

October 2022

# TENANT NEWS

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...and lots more!



# Cuckooing

What is cuckooing? Would you know how to spot the signs that someone is being cuckooed?

Cuckooing takes its name from cuckoo birds, who will take over another bird's nest to use as their own. The most common form of cuckooing is where criminal gangs, usually organised drug gangs, will target a vulnerable person and take over their home to either store, use or sell drugs. They will also isolate the victim and stop them seeing any friends or family.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR?

- an increase in people visiting the property both day and night
- increased signs of drug use and paraphernalia
- an increase in people congregating outside
- someone becoming distant and obstructive around their living situation
- a decline in family, friends and healthcare professionals visiting the address

If you've noticed any of these signs and think someone is being cuckooed, report it to Kent Police by **calling 101** or online at **kent.police.uk/report**.

Similarly, you can report any of the above to our tenancy enforcement team online at **canterbury.gov.uk/contact** or by phone on **01227 862 142**.

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# Disability Forum

We are looking to introduce a disability forum to help us listen, learn and consult with tenants and leaseholders with disabilities and their carers.

We hope this will create an opportunity for disabled residents, their carers and disability organisations in the district to come together to:

- consult directly with the council on the services and facilities which affect people with disabilities
- provide a collective and stronger voice on all issues of disability to achieve positive outcomes for the community

If you are interested in the above, please complete the form below, tear it out and post it back to us in the freepost envelope enclosed with this newsletter.

Alternatively, you can register your interest in a Disability Forum by emailing us at **getinvolved@canterbury.gov.uk**.

**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Celebrating this year's garden competition winners



Thank you to the Resident Engagement Panel for arranging another wonderful garden competition. It's great to see so many tenants enter the competition in all categories. We loved visiting your gardens!



The awards ceremony took place on 16 August at Tower House in Westgate Gardens, Canterbury. As a thank you to Tower House and its staff for hosting our event, we presented them with a plant that had kindly been donated by one of our sponsors.



The ceremony was attended by the prize winners, Resident Engagement Panel members, the Lord Mayor Cllr Anne Dekker and her consort Ken Dekker, along with a number of Canterbury City Council councillors and staff plus representatives from our contractors Mears, Town and Country Cleaners and the council's waste and grounds maintenance contractor Canenco.

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**Huge congratulations to:**

**Front garden:**

- 1. Winner:** Martin Ashdown from Chartham
- 5. Highly commended:** Doreen Terrell from Whitstable

**Back garden:**

- 2. Winner:** Dawn Brazier from Canterbury
- 6. Highly commended:** Jenny Lawson from Herne Bay

**Communal gardens:**

- 3. Winner:** Telford Court, Herne Bay
- 7. Highly commended:** Shalmsford Court, Chartham

**Containers, pots and baskets:**

- 4. Winner:** Lydia Luckhurst from Chartham
- 8. Highly commended:** Michael Thompson from Barham

.....  
 All winners received **£70** in gift vouchers and a plant. Everyone who was highly commended received **£50** in gift vouchers and a plant.



A very big thank you to our sponsors for making these prizes possible: Blue Diamond Garden Centre, Canterbury Environment Company (Canenco), Gas Call, Grovewell Garden Centre (Canterbury), Meadow Grange Nursery, Mears and Town and Country Cleaners.

# Meet your Neighbourhood Management Team

## The team is responsible for:

- renting out empty homes
- visiting new tenants to make sure they are settling in
- dealing with general tenancy issues
- dealing with mutual exchanges
- dealing with residents' enquiries and complaints
- offering advice and support to our more vulnerable tenants
- regularly visiting and checking our blocks of flats and estates
- working closely with contractors to keep these clean and tidy
- arranging for items left in communal areas to be removed



The team is managed by Tracey Fossey, Neighbourhood Management Team Leader.

Officers within the team are responsible for distinct geographical areas of the district, often called 'patches' and will offer advice, support and help to the tenants who live in the areas they manage.

### Your Neighbourhood Management Officers and the areas they look after are:

#### Adam Bateman

##### Canterbury:

Poets  
Vauxhall

##### Rural:

Hersden  
Sturry

#### Jodie Bills

##### Canterbury:

Brymore  
City  
Military Road  
Parham  
Stour Promenade

##### Rural:

Lower Hardres

#### Alison Chapman

##### Canterbury:

North Holmes  
Querns  
Spring Lane

##### Rural:

Bekesbourne  
Ickham  
Littlebourne  
Wickhambreaux

#### Sophie Coates

##### Canterbury:

Hales Place  
**Rural:**  
Blean  
Rough Common  
Tyler Hill

#### Charlotte Eastman

##### Herne Bay:

Beltinge  
Broomfield  
Central Herne Bay  
Greenhill  
Hampton

##### Rural:

Chislet  
Herne  
Hoath  
Upstreet

#### Sue Hawkins

##### Canterbury:

Martyrs Field  
Thanington  
Wincheap  
**Rural:**  
Chartham  
Petham  
Waltham

#### Lisa Whitehead

##### Whitstable:

Grimshill  
Harbour  
Seasalter  
South Whitstable  
Swalecliffe

#### Kalindi Young

##### Canterbury:

London Road  
St Dunstons  
Westgate  
Whitehall

##### Rural:

Adisham  
Barham  
Bridge

Please note the neighbourhood management team only looks after general needs homes. If you live in an independent living (sheltered or sheltered plus) scheme, you should direct any tenancy-related queries to your Independent Living Manager.

# Anti-social behaviour in flats

A flat won't ever be as private as a house as you may not have your own outside space or garden and you may need to share an entrance and communal areas with your neighbours. Due to the design of some properties, you may have thinner party walls which means you will hear your neighbour's everyday living noises and they will hear yours. Our tenancy enforcement team deals with anti-social behaviour and they've put together the following hints and tips:

## Helpful hints to help you adapt to living in a flat

- please only do DIY between 8am and 8pm
- understand that children will make noises when they play
- washing machines can be noisy if used late at night so be mindful of your neighbours
- do not leave bikes in the communal area, this can block your fire escape route
- open your windows if you are drying washing otherwise this could cause condensation which will result in damp and mould
- if your children play in the communal area, put their toys away at night. Remember you cannot have swings, trampolines, slides or paddling pools for safety reasons
- you must ask for permission for a pet. If you have permission for a dog, it must be exercised away from the property and should not be left to bark or foul in the communal grounds. We can request you rehome your pet if they become a nuisance to others
- be respectful when using your bin areas. Ensure all rubbish is disposed of correctly so this is not unsightly and won't cause issues with vermin
- be safe. Make sure you close the communal doors at all times and do not prop them open
- televisions and music systems can be heard in other properties, so try to position them away from the adjoining flat wall if at all possible. Be noise aware and wear headphones if you want to listen to loud music
- you must not smoke in communal areas
- you are responsible for your visitors - tell your friends to leave quietly, especially at night



## What we consider everyday living noises, but not limited to:

- banging cupboards or internal doors
- children or babies crying
- children playing indoors and outdoors
- DIY between 8am and 8pm
- dropping items or footsteps on the floor
- flushing the toilet
- general talking
- moving furniture
- kitchen smells
- noise from a lift or medical equipment
- occasional parties (unless the noise is excessive)
- people looking out of the window
- people staring at you
- playing music or musical instrument at a reasonable level
- sexual noises or snoring
- shift workers leaving home
- shouting/arguing (unless this is excessive)
- washing machine or appliances at a reasonable hour

If you need to report anti-social behaviour, you can do this online at [canterbury.gov.uk/contact](https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/contact) or by calling us on **01227 862 142**.

# KEEPING YOU SAFE IN YOUR HOMES

When the council took back direct control of its housing stock from East Kent Housing in October 2020, we needed to improve how we make sure your homes follow all of the rules around safety.

The council has since been working under a Regulatory Notice from the Regulator for Social Housing.

This notice is still in place but we have made significant improvements since it was issued and discussions are now taking place about removing us from the notice. As soon as this happens, we'll let you know.

## Tap and shower repairs

We encourage you to report when this type of repair is needed as soon as possible so they can be dealt with quickly. Taps and showers must be run and toilets flushed daily to avoid a build-up of stagnant water which can result in contamination of your water supply.

Although it might seem wasteful to do this, it's really important for your health and safety.

If you need to report a repair to a water outlet, please call Mears on freephone **0800 313 4740**.

## Safety issue with some gas grills

The government has issued a safety notice for three types of gas cookers: Belling, Stoves and New World Gas Range Cookers with Gas Grill (110, 100 and 90 models). The grills on these cookers should not be used with the door closed as this can cause a big increase in carbon monoxide.

We have written to all residents who we know have one of these models of cooker. If you do have one, please make sure you only use your grill with the door fully open.



## Tell us about your home

We are always looking to make sure you are safe in your home. This includes how you are able to move around. Please inform us if you still have any of the following:

- lifting or hoisting equipment that is owned by you installed in your home
- lifting or hoisting equipment that is owned and serviced by us in your home
- lifting or hoisting equipment that is owned and serviced by others in your home
- a Lifeline personal security system

If any of the above apply to you or others in your household then please get in touch with any further information you can provide on the equipment.

You can do this by completing our online form at [canterbury.gov.uk/yourhome](https://canterbury.gov.uk/yourhome) or by calling us on **01227 862 059**.

**PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH US BY  
WEDNESDAY 30 NOVEMBER.**

## Fire safety visits

Making sure your home is a safe place is important for everyone, especially if you have long-term health conditions or dementia, are a young family, are an older person or a smoker.

One way to help make your home a safer space is to request a free home fire safety visit from one of the Kent Fire and Rescue Service's firefighters or Safe and Well officers. Fire safety visits are available to anyone who:

- is aged 70 or over
- is living with dementia
- has a long-term health condition
- has young children or is pregnant
- is a smoker

If you would like to request a home fire safety visit, please submit a referral form via [kent.fire-uk.org/home-fire-safety-visits](https://kent.fire-uk.org/home-fire-safety-visits) or call **0800 923 7000** to speak to an advisor.

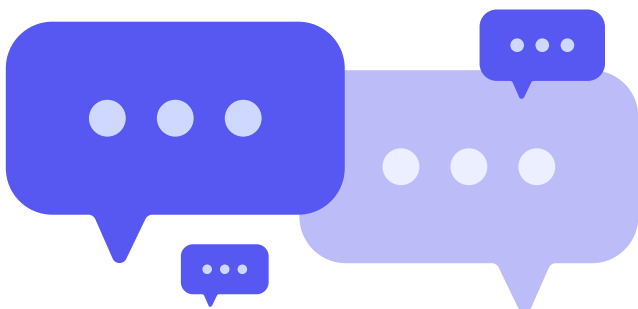


## My Community Voice

My Community Voice is an online messaging service that helps Kent and Medway residents, businesses, and community groups to keep in touch with their local policing teams.

The service sends updates about your area directly from the police officers themselves.

My Community Voice is more than just a messaging service; it allows you to reply to the alerts the police send you, share information and tell them about the issues affecting you. Sign up to receive alerts at [mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk](https://mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk).



## Scam alert

Scammers and rogue traders take every opportunity they can to get hold of your money so you need to be alert to the dangers. We are aware of a scam currently doing the rounds where people are getting a telephone call about the 'claim you have made about the poor condition of your property'. The telephone number shows as **0161 520 2592** and the caller pretends to be a Housing Officer.

In reports we have had, if you tell them you own your own property or question them in depth, they then put the phone down. The scam involves asking for bank account details under the guise that they will be paying the claim. We will never ask you for your bank details over the telephone in relation to a disrepair claim.

If you are ever in any doubt as to whether a call received from someone claiming to work for the council is genuine, put the phone down and call us immediately on **01227 862 142**.

If you have fallen victim to a scam please contact us and the police straight away, and report it to Action Fraud at [actionfraud.police.uk](https://actionfraud.police.uk) or on **0300 123 2040**.

## GET INVOLVED

### Council offices opening times

As you know, our council offices on Military Road are now open on an appointment-only basis. As of September, these opening times have now changed to:

Monday: 10am to 2pm  
Tuesday: 10am to 2pm  
Thursday: 10am to 2pm

### Reporting repairs and maintenance

We work with different types of contractors to do jobs on our behalf:

#### Household repairs

If you have a general repair within your flat, such as a broken window or door, please contact Mears by calling freephone **0800 313 4740**.

#### Gas, hot water or heating repairs

If you have a problem with your heating or plumbing:

- If your home has its own boiler, please contact Gas Call by calling freephone **0800 012 9958**
- If you live in a block with a communal boiler and the problem is with the boiler, please call Thermoserv on **0208 681 7330** and press option 1
- If you live in a block with a communal boiler and the problem is inside your home, such as a faulty radiator, please call Gas Call on freephone **0800 012 9958**

#### Grounds maintenance

If you need to report any issues with grass cutting or general grounds maintenance please contact Canenco on **01227 947 860**.

WHAT  
DO YOU  
THINK?

### Have your say on council consultations

All the consultations we run are available at [canterbury.gov.uk/consultations](http://canterbury.gov.uk/consultations) while they are active. You can also sign up for email notifications at [news.canterbury.gov.uk](http://news.canterbury.gov.uk).

24 HOURS  
A DAY  
365 DAYS  
A YEAR



## Peace of mind at home...

Staying independent for longer with your 24 hour personal alarm.

If you, or someone you care for, lives alone, do you worry about what would happen in an emergency? Lifeline is a 24-hour service providing an instant response at the touch of a button.

Our service gives you a personal security system at your home. This enables you to live or work independently and safely.

There's different Lifeline equipment depending on your needs. Installation is free and the service starts from just £3.27 per week. It can help support:

- people at risk of falling
- vulnerable or anxious people living alone
- people with medical conditions or a disability
- people being discharged from hospital
- those caring for others

To find out more or to book a free demonstration, call **01227 862 540** or visit [canterbury.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/lifeline](http://canterbury.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/lifeline).