payment on or before 6 April 2020. If paying fortnightly, you must pay on the bold dates.

Weeks 13, 26, 39 and 52 are rent free.

We offer monthly direct debits. You can pay by monthly direct debit and will be entered into a prize draw for one month's free rent.

If you have a debit or credit card, you can pay your rent by telephoning us on **020 8080 6587** between 8am and 6pm or online at **barnethomes.org**.

You can also pay by debit or credit card by telephoning the automated telephone payment line on **0845 356 3456** and choose 'Housing Rent'. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For a full list of payment methods, please see the 'Rent & Money' section at **barnethomes.org**.

You can now view your rent account online. If you would like to have 24/7 access to your rent account, sign up by emailing **talk2us@barnethomes.org**, with the subject line "Sign me up".

Rent payment dates 2020/21

Date	Week	Date	Week
6 April	1	5 October	27
13 April	2	12 October	28
20 April	3	19 October	29
27 April	4	26 October	30
4 May	5	2 November	31
11 May	6	9 November	32
18 May	7	16 November	33
25 May	8	23 November	34
1 June	9	30 November	35
8 June	10	7 December	36
15 June	11	14 December	37
22 June	12	21 December	38
29 June	13 (rent free)	28 December	39 (rent free)
6 July	14	4 January	40
13 July	15	11 January	41
20 July	16	18 January	42
27 July	17	25 January	43
3 August	18	1 February	44
10 August	19	8 February	45
17 August	20	15 February	46
24 August	21	22 February	47
31 August	22	1 March	48
7 September	23	8 March	49
14 September	24	15 March	50
21 September	25	22 March	51
28 September	26 (rent free)	29 March	52 (rent free)

BOOST news

BOOST launched in Burnt Oak in 2015 and were joined by a second location in Childs Hill, in 2017. But did you know that the BOOST family now has a third office on the other side of the borough?

BOOST have opened their third space in South Friern Library – open for customers from 10am-5pm on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month.

The BOOST project is funded by Barnet Council working in partnership with Barnet Homes, JobCentre Plus, Future Path Development CIC, Cambridge Education, Barnet and Southgate College and local community organisations.

The BOOST teams help people from across the borough find employment, whether it's by helping them improve their CVs and interview techniques, or their health and wellbeing.

They also help residents find employment, training and volunteering opportunities and provide advice on issues including

housing, benefits and debt. What's more, once they've helped people find work, they give them the advice and support to thrive in their new jobs.

Since its launch in 2015, BOOST has helped more than 850 Barnet residents into work. A current average of 17 people per month are supported to find work through the employment support service – a figure that the project hopes to increase.

You can find BOOST on Facebook;
@BOOST.Barnet

Find out about training opportunities for free!

Want to hear about training opportunities in Barnet? Email **boost@barnet.gov.uk** to register interest in a wide range of courses including employment skills, I.T. and business administration.



Make It Click

BOOST supports the national campaign 'Make It Click', a partnership initiative with The Good Things Foundation and Learn My Way that helps people improve their digital skills.

Make It Click's website features free courses, tools and templates, which can help users with setting up emails, mastering spreadsheets and getting to grips with the main social media sites.

For example, if you are setting up your own business, which one is better for

you to use, Facebook or Twitter?

You can learn how to use new apps, improve the skills you already have and take a positive step forward in your work.

They can offer face to face support or leave you to use the online resources in your own time. To find out more about how Make it Click can help you with your digital skills, contact Rebecca on **Rebecca.collymore@barnethomes.org**, or visit **makeitclick.learnmyway.com**.

Your rent: reminders

You should already have received your rent variation letter for 2020/21 confirming how much your rent will be from 6 April 2020.

The rent payment dates for 2020/21 are in the middle of this pull-out booklet. We recommend that keep it safe! You will also notice that 2020/21 has 48 chargeable weeks.

Thames Water reminder

If you live in the Thames Water area, you will be billed directly by them from April 2020. If you are affected by this change, Thames Water should have already contacted you directly. Please visit **thameswater.co.uk** for further information.



FROM PAG TO YOU



Dear residents,

At the first Performance Advisory Group meeting of the year, we were given an update on the work that has taken place to bring the repairs service back in-house.

Ryan Bolton, Head of Repairs and Estates, attended the meeting and gave us an overview of the progress to date. Ryan and his team have been working hard to ensure that the service goes live on the 1 April 2020 as planned. I will be keeping you regularly updated on this important work.

This is going to be a very busy and exciting year for PAG, as we transition from a Resident Scrutiny Group to a new Resident Board. We will be taking on more of the operational work that The Barnet Group Board usually deal with, meaning we will be able to influence changes to improve the services you receive.

We will be calling on the members of our Resident Support Group to take a more active role in the work that PAG would have previously undertaken. This will create more opportunities for even more of you to get involved and we will be recruiting new members later in the year. There has never been a more exciting time to get involved, for more information email the Community Engagement Team at **deborah.beckford@barnethomes.org** or call **020 8080 6587**.

On a celebratory note, I attended The Barnet Group's Customer Awards in December. I always enjoy this event; it is the highlight of Group's calendar. I love to see residents who have gone the extra mile being congratulated and rewarded for all their hard work. This event just keeps growing and growing and over 150 residents attended in 2019!

I hope you all make the most of the lighter evenings and thought of the longer and warmer spring days to come.

All the best,
John

Customer Awards

Our Customer Awards evening held at Burnt Oak's Sangam Centre on 12 December was truly a community-centred affair.

The venue was perfect for an evening dedicated to recognising the efforts of residents, service users and local community groups who contribute to making their communities better places to work and live.

We reached out to you to ask you to submit nominations for your fellow residents, customers and community partners who you felt make a fantastic contribution to people's lives as well reaching their own achievements. It was a tough task to shortlist the eventual winners.

We would like to thank the following contractors for their continued support in improving the lives of our residents and for sponsoring the awards: AA Woods, Armstrong York, Effectable, Mears, Morgan Sindall Property Services, Procom, Raytell, Vallectric and WG Wigginton. R Benson, also won the Social Value Contractor of the Year 2019 award.

The evening finished on a special note with a thank you party that all nominees, winners and community partners enjoyed. We appreciated the opportunity to host you and look forward to seeing you in 2020. It's never too early to nominate a fellow resident for our 2020 awards, visit our website **barnethomes.org**.

You can view all the winners in our special video at **youtube.com/**

TheBarnetGroup

Barnet Homes winners

Good Neighbour Award

Dennis Manning

Young Volunteer of the Year

Michael Peters

Over 25 volunteer of the Year

Christopher Smith

Group of the Year

Rainbow Money Advice

Staff Choice Award

Andrew Hosking

Your Choice Barnet winners

Making Progress Award

Sarah Okeke-Aru

Good Neighbour Award

Paul Barton

Creative Excellence Award

Paul Charles Payne

Carer Contribution Award

Deirdre Hannington

Volunteer of the Year Award

Christine Porter

Staff Choice Award

Shuhana Uddin



the big lunch

an eden project

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

£250 grant to dine in with your neighbours



Barnet Homes is supporting The Eden Project's annual Big Lunch community events taking place on the weekend of 6 and 7 June 2020.

Any community group or organisation that works with Barnet Homes residents can apply for a grant of up to £250 to host a Big Lunch event.

Shared events like The Big Lunch create stronger connections within communities and inspires people to make a positive difference in their local area, all of which will help to make it a stronger and happier place to work and live.

To Apply

Groups and organisations can apply for a grant by emailing **nigel.thompson@barnethomes.org** and telling us;

- what you plan on doing and when
- how many people will be attending
- how you will promote the event
- how you will feed back to us.

Our website has a guide to help you organise a community event. You can also get a Big Lunch information pack by visit the Eden Project website; **edenprojectcommunities.com**.

For any further advice or information email **nigel.thompson@barnethomes.org**

thebiglunch.com

Join the conversation
f t i @edencommunities | #TheBigLunch

The Big Lunch brings millions of people together across the UK – who will you meet at yours?

Calling all gardeners



Weather-wise, March can be unpredictable. However, it's also the best time to start planting. So what better time than now to encourage our green-fingered residents to enter our annual Finest Flowers competition?

Finest Flowers grows in popularity every year and welcomes gardeners from all levels. There's even a category for new gardeners, so don't be shy entering just because you might only recently gained an interest in sowing seeds or tending flower beds.

The competition is our way of recognising the residents who put so much hard work into making our communities look blooming beautiful all summer.

The judges spend a day in July visiting all the best displays and gardens and the

winners are revealed at The Barnet Group Customer Awards evening in December.

Finest Flowers Winners 2019:

- **Geoff Bedingfield for Most Outstanding Garden:** John Barrett
- **Best Sheltered Scheme Garden:** Hanshaw Drive Garden Club
- **Best Communal Garden:** Brownswell Road Garden Club
- **Best New Gardeners:** Bittacy Court Garden Club

If you are interested in entering the Finest Flowers competition, visit the gardening page at **barnethomes.org** or email **nigel.thompson@barnethomes.org**.

The closing date for all entries is Friday 10 July 2020. The judging of entries takes place on the 17 July.

First Time Access Fund has a lot to sing about

Did you know that each time you allow Mears first time access to do a gas safety check in your home it benefits your local community, too? You might miss the knock if you're at work or out – but if you're in – let them in!

Each time a customer allows a Mears operative into their home for the first time to carry out the annual gas safety check, they donate £1 towards local groups and charities. This could generate around £6,000 towards resident-focused community projects.

For the past two years, money from the Fund has been able to spread a little extra Christmas cheer to local people as it funded 16 beautiful Christmas trees at

the Christmas Tree Festival at All Saints' Church.

In the New Year, it was able to award £750 to 'Angie's Keep Calm and Sing Group'. Angie's workshops take place at the Arts Depot in North Finchley, and are a brilliant option for people who are lonely and want to gain confidence to meet new people.

The workshops are free to attend and as well as finding therapy through song, it's a lovely way to meet new friends in a local and safe environment.

If you interested in finding out more about the Keep Calm and Sing Workshops, which take place from 7-8pm every other Tuesday, please email Angela Anuforo: missangiea@yahoo.co.uk.



If you are part of any local community groups or know of any that would benefit from the First Time Access Fund, please visit our website for an application form: bit.ly/32rmyPW

Together, better, greater

Welcome to Burnt Oak Women's Group



Upon moving to Burnt Oak, Inass Ibrahim had a vision of creating a safe space for local people to gather together. In 2017 she started the Burnt Oak Women's Group (BOWG). Just two years later, she was invited to a reception at Buckingham Palace!

Inass is keen to help local people join together, despite cultural differences like language barriers. Burnt Oak Women's Group was created to break down those barriers and create a space that encourages diversity, cohesion and togetherness.

Inass said: "I began with building a core team, Josie Santangelo, Cherry James, Jane Marshall, Sara Conway and myself. We called ourselves the fab five! A funding bid was successful, and we created our first event, the Great Get Together 2018. It was a major success and created a buzz for more events, including annual community trips, coffee mornings and courses."

In 2019, Near Neighbours nominated the

group to meet Queen at Buckingham Palace at a reception held in aid of community leaders who promote diversity and cohesion. The group was featured in Barnet Council's "Together We are Barnet" campaign, where their photo appeared on bus stops, billboards and Barnet Council's website. The group has now launched a weekly hub at the International Gospel Church on Watling Avenue, which runs every Thursday from 9:30am – 1pm.

In 2020, the group hopes to continue supporting local families and attract even more members. Everyone is welcome. Men are not excluded from being a part of the group, and they join in with the events and trips that BOWG offer.

BOWG offers a drop-in service, although if you wish to do a course or take part in a trip, they will ask you to register.

For more information, please email **burntoakwg@yahoo.com** or search for Burnt Oak Women's Group on Facebook.

You said, we did

As part of our ongoing commitment to a high level of service, we will be sharing examples of how we have made changes following your feedback.



You said: It was taking too many visits for repairs operatives to identify the source of a leak before they were found and fixed, as well as some jobs not being done to the expected standard and needing a further visit.

We did: We have introduced new performance measures for repairs operatives so we can monitor the quality of their work. This should help us to address any issues, including training needs, so you should start to see an improvement.

You said: You were calling us and leaving messages and often the officer was not getting back to you.

We did: We are introducing new training for all staff to ensure they are always using our contact management system properly – this includes mandatory induction training for new employees and ongoing refresher training. We will monitor feedback on this issue and expect to see this improve soon.

Sign up for Barnet's new fortnightly garden waste collection service



From 6 April,
garden waste
collections
will cost

£70

for one bin
for the year.

Find out more at: www.barnet.gov.uk/gardenwaste or
sign up and pay by calling 020 8359 4600 (option 1)



We've changed our number!

We have changed our main phone number. Our new number is a standard rate number, meaning you can use your inclusive minutes to call us.

Please update your phone books!

020 8080 6587



The current 0800 number will continue to work during the coming months. We will confirm its turn-off date in a forthcoming issue of atHome.