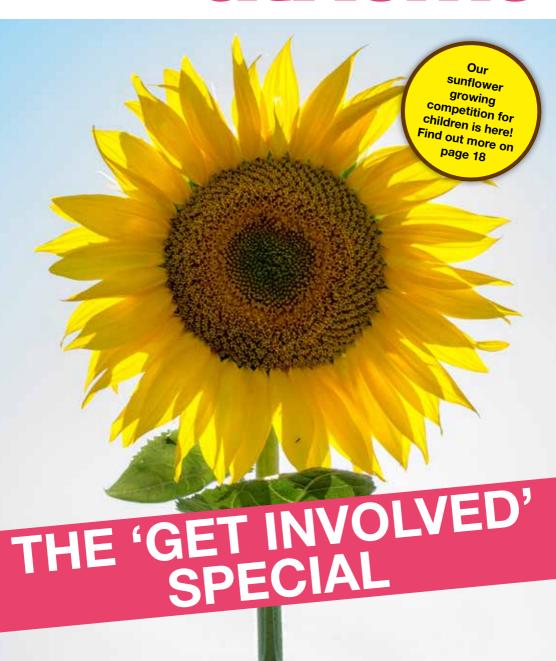
Barnet Homes Residents' Magazine Issue 70 | Spring 2021

atHome





GET IN TOUCH

▼ TALK2US@BARNETHOMES.ORG

3 020 8080 6587 (8AM - 6PM, TRANSLATORS AVAILABLE)

BARNETHOMES.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, and welcome to the spring issue of your magazine. I hope that you have been doing as well as possible, given the current circumstances.

This month, we should see the easing of lockdown restrictions and we hope to return to something approaching normality. This means that some of the services we are offering will return to normal too - you can read more about our own roadmap on page four.

We have seen communities come together over the last year, and support each other in ways that are both inspiring and motivating. Just after Christmas, we held our 2020 Barnet Group Community Awards. They were held online this year, and it was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate those who have given so much over the last 12 months. Head to page eight to find out who the worthy winners are, and how you can watch the awards ceremony again. We had a special performance from the B.I.G. Choir, and our Your Choice Barnet staff and service users came together to perform a special socially-distanced dance. You won't want to miss it!

If that inspires you to get involved in your community, then the rest of this issue is dedicated to just that. We have a wide range of opportunities for you to get involved, from a seat on our Resident Board, to taking part in online forums. There's something for everyone, and you can read more about that from page ten onwards.

Please continue to stay safe, look out for one another, and enjoy the spring; hopefully it can be the start of a great rest of 2021.

All the best.

Tim

NEWS IN BRIEF KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

Barnet Homes Essential Services roadmap

As lockdown restrictions ease so to will the levels of service Barnet Homes is able to offer. The roadmap below outlines the planned return to 'business as usual' for Barnet Homes' Repairs, Estates and Property Services. These are proposed dates, based on the latest government roadmap - they are subject to change,

based on 'data, not dates', Government guidance will be followed at each step, and all distancing/PPE guidelines will be adhered to.

For the latest information, visit our website, barnethomes.org.







Repairs

Some services may still use remote

or digital tools, such as video

repairs surveys and telephone

appointments.

Estates Services

Some services may still use remote

or digital tools, such as video

repairs surveys and telephone

appointments.

Major Works and Property Services

Some services may still use remote

or digital tools, such as video

repairs surveys and telephone

appointments.

8 March	Non-essential subcontractor work already in the system will start to be allocated. New work orders will only be raised if they are considered essential.		Restart component replacement processes as part of planned maintenance programmes and cyclical compliance testing.
29 March	Barnet Homes' Repairs operatives will begin completing non-essential works which are already in the system. New work orders will only be raised if they are considered essential.	The caretaking service will revert to a full service of scheduled cleans. The sanitising of high-traffic areas will continue.	Continue with programmed works and compliance inspections with an increased focus on arranging appointments with residents to deliver these works
14 April	New repair requests will be raised for customers reporting non- essential repairs as well as essential repairs. As much work as possible will be carried out by Barnet Homes Repairs operatives. Some work may still be allocated to external contractors.	Cleaning will return to a normal service to allow Caretakers to resume other duties in full. Caretakers will no longer sanitise high-traffic areas: these areas will become part of the service of regular scheduled cleans.	Continue with programmed works and compliance inspections with an increased focus on arranging appointments with residents to deliver these works
21 June	All restrictions lifted and services return to full capacity.	All restrictions lifted and services return to full capacity.	All restrictions lifted and services return to full capacity.

Up to £5,000 available for local projects



Let's #BuildBackBetter Locally

2020 might not have been what we had hoped for, but if the pandemic has highlighted anything, it's the power of communities coming together to achieve amazing things in the face of adversity.

Crowdfund Barnet is returning this Spring for another round to help our communities bounce back, reconnect, and thrive. Pledges of up to £5,000 are available from Barnet Council for projects that show innovation, imagination and lots of support from the local community. If you have an

idea for a project that needs funds to get started, they want to hear from you!

The deadline to pitch is Friday 21 April 2021. If you would like to share your idea online, simply email Spacehive directly support@spacehive.com

For further information visit spacehive. com/movement/crowdfundbarnet/ news or spacehive.com/profile/ londonboroughofbarnet

Working with the Housing Ombudsman

Residents who have completed Barnet Homes' complaints process have the right to approach the independent Housing Ombudsman Service if they remain dissatisfied. The Housing Ombudsman Service may investigate a complaint or ask Barnet Homes to do more to resolve an issue, and we work closely with it to deliver a better service for customers and act on feedback.

You can read more about how to contact it, as well as Barnet Homes' self-assessment of how it complies with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint-Handling Code, on our website at barnethomes.org/complaints. The Housing Ombudsman Service publishes on its website every two weeks a summary of all the decisions it makes. You can view the latest decisions and investigation reports for all social housing providers at housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

NEWS IN BRIEF

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

Can you support Barnet Food Share Co-op?





Barnet Food Share Co-op began in 2007 as a legacy of The Dining Place, the Grahame Park Community Café. It was introduced as and remained a food pantry responding to food hunger until 2013. It was funded by Near Neighbours to share balanced and nourishing food among the residents of Burnt Oak, Colindale and West Hendon.

The Covid-19 pandemic massively increased uptake of their service, as well as presenting an opportunity to upscale their service delivery. Financially supported by Martin Lewis, Neighbourly and Space2Grow, they stayed afloat while awaiting further funding from London Community Response Fund.

They have been able to recruit new volunteers, but they need more. Volunteers collect and re-distribute surplus food from corporate and individual donors and provide daily provision on their 'food trolley'. They also provide home deliveries to shielding individuals and families upon their assessment and service need.

The group is keen to have more volunteers. particularly drivers with their own car. If you're interested, please contact them using the details below.

Barnet Food Share operates from Living Way Ministries, The Concourse, Grahame Park in Colindale and is open every Wednesday between 2 – 3 pm and Saturday between 11 am - 2.00 pm



Helping you pay your rent this year

In these times, it is still important to pay your rent. We realise it can be difficult, so we're here to help. If you are struggling to pay your rent, please contact us using the details below.

You should have already received your rent variation notice letter for 2021/22 confirming how much your rent will be from 5 April 2021. The rent payment dates for 2021/22 are listed on page 12, as part of a handy pull-out and keep calendar. Why not put it somewhere useful, like on your fridge? If yours has not come yet, please contact us.

If you receive Universal Credit (UC), you must report any rent changes so that your housing costs are reassessed. This must be done on your UC journal on or shortly after 5 April 2021. This information can be found in the rent variation notice letter which you should have received in the first week of March 2021.

The Barnet Group Community Awards Winners celebrated with online awards show!

We hold our Community Awards once a year, but the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic meant that we were not be able to meet in person this time around.

However, that does not take anything away from the incredible achievements of those nominated for an award. During what has been a difficult year, those nominated for an award have stepped up in so many ways to support their neighbours and be a part of their communities.

These awards are usually for customers and service users of The Barnet Group, but in recognition of those who have given so much over the last year, we have extended the awards to the wider Barnet community.

Nominations for community awards have been submitted by residents and community partners who appreciate the contribution their fellow neighbours and friends make in their communities.

This year, we have introduced special "Covid-19 Inspirational Person" awards, to celebrate those who have gone above and beyond since the beginning of the pandemic.

Congratulations to all our winners – it is you who make the biggest contribution to the services we deliver.

RN

Our video awards ceremony was opened by the Mayor of Barnet Cllr Caroline Stock, and had guest appearances from all those people who had nominated the award winners.

There was also a performance from the B.I.G. Choir and a special sociallydistanced dance from our Your Choice Barnet staff and service users.

It's never too early to nominate someone for the 2021 awards! You can get nominating at barnethomes.org, or by emailing camille.yerles@barnethomes.org.

Barnet Homes Contractor Covid-19 Recovery Fund

2020 has been one of the most challenging years for individuals, families, communities and businesses across the globe. Trying to maintain a sense of normality has not been easy with many having to adapt to how they live and work. We have seen the community, our contractors and staff at The Barnet Group come together to support local people in Barnet who have lost their jobs, are struggling financially and we have seen a

rise in the need of food banks and child poverty amongst many any challenges.

With the invaluable support from our contractors, The Barnet Group is pleased to announce its Contractor Covid-19 Recovery Fund, which aims to support local groups throughout 2021. Further details on how groups can apply to the fund will be available on the Barnet Group website soon. Thank you again for all your support, hard work and commitment, and everything you do in the Barnet community.

The 2020 Award winners!

Good Neighbour Award: Carlos-Ricardo Luis Foster-Gomes

Group of the Year: Burnt Oak Women's Group **Charity of the Year:** Dementia Club UK **Volunteer of the Year (Over 25):** Kay Gray

Volunteer of the Year (Under 25): Anthony Quelch

COVID-19 Inspirational person of the year: Janet Matthewson









Watch the awards

You can watch the awards on our YouTube channel, by going to youtube.com/watch?v=OAUThIQPAFI or just search for "The Barnet Group Community Awards 2020".

INTRODUCING A NEW LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT FOR RESIDENTS

The all-new Barnet Homes Resident Board



Over the past year, we have been busy behind the scenes working with our resident Performance Advisory Group (PAG) to strengthen their role in scrutinising our housing services. We are pleased to announce the group's time and energy spent in developing their vision has led to the creation of the Barnet Homes Resident Board.

The Resident Board is the highest level of involvement; being a member requires a high level of commitment, but is an exciting and rewarding opportunity for residents.

The Resident Board is accountable to The Barnet Group Board, tenants and leaseholders living in properties managed by Barnet Homes. The Board will continue to play an important role in monitoring our operational performance, influencing strategic priorities, policy and making recommendations to the Barnet Group Board.

The Resident Board now has a Group Board Director within its membership who chairs the Resident Board and is also a resident. These changes will provide a closer relationship between the two boards.

Eamon McGoldrick, Chair of the Barnet Group Board said "I am absolutely delighted that The Barnet Group has set up a Resident Board. It is essential that we have residents' views at the heart of our decision-making processes. The Resident Board will add huge value by helping to monitor day to day service delivery and ensuring that the residents voice is heard in every decision that the Group Board makes".

The Resident Board will hold four business meetings a year. If you would like to attend a meeting as an observer, or are interested in finding out more about the Resident Board, you can contact us using the details below.

A welcome from our new Resident Board Chair



Hi, I'm Aruna Bhatt, and I have been a resident leaseholder in Barnet for more than 28 years.

I have been involved as a volunteer member and the Vice Chair of Barnet Homes Performance Advisory Group (PAG), until the launch of the Resident Board, and I am now the Chair of the new Resident Board.

I have a background in management and training and have been a volunteer advisor in the past.

My involvement has a big impact on decision making on how to improve the performance of services and residents' surroundings with the aim of increasing overall customer satisfaction.

The Resident Board will continue looking at all aspects of services, performance, customer satisfactions as before but on a governance level.

I am pleased to say after having a great response for recruitment of new Resident Board members, 25 residents showed an interest, ten applied who were short-listed and six have been appointed to join our previous four members from PAG.

I want to see change in customer engagement of all residents services to be improved. I am passionate about making a difference in the community, providing a quality service to achieve good standards and sustainability and safer surroundings to live in. I believe all this is a crucial part of shaping the future of Barnet.

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 5 April 2021. If paying fortnightly, you must pay on the bold dates opposite.

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 your rent by telephoning the 24/7 automated telephone payment line on 0845 356 3456. Please select 'housing rent' as the payment option and ensure that you have your nine digit rent account number to hand which starts with a '1'. This can be found on your rent statement or a rent letter.

For a full list of payment methods, please see the 'Rent & Money' section on our website, barnethomes.org.

Rent payment dates 2021/22

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

GET INVOLVED YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Join the our 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 or 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.

If you would like to join the Resident Support Group you can register your interest online or over the phone, using the details listed at the bottom of this page.

Help us shape future involvement and priorities

Here at Barnet Homes, we have started work on our Community Engagement Strategy and ongoing commitment to involving residents in shaping how we deliver and improve our services over the next three years.

In light of Covid-19, there is a strong emphasis on recovery; providing support to those that need it the most and with our gas and repairs services now being delivered by our own in-house services, we are keen to ensure we continue to provide the best service possible. But we want to hear what is most important to you, the services we provide and any services you would like to see directly from us or the partners we work with.

To provide your feedback and comments, please use the contact details below.

Join our online forums

As a member of the Resident Support Group you will be invited to join our Get Together & Get Involved online forums.

It is important for us to take some time to listen and act on how Covid-19 has impacted you, your family, neighbours and local community. Your involvement and attendance is valuable to us and we want to hear your experiences and thoughts on;

- how your community has come together, and what you feel Barnet Homes and its partners can do to further support the community
- how children, young people and our most vulnerable have coped during Covid-19 and what additional support you feel may be needed
- what you feel should be the priorities for Barnet Homes over the next 6-12 months

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

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 Support 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 contact us using the details on the bottom of page 14.



YOU SAID, WE DID ACTING ON YOUR FEEDBACK

Repairs

You told us that there may be ways we could improve our communication with you. Firstly, we have improved our IT systems to send additional text messages informing you in advance of appointment times, arrival times, confirmation that jobs have been completed and we have also introduced a text message survey so we can better understand your immediate feedback on your most recent repair. We have provided our supervisory, surveying and management teams with mobile working technology so they are able to respond to queries more quickly and improve communication whilst remote working and we have also appointed a dedicated Resident Liaison Officer within the Planned Works Team to improve communication with residents on larger, more complex repairs.

Gas

You told us that in some instances that you felt there was some inflexibility in our approach to carrying our annual gas safety checks. Whilst we do have a legal responsibility to undertake these checks, we have reviewed our processes to make it easier to rearrange the first appointments to make it both more convenient for residents and also to improve out first time access rates.

Housing management

You told us that on occasion you found you were directed to an officer who was not best placed to deal with your enquiry. We are pleased to advise we have taken this feedback on board and following a review our Housing Management services, we have ensured greater clarity between departments on roles and responsibilities. We believe this will ensure a greater degree of ownership and accountability when an officer deals with your enquires going forward.

Customer Contact Team

Some of you told us that the customer care you experienced from some staff on our Customer Contact team was not as good as it should be. Most team members have now attended Customer Care training. We will use learning from the training and the quality assessments that we complete through listening to calls to improve the quality of customer care that you receive. We will also use learning from specific complaints to support individual team members who have had complaints made about them to improve their customer care.



GETTING GREEN

HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT



Wates and The Conservation Volunteers brings the 'Treeathlon' to Barnet

As part of their support in our communities, our contractor Wates has joined forces with conservation charity The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to plant fifty trees across our Your Choice Barnet services, estates and other green spaces in Barnet.

Wates' Treeathlon aims to plant 25,000 trees between 2019 and 2022 throughout the UK.

Being conscious of the detrimental effects of construction on our environment, Wates' tree planting initiative aims to combat this. While tree grows, they use sunlight to

absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis and store it as carbon in the form of wood, effectively reducing emission of CO2.

Planting trees will bring lots of different benefits to our borough and will help to create a greener, more resilient environment for everyone to enjoy. Wates and TCV will start planting a variety of British trees in Barnet early this spring!

Interested in find out more about Wates Group's sustainability initiatives? Visit their website, wates.co.uk.



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 our budding 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 get planting!

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

To enter the competition, or if you would like us to come and take the photos for you, please complete the online form available at the link at barnethomes.org

The closing date for all entries is on Friday 16 July 2021. The judging of the entries will take place on Friday 23 July.

g/gardening 19

BOOSTING YOUR CHANCES BARNET'S EMPLOYMENT AND TRAININ

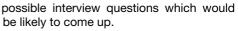
The BOOST service provides employment and training support to people in Barnet. No matter what your background or circumstances, they can help you make a positive change to your life. Here's how Genevieve from the BOOST team helped Jack get back on his feet.

Jack had originally been referred to me by his local councillor over a year ago. At the time, he was suffering with depression and had been out of work for quite some time.

However, he explained that he would be grateful if I could help him find work as a security officer, although he had no prior experience or qualification in this field.

We had a chat and came up with a plan for Jack to have the best chance of working in security. Jack decided to train and obtain his SIA qualifications, and then I helped him find a suitable role, regularly sending him job vacancies.

The situation with lockdowns didn't help, but I am very proud to say that he never gave up, and with my encouragement, he finally got an interview. We prepared for the interview together very well, holding three interview skills sessions over the phone, helping build Jack's confidence. I explained various interview techniques to him and we went through



Lalso sent him an online video link for him to practice recording his video interview and advised him to record himself and practise with this until he felt comfortable.

I boosted his confidence and helped him get over his fears. On the morning of the interview, I phoned him to encourage him - he was so positive and ready for the interview. He passed the interview with flying colours and phoned me in tears, thanking me for my help and said how happy he was that he was referred to us.

He is due to start his role any day now as a full time security officer. I am so pleased to say that we really can make a difference to people's lives at BOOST.



Free BOOST webinars this month!

Our BOOST Team's online webinars can be a great opportunity for you to learn a new skill, or build on one that you already have. This April, they're offering webinars to help you with your content and website creation ambitions:

- 8 April Make It Click: Using Canva for Content Creation
- 22 April Make It Click: How to Create a Website
- 1, 8, 15 and 22 April Employability (Workshop 1): CV writing, interview skills, building your confidence and selling yourself
- 29 April, 6, 13 and 20 May Employability (Workshop 2): CV writing, interview skills, building your confidence and selling yourself

Both sessions start at 3PM. For more information, and to sign up, visit boostbarnet.org.

BOOST - supporting you

Been made unemployed since March 2020? Here's how we can help.

JETS is a brand new scheme for people made unemployed during lockdown and claiming Universal Credit for at least 13 weeks. Specialist one-to-one help is available to find work and get training. To find out if you are eligible and get on the programme email jets@barnet.gov.uk or ask your Jobcentre Work Coach to tell you about JETS.

KICKSTART – new job opportunities for young unemployed people

The government's new Kickstart scheme helps businesses to employ young people by paying their wages for six months. If you're aged 18 to 24 and on Universal Credit then you could be eligible. All Kickstarters will receive training and support and help to find a job when the placement ends. To find out more ask your Jobcentre Work Coach about Kickstart or contact BOOST.

Benefit advice - could you get more income?

Are you getting all the benefits you're entitled to? Do you need help to make a claim? BOOST can check if you're on the right benefits, help make claims and appeals and assist you to access short-term help with rent through a Discretionary Housing Payment.

Make It Click - build your digital skills

Technology doesn't have to be difficult. Through their online webinars, the BOOST team will 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 any of the above contact BOOST on our website boostbarnet.org, by email boost@barnet.gov.uk or simply give us a call on 020 8359 2442

BUILDING NEW HOMES AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR BARNET

Bringing the green to The Archer School

Opendoor Homes' development site at Prospect Ring is nearing completion, and once complete, will provide affordable housing for 50 families in safe, modern flats.

Together with principal contractors Hill, Opendoor Homes is proud to be a part of The Archer School Community Garden Project.

The project at the school, just a stone's

throw from the new homes, will create a space that will be of great benefit to the local community and the children of the school, supporting their mental health and encouraging them to interact with nature.

Hill will be donating plants for the project, and working with their soft landscaping contractor to turn the garden into a great place for everyone to enjoy.

34 new affordable homes in Colindale

This month Opendoor homes completed the development of 12 one-bedroom, eight two-bedroom, ten three-bedroom and four wheelchair accessible homes at Sheaveshill Court. NW9.

high quality, affordable accommodation for Barnet residents.

Lockdown restrictions meant moving into the new homes was somewhat challenging. but Opendoor Homes' teams, together with their new neighbours Covid-safe.



Sign up and pay for garden waste collections 2021-2022

You can now sign up for the 2021-22 garden waste service year which begins from **early May 2021**.

The cost has been held at £70 for the fortnightly collection of one bin for the year, and £50 for each additional bin.

You will receive a full year's service if you **sign up and pay by 18 April**.

If you signed up to the collection service last year, then you will need to sign up again this year for your collections to continue from early May 2021. Stickers for the new service year will be a different colour.



For a quick and easy sign up, do it online at www.barnet.gov.uk/gardenwaste or call us on 020 8359 4600



How does it work?



Sign up and pay using the details above. Please ensure that you sign up for the total number of bins you would like us to empty. We don't empty overfilled bins or collect excess sacks of garden waste.



Once payment has been received, your sticker will be posted to your address before the service starts, providing you have signed up by 18 April.



When you receive your sticker, please remember to apply it to the centre of the lid of your garden waste bin before the service starts so the collection crews know you have paid for the service.

If you subscribed to the service last year, make sure you remove the old sticker before applying your new sticker.





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

