atHome



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How to contact us

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

Email talk2us@barnethomes.org

Onlinebarnethomes.orgContact Centre/Repairs020 8080 6587

Pay your rent or service charges0845 356 3456 (24 hours) or barnet.gov.ukOur office2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EWAssist service020 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

Dear residents.

Welcome to the winter issue of atHome, your magazine. As we approach what will no doubt be one of the different Christmases in our lifetimes, this magazine will help you get the most out of the festive period and the new year. On pages seven and eight, there's a host of learning and development opportunities which the BOOST team are ready to support you with.

On pages 10 to 13 there are details on how you can keep your home and block clean and safe, and on page 14 there's the latest information about how we can support you with your rent payments.

It may be winter now, but earlier this year we held our annual Finest Flowers competition, celebrating those green-fingered gardeners who keep their homes and estates looking amazing. On page 18, you can see who won as we delivered their awards - following social distancing, of course.

Finally, there's an update on our Racial Equality Steering Group on page five. We're

keen for this to be a group residents are involved in too, so if you're interested, you can find the contact details in that article.

A big thank you and farewell to John Davies, Chair of the Performance Advisory Group (PAG).

After seven dedicated years, it is with regret we to say goodbye to John who has decided to step down as Chair of PAG. John has been an invaluable advocate, working with Barnet Homes to help improve services for all residents. John also acted as Gas Service Resident Champion, attending contractor performance meetings, ensuring the customers' voice was always heard. John has played a key part in guiding Barnet Homes on measures to take that lead to improve resident satisfaction. John will be missed by his fellow PAG colleagues, the Board, including staff and colleagues he worked closely with.

On behalf of Barnet Homes, we wish John all the best and thank him for all his hard work over the years in representing the voice of residents and supporting The Barnet Group.

As a business, we're continuing to work to keep those in our community safe and well, both now and in the future. Please make sure you continue to look out for one another, and make the most of the festive period while following the latest government guidance.

All the best,

Tim Mulvenna CEO The Barnet Group



News in brief

Barnet Group's private lettings agency scoops property award





Bumblebee, The Barnet Group's private lettings agency, picked up a prestigious award this month, as it was confirmed as a 'Gold Winner' in the NW9 lettings market at the British Property Awards. This award shows all the hard work the Bumblebee team are putting in to becoming one of the most efficient and trusted agents in the Barnet lettings market.

The awards process contained an element of mystery shopping, showing what excellent, personcentred service the Bumblebee team provides.

If you know someone who is looking for a property in the private rented sector, tell them to take a look at their website, bumblebeeproperty. co.uk where they can see all the latest available properties. Alternatively, if you are a Barnet Homes leaseholder and would like to rent your property out through Bumblebee, please call them on 020 8359 3399.



Make It Click - build your digital skills

Technology doesn't have to be difficult. Through their online webinar, the BOOST team will make sure to help you with everything digital until it clicks. Do you or someone you know need help with the internet? Make It Click is a website with free tools, courses and templates which helps you to learn new skills or improve the skills you already have. For more information, visit boostbarnet.org, email boost@barnet.gov. uk or call 020 8359 2442.



Race Equality Steering Group

Barnet Homes has been engaging its staff in discussions about race equality since the summer, prompted by the Black Lives Matter movement, and we've also been extending the conversation to the Resident Performance Advisory Group.

As a result of this, an action plan to improve race equality is being drawn up, led by a new staff Race Equality Steering Group. Whilst there is a focus on our employees' experience, Barnet Homes is also considering how customers are affected.

Much of the initial work involves improving our understanding of how different groups are affected by our services, and from this we will work with customers to identify any areas for improvement.

If you would like to be a part of future conversations about race equality in the Barnet community, please call Camille Yerles on 020 8359 3148 or email us at GetInvolved@barnethomes.org.

The Barnet Group's Race Equality Steering Group Making race equality reality

£25 offer to for new Credit Union members

Christmas and end of year celebrations are fast approaching, and the Illegal Money Lending Team continues to promote credit unions as a safe and legal alternative to loan sharks. They are offering a £25 cash bonus scheme for the first 50 new accounts.

Loan sharks are a scourge on society and cause harm and misery to their victims, but The Illegal Money Lending Team are continuing to tackle them in London and across the country. We would urge anyone aware of any illegal money lending activity to call the hotline in confidence on 0300 555 2222, so the team can take action.

To join the Credit Union visit their website at credit-union.coop, email info@credit-union.coop, download the London Capital Credit Union app to your phone or call 020 7561 1786.

Save the minimum of £5 per month or £1 a week for three months and you will have the £25 bonus paid to boost your savings towards next Christmas.

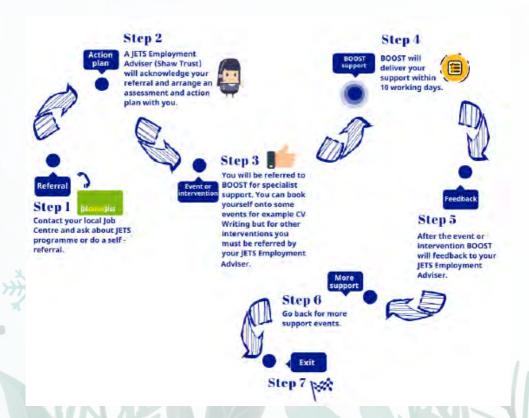
JETS has landed in Barnet!

Job Entry Targeted Support (or JETS) is a new national programme from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and West London Alliance to support those recently made unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

BOOST, The Barnet Group's training and employment project is working with the Shaw Trust to provide the Barnet borough support. BOOST will deliver CV advice, interview skills, confidence building, advice about re-training into new careers and digital support. The project began in October, and will run until October 2021.

Customers can be referred by their Jobcentre Work Coach or can self-refer through BOOST. To be eligible clients must be receiving Universal Credit or new style JSA for at least 13 weeks, be aged over 18 and be ready to work.

If you are eligible, and are interested in JETS, please contact BOOST by emailing jets@ barnet.gov.uk or visit boostbarnet.org. Here's how the process works for customers



You said, we did - acting on your feedback

You said - "I wasn't happy that I wasn't getting regular updates about my ASB case"

We did – We changed our database so that each anti-social behaviour (ASB) officer receives an alert to contact the customer every 10 days to either advise on an update or to let them know we are still working on the case. The resident is advised of this once the case is opened so that we can manage expectations and keep them informed.

Keeping the peace

With more of us at home more often now, it's important to keep your neighbours in mind. Whether that's waiting until the afternoon to do noisy activities like hoovering, or making sure your TV or stereo are at a reasonable level, we can all do our bit to help keep our communities peaceful.

Everyone has the right to enjoy their

home and community and live peacefully alongside their neighbours. We are committed to helping residents to be good neighbours and build tolerant communities. Part of how we do this is to help residents tackle incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their homes and around the community.

We define ASB as:

- Personal threats that are deliberately targeted at a particular individual or group
- Public nuisance where an individual or group causes trouble, annoyance, inconvenience, offence or suffering to people in the local community rather than targeted at a particular individual or group
- Environmental nuisance such as graffiti, damage to buildings and structures

While it may make noise, we do not class issues such as washing machine noise, mowing lawns or children playing outside

as ASB, unless it is late at night and repeated. We encourage residents to work with their neighbours to resolve issues in the first instance.

What to do

If you wish to report ASB, you should call the Customer Contact Centre on 020 8080 6587 who will complete a questionnaire called an ASB triage. If the ASB triage identifies the issue you are reporting is ASB, it will be referred to the anti-social behaviour officer in the Neighbourhood team who will contact you to complete a more in-depth questionnaire and who will be able to advise you further.

Get Involved – Join the Barnet Homes Resident Support Group

As a Barnet Homes resident, you have the right to be involved in the management of your home and the services you receive from us. As a member of the Resident Support Group you will be invited to be involved in a range of opportunities that include taking part in focus groups, mystery shopping, service improvement projects as well as providing valuable feedback on how we can continue to improve our services.

This group feeds directly into the Resident Board. The level of commitment is not as high as being a Resident Board member, so it may be of interest if you have a limited amount

of time. This opportunity also provides a good grounding to become a future Resident Board member.

We are keen to ensure the group is diverse and representative of our residents and the community we serve and supports our commitment to inclusion across gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and physical or mental ability.

If you would like to join this group you can register your interest by visiting barnethomes.org, emailing getinvolved@barnethomes.org, or by calling Camille Yerles on 020 8359 3148.



Job opportunities as NHS vaccination administrators

The NHS is looking to recruit Covid-19 vaccination administrators to support the delivery of Covid-19 vaccines. BOOST can support you in applying for one of these jobs. They are holding open days every day to guide you through the job application process.

BOOST staff can also help you with your CV, interview skills training, benefit advice and access to mental health support. To find out more and book your place, visit boostbarnet. org/?p=3930.

If you are an older adult, and have any questions or concerns about Covid-19 vaccines, please visit the dedicated government website: gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-guide-for-older-adults.



⇔ boostbarnet.org |
 ✓ boost@barnet.gov.uk |
 ✓ 020 8359 2442

The BOOST team provides Barnet Homes residents with free training and support to improve your skills, knowledge and confidence!

Here are some of the trainings that are currently available to you:

Managing stress 101: If you find yourself feeling stressed and have difficulty coping this is the course for you. Take 30 minutes for yourself to look at ways to feel better.

How do I find a job? A workshop looking at how to find a job including traditional methods and new ways such as online and on social media.

Video calling: Video calling is now part of many people's everyday lives; this basic course will enable learners to find out what this is and how it can help people stay in touch and communicate.

Why should I volunteer? Volunteering is an excellent way to boost your CV and work experience. It also benefits the wider community and has a positive impact on health and wellbeing. This course asks why volunteering might be a good option for job seekers or those looking to get back into work in the future.

Introduction to Microsoft Office: This is a basic introduction to a selection of the most widely used Office programmes such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint, as well as the Google suite of applications.

To register and access the training, please contact BOOST using the details above.



Water hygiene in your home

The water supplied to your home by the water board is intended to be clean and bacteria-free, but particularly where water is stored, this is not always possible as bacteria can grow under certain conditions.

Legionella bacteria, for example, can be found and although in small quantities this may not pose a public health risk, it could become a problem if the stored water is stagnant and the water temperature stays between 25 to 50 degrees Celsius. This bacteria can then be transmitted via inhaled droplets or spray from contaminated water.

The likelihood of Legionella in your home is very low, as most households do not store huge amounts of water as it's usually used regularly, so it won't have been left standing still in tanks and pipes.

However, Barnet Homes works diligently to ensure the water quality in your home is good at all times. Where we have large storage tanks, we carry out surveys and risk assessments, which sometimes result in works such as testing and/or cleaning, and in some cases storage tank renewal.

Some tips to make sure the water in your home is safe

Keep your taps and shower heads clean

- Legionella bacteria can grow and multiply on scale (the crusty white deposits that tend to appear around the tap outlet)
- You should de-scale taps and shower heads every three months. The harder the water in your area, the more frequently you should de-scale
- Clean the taps on your bath and sink by brushing the scale off with a nylon brush or wiping them with a diluted bleach or de-scaling solution found in most hardware shops.

Use taps once a week

- Always use the taps in your home at least once a week
- If you have not been at home or have been away on holiday, always ensure you run the cold water taps for at least five minutes when you return prior to use.

New residents

 If you have just moved in to a new home, you are advised to heat the hot water cylinder for at least one hour before you first use the hot water. This is particularly important, as in some instances, water services may have been disconnected during the time the property has been empty.

Is your hot water set at the right temperature?

- The temperature thermostat on your hot water storage vessel (calorifier) should be set to store water at 60 degrees Celsius to deter Legionella
- Please do not alter the thermostat settings for your hot water after they have been set
- If you have a hot water problem and your water is heated by a gas boiler or an electrical immersion heater, please contact us using the details below.

The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations, play an important role in protecting public health, safeguarding water supplies and promoting the efficient use of water within customers' premises across the UK.

They set legal requirements for the design, installation, operation and maintenance of plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances. They have a specific purpose to prevent misuse, waste, undue consumption or erroneous measurement of water and, most importantly, to prevent contamination of drinking water.

Barnet Homes will follow these regulations when carrying out work in your home.

⇔ barnethomes.org |
 ✓ talk2us@barnethomes.org |
 ✓ 020 8080 6587

Please look after your bin chutes!

Following a recent fire in one of our blocks, we would like to remind residents of the following guidance in reducing the risk of fire occurring in a bin chute rooms.

Bin chutes are in place in tower and maisonette blocks for residents to dispose of household waste. If you use bin chutes, you can help us to prevent any fires and blockages within your block by following the advice below.

- Only dispose of household waste in small quantities. Anything larger than a carrier bag can block the chutes which can cause an inconvenience to you, as well as other users of the chutes
- If you would like to collect your waste in a larger bag before visiting the chute, please leave it untied and empty the contents of the bag down the chute. You can either reuse your bag or dispose of it down the chute
- Please ensure dangerous objects such as broken glass are not thrown down the chutes. This can cause injury to others
- Please tear your boxes in to small pieces and recycle in your paper bin.
 Only place your torn boxes in the chutes if it is unavoidable
- Please put wet waste (such as tea bags, peelings, leftovers) into small bags before disposing of them in the chute
- If you have a paper bin in or around your block, you can use your recycling bag to separate your waste paper from the rest of your general waste. This will help you to reduce the amount of waste you put into the chute and help to prevent blockages.

Bin chute fires are common and are caused by a number of different factors, but the most common cause is from improper disposal of items such as cigarettes and matches falling into basement bins.

Smoking materials can easily cause a fire in the home if they are not stored, used and disposed of correctly.

If you smoke...

- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- Never leave your cigarette unattended.
 A lit cigarette can easily fall, increasing the risk of fire.
- Always ensure that your cigarette is fully extinguished. A small amount of water in the bottom of your ashtray is a good idea.
- Do not empty your ashtray in your bin until the contents are cold.
- Do not smoke when you are tired or if you are in bed.
- If you would like support in stopping smoking please contact your local G.P.



Your Christmas recycling and refuse collection schedule

Normal collection day	Revised collection day	
Monday 21 December	Monday 21 December (no change)	
Tuesday 22 December	Tuesday 22 December (no change)	
Wednesday 23 December	Wednesday 23 December (no change)	
Thursday 24 December	Thursday 24 December (no change)	
Friday 25 December	Monday 28 December	
Saturday 26 December	Sunday 27 December	
Monday 28 December	Tuesday 29 December	
Tuesday 29 December	Wednesday 30 December	
Wednesday 30 December	Thursday 31 December	
Thursday 31 December	Saturday 2 January	
Friday 1 January	Monday 4 January	
Saturday 2 January	Sunday 3 January	
Monday 4 January	Tuesday 5 January	
Tuesday 5 January	Wednesday 6 January	
Wednesday 6 January	Thursday 7 January	
Thursday 7 January	Friday 8 January	
Friday 8 January	Saturday 9 January	
Saturday 9 January	Sunday 10 January	



Your normal blue recycling bin and black refuse bin collections day will resume from the week commencing 11 January 2021

Annual winter pause to garden waste collections

The subscribed garden waste bin collection service is paused for six weeks between 5 December 2020 and 15 January 2021.

Subscribers to the service can check the date of their first collection in the New Year at the website below. We will also be emailing subscribers a reminder before collections resume in January.

You can still sign up now for fortnightly garden waste collections for the reduced price of £40. Sign up and pay at www.barnet.gov.uk/gardenwaste or call 020 8359 4600.

Christmas tree collections

Real Christmas trees will be collected from 8 January 2021 through to the end of the month.

Please ensure your real Christmas tree has all decorations and tree lights removed, is **cut in half** and put at the boundary of your property by Friday 8 January.

What goes in your recycling bin?

Yes please 🗸 No X Recycling bin X nappies - place in black refuse bin ✓ aerosols X food waste - place in black refuse bin ✓ cardboard * textiles - donate or take to Reuse and Recycling Centre cartons **x wood** - take to Reuse and Recycling Centre ✓ food tins and drink cans X electrical items and battery packs - take to Reuse and Recycling Centre mixed glass bottles and jars X polystyrene - place in black refuse bin mixed paper X clinical waste - arrange clinical collections by visiting Recycling ✓ plastic bottles the website below **X household batteries** - place in a clear bag on top of ✓ plastic tubs, pots and trays your blue bin X black sacks or plastic bags - place in black refuse bin

Taking care of your rent

In these challenging times, please prioritise your rent. Paying your rent on time is really important as it ensures that we can provide you with essential services.

Rent is a priority as it covers a range of services such a property maintenance, repairs and caretaking to name just a few. If you fall into difficulty paying your rent, please get in touch with our Income Collection Service. We can support you with money management, welfare benefits, hardship funds, discretionary housing payments and can also refer you to our in-house welfare benefits advisors. Further advice is also available on our website.

Do you need support with debts?

If so, we strongly recommend you contact one of our partner debt charities who may be able to support you. Making that initial call may seem daunting but it will be the beginning to getting back in control. Christians Against Poverty (CAP) and StepChange can provide in depth advice and can be contacted as per below:

capuk.org or call 0800 328 0006 stepchange.org or call 0800 138 1111

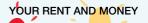
Have you been financially impacted by Coronavirus or been made unemployed?

Please let us know as we may be able to help you. The sooner you contact us, the better! We want to be able to work with you to avoid serious action such as legal proceedings.

Looking for a low cost loan? If so, please read on...

Loans should only be used as a last resort. But if you need a low cost loan from a reputable loaner, we recommend the London Capital Credit Union. The Credit Union is able to offer low cost loans whilst promoting saving. Find out what they can offer you at credit-union. coop or call 020 7561 1786.

barnethomes.org | 🥒 020 8610 3538



Paying your rent

There are a number of ways in which rent can be paid, although the quickest and most flexible way of paying is by using the following methods:

Monthly direct debit

We currently offer two payment dates a month (1st or the 15th). If you would like to pay by direct debit, please download a form from our website at barnethomes. org

Why not self serve by telephone or online?

We strongly recommend payments being made using our automated services as this is the quickest and most efficient way to pay if you have a debit/credit card. You can self serve by calling the automated payment line on 0845 356 3456. Please ensure that you select 'housing rent' (this can also be used if you would like to pay your garage rent). This service is available 24/7. Please ensure that you have your nine digit rent account number to hand when using this service. This can be

found on the top right hand corner of any rent statement and begins with a '1'

Payments can also be made on our website at barnethomes.org – please select 'make a payment'. As per our automated line, please ensure that you have your nine digit rent account number to hand.

By Bank Standing Order

We also recommend paying by bank standing order. In order to do this, you will need our bank details which are as follows:

Sort code: 60-23-36 Account number: 82622833 Receiving bank: NatWest

Beneficiary: London Borough of Barnet

Please ensure that your rent account number is quoted as the reference number when payments are made. This is nine digits long and begins with a '1'. Please do not add any other characters/ letters to this reference number.

Support for leaseholders

If you require assistance with your service charge payments, please call us to discuss your concerns on 020 8080 6587. Please do not stop or cancel payment arrangements without discussing your situation with us first. If you are going to struggle to make any other monthly credit repayments you should contact your lender direct as soon as possible.



Free milk, fruit, veg and vitamins for you and your family



www.healthystart.nhs.uk

HEALTHY

If you're pregnant or have a child aged under four, you could get Healthy Start vouchers to help buy some basic foods. This important means-tested scheme provides vouchers to spend with local retailers.

Pregnant women and children aged between one and four can get one £3.10 voucher per week. Children under one can get two £3.10 vouchers (£6.20) per week.

The vouchers can be spent on:

- plain cow's milk whole, semiskimmed or skimmed. It can be pasteurised, sterilised, long life or UHT
- fresh, frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables including loose, prepacked, whole, sliced, chopped or mixed fruit or vegetables, fruit in fruit juice, or fruit or vegetables in water, but not those to which fat, salt, sugar or flayouring have been added
- fresh, dried and tinned pulses, including but not limited to lentils, beans, peas and chickpeas but not those to which fat, salt, sugar or flavouring have been added
- infant formula milk that says it can be used from birth and is based on cow's milk

Healthy Start vitamins

Women and children getting Healthy Start food vouchers also get vitamin coupons to swap for free Healthy Start vitamins. Healthy Start vitamins are specifically designed for pregnant and breastfeeding women and growing children.

Your midwife or health visitor will be able to tell you where you can swap your coupon for vitamins in your area.

Applying is easy, you can print off an application form from the Healthy Start website and post it to the Healthy Start office. Once you are registered, food vouchers are posted to you every four weeks and vitamin coupons every eight weeks.

Please ask your local children's centre or health visitor if you do not have internet access or require further information.

healthystart.nhs.uk

Your Finest Flowers winners!

In Autumn, we were delighted to share with you the winners of our 2020 Finest Flowers Awards. These are the green-fingered residents who keep their balcony, garden or communal area in bloom throughout the year.

This autumn, we hand-delivered residents'

awards and their gardening vouchers.

Thank you and well done to all our residents and garden club members that took part in this year's competition. We hope to be back to our full glorious gardening celebration next summer!











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

