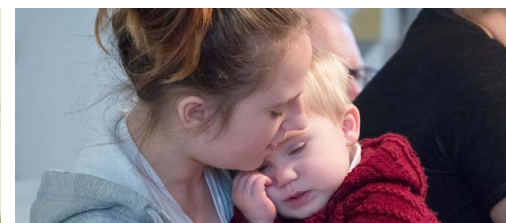


WestKent

Places to live. Space to grow.

Residents' Report 2018



Introduction



I hope you enjoy this annual report for our residents. 2017 was a difficult year for the social housing world following the terrible Grenfell Tower fire and our thoughts go out to everyone affected by it. Thankfully, West Kent does not have any similar tower blocks and we were able to focus on our usual activities as a provider of more than 7,000 homes.

Last year we let 509 homes and rent arrears came down again – to 1.7% of rent due. Thank you to the vast majority of you who paid promptly and to those who struggled but worked with our staff to pay back what's owed.

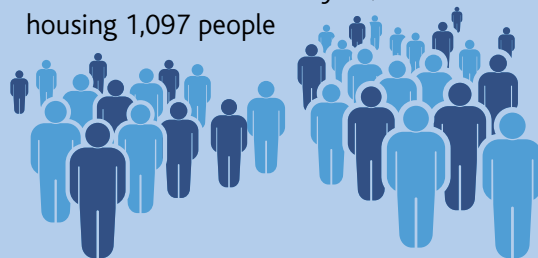
The board is committed to increasing our development programme of new homes in Kent and Medway. We recently secured an additional £54m finance on excellent terms to do this and expect to complete more than 200 new homes during 2018.

Letting our homes

It took us, on average, 25 days to let our homes in 2017.



We let 509 homes in the year, housing 1,097 people



On our **website** you will find a separate report on the impact of our wide reaching and excellent community activities, working with you and volunteers across the county. We encourage you to find out more from this report and our website on how you can join in.

Thank you to our tenant board members Joanne Frawley and Angela George for their continued contribution to the board and the many residents who are involved with helping us make West Kent an exceptional community housing provider.

Colin Wilby
Chair, Board of Management

Resident involvement

Communities strategy

At the end of 2017 we updated our resident involvement strategy and made changes to the way we consult based on feedback from residents at our consultations in 2016 and 2017.

In the updated strategy we propose a combination of undertaking formal consultation, digital consultation and attending community events. Above all we ensure that resident voices are heard at the highest level and at the earliest opportunity on key issues that affect residents.

More than a landlord

West Kent is about far more than just homes. Our overall aim is to make sure as many people as possible have 'somewhere to live, someone to love and something to do'. Case studies and more detail about our work with our communities can be found in our Social Impact report 2018.



3,768

RESIDENTS GAVE THEIR VIEWS
ON OUR SERVICES



Resident Involvement – how you have influenced what we do

We asked our Emerald and older tenants for their views on our *Age – a positive experience* strategy and incorporated their comments into the new strategy.

Residents shaped the look and feel of our website – we asked our residents how they would use our website and the barriers to them using it regularly. These comments were used in the final design of the website and setting up the digital inclusion section of our digital plan.

We asked our tenants about their understanding of our new service standards and what they would like to see in terms of our performance reporting. As a result of this we now present our performance data using infographics.

Resident involvement

Well-fest

Former Paralympics wheelchair rugby captain Steve Brown captivated audience in 2017 at a series of events organised by West Kent to promote mental, physical and financial wellbeing.

The events were held in Sevenoaks, Swanley and at a scheme for older people in Medway to mark Mental Health Awareness day on 10 October.

Visitors to Well-fest enjoyed a number of other free activities throughout the day that included sports advice from Kent Sport, back and shoulder massages, healthy food demonstrations and tastings and advice on how to cut your bills.



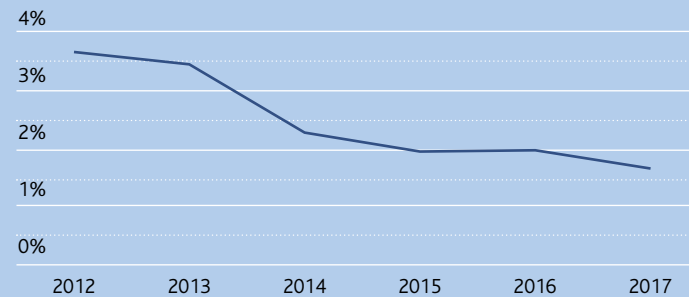
Community hubs

We partnered with Moat to run three community hubs in Gravesend, Gillingham and Sittingbourne. The Hubs are refurbished homes in the heart of local communities that support local residents to develop themselves and build strong and active communities.



Your home Your responsibility

We ensure rent is paid – this money enables us to provide a range of excellent services. The table here shows how we have reduced the percentage of rent owed to us by current tenants over the past five years, the percentage figure is the total outstanding at the end of each year.



Positive result against anti-social behaviour

West Kent encourages residents to sort their differences themselves, but if that fails we will help to gather evidence to enable appropriate legal action.

Residents from one of our estates in Edenbridge were subjected to repeated anti-social behaviour until legal proceedings resulted in the family responsible losing their tenancy.

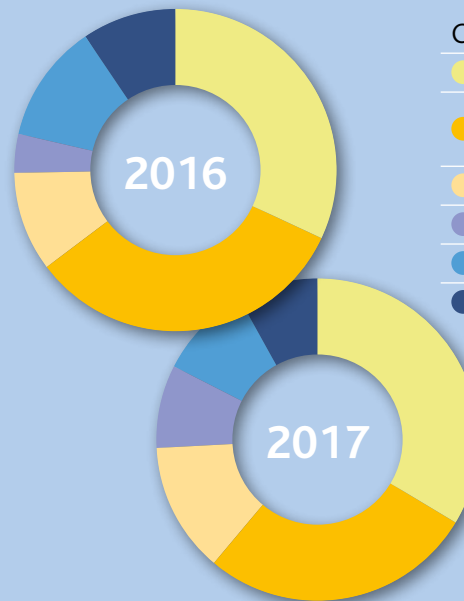
West Kent, the police and other local agencies carefully built up relationships between all the parties and enabled a good case to be put together.

This work led to five injunctions. Our evidence and the partnership working allowed the other landlord involved to secure a possession order.

Since the family causing all the problems has moved away, life has returned to normal for the residents and they can get on with their lives without fear.

Anti social behaviour reports

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total Reported Incidents	551	430	470	331	323	471



Category	2016	2017
Noise	73	113
Harassment / Threatening Behaviour / Intimidation	74	93
Drugs	23	44
Litter	9	28
Pets / Animal Nuisance	27	31
Domestic Abuse	21	27



Customer service – complaints

Number of complaints

We received the following numbers of complaints in 2017:



774

MAKING IT RIGHT

First stage where we try to resolve an issue as soon as we can

37 (we agreed with 19 of these)

COMPLAINT REVIEWS

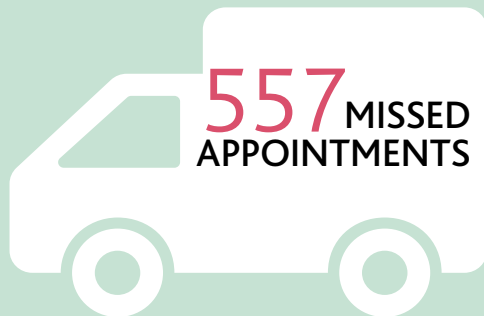
The next stage of our complaints process if a customer is not happy with our making it right response or outcome



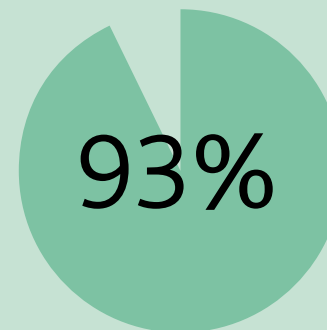
7 (we agreed with 3 of these)

COMPLAINT APPEALS

The final stage of our complaints process



This was 1.2% of repairs completed in 2017



of all our repairs were
COMPLETED ON TIME

Customer service – complaints

The majority of our complaints continue to be about our repairs service. The most common reasons for complaints are:

- time taken to complete repairs, particularly where follow-up work is needed
- charges for repairs caused by tenants' actions or where a tenant is not in for an appointment
- not keeping tenants informed about what is happening with their repair or where we have to change or move their repair appointment

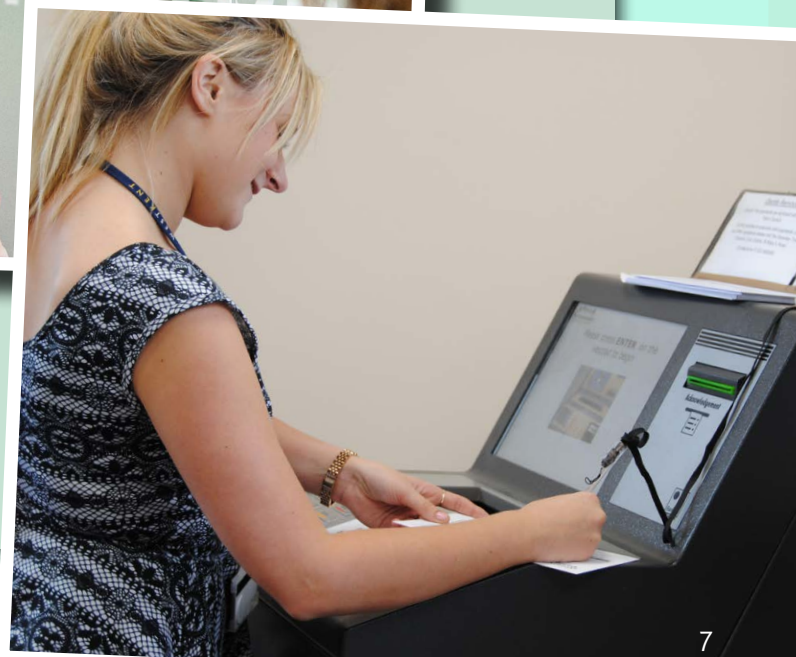
We appreciate that these issues are frustrating and we are working hard to try and improve our service

We will:

- change the way we manage repair appointments to be more proactive, keep you updated with what is happening and let you know in good time when we have to change an appointment and why
- ensure that where we have to charge you for a repair we are clear about the reason why and provide you with the evidence

Ombudsman Complaint

One complaint was dealt with by the Ombudsman in 2017. This was about how we handled a request for compensation following a leak. Our investigation found we were not responsible for the leak and did not have to pay compensation for items that had been damaged by the leaking water. We advised the tenant to claim on their own contents insurance. The Housing Ombudsman agreed with us and while they found no maladministration they gave a recommendation around improving staff knowledge and understanding of our repairs service. This is being addressed through targeted staff training.



Fit for the future

West Kent
Places to live. Space to grow.

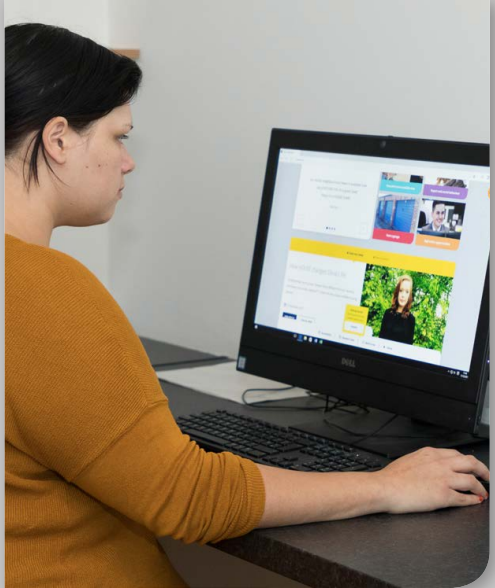
Find a home | Your home | Your community | About Us | Search

Leaflet rack | Work for us | My West Kent Login

West Kent aims to become a 'digital first' organisation, with digital technology at the heart of how we work and how we engage with our customers.

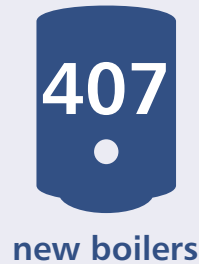
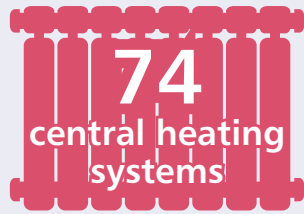
We will:

- focus on ways to help you to manage your tenancy online, at a time that is convenient to you
- increase what you can do through our website and our customer portal, My West Kent
- make it easier to book a repair online
- increase the types of repairs you can book
- enable you to schedule your appointments or re-schedule an existing appointment



Maintaining your home

During 2017 we fitted:



The average cost of
a new kitchen was
£5,938



The average cost of
a new bathroom was
£3,717



On average
we spent
£2,068
on repairs and
maintenance
in each home
in 2017

Fire risk assessments

We visit all our properties with communal areas at least every five years and carry out a thorough check to ensure the risk of fire starting and spreading is low. We check outside, for risks such as:

- fuel stored nearby
 - obstructed paths
- and inside to check:
- signage
 - areas that are cluttered or not adequately lit
 - doors to flats can resist fire for at least 30 minutes
 - loft spaces because fire can spread if they are not compartmentalised.

If you would like to see a copy of the fire risk assessment for your block please contact customerservices@wkha.org.uk and they will send it to you.

Supported housing

Cedar Court

An Edenbridge housing scheme for people with learning disabilities, previously damaged by a fire, has undergone major refurbishment.

The £1m refurbishment of Cedar Court was part funded by Homes England and Sevenoaks District Council, as well as by a significant investment from West Kent.

The new scheme features spacious individual flats with separate bedrooms, together with a shared furnished apartment with a conservatory and direct access to a communal garden. It provides five-year accommodation to give residents the care and support they need to build skills for independent living.



Older people

We refreshed our *Age – a positive experience* strategy, West Kent's strategy for older people. Since our first strategy in 2008 we have promoted the positive aspects of getting older. We have made significant progress and investment in our existing and new homes, as well as changing the way services are provided. West Kent's long-term aim through our Emerald homes and services is to be a 'leader in meeting the accommodation needs of older people in Kent'.

- We have changed the use of, or demolished, around 140 homes that were no longer suitable as homes for older people, and built or taken into management over 300.
- We became a dementia friendly organisation running and supporting many dementia focused projects, such as memory cafes and craft activities.

Chief Executive Frank Czarnowski highlighted the value of supported housing when Dartford MP Gareth Johnson visited Wellfield Community Hall in Hartley to mark *Starts at Home* day.

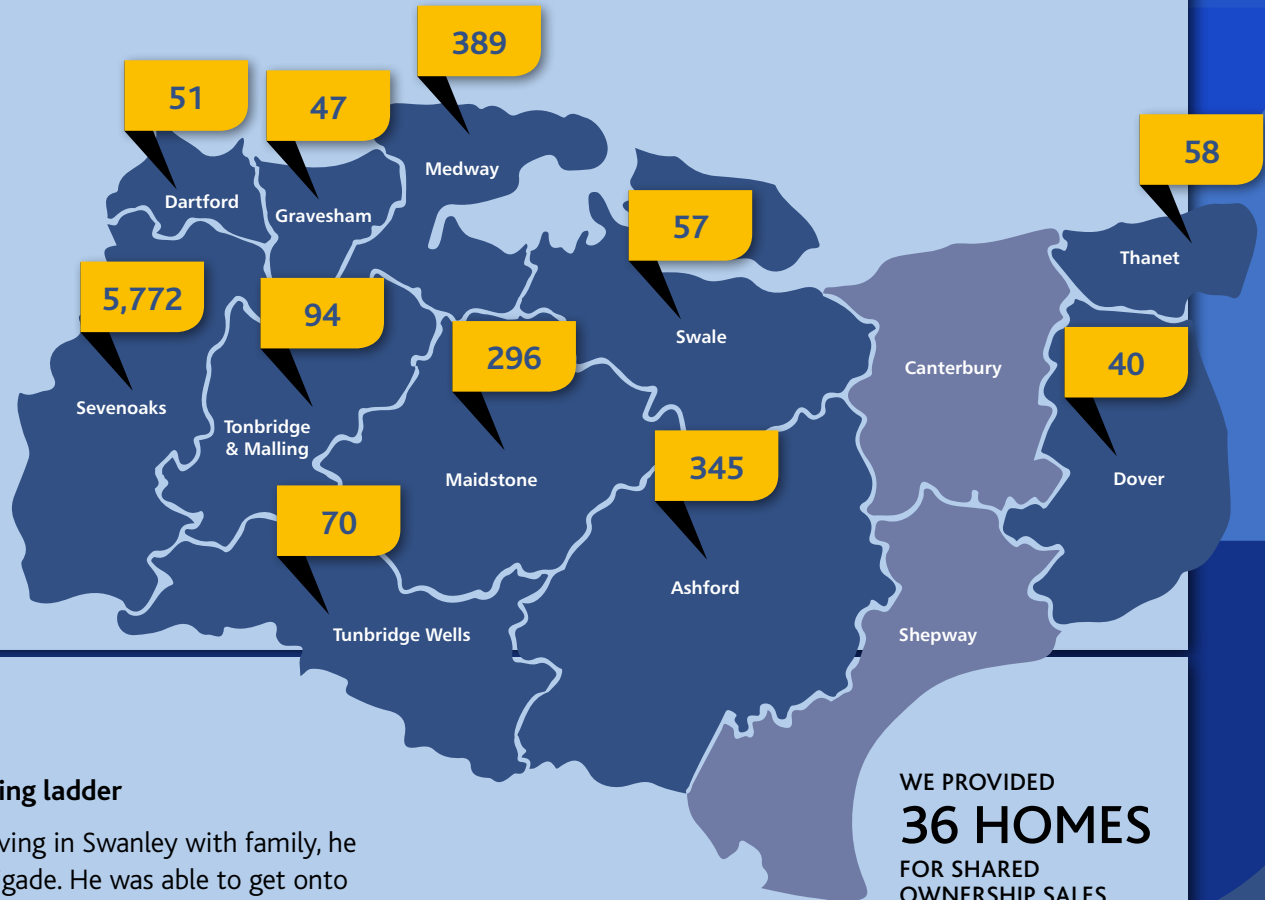


New homes

Current number of properties owned and managed – 2017

Rented	5,453
Rented – older people	1,109
Low cost home ownership	480
TOTAL HOMES	7,042
Homes managed by others	3
Leaseholders	174
TOTAL HOMES OWNED AND MANAGED	7,219
Homes under construction	275

Current properties owned and managed by local authority area



A helping hand up the housing ladder

Stuart, a father of one, was living in Swanley with family, he works for the London Fire Brigade. He was able to get onto the property ladder using our shared ownership scheme and purchased a 50% share of a two bedroom home in 2017.

WE PROVIDED
36 HOMES
FOR SHARED
OWNERSHIP SALES.

Where the money goes

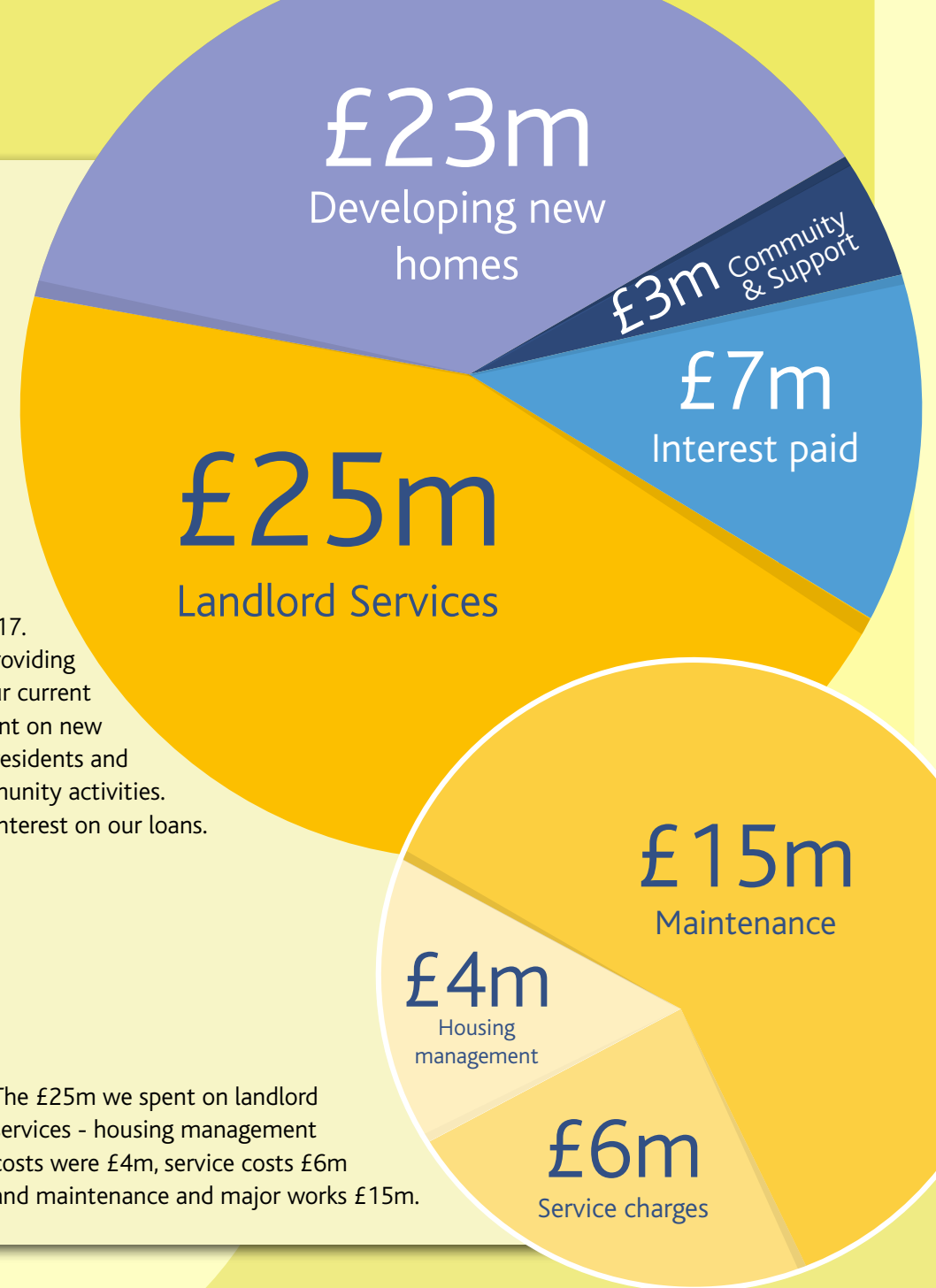
In 2017 we received £70m of income, £44m came from rents, service charges and other income, £19m from new loans and £7m was from sales.



For further details about West Kent's finances and accounts, see our full Annual Report and Financial statements for 2017 on our website at westkent.org

We spent £58m in 2017. £25m was spent on providing landlord services to our current residents, £23m is spent on new homes for our future residents and £3m is spent on community activities. We also have to pay interest on our loans.

The £25m we spent on landlord services - housing management costs were £4m, service costs £6m and maintenance and major works £15m.

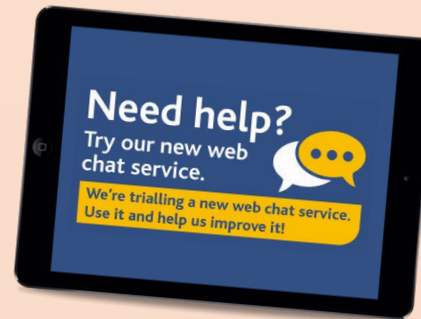


Coming up in 2018

We're building more homes for shared ownership sale than ever before in Canterbury, Hawkhurst, Tenterden, Sittingbourne and Swanley from just £35,000 for a 35% share; details will be on our website as they become available to buy.



We're introducing a web chat facility so you can chat live to one of our customer services advisers online.



We'll have lots of resident events including Well-fest, repairs roadshows and youth services festivals.

To stay up to date:



Watch the website



follow us on twitter
@west_kent



or like us on Facebook
WestKentHA

WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

We have a range of involvement opportunities that include being part of a consultation group or a tenant board member, if you are interested in getting involved email getinvolved@wkha.org.uk.

WestKent

Places to live. Space to grow.

