

Housing News

Spring 2025

The magazine for Ealing Council tenants

Homes



Neighbourhoods 

Opportunities



Making changes

We're making improvements to our services, including new repairs contractors and a new complaints process.

Find out more on page 6



Ealing

www.ealing.gov.uk

Improving your services



Councillor Louise Brett

Cabinet member for safe and genuinely affordable homes

You might have seen reports in the news about the increasing number of people who are homeless and have no choice but to approach their council for help. This is particularly the case in London, where councils are collectively spending £4m a day preventing homelessness.

Ealing is no exception to this surge in requests for support with housing.

Although we have years of prudent financial management behind us, and we are not at immediate threat in the way that many other councils are, we are facing real budget pressure because of the cost of providing temporary accommodation. We are now providing emergency housing for an average of around 3,000 households each month – and that does not come cheap.

That has happened because our borough is at the sharpest end of the national affordable housing crisis. This is now one of the least affordable places for housing in the country. Ealing has beautiful open spaces, outstanding schools, and fantastic transport links, and

lots of people want to live here. Our population went up 15% between 2013 and 2023.

Private rents here rose almost 15% last year alone, and average incomes have not risen to match them. Although the rent you pay us is on average just a quarter of what you would pay for an equivalent privately rented home in the borough, there simply aren't enough council homes for everyone who needs one. In response, we are running one of the biggest council homebuilding programmes in the country. Find out more about some of the new homes being built on page 7.

We know from our tenant satisfaction surveys that we can do better with repairs and complaints. On page 6 you can read about changes we've made to improve those services. We will continue to strive to make those services the best they can be, by listening to what you tell us.

Finally, last October I was delighted to attend the opening of our new office at the Havelock estate in Southall. You can find out more about that on page 12.



Councillor Brett 'breaking ground' on a new phase of development at Acton Gardens in December

Let us in for vital safety checks



There are some essential safety checks we can only do from inside your homes - so you must ensure we can gain access when we need to.

In recent years, we have had no choice but to take several tenants to court so we could get in to check that their homes were safe.

As your landlord we have a legal responsibility to ensure that any gas appliances (like boilers and gas fires) and electric wiring and appliances we have fitted in your home are safe.

To meet this requirement, we need to test and inspect your gas fittings every year and your electrics every five years, and we also need to update the fire risk assessment for your building regularly too. We also need to get into your homes for other reasons - for example, to understand if repairs are needed, to do follow up repairs after your safety inspections, or to service lifts.

The vast majority of tenants listen to our requests to perform these simple checks and arrange convenient times for us to visit. But a tiny minority failed to respond to our repeated requests, which resulted in us taking them to

court. Some of those tenants now have County Court Judgements against them and are liable for our legal fees.

Gas checks are the most frequent reason we would need to enter your home. When you receive a letter or a phone call from our contractor T Brown, telling you that your inspection is due, get in touch to make an appointment as soon as possible. The longer you leave it, the more you risk exposing your family to carbon monoxide poisoning or the risk of a fire or explosion.

Allowing us access to your home is a condition of your tenancy agreement. If we are unable to complete our safety inspections, we will seek access via the courts.

If you don't know when your last gas safety check was, or you think your next check is overdue, please contact our contractor T Brown Group at servicing@tbrown.com or **020 8786 1240**.

Join our housing board



Are you interested in helping improve our services?

We have an exciting opportunity to join our housing board as a tenant representative, where you could make a real difference to how our services function.

If you are passionate about housing and want to make a difference, this could be the role for you. You need to be enthusiastic, a team player, and have time to commit – and most of all, you must have insights to share.

The purpose of the role is not to focus on individual issues or challenges, but instead to focus on the bigger picture of the council's performance as a landlord. For



example, board members would not be scrutinising outstanding repairs relating to a specific property or block. Instead, they would analyse the overall performance of the repairs service and associated improvement plans.

You will need to attend 4 meetings a year (2 hours each) and do some reading in advance of each meeting. Board meetings are usually held at our head office at Perceval House, Ealing during the working day.

In exchange for your time, we can offer you expenses, training and development, and the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process in your community.

There will be an informal face to face session in March to find out more, speak to people already on the board and learn what we are looking for before you apply. We are committed to equality of opportunity and will welcome applications from suitably skilled people from all sectors of the community.

To find out more, please contact our resident engagement manager Rajiv Bhattacharjee on **020 8825 8240** or residentinvolvement@ealing.gov.uk.



From April, your rent will increase by 2.7%.



Despite this, it is still one of the cheapest social landlord rents in London. Our rent will be £121 a week on average for a two-bed home. That means it is comparatively very affordable for the capital. The weekly rent you pay us will increase by an average of £3.21.

We know that many local families are continuing to feel the effects of the cost-of-living crisis, and for lots of people, every penny counts. Unfortunately, like most other social landlords, we have no choice but to add a small increase to your rent. Years of reductions in funding under the previous government and higher demands placed on the council by regulators have put severe pressure on all councils' budgets, and Ealing is no exception.

The increase will help us to invest millions in our existing housing stock, to build more homes, and to continue improving the quality of our services.

It is in-line with the national approach set by the government. Even after the increase, our rents are still well below those charged by other social landlords in the borough and on average at least 75% less than equivalent private sector rents.

Service charges

We have introduced caps for service charges. For sheltered tenants, the cap is £22.52 per week, which means more than 300 tenants will pay less this year than last year. For other tenants, service charges this year will be an average of £22, and capped at £50 a week.

We subsidised service charges for two years during the worst of the cost-of-living crisis. Some residents have historically been undercharged or not charged at all for some services. To ensure fairness and consistency, we began charging all tenants the correct amount from January.

Around 2,200 tenants will pay a heating charge, at an average of £26.22 per week.

Garages

Over the next two years, garage rents will be aligned with current market rates for each town.

Until now, we have consistently kept rents well below market value, but ongoing financial pressures have made it unsustainable to continue subsidising the cost.

However, in an effort to minimise the financial impact, this increase will be applied in two stages over the next two years. 50% of the increase will be added to bills from 1

April this year, with the remaining 50% applied next year.

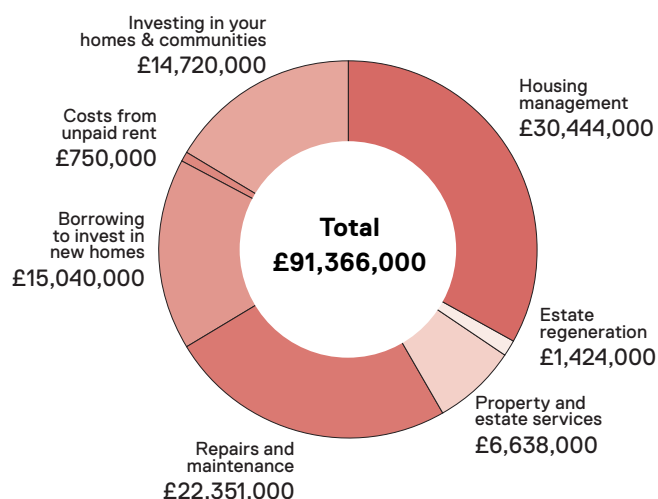
The average cost of hiring a garage in each town from April will range from £144 a month in Acton to £86 a month in Greenford, Hanwell, Northolt, and Southall.

That means that an Ealing Council garage will continue to be by far the cheapest way to hire storage space in the borough for the next year – and it will remain very competitive after that too.

Ways to pay your rent

- Call the 24-hour payment line on **020 88825 8346** with your rent reference number
- Set up a direct debit or standing order by contacting your Rent Officer
- On the Ealing Council website at **www.ealing.gov.uk/pay**
- By Swipe card at the Post Office or at any shop that displays the Pay Point sign
- Speak directly to your Rent Officer on **020 8825 8477**

What we spend your rent on



Get help with your finances



Don't be embarrassed to ask us for help if your income or circumstances have changed.

Our financial inclusion team help council tenants take control of their household budgets.

They can talk you through things like:

- help to claim welfare benefits
- support with accessing grants and loans for people on low incomes
- budgeting tips
- access to independent debt advice
- advice on other ways to boost your income and save money on bills

Paying your rent is a priority, as nothing is more important than having a secure roof over your head. If you do not pay your rent or keep to an agreed arrangement to repay the money you owe, we could take legal action, which could end with you losing your home.

If you cannot pay the rent you owe in full, we can consider affordable repayments. This may mean paying an extra amount with your rent each week or month until the debt is paid off.

If you would like to speak to a financial inclusion officer, please get in touch with your neighbourhood housing officer, who can arrange an appointment for you.



Money Advice Services

If you have questions about budgeting or managing your money, Money Advice Services is an independent service set up by the government. They help people make the most of their money and provide free, unbiased money advice - online, over the phone and face to face. Go to www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk or phone them on 0300 500 5000.



London Community Bank

London Community Bank is a financial cooperative, which uses the regular savings of its members to provide the means to fund loans for other members. Anyone who lives or works in Ealing borough is eligible for free membership. Find out more at www.londoncb.co.uk or phone 020 8756 3864.



Turn2us

Turn2us is a national charity who provides practical help to people who are struggling financially. Head to their site to find a useful benefits calculator and details of grants available. Check out www.turn2us.org.uk or call them on 0808 802 2000.

Are you struggling with unresolved repairs?



Keeping our residents safe and well in their homes is a top priority for us.



No-one should have to live with disrepair in their home, and we are sorry that some of you have had to wait a substantial time for us to fix problems in your homes.

We understand how frustrating it must be when you are struggling to get repairs completed.

With more than 9,000 socially rented homes to manage, repairs are a major area of work for us, and last year we completed around 36,000 maintenance jobs on our tenants' homes.

But like many social landlords, we are struggling with a backlog which dates back to the pandemic, and in the last few years, we have not always hit the high standards we have set for ourselves.

We want to provide the best possible service to you. We're now taking a series of measures to make the improvements needed.

We are prioritising the most important cases, and we have recently cleared many jobs from the backlog. We have also made a raft of changes to our processes. We have appointed two new repairs contractors and a new repairs manager to help improve our response times. We are now recruiting more staff and implementing more training for our team.

We have recently introduced new software to document all property inspections and allow better reporting. We are also undertaking surveys of our entire housing stock. This will help us to better understand where problems are likely to occur so we can tackle them before our residents are affected.

Complaints process improvements



Alongside our regular resident surveys, complaints help us understand the issues that residents are most concerned about.



Although we are working hard to improve our services, things do sometimes go wrong. To help us get better, please tell us if there is something related to your home or tenancy that you are not happy about.

We have recently updated our complaints handling process in an effort to ensure residents receive prompt responses and have their complaints dealt with properly. You can read our complaints policy by clicking on the QR code opposite.

If you feel you have a repairs problem which is not getting resolved, we encourage you to raise a complaint with the council and escalate it if need be. We will do our best to support you and complete the work that is needed. If it is a complex problem, we may need to ask for your patience while we work through the stages of a solution.

A complaint enables much quicker action on fixing the problem than a disrepair claim as it does not get tied up in legal procedures.

Where applicable, complaint compensation is at a similar level to that from a disrepair claim. If you win a case, 'no win no fee' disrepair lawyers will deduct their fee from your award, and hence may leave you with less compensation than you would have got from a complaint.

You can log a complaint about a council housing-related issue via My Account or by emailing

housing.environ.complaints@ealing.gov.uk





We're delivering thousands more genuinely affordable homes to let. Lots of progress has been made in recent months. Here are three updates from the east and the west of the borough.

Golf Links

A topping out ceremony took place at this estate in November, to mark the completion of the central structures of 143 new homes. This includes 104 genuinely affordable new homes to let.

This phase of development is expected to be completed in autumn 2026, with the new tenants moving in shortly after. Building work to redevelop the Golf Links estate got underway in March 2013. Two phases of regeneration have already been completed at the estate, with the construction of Dormers Rise in 2016 and Peterhead Court in 2019.



The core of the new building at Golf Links is now complete.

South Acton

The regeneration of the South Acton estate hit a new milestone in December, with work getting under way at the latest phase of construction.

In this phase, 215 more homes will be built, including 67 genuinely affordable homes to let.

The regeneration of the estate is one of the largest projects of this kind in the borough. Work started on the 20-year masterplan first began in 2012.

Once completed, it will host almost 3,500 new homes, with approximately 40% to be let to people on the council's housing waiting list.



A computer generated image of the new development at South Acton

Northolt Grange

84 new council homes to let are being built at the site of the former Northolt Grange Community Centre, in Rushdene Crescent.

The flats will be a mixture of 1- and 2-beds, in two 5-storey blocks. The development will also provide a children's play area, new landscaped open space, and vehicle and cycle parking.

Construction got under way at the site last summer, and it is expected that the first residents will be able to move in from spring 2026.



Once completed, the development at Northolt Grange will look like this



Please tell us if you have a problem with antisocial behaviour in your neighbourhood.

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their home and community. If you're experiencing issues with bad behaviour from other people which is affecting you, don't suffer in silence – we can help.

Ealing Council's safer communities team work with the police and other partners to resolve complaints of crime and anti-social behaviour.

However, we can only take action to tackle specific problems if we are made aware of the issue. Contacting the team is the vital first step in resolving the problem for good.

Get in touch on safercommunities@ealing.gov.uk or **020 8825 5994** from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Your conversation will always be dealt with in strict confidence.

If you witness a crime or are being affected by antisocial behaviour that is occurring right now, call the police on 101. The service has improved significantly recently, with much faster connection times.

In an emergency, always call the police on 999.

Find out below how we have recently helped in two situations.



Removing a troublesome guest from a sheltered scheme

In September 2024 two residents were assaulted at a sheltered housing scheme in Acton.

The assault took place after the residents had enjoyed a social gathering in the communal hall.

The person who attacked them had been living with a family member at the site – which is against the rules. It quickly emerged that this was not the first antisocial behaviour the man was responsible for at the scheme, with loud music, shouting, and threatening behaviour towards his family member and other residents all reported.

Our safer communities team and the police visited the sheltered scheme to talk to victims and take statements, and applied to the county court for an injunction to exclude the man from the scheme, which was granted. He could be arrested if he visits the site again.

The man – who has vulnerabilities – has been placed in temporary accommodation and is in the process of accessing support.

Cuckooing in Acton

The council's safer communities team received reports from concerned residents about a tenant who was causing nuisance to his neighbours in Acton.

The tenant – a Class A drug user – had fallen victim to 'cuckooing', which is when groups target the homes of vulnerable adults so they can use the property for criminal purposes like drug dealing and storing weapons.

A group was attending the flat regularly, dealing drugs, causing noise nuisance, and acting in an threatening manner. When council officers challenged the tenant on this behaviour, it became clear that although he was complicit in much of it, he had also lost control of his home and was being exploited.

Witness statements from local people provided our team with the ammunition needed to obtain a Closure Order on the property from the county court, preventing any person from entering it for a three month period.

Although the tenant had taken part in some of the activity, he was also a vulnerable person who was now homeless. Officers from safer communities, housing, and substance misuse services worked together to create a support plan for the tenant, who has been evicted from the property and rehoused in temporary accommodation. He has started drug addiction treatment, outside the borough, giving him and the community a fresh start.



“I feel happy when I see the smiles of people whose lives we’ve been able to make a difference to.”

This is what Philomina Noel, founder of a voluntary organisation in Southall, told us, during a visit to their new hub on the Havelock estate.

In 2020, Philomina founded Asian Community Concern (ACC), which offers English language classes, exercise classes, health and wellbeing workshops, and mental health support. It’s able to do that thanks to Southall’s Open Havelock project, which has transformed unused garages at the estate into vibrant spaces which house community organisations, with workshops, a community kitchen, and children’s play areas.

“ACC builds a relationship of love and trust with the people in need and provide counselling and advice to reach out the wider community,” said Philomina “Through training and education, ACC empowers the people to build their confidence, identity, and self-worth.”

“It’s a diverse population here in Southall,” she added. “There are many people from different cultures. Doing community work is a challenge. I said to myself, ‘I am going to reach

out to the community’, because that’s my passion – to help people to engage, educate, and empower.”

ACC provides a warm and welcoming environment where residents, particularly women, can build vital skills and regain confidence. It offers:

- education – English language classes and career development advice
- opportunities to develop new skills and get moving, like sewing and exercise classes
- health and wellbeing support programmes to improve mental health and reduce loneliness
- domestic abuse support, offering survivors emotional care, practical advice, and connections to legal services

“English classes are incredibly important for women in underserved communities,” added Philomina. “These women often face restrictions. But by reaching out to them and inviting them to spend just 2 hours in a class, we can make a significant difference in their lives.”

If you’d like to get involved, contact Philomina on **07825 575849** or **admin@asiancommunityconcern.co.uk**.



Your safety

Know your emergency plan

It's really important that everyone in your household knows what to do in the event of an emergency.



Make sure you take the time to discuss your plan. It is especially important that children know what to do in an emergency.

Familiarise yourself with the wider evacuation plan for your building. Note that different plans and evacuation strategies apply for different building types and layouts. Remember, if you live in a shared block and a fire starts in another part of your building and you are not immediately affected by smoke or fire, you might be safest staying in your home.

Have a look at the fire action notices and plans around your building to familiarise yourself with your evacuation policy. If you still have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us – contact your neighbourhood housing officer.



You can find out more via this QR code.

Test your smoke alarms

You could make a potentially life-saving move when you change your clocks on the weekend of 29/30 March - by taking a moment to test your smoke alarm too.

Turning the clocks forward will already be on the 'to-do' list for the majority of British households that weekend. When you do, please also take the opportunity to check your smoke alarms are working too.

Many people forget about their smoke alarms altogether. It is one of the most effective ways of ensuring your household's safety – but it's vital to regularly check that they work.

A working smoke alarm can buy you valuable time to get out, stay out and call 999. You're more than four times as likely to die in a fire if your smoke alarm is not working.

When you change your clocks, check your alarm.





Tell us if you need help to evacuate

Residents who have a disability, health concerns, or mobility problems may feel more vulnerable to emergency situations.

If you need our help, we can support you in a number of ways. We can carry out a person-centred risk assessment, or PCRA, where we will visit you at home to discuss your needs and how best to help you keep safe. It will help us put in place actions or control measures to minimise any risks as far as possible.

We can also provide you with a personal emergency plan if needed. The plan will state whether you are able to evacuate safely yourself with the aid of specific equipment or information. If not, we will establish a process whereby you receive assistance from the fire brigade.

We are here to help, so please let us know if you think you need support. Speak to your neighbourhood housing officer to find out more.



Be safe on your balcony

With spring on its way, we want to remind you that you must never light a barbecue on your balcony, if you have one.

All barbecues, including disposables, are a serious fire risk when used so close to a building. They can stay hot for hours and smouldering debris can easily spit off the surface and land on another level of the building. Several fires have started this way in recent years.

Balcony fires are more common during the summer months and can be devastating, as they can easily spread to adjoining

properties - potentially leaving many people homeless.

Smokers can also stay safe on their balconies by putting out cigarettes completely and disposing of them carefully. Never throw lit cigarettes or butts over your balcony. For help giving up smoking, go to www.nhs.uk/smokefree.

For lots more information about fire safety within your home, visit www.london-fire.gov.uk



New office at Havelock estate



A new community office has opened for residents of the Havelock estate in Southall, bringing together teams from across Ealing Council to offer local people a better service.

At the Havelock Advice Venue (HAV), residents will be able to access a range of council services including housing, safer communities, adult social care, and financial inclusion. Help from community organisations will also be available.

As part of a community-led approach, the council has been working closely with residents on the estate to understand the underlying issues that they face. At a community drop-in event last autumn, residents told the council that they had benefitted from being able to speak to services locally.

Manjula and Mradula are sisters who live on the estate. They said: "We came in today and got answers straight away. It's nice to know that someone is listening to us and we feel confident that we are being helped. People here are nice and friendly and approachable. It's also nice to speak to someone face-to-face, especially when your hearing is not so good!"

The office – officially opened by Councillor Louise Brett last October, as pictured – will initially be open from 9am to 5pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Estate residents could change this if they feel that this does not meet their needs.



Useful contacts

Tenancy management and paying your rent

Please contact your local housing hub:

Acton

Temporarily relocated to Perceval House in Ealing

Appointments must be prebooked

Phone: 020 8825 5387

Email: actonhousinghub@ealing.gov.uk

Ealing

Phone: 020 8825 5387 option 2

Email: ealinghousinghub@ealing.gov.uk

Greenford

Phone: 020 8825 5387 option 3

Email: greenfordhousinghub@ealing.gov.uk

Hanwell

Phone: 020 8825 5387 option 4

Email: hanwellhousinghub@ealing.gov.uk

Northolt

Phone: 020 8825 5387 option 5

Email: northolthousinghub@ealing.gov.uk

Southall

Phone: 020 8825 5387 option 6

Email: southallhousinghub@ealing.gov.uk

Havelock Advice Venue

33 Hunt Road, Southall UB2 4QB

Drop in Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-5pm

Repairs and maintenance

Phone: 0800 181744 from a landline

or 020 8825 5682 from a mobile

Safer communities (antisocial behaviour)

Phone: 020 8825 5994

For noise nuisance: 020 8825 8111

Email: safercommunities@ealing.gov.uk

Home ownership

Right To Buy enquiries:

Phone: 020 8825 5583

Email: homeownership@ealing.gov.uk

Caretaking services

Phone: 020 8825 8593

Email: caretaking@ealing.gov.uk

Compliments, complaints and suggestions

Phone: 020 8825 8855

Email: regenhousingcomplaints@ealing.gov.uk

