

Winter 2018

Housing News

Latest housing news for London Borough
of Hounslow residents

Including Hounslow Matters



Clements Court

improvements completed



**Councillor
Katherine Dunne,
Cabinet Member
for Housing**

Welcome to our latest edition of Housing News

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, the council has worked extremely hard with the London Fire Brigade to take appropriate steps to improve the safety of council housing.

The council owns and manages 35 high-rise properties. Seven of these have rain screen cladding. Following independent testing of cladding on Clements Court tower in Cranford, we were informed that the outer Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) failed the combustion test.

The outer cladding has been removed, fire breaks upgraded, mineral wool insulation reinstalled, new fire doors fitted throughout the block, and the building has now been completely re-clad with solid aluminium panels.

The significant improvements were made possible due to residents' cooperation and together we have achieved a great deal in very short time.

Completion of this was marked by an event on the 17 November, organised by contractor d&b facades, involving residents, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, council officers and ward councillors (pictured on the cover).

We have committed to invest over £196m over the next five years improving our fire safety and estate management across our properties.

We began the programme of improvements in our high-rise blocks, and will ensure resident' front doors are changed within two years. Fire doors are being changed at Convent Way, Hunter House and Belvedere House. We will then focus on the six Brentford Tower blocks, before looking to the remaining blocks that require them.

Ensuring the fire safety of our homes is a partnership between the council and residents. We need you to ensure that communal areas are kept safe and clear from obstructions, and will be working to provide safe storage for bicycles, buggies and mobility scooters.

Improving the QUALITY of COUNCIL HOMES

A safe and secure place to live contributes to the health and wellbeing of everyone. The council owns and manages approximately 16,000 properties. Maintaining their condition, quality and safety is a key priority.



Health & Safety

99% compliance on gas safety; 100% compliance on heating schemes



Repairs

32,000+ repairs per year, including 5,000 doors, 4,000 lights and 3,000 windows



Kitchens & Bathrooms

300+ kitchens and bathrooms replaced each year

New council company delivers improvement works

The council has partnered with Lampton Facilities Management 360 to deliver planned maintenance to council houses and estates. This includes refurbishment of kitchens and bathrooms, upgrading boiler and heating systems, painting and improving estates, and carrying out fire safety works.

Resident satisfaction for planned works already averages 98%, but the aim is to improve efficiency and value for money, so that more residents will see faster replacements of equipment and faster improvements to the communal areas of our estates.



Better services for you

Changes to the way Hounslow Housing works will bring new and improved services for customers in 2018.

These will mean most things can be done from the comfort of your own

home via our website or, failing that, from a convenient location.

Whether its viewing your rent account, seeking assistance about a housing issue, or making an appointment to meet one of our staff, this will all be possible online.

You will also be able to contact the same person for help on a wider range of things, rather than having to deal with someone different. Details of your dedicated housing officer will be available simply by entering your postcode on our website.

The caretaking and cleaning service is being revamped too, so that it is clear who is responsible for communal standards on each estate. And where there are concierge services, area teams will be created that combine these with cleaning and housing officer roles in a single place.

As part of the changes the three existing Area Offices will be replaced by a larger number of new Touchpoints across Hounslow's estates.



Improving homes and health

The council commissions Better Homes, Better Health (BHBH) to tackle fuel poverty, improve the wellbeing of vulnerable residents and reduce the risk of cold-related illnesses and death.

The 2016-17 BHBH programme ran alongside Groundwork London's award winning WARMTH (Warm Homes Agency Referral Method to deliver health outcomes). This enabled BHBH to reach a far higher number of households with great success.

- **2,728 free energy efficiency and water saving measures were provided to vulnerable households to keep warm and save on their bills.**
- **122 vulnerable clients were helped to access the Warm Homes Discount, providing £17,080 worth of financial help**
- **169 vulnerable households switched energy supplier, saving residents a total of £59,145.**

Responsive repairs

- **130,000 repairs carried out over the past four years**
- **100% emergency repairs completed within 24 hours**
- **99% urgent repairs completed within 48 hours**

Each year, the council completes 30,000 responsive repairs. We employ a dedicated team made up of plumbers, electricians, carpenters, glaziers, roofers and labourers, who work around the borough in a fleet of new vans.

It can be annoying and inconvenient when something needs repair, so our service aims to complete a high-quality fix as quickly as possible.

Our qualified tradespeople have detailed knowledge of council housing and we are investing to develop their skills further.

We aim to get things fixed first visit and are achieving this 96 percent of the time. Complaints about the service are rare, with fewer than 100 per year.



Supporting COMMUNITIES

In 2014, the council committed to support all residents who were homeless or at the risk of becoming homeless, and we have been working hard to help them. With high housing costs, lack of available homes and the impact of welfare reforms, more people are struggling to pay their housing bills. Our efforts have reduced the need to place homeless families in bed and breakfast or temporary accommodation by securing suitable accommodation through the private rented sector.



80 domestic violence households helped on average per year



550 rough sleepers helped on average per year



2,100 vulnerable people helped



15 care leavers helped on average per year



400 homeless households helped on average per year

Private Sector plays a key role

The council has a dedicated Landlord Liaison Officer to build relationships with private sector landlords and support the increasing number of people in these homes. In 2016-17 we placed 189 homeless households into privately rented accommodation, up from 173 lettings the previous year.

Since 2014, we have also prevented over 450 households from becoming homeless by finding them alternative, affordable, private sector accommodation.

To register your property for rent or for more information, email landlords@hounslow.gov.uk or call 020 8583 3855.



Preventing rough sleepers

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness. The council seeks to prevent it at the earliest opportunity, although we are only able to assist those willing to receive our help.

The West London Rough Sleeper Prevention Project identifies people at high risk of rough sleeping and enables us to intervene and prevent rough sleeping by actively supporting individuals.

Rough sleeping is increasing throughout London. The council works with St Mungo's outreach

team to identify and support rough sleepers by bringing them off the streets. Last year we helped 132 people.

The council also funds the Sheltered Project Hounslow which won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service this year. Churches in the borough help up to 20 people who are unable to access government benefits.

If you are concerned about someone you have seen sleeping rough please report them online at www.streetlink.org.uk or by calling **0300 500 0914**.



Renata



Ahmed



Lorraine

Supporting independence

Since 2014, the council has supported over 3,500 vulnerable residents to remain independent and improve their wellbeing. This includes help with employment, training and education, making active and healthy lifestyle choices, dealing with substance misuse, and mental health problems.

We provide supported accommodation for residents who need a safe home.

Renata, a resident of one of our hostels said: "It's really lovely here. I have made friends. I am looking forward to volunteering. These people have given me so much in such a short period and I really want to give back."

Ahmed, who has been staying in a hostel said: "This service has really changed my life. I am very thankful."

Lorraine, who has spent a lot of time sleeping rough in the past said: "I'm so happy to be in the hostel and I love my wheelchair adapted room. I'm actively working with the hostel to prepare myself for independent living."

To find out more, email supporting.independence@hounslow.gov.uk or call 020 8583 3942.



New start for homeless families

In November 2017, 755 families were in temporary accommodation, down from 1,034 in March 2016.

Temporary accommodation is not ideal for vulnerable people and families with children. Recently we approved the introduction of an expanded homelessness prevention package, to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation. We expect to see the results of this over the course of 2018.



Taking families out of B&Bs

In March 2014, 249 homeless families were in bed and breakfast accommodation. In November 2017 this figure was reduced to only nine families.

Residents in B&B with shared facilities may face a lack of space, privacy and safety problems. The council ensures that families with children spend no longer than six weeks in B&Bs.

Supporting PEOPLE

Housing, health and welfare reforms have meant huge changes for the most vulnerable in our community as they are expected to do more to look after themselves. The council provides a wide range of services that enable residents to live a better quality of life. This includes helping the elderly to remain living in their own homes, helping families affected by welfare reforms, creating employment and training opportunities for young people.

WELFARE REFORM

We have helped over 1,400 of our tenants affected by the reduction in the spare room subsidy.



We have helped over 2,000 residents make the transition to universal credit, where they are now responsible for paying their rent to the council.



We have helped over 800 residents affected by the benefit cap.

- 2,300 repairs delivered by the handyman scheme
- 2,296 older people using LINKLINE
- Successful re-launch and continuous expansion of minor works to people's homes
- 577 residents receiving higher level telecare leading to an increasing number of higher telecare packages
- 76 residents living with dementia using the new GPS device to allow them to continue to live safely in their own homes and local community



Investing in apprentices

Apprentices are placed in the council's repairs team to give them the skills that will kick-start their careers while they earn-and-learn. This also provides us with talented tradespeople for the future maintenance of our housing stock.

Our apprentices have the opportunity to gain qualifications in plumbing, carpentry and joinery or electrics. Over four years, 30 apprentices have become qualified, with 15 of them gaining jobs with the council.

Helping local people into work



The council works with our partners to support households affected by the benefit cap, which limits the total amount of money given in benefits, and affects many families and single parents. To date, we have assisted over 2,200 residents.

Since October 2016, our partner, Future Path, has helped 120 households improve their circumstances, finances and wellbeing. This includes identifying and

overcoming barriers to employment, setting job goals, helping them find work and supporting them once they are employed. So far, 61 households have found full time work.

To find out more, email emily@future-path.co.uk or call 0300 302 0077.

Empowering young people



We blend classroom learning with hands-on experience. Currently there are 18 apprentices and 11 'upskilling apprentices', aged 16 to 51.

All of our apprentices are paired with mentors who share their experience and knowledge.

They receive training in manual handling, first aid and money matters to prepare them for the world of work.

We plan to expand the scheme and invest in higher level qualifications.



The council funds Street Sports, a social inclusion project run by Brentford FC Community Trust, which provides free training sessions to young people on our estates.

Participants can choose from different sports to play. The aim is to encourage respect between age groups and improve relationships with police who take part, to create safer communities.

In November, young people from the project were flag bearers at the Brentford vs Burton Albion football match, while others attended the England friendly against Germany. Previous participants have even found work with the Trust.

For more information on sessions in your local area, please visit www.brentfordfcst.com/communities-engagement/street-sports.aspx



Syrian refugees thankful for Hounslow welcome

More than 250,000 people have been killed in Syria and more than five million Syrian people fled in one of the largest refugee movements in recent history. In 2015 the Prime Minister pledged to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees.

As a borough, Hounslow is committed to housing ten families, two this year, with a further eight due to arrive in 2018.

One refugee said: "I thank Hounslow Council and their volunteers for their efforts in making our new home a nice family one. Everybody was very generous in their time and efforts."

If you wish to help or support the project, please email refugeeswelcomehounslow@gmail.com

Tenant's forum

In November over 80 tenants came together at Montague Hall to elect 12 new reps to Hounslow Tenants Forum. It is important for tenants to work together with the Council to improve the service they receive. To get in touch to find out what's going on email: Hounslowtenantsforum@gmail.com.

BUILDING HOMES for local families

Hounslow Council pledged to provide a choice of high quality housing for people at all stages of their lives, and has been busy building to meet this pledge. Amid the national housing crisis, we have continued to secure the delivery of new housing developments. This includes 2,600 new affordable homes in collaboration with partners, but also newly built council homes.

By March 2018 we will have delivered 400 council homes in twenty schemes across the borough, at a total value of £75m. These homes have been let to local homeless families, including 77 for the elderly and 36 specifically built for people with disabilities.



Homes for the community

We have built 240 properties, 200 of which are family-sized, including 27 with four or more bedrooms. This is enough to house families including 650 children.

At New Heston Road are 60 new homes for social rent. These have spacious private and shared amenity space, and are conveniently located

adjacent to a public park and a newly refurbished leisure centre.

At Rectory Court, we built six houses that are being offered to households downsizing from larger properties. This will free up larger family-sized houses for homeless households in the borough.



Homes for the travelling community

Regeneration of the Hartland's Caravan Park in 2016 saw the refurbishment and enlargement of 20 existing pitches, plus the creation of 10 additional pitches. Refurbishment included work on all facilities and renovation was carried out to provide a community hub area for families to use and a centre where they can meet council officers to discuss issues. Young residents also have educational activities on site.

Homes for the over 60's

We rebuilt 77 new sheltered properties, including Hogarth Court, which has proved very popular with residents.

These have communal facilities, on-site laundry rooms, and assisted bathing facilities.

Nazira, a Hogarth Court resident, loves the new facilities "Hogarth Court is a lovely place to live, everyone here is so friendly and I have made many new friends. There is a real community spirit and I feel very lucky to live here."

The forty sheltered scheme units all have either a balcony or ground floor garden, set within extensive landscaped communal gardens, including a 100-year-old tree.

Our latest sheltered home is Rectory Court in Hanworth. The 37 one-bedroom flats replaced unpopular bedsits and are part of a wider improvement programme for our sheltered schemes.

The development has been designed to be safe and secure, energy efficient, and easily adaptable for residents. Partly funded by the GLA, it will meet the future needs of our ageing population for years to come.

Bill, a former resident says: "I am very impressed with the new Rectory Court. The design will suit my needs better in my later years. I am very pleased with the support given to me to assist me moving back to Rectory Court."



Gardening winner

Susan, Hogarth Court resident, who recently won Best Balcony in this year's gardening competition. She said: "I was very surprised when I won the gardening competition. I was very happy when I did... I love living at Hogarth Court, it has been life changing."

Adapted homes

All the council's developments are built to 'Lifetime Home' standards, meaning they are easily accessible and adaptable as residents lives change. We have also built 36 fully wheelchair accessible properties for tenants with a disability.

Homes for shared ownership

We work with partners to develop and provide affordable routes into home ownership.

Notting Hill Housing Group is redeveloping the Civic Centre site in Lampton Road to provide 920 homes, including 370 shared ownership units.

This development is the first scheme within the GLA's Housing Zone programme to achieve 50 percent affordable housing. The first 160 homes

will be available in spring 2018.

The council has also directly provided 84 shared ownership flats across 13 schemes.

Felippe, a new shared owner, said: "After 10 years of renting and with the help of the home ownership team, I was advised of several new schemes. The flexible approach to the share I can purchase has allowed me to buy a one bedroom flat that I can afford. I can't wait to move in for Christmas."



SAFER estates, BETTER places to live

500 abandoned vehicles dealt with
1,000 reduction in ASB crime reports

We want people to feel safe, to walk down clean streets and to know that their borough is leading the way to improve the quality of neighbourhood by:

- Maintaining clean streets
- Carrying out estate inspections
- Encouraging residents to keep their area clean
- Using our enforcement powers where people litter or don't clean up after their dogs
- Taking action on noisy neighbours and
- Increasing CCTV coverage

Standing firm on ASB

Since 2014, incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) have decreased thanks to the hard work of our Estate Enforcement team, Estate Police Officers and housing officers – working in partnership with residents.

The officers carry out regular estate patrols, investigate and manage anti-social behaviour and deal with abandoned vehicles, littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling.

Our estate police officers have also been working hard to stamp out bullying and harassment on our estates.

Any Hounslow resident can report ASB to the Metropolitan Police. As a council tenant, you can also report any incident directly to the customer services team on **020 8583 2000** or the estate enforcement hotline on **020 8583 4141**.

Working with communities to stamp out crime

Estate Police Officers (EPOs) are a dedicated team for Hounslow's council housing estates. They patrol estates at all times of day and night, to provide reassurance to residents, and tackle anti-social behaviour, drug misuse and crime.

The council promised to enhance safety and reduce residents' fear of crime across our communities. **Since the start of the scheme in 2013, we have seen a 50 per cent reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.**



Contact details for your EPO:

Feltham and Hanworth

PC Joe Kettle
joe.kettle@met.pnn.police.uk

Heston, Cranford and Osterley

PC Karl Thomas
karl.thomas2@met.pnn.police.uk

Hounslow and Isleworth

PC Joao Da Costa
joao.dacosta@met.pnn.police.uk

Chiswick and Brentford

PC George Mitchell
george.mitchell@met.pnn.police.uk



Tough action against fraudsters

Housing fraud takes homes away from those in genuine need. The council combats this, saving residents money and releasing homes for those who really need them.

Tenancy fraud can involve tenants letting their homes to other people, getting a tenancy by giving false information, and right to buy fraud.

At a time when councils, like residents - must watch every penny, it has never been more important to clamp down on fraudsters. The council pledged to take tough action on housing fraudsters and since 2014 we have reclaimed 189 properties.

In a recent case, a tenant who had been fraudulently claiming Housing Benefit for eight years was renting out her council home and owned three other properties. We took our property back and provided information to the Department for Work and Pensions which led to her successful prosecution for over £653,000 and a four and half year prison sentence.

If you suspect housing fraud, email tenancyfraud@hounslow.gov.uk or call the Tenancy Fraud hotline on **020 8583 3777**.



Congratulating 42 years of loyal service

Cllr Steve Curran, Leader of Hounslow Council met David Salisbury earlier this month to recognise David's remarkable achievement of 42 of loyal and unbroken service to the council.

David began as an apprentice in 1975, then worked his way through the council's building and maintenance services and Hounslow Homes, and is currently working in Lampton Facilities Maintenance 360.

On celebrating his 42 years, David said: "It's been a long journey. I have seen my children grow, go through university and collect their master's degrees."

Pictured above (left to right) are Cllr Keith Anderson, David Salisbury, Cllr Curran and Peter Matthew, Hounslow Council Director of Housing.

 London Borough of Hounslow

IS YOUR HOME TOO BIG?

Transfer to a smaller, manageable and more affordable home

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR DOWNSIZING

For further information please contact 020 8583 4452 or email downsizing@hounslow.gov.uk www.hounslow.gov.uk/downsizing