

Recruitment
for our
apprenticeship
scheme is now
open! Find out
how to apply
on page 14

Make a difference
Your chance to be a
Resident Board director



Your Community Award winners: page 10

GET IN TOUCH

✉ TALK2US@BARNETHOMES.ORG

CUSTOMERCARE@OPENDOORHOMES.ORG

📞 020 8080 6587 (8AM - 6PM, TRANSLATORS AVAILABLE)

🌐 BARNETHOMES.ORG
OPENDOORHOMES.ORG

PAY YOUR RENT OR SERVICE CHARGE

0845 356 3456 (24 hours) or barnet.gov.uk

ASSIST SERVICE

020 8359 4841 or assist@barnethomes.org

OUR OFFICE

2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

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.

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THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

TIM MULVENNA

Hello everyone. Welcome to the Summer 2021 issue of atHome, the magazine for Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes residents.

In this issue, we have got news about a variety of opportunities for you. On page four, you can find out about the chance to become a resident director on The Barnet Group's Board. This is a fantastic position, where you will be able to shape the future of our services to residents.

We are now opening the recruitment for our 2021 apprentices. Our apprenticeship scheme is something we're very proud of, and it is always rewarding to see our residents become part of our staff community too. We have jobs available across The Barnet Group, and the scheme offers full training and education, while giving the chance to earn a salary too. You can find out more about that on page 14.

At the time of writing, social distancing and lockdown restrictions are easing, and we are hoping for a summer approaching normality. The vast majority of our services are now operating as normal, but you can keep up-to-date with any changes on our websites, barnethomes.org or opendoorhomes.org.

Finally, I'd like to say thank you again to everyone in our community who has contributed and sacrificed so much over the last 15 months. It has been a difficult time for so many people, but the strength and resilience of local people has been incredible to see. If there's someone you would like to show your appreciation for, why not nominate them for one of our community awards? There's all the information you need on page 13.



I hope you all have an enjoyable summer, and look forward to a positive second half of the year.

Tim

NEWS IN BRIEF

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

Could you be our next Resident Board director?



Are you a Barnet Homes or Opendoor Homes tenant interested in a unique opportunity to help direct and monitor the work of The Barnet Group?

We are recruiting for a new Resident Board Director who will play a key role on a senior governing body of the group.

You do not necessarily need experience of being on a board to apply for this role, however, you will need to demonstrate that you have the right skills or that you can develop them with our

support. We encourage tenants from all ages or backgrounds who wish to express an interest to apply, as we believe that having a diverse board will help us make better decisions that will benefit all of our residents.

To express an interest in this role please email Chloe.Bryant@BarnetHomes.org. The closing date for expressions of interest is Friday 30 July 2021, and the closing date for applications is Friday 13 August. Shortlisting and interviews take place between 16 and 27 August.

Our phone number has changed

We have a new phone number for our Customer Contact Team: 020 8080 6587. Our old number has now been withdrawn from service so please use the new number when you need assistance in future.



Take part in our free online training!



Over the next year, we will be providing residents with the opportunity to take part in free online courses and virtual training sessions. This is a great opportunity to gain new skills and be actively involved in your community. Our first sessions in July and August will include:

- **How to set up a Resident Association or Community Group** – Thursday 15 July, 6:30pm
- **How to organise a community event** – Wednesday 28 July, 6:30pm
- **Chairing meetings** – Wednesday 11 August, 6:30pm

You can find out more details about our online training programme by emailing getinvolved@barnethomes.org or get.involved@opendoorhomes.org.

GARDENING

MAKING YOUR COMMUNITIES BLOSSOM

The gardening clubs get composting!

In the past couple of weeks, we successfully delivered compost bins to all our gardening clubs! The initiative makes composting and the disposal of green waste more affordable for Barnet Homes' many gardening clubs. We secured twenty compost bins for all our gardeners via the Barnet Homes Innovation Fund.

The gardening clubs have been doing an amazing job at keeping their communal gardens attractive for over 10 years! It is one of our priorities to support them as they bring communities together and help combat stress and loneliness. All the garden club members do this voluntarily and most of the clubs are at Barnet Homes' sheltered housing schemes for older people.

Beyond the social impact of the project, the compost bins will also bring environmental benefits to the communities. Composting is a natural alternative to chemical fertilizers when applied to soil, and it encourages plant growth. It's also great for recycling food and garden waste and introduces beneficial organisms to the soil!



Gardening clubs: become a member



Our gardening clubs bring neighbours together and help to build healthy communities. They are open to all residents who do not have a private garden. An individual or a group of residents can take ownership of an area in their communal garden and cultivate it. Clubs receive vouchers for plants and equipment, together with advice on gardening and aspects of health and safety. Members can have the opportunity to organise gardening projects and trips by applying for the Community Fund.

If you are interested in becoming a member please contact us using the details below.

Finest Flowers 2021

Our Finest Flowers gardening competition is one of the highlights of our summer, giving our residents the opportunity to showcase their gardens. Last year we held our competition with virtual judging, and it was so successful that we are doing the same in 2021.

All budding and experienced gardeners will be given an opportunity to send us pictures of their garden. If that is not possible, we can arrange to come and take some pictures following government guidelines for social distancing. So, come on and show those flowers off!

The categories are:

- Best sheltered scheme garden
- Best front garden
- Best communal garden
- Best balcony/display pots
- Best new gardener
- Grow the tallest sunflower – for children only

The closing date for all entries is Friday 30 July 2021 with the judging taking place on Friday 6 August.

Visit barnethomes.org to access the Finest Flowers entry form online, or email getinvolved@barnethomes.org. If you do not have access to the internet, please call Camille Yerles on 020 8359 3148 to enter the competition.



GET INVOLVED YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Resident Support Group complete Level 1 Housing Training Course

Members of the Resident Support Group and the newly appointed Resident Board completed their Level 1 Introduction to Housing Course recently. The 28 participants took part in a programme that provides an overview and understanding of the social housing sector and the environment in which housing organisations operate. They learned about key challenges and new opportunities that social housing providers face as the sector continues to evolve.

We would like to thank our partner LBL Skills for delivering an engaging and informative course; our residents shared really positive feedback!

"I found the historical content highly informative and interesting including the present housing timeline. I especially enjoyed discussing the controversy-encompassing social housing providers' multi-diverse purpose and how they seriously struggle to meet the demand"

Jennyfer Gentle, member of the Resident Board

Join your resident group

Barnet Homes residents: Resident Support Group

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.

Barnet Homes Get Together & Get Involved – Join our online forums

As part of the Resident Support Group you will be invited to join our Get Together & Get Involved online forums. The next sessions will be held on Thursday 30 September and Thursday 18 November from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. The forums will be themed around your experiences and thoughts on our services. If you would like to join, visit barnethomes.org or contact us using the details below.

Opendoor Homes residents: Resident Involvement Group

You have the right to be involved in the management of your home and the services you receive from us. Registering to be in this group will provide an opportunity to be invited to help us shape or improve our services. Customers are selected at random to attend focus groups, take part in surveys, debate a certain topic or service and give their views. These are often required when we are reviewing a service and considering making changes. There may also be a financial incentive in attending some of these groups.

Opendoor Homes Get Together & Get Involved – Join our online forums

As part of the Involvement Group you will be invited to join our Get Together & Get Involved online forums. Your involvement and attendance are valuable to us; the sessions will provide you with an opportunity to share your experiences and thoughts on Opendoor Homes services.

If you would like to join, visit opendoorhomes.org or contact us using the details below.

Our resident board: representing you

Dear Residents,

I hope that you're keeping safe and well. It's been a very busy few months for the new Resident Board. In February we held our first business meeting with Heads of Services from Barnet Homes, who presented reports on how they have been performing over the past three months.

I feel it is important to communicate our work and you can expect to receive an update from all meetings in the future.

In February we discussed;

- **Resident satisfaction:** and steps being taken to drive improvement, as well as a better understanding of the role and responsibility of absent landlords. The Board requested for future reports to contain more information that highlights Leaseholder satisfaction and if there was an opportunity to benchmark satisfaction of non-secure residents with other local authorities.
- **Safety and assurance:** The Board wanted assurance that operatives visiting homes are all wearing the correct PPE.
- **The Customer Experience Programme:** Future plans to involve and engage with residents to improve services
- **Repairs and gas:** How are these services performing a year after being brought in-house?
- **Complaints:** Measures that are being undertaken to improve how complaints are resolved
- **Anti-social behaviour:** A better understanding of issues, measures and interventions
- **Building and fire safety:** Progress of all works, perception of safety and resident satisfaction, and the fire doors installation progress was discussed against targets.



Going forward, the board discussed areas they would like to focus on over the next year that will involve residents who have joined the Resident Support Group.

On a final note, I recently became a member of the newly formed National Federation of ALMOs (NFA) Tenants Advisory Panel on the government's social housing White Paper Steering Group and attended my very first meeting in May. The group discussed customer regulation, tenant satisfaction measures, the role of the Housing Ombudsman and Decent Homes.

For future meetings we will be looking at how organisations similar to Barnet Homes engage with their residents, and how councils know that they are doing this effectively.

Have a good summer and best wishes,
Aruna Bhatt, Resident Board Chair

Focus on The Barnet Group Community Award Winners 2020

Back in January, we marked our 2020 Community awards with an online ceremony. While we celebrated the winners, we were unable to meet them in person to deliver their

prizes. With restrictions lifting this summer, we were really excited to be able to go out in the community to finally meet our winners and give them their awards!

Dementia Club UK Charity of the Year



Dementia Club UK (DCUK) goes the extra mile to provide help and support to those suffering with dementia, as well as their carers and families to put smiles on their faces and give them a better quality of life.

They raise awareness and aim to stamp out the stigma associated with dementia. The charity delivers professional advice and information, in a social environment where members can relax and make friends and find a friendly ear when times are hard.

"I am delighted that my charity Dementia Club UK won Charity of the Year 2020. During the Covid-19 lockdowns, Dementia Club UK has been running four Zoom sessions every week helping people to stay connected. Once restrictions are over, we will carry on with

the Zoom sessions and also open up all our venues so that people can meet up and enjoy tea and cakes in a social atmosphere, with entertainment, exercises and social activities. Dementia Club UK aims to continue helping as many people as possible living with dementia and provide support and advice to the carers and families and those who are lonely and isolated." *Lisa Rutter, Chairman Dementia Club UK*

Dementia Club UK went above and beyond to support the community during Covid-19, and the charity's beneficiaries showed their appreciations with a high number of heart-warming nominations!

"DCUK has been our life-line ever since my mother was diagnosed with dementia. Attending the weekly club brought a structure to our week and made my mother extremely happy. During the pandemic, DCUK has offered Zoom sessions four times a week which has been a godsend. We have been able to maintain contact with the group; we have music entertainment and exercise. My mother is 92 and has been loving these sessions." *Community Awards 2020 Nomination*

 dementiaclubuk.org.uk

Burnt Oak Women's Group Group of the year

Back in 2017, Inass Ibrahim set up a safe space for local people to gather, and Burnt Oak Women's Group (BOWG) was born. Inass created the group to help local people join together, despite cultural differences like language barriers. She wanted to help break down walls and create a space that encourages diversity, cohesion and togetherness.

Just two years later, Inass was invited to a reception at Buckingham Palace to celebrate the achievements of community leaders who promote diversity and cohesion. Burnt Oak

Women's Group was also featured in Barnet Council's 'Together We are Barnet' campaign, where their photo appeared on bus



stops and billboards all over the borough.

During the peak of the pandemic, the group worked tirelessly to support their local community. Inass and her team of volunteers ran a weekly foodbank, providing life-saving food parcels to over 80 local families.

"Over the past 12 months and more recently during the Covid-19 pandemic, the band of volunteers came together to address local needs in the community. This included providing essential food supplies to over 80 families from their Hub at North Road Community Centre. Inass and her group have been actively involved in Burnt Oak for a few years and have had a major impact in reaching out and engaging with local people in and around Burnt Oak, previously working with International Gospel Church and Loveburntoak, reaching out to women to get them actively involved in their community." *Community Awards 2020 Nomination*

Janet Matthewson Covid-19 Inspirational Person

"Janet has pulled together an amazing community sector response to support community and faith groups through the Covid-19 period. She and her organisation, the Young Barnet Foundation, have not been contracted or paid to do this. Through Janet's sheer energy and commitment, she helped set up the Barnet Community Response Fund that has seen donations exceed £100,000. No mean feat to achieve in such a short time period."



Anthony Quelch Young Volunteer of the Year

"Anthony has been a wonderful member of our volunteer team. He always has a smile on his face, is always reliable and happy to help, no task is too small or too big. He often takes care of a job before we actually realise that it needs doing! We couldn't do our work without him."



Carlos-Ricardo Luis Foster-Gomes Good Neighbour Award

"Carlos is a thirteen-year-old, who is a student and a sea cadet within the borough. Upon receiving the news that my mum (in Peru) had metastatic terminal cancer, I exhausted all avenues trying to source the funds to get to her, in order to assist in end of life care. Carlos suggested that I started a GoFundMe page, which subsequently raised £2500, which enabled me to see her. I am eternally grateful to this young man for his selflessness and great sagacity beyond his years. Carlos is an outstanding young man that I would like to see recognised and significantly commended. The sheer magnitude of his efforts has given me the opportunity to say farewell. It is a rarity to be fortunate enough to encounter a teenager, willing to make a difference in the world, with small and significant acts of kindness. Thank you, Carlos!"



Kay Gray Volunteer of the Year

"Kay has set up the Renew project from Christ Church in Barnet. Kay sources items for residents of Barnet who cannot afford these themselves due to low income. Our service has obtained many items from her including toys for children who have been moved due to DV, a mattress for a customer who needed one, hoovers, washing machines; the list is endless."



Vallectric

Social Value Contractor of the Year

This year we recognised and awarded Vallectric as our Social Value Contractor of the Year 2020. Like so many of our contractors they have provided financial assistance to support the most in need but have also exceeded our expectations with their social value commitments.

We would like to thank Greg Slater, Jason Oakford and Bob Wilde for their ongoing support and again thank all contractors for their continued investment into communities across Barnet.



2021 Community Awards

It's never too early to nominate!

We want to recognise and truly thank all our residents that have gone above and beyond in supporting their fellow neighbours across our communities, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. We also want to take the time to appreciate the hard work of local community groups and the voluntary sector in supporting our elderly and most vulnerable in Barnet. If you know of someone or any group you want to thank, now is the time to nominate them for a community award by visiting barnethomes.org.

The categories are:

- Good Neighbour Award
- Volunteer of the Year
- Volunteer of the Year (under 25)
- Group of the Year (community or resident association)
- Voluntary Sector Organisation or Charity of the Year
- Covid-19 Inspirational person of the year

Visit barnethomes.org to submit your nominations, or email getinvolved@barnethomes.org. If you do not have access to the internet, please call Camille Yerles on 020 8359 3148 to submit your nomination.



WORK AND EDUCATION

HELPING YOU GET BACK ON TRACK

Could 2022 be the year for you?



“Apprenticeship has been extremely rewarding considering the circumstances. This is mainly because of the amazing support I have received from my managers and colleagues which has allowed me to be hands-on with the work I am doing, even if it has been from home. I am also learning a lot about housing through the training we are receiving once a week.”

Stella, Barnet Group apprentice

What is an apprenticeship?

If you love learning, but also want to gain experience in the workplace and get paid, then you should consider an apprenticeship.

An apprenticeship is a full-time work-based learning programme that combines accredited learning with paid work. It gives you the opportunity to study towards a nationally recognised qualification (fully paid for by us), whilst gaining real experience.

By the end of the programme you will have acquired the skills, knowledge and experiences, as well as a relevant qualification, to perform a skilled role.

80% of your time will be spent working in a real job which gives you the experience you need to excel in your chosen sector.

The other 20% of your time will be spent on off-the-job training which may be delivered in several ways: face to face, online, through projects or through supervision and mentoring

Can I do an apprenticeship?

The only entry requirements are:

- you must be over the age of 16

- not in full time education or work
- have GCSE grade 4 or C in English and Maths
- be eligible to work in the UK
- not already hold a qualification in housing

We encourage unemployed Barnet residents to apply to our apprenticeship programme, including school leavers, care leavers, people with disabilities and people who have been unemployed for a long time.

What apprenticeship will I achieve?

Our programme is a Chartered Institute of Housing Level 2 Housing and Property Management apprenticeship. On successful completion your qualification will be equivalent to a GCSE.

How long will it take?

The full programme will last for 14 months and starts in September 2021.

What will I earn?

You will be paid an annual salary of £14,000 and you will also receive a flexible pension and benefit allowance of 5% of your base salary. Flex benefits are hosted by AON and will allow you to choose from a variety of benefits.

Get back on track with BOOST's webinars



Manic Mondays? Beat the blues with Mindfulness Mondays and help yourself to better mental health.



An opportunity for young people to discuss career options, job opportunities, and get support in applying to jobs and possibly some live vacancies.



Come along and meet our employment and wellbeing advisor Shak. He'll help you get ready for work and improve your wellbeing.



Technology doesn't have to be difficult. We will make sure to help you with everything digital until it clicks.



Come and meet our Employment Coach Michael Anderson. He will guide you with the overall goal of getting the right job for YOU!



Learn how to improve your digital skills and become more independent. Build your confidence in using technology in our fun monthly sessions.

Call one of our digital advisors or email them: Stella 075 9854 4927 stella.cooper@barnethomes.org | Fardowsa 077 7325 2470 fardowsa.mahamed@barnethomes.org.

Our Training and Employment Survey The results are in!

Earlier this year, we sent out surveys to a sample of residents to find out more about your training and employment needs.

You told us what impact COVID had been having on your household finances

- 57% of you said that COVID had had a moderate or severe impact on your finances
- 38% had made a Universal Credit claim
- 26% had used a food bank

Benefit advice is available through your Income Collection Officer or from BOOST

Moving on to employment and training needs

- 30% of respondents said their employment status had changed during COVID
- When asked how could BOOST help you find work the most common requests were help training for new skills, help with job searches and help to create or update CVs
- Interestingly, when asked about training preferences most people to return to classroom based learning but conversely the second most popular type was online self taught courses. We plan to return to classroom based sessions when it is safe to

do so – watch this space

- The most commonly request training subjects were Health and Wellbeing and IT with a significant number also wanting personal development and confidence building

We also asked about digital needs

- 68% of responders said they their mobile was the main way they accessed the internet
- 29% described their digital skills as poor
- Most commonly requested IT training subjects were Making Better Use of Computers and MS Office applications such as Word and Excel but topics such as staying safe online and better use of video calling were also popular

Our BOOST team will use this to design their services for the coming year. Thank you to the more than 250 people who responded. Full survey results can be found on the BOOST website. A link to the online version of the survey remains open so you can still tell us your thoughts, just visit boostbarnet.org.

Make It Happen goes live

A new service to help residents of Grahame Park and Colindale went live on 28 June. Make It Happen is a multi-agency team based in the recently refurbished Old Library on Grahame Park Concourse.

Among the services on offer will be BOOST employment and training support, Barnet Homes and Notting Hill Genesis housing staff, youth enterprise and careers support and a wide range of activities and services offered by Colindale Communities Trust. Find out more by popping into the library, or contacting BOOST.

The project is part of the wider regeneration of the estate led by Notting Hill Genesis working with Barnet Homes and Barnet Council.





Discover Barnet Presents is bringing a summer to Barnet like no other - and everyone is invited!

The summer festival's packed programme from July to September features open air cinema and major sports screenings, community carnivals, live music, artisan food markets, open air theatre, street performers, and activities for the whole family. The majority of the programme's events and activities are free to attend.

Discover Barnet Presents encourages the safe return to our town centres, high streets, parks and open spaces. All events are taking place outside and will be delivered in line with government guidelines. Do not attend if you have symptoms of COVID-19.

It begins with the open air cinema and sports screenings in Victoria Park, Finchley starting on Friday 2nd July until Sunday 11th July. The programme includes family favourites, cult classics, and everything in between, as well as live matches from Wimbledon and the Euros. Dates and times can be found here: engage.barnet.gov.uk/discoverbarnetpresents-openairscreen

To find out more about Discover Barnet Presents... Summer Festival 2021 and the full line-up, visit:

- Web engage.barnet.gov.uk/discoverbarnetpresents
- Email: barnet.first@barnet.gov.uk to join the mailing list and be the first to know as further programme details are announced.
- Follow: @BarnetCouncil #DiscoverBarnetPresents



Are you under 18? Voicebox wants to hear from you!

This is an opportunity for young people to talk about issues affecting them in the community and share their experiences.

Would you like to see more activities and services in Barnet that are aimed at young people? Including mental health and wellbeing, sports, art, media or community safety?

Do you need more support and advice around staying safe online, finding out what to do in Barnet or how to join local groups and clubs near you?

Send us a direct message on Instagram and start voicing your opinions!

Quick ABC on how to take part in Voicebox:

A - Follow us on Instagram @tbg_community1

B - Like our Voicebox Instagram Post

C - Drop us a DM telling us about what you would like to see in your community

All DMs received will be entered into a prize draw to win £20 of shopping vouchers and an exclusive Voicebox t-shirt. Closing date is 30 July.

Personal Assistant Service

Are you looking for flexible or part-time work caring for people locally in Barnet?

PA Choices matches people who are in receipt of direct payments with personal assistants who are able to support them on a day to day basis.

We have part-time and full-time positions available.



Earn up to £10.85 per hour

GET INVOLVED

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Age UK Barnet

Helping older people find their feet



As most people embrace the new freedoms the lifting of restrictions bring, many older people in Barnet remain worried about going out. Age UK Barnet is launching 'Finding Your Feet'; a scheme to help give older people confidence to get back out into the world.

When someone is referred to the Finding Your Feet service, Deborah from Age UK Barnet will visit their home to assess their mobility and provide exercises to build strength before they're ready to venture out. They'll then be matched with a trained volunteer to go out on regular walks together for a period of 4-6 weeks. The volunteer will chat, offer emotional support and encourage them back into the world again.

"They'll start with short walks, which might be to the front gate and back, but will build towards an agreed goal, whether it's going to the local shops, the park or attending a coffee morning," says Deborah. "They will get to the point where they're able to do what they did before the pandemic."

Some of these pairings will turn into befriending relationships, a form of long term companionship where the volunteers and older person we're supporting arrange to meet weekly for a chat.

Jenny, 75, who lives in sheltered accommodation in Edgware, says: 'So many of the people in my sheltered housing don't feel ready to leave their homes and they are genuinely afraid to mix in public again. This is exactly what they need to help them face the world again!'

Getting help

If you or someone you know needs some help getting back out there, please give Becky a ring on 020 8150 0967 or email rebecca.bayne@ageukbarnet.org.uk. We cannot match volunteers with people who need a Falls Clinic referral but needing a walking frame or walking stick is not a barrier to referring on to the service.

Volunteering

If you would like to become a Finding Your Feet volunteer, go onto the Age UK Barnet website ageukbarnet.org.uk or email lisa.robbs@ageukbarnet.org.uk.

YOU SAID, WE DID **ACTING ON YOUR FEEDBACK**

Resident communication

The Community Engagement team kindly organised two focus groups with members of the Resident Support Group and Resident Board in April, to help in the development of the Group PR & Communications Strategy 2021/24. Lots of great ideas were suggested, and these have been taken into account in the drafting of the strategy. These included making atHome available electronically, and increasing focus on community initiatives and events. Many thanks to everyone for their time and valuable contributions. The strategy will be made available on the website following final approval by the Board.

Repairs

You told us that following a visit from the repairs service, there had been occasions when follow-on works were not raised based on the recommendations that were made. This meant that you have needed to chase up on this to find out what was happening. In response to this we have put in place extra training for repairs operatives to ensure they do not close a job if they have made recommendations for follow-on works. We have also given extra training to office staff to ensure notes from operatives are reviewed carefully so any recommended follow-on works are raised in a timely way.



Housing management

You said that on occasions when you made an enquiry there had been a delay to our response. On investigation we found that some queries had not been logged correctly due to some training gaps for new members of staff. We have subsequently provided training to all new members of Housing Management staff to address this, making this training mandatory from now on. This should help to reduce the risk of delayed responses in future.

For more information about our performance, and how we're responding to your feedback, visit barnethomes.org/about-us/performance

LEASEHOLDERS

SAFETY IN YOUR PROPERTY

Keeping your homes safe is part of your responsibilities as a leaseholder. The information over the next two pages can help you keep up-to-date with what is required. For more information, visit barnethomes.org/landlords



New electrical safety standards for private landlords: (applicable to those who sublet)

Are you a leasehold landlord? New regulations require private landlords to have the electrical installations in their properties checked by a qualified and competent person at least every five years. Landlords must provide a copy of the electrical safety report to their tenants and local authority, if requested. The regulations form part of the government's wider work to improve safety in all residential premises and particularly in the private rented sector.

For more information about electrical safety standards, and landlords' responsibilities, visit barnethomes.org/landlords



Electrical Rising Mains works

Please remember to send Barnet Homes your Electrical Installation Condition Record (EICR) as soon as we start Section 20 consultation about these works in your building. This will avoid problems with delays on the day the electric supply to your block is switched over to the new electrical rising mains.

If you sublet your property, Barnet Homes will expect to receive your EICR within 14 days of making a request.



Fire Safety Programme

Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the government established the Building Safety Programme to ensure that residents of high-rise buildings are safe now, and in the future. This programme is aimed at maintaining and increasing building safety. You can read more about the programme on the next page.

Immediate safety across our properties



As part of the Building Safety Programme, Barnet Homes are working closely with the London Fire Brigade and the London Borough of Barnet to make sure that all buildings in Barnet are safe and remain safe. Together with Barnet Council, we are investing £50m for high-priority fire safety works.

The funding also included high-priority fire safety works across the council's high rise blocks, hostels and sheltered blocks, including:

- The upgrading of communal and flat front entrance fire doors to a higher grade of fire

and/or smoke resistance (where fire doors previously fitted do not meet the certified 30 minutes fire and smoke resistant standard)

- Improved compartmentation between floors and flats
- Upgrading ventilation systems within buildings
- Improving access into the blocks for the emergency services in the event they need to access the building, such as dedicated parking/loading areas at block entrances and installation or upgrading of emergency lighting.
- New and additional fire signs in and around blocks and estates
- Installation of automatic fire suppression systems (sprinklers) within flats, communal and service areas of blocks.
- Installation of L1, LD1 or LD2 fire detection devices within flats, communal and service areas of blocks

Where any of the above works are identified in a fire risk assessment for your building and flat, you will receive a Section 20 Notice consulting you on what exactly is required and why. You will also receive a notice of which works and how much you will be required to contribute towards. The Fire Safety Team will work closely with the residents of the building to ensure any concerns you may have are considered.

We will continue to work closely with the London Fire Brigade and are ready to fully support any changes on fire safety advice. In so doing we have continued to upgrade the blocks we manage and to make improvements by carrying out important fire safety works which may chargeable to leaseholders and where access to all properties in a block is essential.

LEASEHOLDERS

LOOKING AFTER YOUR PROPERTY

Alterations - make sure you get approval!



As a homeowner, you may wish to undertake alterations or improvements to your property. However, under the terms of your lease you are required to seek permission before carrying out any works to your home.

Please note that apart from obtaining your landlord's consent through Barnet Homes, some

works may require other permissions, such as planning permission or building regulations permission. It is therefore crucial that you approach relevant departments before you commence any works. If you carry out home improvements without obtaining your landlord's consent where necessary, you will be breaking the conditions of your lease. In this case, we will take enforcement action to ensure that the property is reinstated to its original condition and any legal and building costs that we incur will be recharged to you. Please be advised that if you purchase a property where unauthorised alterations were carried out by the previous owner, you will be responsible for rectifying the breach and the associated costs.

If you do obtain permission to carry out works, you must ensure that your builders are considerate, and clean up any mess they make in the communal areas. You must also not leave any items in the communal areas overnight. If you are concerned that one of your neighbours is carrying out alterations without permission, or if you have any questions then you can email us on TalkToUs@barnethomes.org.

Insurance matters

The building insurance for your leasehold property is provided by Zurich through the London Borough of Barnet.

Only *alterations* to your property that have received the landlord's written consent from Barnet Homes are covered by the Zurich building insurance policy. In the event of any loss occurring under the policy and a claim being made, unauthorised alterations are not covered. This means that unauthorised alterations will not be re-instated and you will not receive any compensation for losses under the policy.

It is important that the information held about your property is up to date. You can let us know by emailing: TalkToUs@barnethomes.org

What to tell us:

- If you sold or bought your property recently
- If you change your correspondence address
- If your property is sublet the type of tenancy agreement you have in place has changed or you have not told us about the agreement before (if you do not provide this information a higher insurance premium may be charged)

Leaseholders - who to contact

We have put together an essential services and contacts table for ease of reference.

Service	Advice	Who to Contact
Service Charges	Enquiries about or payment of service charges	
Updating contact details	Name or address changes	
Lease Extensions	Handling requests to extend a lease duration	
Lease Amendments	Handling all amendments to a lease e.g. Deed of Variation	
Pre-Assignment Enquiries (PAEs)	Requesting a PAE pack before purchase/sale of a council property	For all these queries, please contact:
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour	Customer Contact Team on 020 8080 6587
Administrative Changes to the Lease	Making changes to any administrative elements of a lease e.g. Address	Or via email on TalkToUs@barnethomes.org
Right To Buy (RTB)	Purchasing the property	
Enfranchisements	Purchase of the property freehold as a leaseholder	
Major works	Statutory consultation and Project enquiries	
Repairs to shared or structural areas	Report or check progress of reported repairs	
Insurance Claims	When making an insurance claim related to a leasehold property	Zurich Insurance: 0800 026 1841 or via email on homeclaims@uk.zurich.com

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.

YOUR RENT

HELPING YOU WITH MONEY MATTERS

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.

Paying your rent on time is really important as it goes towards essential services such as caretaking, repairs and property maintenance. However, we also understand that we are in challenging times therefore if you get into difficulty with paying your rent, please get in touch with us as soon as possible. The Income Collection Service can advise on money management, hardship funds and you can also benefit from expert advice from one of our in house welfare benefit advisors who can check if you are in receipt of all eligible benefits. More information can also be found on our website, barnethomes.org.

Do you receive UC?

Please ensure that you update your UC journal with the correct rent and service charge figures for this year (2021/22). These can be found on the rent variation letter that was sent out at the beginning of March. Please note that UC will only assess charges such as 'rent' and service charges, and services such as caretaking, grounds maintenance, and lighting. Charges such as water and heating are not eligible for UC.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)

Are you struggling with your rent and in receipt of housing benefit or universal credit? A DHP is a one off grant that may assist you in clearing some or even all of your arrears and can also assist with council tax. To find out more, call the Income Collection Service on 020 8610 3538 or email IncomeCollection@barnethomes.org – we are here to help!

Looking for a low cost loan?

Barnet Homes highly recommends the London Capital Credit Union! The Credit Union is able to offer low cost loans whilst promoting saving. Check out what they can offer you at credit-union.coop or call 020 7561 1786

Paying Your Rent! Go digital and self-serve by telephone or online at a time that suits you

We recommend using our automated payment services that are ready when you are! You can self-serve by calling the automated payment line on **0845 356 3456** which is available 24/7. When calling this number, please ensure that you select 'housing rent' (this should also be selected for when paying garages rent). Please ensure that you have your nine digit rent reference number to hand when using this service which can be located 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 telephone payment line, please ensure that you have your nine digit rent account number to hand.

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

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.

Managing unreasonable behaviour

We have a duty to deal with our customers fairly and consistently, and we also have a duty to our staff to protect them from abuse and make sure they feel supported. Occasionally, the behaviour or actions of individuals who receive our services make it difficult for us to support them, and also impact on our ability to provide a service to other customers.

We do not view behaviour as unacceptable simply because someone is assertive or determined,

and we recognise that upsetting circumstances can cause people to act out of character. On our websites you will find our Managing Unacceptable and Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy.

This sets out our approach to ensuring that we provide an equitable service to customers, whilst also ensuring that we protect our staff and that the behaviour of a minority of customers doesn't impact unfairly on everyone else.



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 previous 0800 number has now been turned off. Please use our new number to contact us. Thank you.