

NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS

The magazine for residents of
West Kent Housing Association



...a job, or need
new challenge?

...nt Works can help.

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Spring 2022

Chips and Chat

Free fish and chip event in the St Mary's ward of Swanley to find out what residents thought about their community. page 16

Cost of living increases

How will you pay your rent and other bills in the months to come? page 10

Housing Plus

We offer a range of services for residents to help with gardening and decorating. page 7

@West_Kent West Kent westkent.org



Places to live. Space to grow.

WELCOME TO SPRING NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS!

Spring has finally sprung, and it's such a beautiful time of year. Everything seems to brighten up a little bit and the first crocuses and daffodils are fully in bloom. We have lots to look forward to; the weather is warming up, we have some extra bank holidays to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and we're starting to live life a little more normally now with most Covid restrictions at an end.

One of the big themes in this edition is customer feedback. We've asked for lots of your thoughts and experiences over the last year, with Rant and Rave surveys and the STAR survey. Read about how we're using your feedback to make some big improvements on page 13.

Our resident scrutiny panel has also completed their first review of our training and employment team, and we're busy implementing their recommendations behind the scenes. Read more about the review and what else our resident involvement team has been up to on page 14.

Thank you to all the residents that helped us to shape the form and communications around our resident census, where we recently asked all our households to let us know if anything in their household had changed and how we can best contact you. We also asked for equality and diversity information so we could make sure all our services and policies are inclusive and fair. 70 per cent of our residents completed this, so thank you if you were one of them.

Finally, we know things won't be easy in the coming months for some of you. The cost of living is rising and tightening up those purse strings. It's a worrying time, but there are lots of ways West Kent can support you – we have a full list of support and grants available to you on page 10. Remember, you should always contact us if you're worried about anything – we're here to help.

Enjoy,
The editorial team



WHAT'S INSIDE

- Our community safety team has teamed up with Kent Police and Sevenoaks Council to tackle flytipping
- Housing plus: how we can help with those decorating and gardening projects
- STAR survey: read what we found out from our recent resident survey.

SEVENOAKS Reception

NOW OPEN

Our Sevenoaks reception is now open to the public, following Covid restrictions.

Our office is open for you to meet with our teams in pre-booked appointments. If you need to book an appointment please email help@wkha.org.uk or call 01732 749400.

Our teams are not in the office every day, so please don't call in without an appointment. Our reception team can put you in touch with customer services or take a message and arrange a callback.

Our Swanley office still remains closed to the public for the time being.



Easter AND BANK HOLIDAY CLOSURES

We'll be closed for the Easter and platinum jubilee bank holidays on:

- 3pm on Thursday 17 April to 8.45am on Tuesday 3 May
- 5.15pm on Wednesday 1 June to 8.45am on Monday 6 June.

If you have an emergency while we're closed, please contact our out of ours team by calling **0800 1691122**

OUR COMMUNITY SERVICES



We've been busy working within communities across Kent to create opportunities and projects that help our residents help themselves, their communities and the environment.

We run youth work, training and employment activities, tenancy sustainment schemes, community development and funding schemes, volunteer projects and of course our award-winning resident involvement activity.

Here's a taster of what we've been up to:

Youth work

Our youth team has been nominated for Sevenoaks District Council's Community and Voluntary "Making it Happen" Awards 2022 for their work during the pandemic.

While youth clubs and face to face activities had to stop, the team continued to support and work with young people, carrying out:

- Online cooking sessions, where we supplied the attendees with the ingredients and taught them how to cook.
- Online gaming and crafts
- Homework and study clubs
- Various well-being sessions.

Abacus Furniture Project

Abacus recycles unwanted, pre-used furniture and household items, preventing them from going into landfill and selling them on at low cost to families and people in need.

Our aim is to help everyone to furnish their homes without incurring debt. We also collect donated furniture and electrical items free of charge.

The money raised is reinvested back into the projects to cover costs and to fund other community projects.

Abacus is open to the general public and everyone is welcome. A 25% discount is available for all customers in receipt of Housing Benefit or the housing cost element of Universal Credit (we may ask for evidence).

All our soft furnishings comply with current fire regulations. We accept donations of electrical items but not cookers, washing machines or microwaves. All our electrical goods are safety tested before they leave our stores. We particularly appreciate donations of bikes, sofas and children's mid-sleeper beds.

Follow us on Facebook where we advertise some of our latest stock: [@AbacusFP](#)

Call us: **01732 743365**

Visit us:
Abacus House,
Greatness Lane,
Sevenoaks,
Kent,
TN14 5BQ

Our stores are open between 8.30am and 4pm, Monday to Friday and between 9am and 3pm on Saturdays.

Training and employment

We offer support to those looking to return to work and those wanting to get better paid work. The range of services covers CV writing, interview skills, self-employment support, internet job search and online applications. We also offer help with finding apprenticeships, careers advice and deliver a range of training courses. We work in partnership with local job centres, other training providers, housing associations and local councils.

Recently, the team held:

- Beauty training
- Barista training
- A CSCS (construction) course
- Working in schools training
- A job fair along with our contractor Brenwards
- Weekly job hubs in Sevenoaks and Swanley.

We're now also holding weekly job hubs in Edenbridge. To attend, contact the training and employment team by emailing

westkentworks@wkha.org.uk or calling 01732 749420.

For more information on what support we can give you, visit our website

www.westkent.org/training for upcoming training events

www.westkent.org/work for how we can support you into work

www.westkent.org/selfemploymenthelp for how we can help you set up and run your own business.



STOCK CONDITION SURVEYS



HousingPlus

We offer a range of services for residents to help with gardening and decorating.

These are paid for, but at a much lower rate than paying a private company. Residents meeting a set criteria can also take advantage of some free services (such as receiving certain benefits and not having any savings).

We can help with:

Decorating

- Decorating help - A free service for tenants who meet the set criteria. This service includes a maximum of three rooms decorated at one time. You'll only be eligible for this service once within a ten-year period.
- Help to decorate - Decoration packs are available to buy once a year. The packs available include accessories and up to three rooms worth of paint. You will receive a Johnstone's Decoration voucher and instructions on how to choose your paint and arrange delivery. You'll be required to pay for your paint directly with Johnstone's when choosing your paint colour and delivery options. For pack options, please visit www.westkent.org/decorating

Gardening

- Gardening help - A free service for tenants who meet the set criteria. This service includes grass cutting to the front, rear and side gardens eight times a year. If there are hedges in the gardens, these will be cut twice a year. The scheme does not include flower beds.

- Help to garden - A paid gardening service for grass and hedge cutting. It includes grass cutting to the front, side and rear gardens eight times a year and hedges twice a year. It does not include flower beds. We also offer garden clearance days.

Trees

- This service is available to tenants who wish to pay for trees to be maintained or removed. Please note removal is the only option for Conifer or Leylandii trees. For information on prices, please visit www.westkent.org/gardening

Fencing upgrades

- At the time when your fence requires replacement, you can choose to upgrade from the standard 4ft chain-link fence to 6ft wooden fencing. The replacement fence costs £25 per metre and is only available for the damaged sections of fencing.

We're looking for grounds maintenance watchers to monitor and report back on the quality of Bridglunds' (our grounds maintenance contractor) routine work. If you're interested, please email residentinvolvement@wkha.org.uk

A stock condition survey is a visual inspection of the inside and outside of your home, which we complete every five years.

A surveyor comes to your home and collects information on the condition of your home; looking at the age and condition of the key elements, such as the kitchen, bathroom and windows. We know from the STAR survey that window and door replacements are a priority, so we're particularly looking at these during the visit.

The surveyor will also identify any potential health and safety risks to you or visitors to your home.

Why are stock condition surveys so important?

Our number one priority is making sure your homes are safe for you and your family.

We also have to comply with something called 'The Decent Homes Standard'. This is a requirement for all social housing providers in the UK. Without the information collected during the stock condition survey, we wouldn't be able to meet the standard.

What happens to the information?

The information from the stock condition survey is used to plan repairs and future maintenance at your home.

If any health and safety risks are identified, we'll make an appointment with you to fix these as quickly as possible.

What are the most common health and safety risks identified?

The risks are identified using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as set out in the Decent Homes Standard. There are 29 categories in total, but the most common risks we find are:

- **Falls associated with stairs and steps**
These risks include stairs (both inside and outside) without a continuous handrail for you to hold onto; staircases without banisters or balustrades to prevent falling; or banisters or balustrades that encourage children to climb.

- **Electrical Hazards**
The most common electrical hazards we find are broken sockets or exposed wires.

- **Fire / Carbon Monoxide (CO2) hazards**
We sometimes find homes have missing or faulty smoke alarms; missing or faulty CO2 Detectors (only if your home has gas); and missing or faulty door closers (if you live in a flat).

Please make sure you check your smoke and CO2 alarms regularly and let us know straight away if they don't work.

- **Falls between levels**
Falls from a height are really dangerous. These risks include retaining walls in gardens without a barrier or fencing to stop you from falling; or missing or faulty window restrictors.

If you think you have any of these hazards in your home, don't wait until your stock condition survey. Email help@wkha.org.uk or call 01732 749400 to report them.

Please make sure you allow us to complete the survey at your home. It's for the health and safety of you and your household.

Flytippers beware!

We've issued two, £400 fines to non-West Kent residents living in Hollytree Avenue, Swanley as part of our joint campaign with Sevenoaks District Council.

The campaign involves identifying where we have the biggest issues with fly tipping, installing CCTV and arranging bulky waste days in these areas, and visiting the area with the local Police Community Safety Officers (PCSO) to identify and remove fly tipped items and litter. We have so far held events in Hartley and Lullingstone, Swanley.

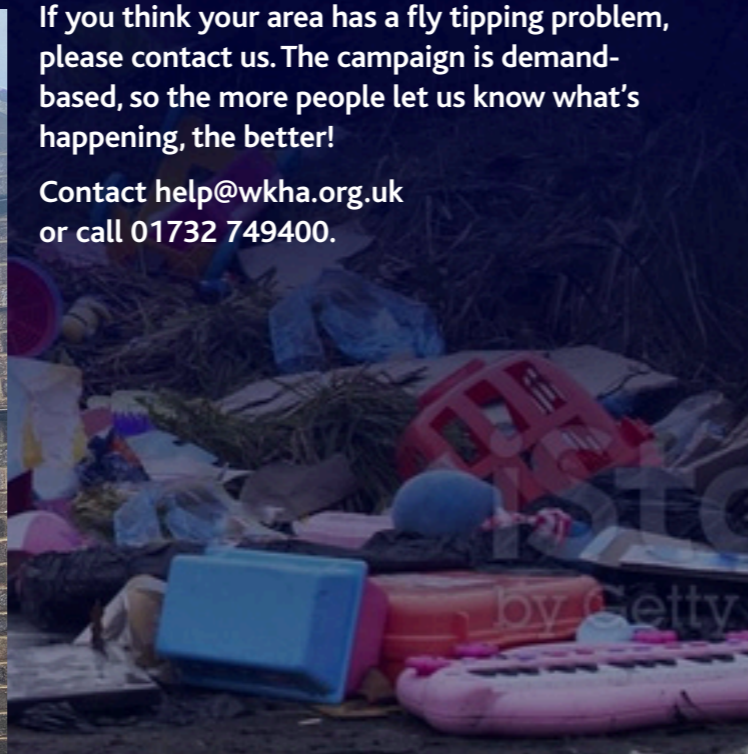
Sean Richards, Community Safety Manager at West Kent says: "We want people to be proud of their home and local community. We know that fly tipping and litter really does affect how people feel about their home and the neighbours around them. It's fantastic that in just two events, the appearance areas have already improved, and people are being deterred from dumping their rubbish."



PCSO Lee Williams added: "Fly tipping is a crime and totally unacceptable in our communities. We know that it has a significant environmental and health impact to the community but is also a financial burden to citizens and our public services. I am happy to see that there has been a visible improvement in Hartley, but there is still work to be done."

If you think your area has a fly tipping problem, please contact us. The campaign is demand-based, so the more people let us know what's happening, the better!

Contact help@wkha.org.uk or call 01732 749400.



Important Changes

Post office benefit payments



If you have a Post Office card account and receive benefits or a pension from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), you'll no longer be able to pay these into your account from November 2022.

If you receive payments from HMRC there will be no further (such as tax credits or child benefit), you won't be able to pay these into your Post Office card account after 5 April 2022.

All customers receiving payments should have been written to already. If you have not responded, DWP will write to you again before summer 2022. By that time, you need to have

chosen how you would like to receive your payments from DWP and made arrangements for this. You have two options:

1. Use an existing account you have with a bank, building society or credit union
2. Open an account with a bank, building society or credit union.

If you need help finding or setting up a new bank account, please contact Citizens Advice who can provide support and guidance. Call 0808 223 1133.

YOUR Rent & Money

After careful consideration, we have decided that we need to follow the government's guidance and increase our tenants' and shared owners' rents by 4.1 per cent.

This isn't a decision we have taken lightly, with several reasons behind this increase:

- **Rising costs and services:** the costs of delivering our services has increased, as has the cost of materials and fuel.
- **Maintaining and repairing homes:** we need to maintain the quality of our homes but are faced with rising costs to repair and maintain them, along with new regulations around energy efficiency. We have increased the amount we spend on planned maintenance including doors, windows, kitchens and bathrooms.
- **Keeping residents safe:** We are very aware of how important it is that we do everything we can to keep residents safe in their home. We have increased the amount we spend on building safety costs – especially fire safety and electrical checks.

- We appreciate this news comes at a time when costs are rising in many other areas of life such as energy costs, food and petrol, and this might be a worry for many of our residents.

We know this comes at a time where the cost of some of your other household bills are rising too. In this four-page pull out there's lots of information about how you can get the most out of your money and get help if you need it. We've also included lots of information on our website www.westkent.org/rentandmoney.

Please remember, contact us if you're worried. There are lots of ways we can help. Call 01732 749400 or email help@wkha.org.uk.



Cost of living increases

We understand that you might have a lot on your mind at the moment and one of those things may well be, how will you pay your rent and other bills in the months to come?

If you're struggling to pay your rent, please talk to us. There are lots of ways we can support you.

For independent advice, you can contact Citizens Advice or a free debt advice charity. You never need to pay for debt advice.

Working out what to pay first

Some bills and debts can cause serious problems if you don't deal with them. These are called 'priority bills'.

Priority bills include:

- Rent and rent arrears
- Loans
- Council Tax
- Phone and internet
- TV licence payments
- Court fines
- Overpaid tax credits
- Payments for goods bought on hire purchase or conditional sale
- Unpaid income tax, National Insurance or VAT
- Unpaid child maintenance

If you have more than one priority debt, or are struggling to pay your priority bills, Citizens Advice can help.

Call 0800 144 8848

or visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Maximising your income

- Whether you are in or out of work, use our 'better off' calculator to find out if you are missing out on any entitlement such as income-related benefits, tax credits, contribution-based benefits, Council Tax Reduction, Carer's Allowance, Universal Credit. Visit westkent.org/money or call 01732 749400 and ask to speak to our financial wellbeing team or email help@wkha.org.uk

Help with Council Tax

- You could be eligible for a Council Tax Reduction if you're on a low income or claim benefits. The amount you can receive depends on your income and circumstances and is shown as a discount on your Council Tax rather than being paid as a benefit. Your bill could be reduced by up to 100%.

Help with household essentials

- Household Support Fund: households in Kent and Medway can now access support to help them with essential household costs over the coming months as the country continues its recovery from coronavirus. Some small grants to meet daily needs such as food, clothing and utilities are available through councils in Kent. For further information, contact your local council.
- The Kent Support and Assistance Service (KSAS): KSAS may be able to provide supermarket or energy vouchers for up to seven days if you are having serious difficulties managing your income due to a crisis or an emergency. Help is for a short time and only if you have no other means of support. Help can be offered three times over a rolling 12-month period but will not be provided for the same reason more than

once. For more information, call 0300 333 5700, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

Help with energy costs

- Green Doctors: Green Doctors work in partnership with Kent County Council and can provide emergency fuel vouchers to those in need. You'll need to have a telephone consultation first. To make an appointment call 0800 233 5255.
- Grants to pay off energy debt: If you're in debt to your energy supplier, you might be able to get a grant to help pay it off. Check with your supplier to see if they offer any grants, if not British Gas Energy Trust offers grants to anyone (you don't have to be a British Gas customer.)

Help with food costs

- Food banks: Food banks are community organisations that can help if you can't afford the food you need. You'll need a referral, but some food banks offer an emergency bag of food before your referral takes place. We work closely with local food banks and can refer you if you

contact us. If you don't want to speak to us, Citizens Advice or your local council also might be able to tell you how to get a referral to a food bank.

- Free school meals: If your child is in year two or below they can get free school meals. If you receive certain benefits, your child's school can also get some additional money to support their learning if you register. If your child is under 19 and in full-time education, you might be able to get free school meals if you get any certain benefits. Contact your child's school to find out more.

We've got lots more information on our website, visit www.westkent.org/rentandmoney. If you don't have access to the internet and need some support, please contact us – we're here to help.

Call 01732 749400 or email help@wkha.org.uk



DON'T MAKE TOUGH TIMES TOUGHER



We understand that you have a lot on your mind at the moment and one of those things may well be, how will you pay your rent in the months to come?

It's important you do, so you don't put your home at risk. Getting behind with your rent makes you vulnerable to this in the future, and it's a worry no one needs to deal with at the moment.

However, you can help yourself by simply keeping in touch with us, and letting us know your circumstances. We can offer you some simple advice to help you work through any difficulties so you are in the best possible shape when things return to normal.

KEEP TALKING

If you are worried about anything or need some help or advice because there have been changes in your situation, stay in touch. We will listen and will always try to be flexible to help if things are a little tight at the moment.

PAY WHAT YOU CAN

If you are worried you may not be able to pay all of your rent, then get in touch. Paying something every month will mean that you are not letting things get completely on top of you. We'd much rather help you with a smaller amount in the future, than see you in serious debt. Don't forget if it's hard to make one payment this month it'll be even harder to pay two next month.

MAKE SURE YOU CLAIM

You may be able to get financial help, so speak to us and find out more. We have experts who can help make sure you know your entitlement to benefits and other help.

If you're claiming Universal Credit you may receive an advanced payment as a lump sum. Remember you will have to pay this back so think ahead before you spend it. Make sure you pay your rent as a priority over other

bills. If you don't there will be no other options in the future if you get in arrears as you have already had the money.

FEELING OVERWHELMED?

If you feel like you're in a crisis and aren't sure where to turn for help we can provide referrals for support. Just talk to us and we'll try to help.

LOST YOUR JOB? WE CAN HELP.

You're not alone if you've recently lost your job – we can help. We have a dedicated team ready to help you find and apply for a variety of employment opportunities. It might be different to what you normally do, but it will help you get into a steady job. We can help you write a CV, access training courses and be ready to apply when opportunities come up.

SHARED OWNERSHIP WORRIES?

If you're in a shared ownership home, it's important to speak to your mortgage lender as well as us. If you need any advice about paying your rent, we're happy to help, so please give us a call and avoid any unnecessary issues in the future.

Call us: 01732 749400

Email us: help@wkha.org.uk

STAR SURVEY

The main themes were:

- The way we deal with community safety and anti-social behaviour

61% of residents are dissatisfied with the way anti-social behaviour is dealt with.

- Repairs and maintenance

27% are dissatisfied and some residents said they have outstanding or forgotten repairs and they are unhappy with time it takes to get work done.

- Communications and contact

53% are dissatisfied that West Kent listens to their views and acts upon them

57% are dissatisfied with the opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. Residents want improved communication generally, but also to make contact and customer service better.

We recently sent a STAR survey to all our residents, asking you what you think about your home and the services we provide.

STAR is a nationally recognised survey which is used across the country by housing organisations so we can compare our results with other landlords.

1,711 households responded. The survey feedback gave us your clear priorities for areas where we need to improve our services. The feedback we receive will form a bigger improvement plan that we will share with you soon. In the meantime, we're calling back those who raised complaints or ongoing issues so we can resolve these as quickly as possible.

So far, we've made over **500** calls.

If you're interested in getting more involved, we'd love to hear from you.
Email residentinvolvement@wkha.org.uk
call 01732 749420.

What's been happening with resident involvement?



Resident engagement is all about using your voice to help us improve our services. As a resident you're the best person to tell us what we are doing well and what we can do better.

The resident scrutiny panel

In the last edition of Neighbourhood News, we said that we were planning a face-to-face meeting with the scrutiny panel, this happened just before Christmas, and it was a great afternoon where the panel got to meet lots of West Kent staff.

The panel have just started their next review of the repairs service. The responses from the STAR survey prompted the property and asset management director to ask the panel to investigate certain areas of the repairs service. The panel got the chance to look at results of the STAR survey, Rant & Rave surveys, and other data to help them make the decision on exactly what areas they wanted to look in to.

If you want to know more about our six resident scrutiny panel members you can see their profiles and read a little bit about each of

them on our website. There is also the option to suggest topics for the scrutiny panel to review.

If you're interested in hearing more or joining the panel, please register your interest by emailing residentinvolvement@wkha.org.uk

Update on the move or stay policy review

Last year we asked you to get involved with reviewing the move or stay policy. We had 14 residents reply to the questions we sent out.

From the recommendations that the residents made we updated the policy name to 'Housing Options' which is a more widely known name for this type of policy and should mean that it is easier to be found on our website. We added more criteria to enable the management of transfers to be managed more effectively.

We removed all the unnecessary text that made the policy too complex and added in some additional links to help the user go straight to the information that they are looking for within the policy and our website.

Why should you get involved?

As a West Kent resident and a recipient of our services, you have a unique perspective. Sharing your feedback with us is useful, because only you can tell us what's going well and what might need a bit of work.

Throughout 2022 we will be putting resident involvement opportunities on social media, in Neighbourhood News and on our website. However, because of data protection we aren't able to contact you directly about any topics we are looking at unless you give us permission. If you want to be kept updated on what we are doing please let us know so that we can add you to our mailing lists, we will only use this to email you about resident involvement.

Email – residentinvolvement@wkha.org.uk
Message us on Facebook - @WestKentHA
Call – 01732 749400

Together with Tenants

The Together with Tenants charter was proposed by the National Housing Foundation for social housing providers to adopt. The charter outlines six key commitments focused on strengthening the relationship between residents and landlords.

In October 2021 the scrutiny panel reviewed the charter to assess its suitability for West Kent's adoption before consulting with residents. In March the Board approved the adoption of Together with Tenants.

The key commitments are:

- 1. Relationships** - will treat all residents with respect in all of our interactions. Relationships will be based on openness, honesty and transparency.
- 2. Communication** - residents will receive clear, accessible and timely information from us on the issues that matter to them, including important information about their homes and local community, how we're working to address problems, how we are run, and information about performance on key issues.
- 3. Voice and influence** - we will seek and value the views of residents, and will use this information to inform decisions. Every individual resident will feel listened to on the issues that matter to them and can speak without fear.
- 4. Accountability** - Collectively, residents will work in partnership with us to independently scrutinise and hold us to account for the decisions that affect the quality of their homes and services.
- 5. Quality** - residents can expect their homes to be good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.
- 6. When things go wrong** - Residents will have simple and accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints and seeking redress. Residents will receive timely advice and support when things go wrong.

If you want to help make a difference, join the resident scrutiny panel! Email residentinvolvement@wkha.org.uk to find out more.





CHIPS AND CHAT!

This February half-term, we visited homes in the St Mary's ward of Swanley to find out what residents thought about their community and held a free fish and chip event to say thank you for completing the survey and to find out more about what they really care about.

We spoke to 250 individuals face to face, with a number of other completing the survey online during this time. We found that 75% of the people we spoke to really like living in the area and feel their neighbours and the community are one of the reasons why they feel so positive.

Inevitably there were a number of challenging issues that were raised, so our next steps are to create a community action plan to begin to tackle some of the key issues raised.

Anabel Palmer, Interim Communities Director said *"It was great to meet our residents in person and understand the challenges they are facing. The last two years have been really difficult for everyone and it's great to hear how families and communities supported each other during this time. We want build on this and ensure that our residents benefit from wider opportunities post-pandemic."*



Fire risk ASSESSMENTS

A Fire Risk Assessment is needed to all residential blocks of flats so we can ensure the risk of harm to our residents is reduced if a fire were to happen. Within the assessment we can identify all the potential hazards that might cause a fire or cause it to spread more easily, it then ensures measures are put in place to minimise that risk.

They are essential for your safety and your neighbours.



ETS Health and Safety Limited to do these assessments for us. When they are due to visit you will receive a letter from them and from us, informing you of the visit. During the assessment, ETS will inspect all the communal areas, they also need to inspect your flat entrance door and report on its fire rating, they check on the fire detection inside your flats, and may also need access to the loft space if that is within your flat rather than in the communal hallway.

It's so important to try and ensure you are in or if you can arrange for someone to be present for you, so that these essential checks can take place.

We are not able to move appointments as we need to give appointments for everyone in your block to be present, so please do your very best to be in to help ensure we keep your block safe.

If we identify that works are needed, we will instruct contractors to carry out these repairs, these can be in the communal areas, or may be in your home. Our contractors will be in contact

with you to make appointments if works are needed in your home. Works inside your homes can include the installation of overhead fire door closures, additional repairs to your doors to ensure they are fire compliant or to fit smoke and heat detection. These works must be carried out, West Kent are required by Law to ensure these works are undertaken to keep you and your fellow residents safe. Such works are important to ensure that another disaster such as the Grenfell Tower fire does not occur again. If you are worried about any works, please do contact us as we can discuss this with you and ensure we work with you to come up with a solution. For example, we have had some concerns about the door closures being fitted, we can work with you to ensure a suitable closure is fitted for your specific needs.

Don't forget, if you'd like to see the fire risk assessment you can request a copy from us at any time.

Just email help@wkha.org.uk or call 01732 749400.

Welcome, Maria Organ!

We're welcoming Maria Organ, who joined West Kent as Executive Director of Finance in March.

Maria has worked in a number of senior finance roles across housing and the wider public sector, most recently being Deputy Director of Finance for Raven Housing.

Maria says:

"I am passionate about the difference that can be made in a person's life by getting their housing right and also the positive ripple effect this has on communities. I am really delighted to be joining West Kent at such an exciting time."



HELPING YOU TO GET ONLINE

5% of the UK population (roughly 2.6 million people) are still completely digitally excluded, meaning they're not online at all.

Vodafone has given West Kent a limited number of free SIM cards to help us to get our residents online. Each SIM is loaded with 20GB of data, plus unlimited calls and texts to be used over six months.

While it's great to stay in touch with family and friends, being online can also help individuals learn new skills, access support services, feel more included in their communities, and seek new employment opportunities.

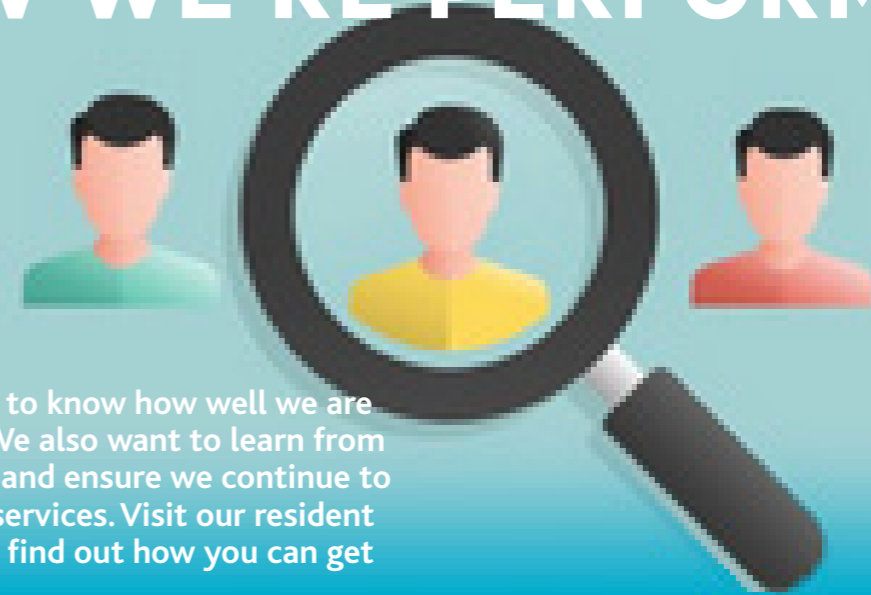
The cards are only available to West Kent residents over the age of 18, and

you need to be referred by a member of staff. If you don't have a device for the SIM, we can also refer you to Digital Kent's Covid-19 Hardware Access Scheme, which can supply individuals that meet their criteria with access to digital equipment.

If you're interested in getting online but don't know where to start and could use some training, let us know. We can refer you to our partner Compaid, who provide flexible 121 support sessions to get people online and doing what they need to do – so anything from online shopping or applying for jobs to talking to family and friends via zoom or facetime.

If you're interested, contact us on 01732 749420.

HOW WE'RE PERFORMING



We want you to know how well we are performing. We also want to learn from our mistakes and ensure we continue to improve our services. Visit our resident voice page to find out how you can get involved.

Here is our performance against our service standards for October to December 2021.



90.53%

Repairs that met our 'maintaining your home' promise



131

Number of complaints



19 (185 were built in 2021)

Number of new homes built this quarter

Complaints received in October, November and December were mainly about:

- Repairs and Defects
- Charges



Right First Time

89.9% of customer's contact with us was right first time. This means that we were able to answer the customer queries straight away without having to pass the question or task on to another member of staff.

We continuously monitor this figure to see if there are any trends or further training that can be given to frontline staff so that all customer queries can be resolved as quickly as possible.

GETTING IN TOUCH

CUSTOMER SERVICES

Contact our customer service advisors to report a repair, get advice about finding a home or for any other housing related questions.

Email: help@wkha.org.uk

Web: westkent.org

Phone: 01732 749400

REPORT A REPAIR

Web chat: www.westkent.org

Email: help@wkha.org.uk remember to give your name and address

Phone: 01732 749400 between 8am and 5pm
0800 169 1122 in emergencies
at other times

WANT TO MAKE A PAYMENT?

Phone: 01732 749442

Web: westkent.org/payrent

WORRIED ABOUT PAYING YOUR RENT?

Contact us as soon as possible for help
and advice

Phone: 01732 749400

Web: westkent.org/rentandmoney

Follow us on social media:

Facebook: WestKentHA

Twitter: @West_Kent

Instagram: westkenthousingassociation

