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Places to live. Space to grow.

May resident involvement: updates & opportunities!

Welcome to your May resident involvement newsletter!

The momentum behind resident involvement continues into Spring/ Summer of 2026, and we have recruited ten NEW involved residents across our projects!

The resident communications network is growing, with projects beginning in May and occurring monthly throughout the year.

Resident inspectors continue to report back about grounds maintenance and we shall be extending this to cleaning inspector opportunities in summer 2026 also.

**If you are interested in joining one of our
projects, get in touch to find out how you can
join us!**

Get involved!

In this newsletter. . . .

- **HIGHLIGHTS** from our Shaping Professionalism consultation feedback.
- **SIGN UP** to our communications co-production network.
- **READ** our scrutiny panel update

- **CELEBRATE** our award nomination for the resident inspectors project
- **READ** our customer portal survey results
- **CELEBRATE** our resident prize draw WINNERS!
- **SEE** consultation updates

Shaping professionalism at West Kent

We're listening to residents as we prepare for the new Competence and Conduct Standard, coming into effect in October 2026. This standard sets clear expectations for housing services to be professional, respectful, skilled and trustworthy.

In preparation for the new standard, we asked residents what good professionalism and accountability look like. Nearly 8,000 residents were invited to take part, with 352 responses and further discussion with residents at an online resident forum in April.



What residents told us was clear

When asked what professionalism means, residents focused more on behaviour than job titles with the theme of communication appearing in the majority of response. Being polite, kind and respectful, listening properly, treating homes with care, and explaining things clearly mattered most.

Encouragingly, many residents also told us where West Kent is doing well: 91% said staff are polite and respectful, 80% feel they are treated fairly, and 74% said staff listen to them and are honest and open in their communication (always or mostly).

Accountability and trust go hand in hand. Residents want staff to take ownership, follow issues through to the end, admit mistakes, and keep their word. Being passed between teams or left without updates creates frustration and damages confidence. Small things like missed appointments or unanswered queries can quickly erode trust. Reliable contractors who turn up on time and complete work properly were also key.

Residents would like:

- To know who their housing officer is
- More staff presence in communities
- To feel heard and acknowledged
- Better identification and support for vulnerable residents
- Clear, regular updates without chasing, especially when things go wrong.
- Have a consistent point of contact
- More consistency in service across teams
- Greater accountability—staff taking ownership, following issues through
- Improved workmanship and attention to detail

Many residents shared positive examples of excellent service where issues were resolved the first time, and staff took the time to explain and listen.

This feedback is already shaping our new professionalism policy and updated staff code of conduct, which West Kent's HR and learning and development teams are currently drafting. The draft will be shared with residents again before submitting to our board for approval and final publication in October 2026.

Thank you for sharing your views. They are helping us build better, more trusted services.



[Sign up](#)

Resident communications **network opportunity**

We have several exciting projects coming up over the next year, and we'd love to involve you in anything that matches your interests.

This creative project takes an inclusive approach and is designed for flexible membership, choice of projects, low-level commitment and convenient participation. There's absolutely no commitment at this stage; signing up simply means we'll send you relevant updates and opportunities to take part.

Here's a quick overview of what's coming up over the next six months:

- **Website upgrade and portal testing** - You'll test the new website homepage and updated page layouts, giving us feedback on your experience and accessibility and where we can make improvements to make the website better for residents. You'll also test our new

customer portal replacement, giving your feedback on how easy it is to access and use.

- **Campaigns and publications** - You'll help shape key campaigns on damp and mould, repairs, rent and cost of living, and give feedback on major publications like the annual report and complaints report. You'll be part of the tender process for Neighbourhood News, ensuring quality and value for money. You'll also share your thoughts on how it should look and feel in the future.

SIGN UP to join our network list and tell us which projects you want to hear more about

We ask all members to sign a code of conduct form and confidentiality agreement at sign up. The form takes around five minutes.

[Sign up](#)

💛 Scrutiny panel updates 💛



West Kent's 8 members attended a conference in May where they met with other Scrutiny Panels from across Kent to share ideas and learn about how other panels carry out scrutiny. This event was hosted by TPAS who delivered information about legislative changes to social housing.

The Scrutiny Panel are finalising their report and recommendations for their most recent review, "Service improvement for residents with physical disabilities." This will be presented to our Executive Board for review and shared with the relevant teams to influence service changes. Updates can be found on [West Kent's website](#).

If there is an area of the West Kent business/ services which you would like us to review, please let us know by answering a couple of quick questions.

Resident Scrutiny Suggestion

Grounds maintenance resident inspectors

This project has been running since 2023 and we now have 64 resident inspectors across Kent. They carry out monthly inspections of the grounds maintenance on their estates which helps us to identify issues quickly and take action to have them resolved. Resident inspectors receive monthly newsletters which share service updates, feedback and celebrates positive outcomes.

Award nomination

The project has been a huge success for improving the service residents receive and we have seen a steady increase in customer satisfaction. The Grounds Maintenance Resident Inspector project has been nominated for the Kent Housing Group Award for partnership working.

Margaret, tells us about her experience as a resident inspector



Customer portal survey

In April, 1000 residents were surveyed ahead of our procurement for a new Customer Portal provider. We received 62 responses to the survey and 4 residents came forward to attend demonstrations from potential providers.

Residents want a reliable, simple, mobile-friendly portal that allows them to manage their tenancy end to end in one place. Most residents access services via their mobile phone and expect a modern, app-style experience.

Top priority features are:

- Viewing rent balances and payment history
- Reporting and tracking repairs
- Booking and changing appointments
- Uploading evidence
- Clear progress updates showing “*what’s happening now*” and “*what happens next*”

Residents want the portal to feel like banking and retail apps, with:

- Clear dashboards
- Proactive notifications
- Live chat with easy escalation to a human
- Flexible appointment options
- Transparency around communal issues and routine maintenance
- Ease of use, speed, accessibility, and security are critical.

Experience of the previous portal was mixed but largely frustrating with issues undermining trust in the system. While residents valued being able to view rent and report repairs, the portal was criticised for being:

- Unreliable and buggy
- Difficult to log into
- Frequently offline for long periods

The single biggest improvement residents want is a portal that works consistently, with accurate information and visible progress. Residents want to avoid having to chase updates or phone for basic information. If the portal is reliable, easy to navigate, available 24/7 and communicates clearly, residents said it would become their first point of contact.

The Customer Portal project team and some of our involved residents have attended demonstrations from potential providers and scored them for their performance and service offering. The Customer Portal project team are currently deciding on which provider can offer the best fit for West Kent and their residents.

West Kent shall be re-introducing the new portal's functions in stages, in order of resident priority of importance. A phased approach will be taken to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the portal service, inline with resident's priority for improvement.

NEXT STEPS:

(Subject to change and dependent on timelines for contractual and legal agreements to be reached)

- Customer portal project team draft report to the Executive Team for sign off in June.
- Before “going live”, resident discussion around the look, feel and functionality in July.
- Residents testing of the portals functions which will likely take place in August.

To take part in
our portal testing then please email to express
your interest:
residentinvolvement@wkha.org.uk

Consultation updates

New policies and policy reviews are shared on our website for all residents to comment and influence the way we deliver services. They are also shared directly with residents who the changes may have greater impact upon.

Communications and marketing strategy-

Following our initial survey and resident review of the draft, the strategy is being considered by our executive board for approval.

KEHFA (Kent Excellent Homes For All)-

We had the best engagement response yet, with 170 survey responses and 7 lucky winners of Love2Shop vouchers.

Shaping Professionalism consultation-

Look out for updates in our next newsletter.

**Our 5 WINNERS of £25 Love2Shop vouchers
came from:**

Dartford, Ashford, Swanley, Otford and Rochester

**To view our current consultation and
comment, please follow the link below.**

Current Consultations

**See the full range of resident involvement
opportunities available and to register
your interest:**

Get involved!

Forward

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