



Shining a light on our residents

Meet Sheltered Housing tenant and artist Jahanshir



Meet our new regeneration team, page 6

GET IN TOUCH

✉ TALK2US@BARNETHOMES.ORG

📞 020 8080 6587 (8AM - 6PM, TRANSLATORS AVAILABLE)

🌐 BARNETHOMES.ORG | OPENDOORHOMES.ORG

PAY YOUR RENT OR SERVICE CHARGE

0845 356 3456 (24 hours) or barnet.gov.uk

ASSIST SERVICE

020 8359 4841 or assist@barnethomes.org

OUR OFFICE

2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

COMPLAINTS

The Barnet Group is committed to continuously improving what we do and the way we do it as a result of feedback from customers, and the people we support and their families. The Barnet Group aims to listen to and learn from our customers, enabling us to address any service failures, identify areas for improvement or areas of good practice, and monitor services in a customer-focused way.

We welcome complaints and feedback from our customers to help us do this. Feedback can be given to us by email, in writing, by telephone, and in person. Please visit barnethomes.org/complaints or use the information above to contact the Complaints Team.

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THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

TIM MULVENNA



Hello everyone, and welcome to the spring issue of your magazine. I hope that you had an enjoyable festive period and that you have been able to return to some semblance of normality.

I'm delighted to share this issue of atHome with you which shines a light on some of the people in Barnet who brighten up the lives of those around them. On page five you can read about Jahanshir, one of our sheltered housing residents who uses his artistic skills to create some fantastic works of art.

On page ten, you can read about Inass Ibrahim who leads the Burnt Oak Womens' Group. They're a fantastic organisation who constantly go above and beyond to support the people in the wider Burnt Oak area.

In this issue we also share how you can get involved - head to page 10 to find out about this year's Big Lunch and page 11 to see how you can put our Community Recovery Fund to good use. If you're looking for a more hands-on way to get involved and are an Opendoor Homes resident, you can apply to join their scrutiny panel. Find out more about that on page eight.

Together with this magazine, you will find a copy of our 2021 Community Awards booklet. It has been another year where we have seen our communities come together to support each other. It is still so inspiring to see everything they do for one another and it's a great honour for us to be able to share our Community Awards with them.

Unfortunately, we were not able to meet in person again this year, but you can watch our awards video at thebarnetgroup.org.

We have recently experienced technical issues with our customer phone lines which have caused problems for customers. The technical issues caused some to have had long wait times to have their call answered or they had their call cut off mid-conversation. The issues have also meant at times we have not been able to access the systems we need to fully assist customers which has caused delays for customers. We are very sorry for the inconvenience that this has caused and are working on a solution to fully fix the issues.

Stay safe and have a great spring,

Tim

NEWS IN BRIEF

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

Be alert to bogus callers



Bogus callers are criminals who claim to be someone they're not to get into your home. What they want to do is steal your money and valuables. They could target anyone at any time, but they often focus on the over-60s. Barnet Homes are aware of incidents where bogus callers have tried to gain access to properties, often they may say they are from Barnet Homes, a council department, or a utility company.

Please do not let anyone into your home if you are unsure of who they are, or if they do not have any valid identification. All Barnet Homes staff carry official identification, with their name and a photograph.

Tips to keep safe:

- ✓ Don't let any strangers into your home
- ✓ Use a door chain, if you have one
- ✓ Always ask for proof of identification and check it carefully – it must have a photograph of the caller on it
- ✓ Never be persuaded or bullied to let someone inside your home or worry about seeming rude
- ✓ If in doubt – keep them out!
- ✓ Never give keys to workmen or tradesmen unless you are certain you can trust them – copy keys are easily made.

If you are in any doubt as to the identity of any visitors to your property, or if they are not carrying any identification please call the Barnet Homes Contact Centre on 020 8080 6587 or dial 999 if it's an emergency.

FIRE SAFETY

KEEPING YOU SAFE IN YOUR HOMES



Home Fire Safety Visits

Do you know that the London Fire Brigade (LFB) carry out home fire safety visits? The LFB believe that successful fire-fighting starts with prevention, so they have introduced a service where they can visit you, a loved one, or someone you care for at home to provide personalised advice about fire safety.

It's totally free, available 24/7, and they will even fit free smoke alarms during the visit if you need them. The visit is friendly and informal, and there's no need to tidy up or provide refreshments – they're visiting to keep you safe, not for the tea!

After a chat about fire prevention, the LFB will ask you to show us around your home so they can provide personalised advice on:

- cooking and smoking
- heaters and heating

- candles and fireplaces
- detection systems (smoke and heat alarms)
- bedtime checks
- what to do if there is a fire.

If you need them, they will also provide and fit free smoke alarms in any room where a fire might start. Depending on your personal circumstances, they might also suggest extra help and support from other organisations. This could be to discuss things like fire retardant bedding or linking a smoke alarm to your Telecare system.

There are a number of ways that a visit can be arranged;

✉ smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk
☎ 0800 028 4428 / text 07860 021 319

Don't delay, what have you got to lose?

Ordering communal key fobs

If you require a new fob key for your property and you do not hold a tenancy with Barnet Homes but the property is in a Barnet Homes block, please contact your landlord. Your landlord will then need to contact Barnet Homes to arrange this.

Alternatively, your landlord can provide signed written consent for Barnet Homes to supply you with a key fob directly. The cost in either case is £15 for the first key and £25 for all subsequent keys.

REGENERATION

INTRODUCING OUR NEW TEAM

Introducing our Regeneration Team



The Barnet Homes Regeneration Team has ten staff (pictured above) who are responsible for managing the Grahame Park, Dollis Valley, and Whitefields estates between now and when the estates are regenerated. The cultural makeup of the team is diverse which enables them to help with communication barriers as across the team, and they can speak a range of languages.

The Team offers the service of housing management and rehousing of residents on the estates, and between them have a wide knowledge of housing management and the borough's estates.

The Team which is led by Michelle Davies, the Service Manager is made up of two teams;

Housing Management, and the Decant Team, each responsible for providing a high-quality and customer focussed service to all residents living on the Regeneration Estates.

The Decant Team is responsible for assisting in the rehousing of households that are affected by the regeneration process.

The Housing Management Team is responsible for supporting residents in their tenancies, managing anti-social behaviour and for the service standards on the estates.

For more information about regeneration in Barnet visit barnet.gov.uk/regeneration

Who do I contact to report an issue?

All enquiries will initially be dealt with through the Customer Contact Team, with complex queries being dealt with by the Regeneration Service. This will ensure that residents receive the right advice when they first contact us.

The **Complaints and Information team** can be contacted as follows:

By email: Talk2Us@barnethomes.org

By telephone: 020 8080 6587

If you need to write to us, you can do so at the address below, but please be aware that it may take longer than usual for us to reply: Complaints and Information team, Barnet Homes, 3rd Floor, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale NW9 4EW

A dab hand in Burnt Oak

We visited Barnet Homes tenant Jahanshir in his one bedroom flat in Burnt Oak to find out more about his favourite pastime.



Seventy-two year old Jahanshir lives in one of our sheltered housing schemes for older people. His small flat looks more like an art gallery and is filled wall to wall with his oil and water colour paintings of landscapes, portraits, and still life.

The retired accounts clerk explains, “I began painting when I was 14 back in Iran, and have continued this hobby throughout my life. I paint for pleasure and sometimes I gift my paintings to friends and family. But once I sold some paintings to help buy a second-hand car.”

“My wife and I fled Iran when Iraq’s Saddam Hussein ordered the military invasion of the Abadan oil refinery, where I used to work. After living in

Sweden for a time, we moved to the UK in 1990. We lived in a privately rented flat which was very damp. In 2014, I had a heart attack and bypass surgery. After being on the Barnet housing waiting list for 29 years, we were offered this flat for rent in August 2019.”

Jahanshir adds “I like this home, and the sheltered scheme - everyone living here is a friend. We always say hello to each other. I have a habit of picking up litter and sweeping the corridors, because I like keeping the place clean.”

Jahanshir enthuses, “I love London because there are so many art galleries, my favourite is the National Portrait Gallery. I also like restoring wooden furniture, I regularly visit antique fairs in Camden Town, Covent Garden and Hampstead. This is my latest project, I bought this old hand carved chair for £30, it was in very bad shape, and I have restored it during the lockdowns.”

Scheme Manager Ricky Brown says, “Jahanshir is a brilliant resident, and he’s absolutely amazing at woodwork!”



INVOLVEMENT

HAVING YOUR SAY

Get Together, Get Involved Virtual meeting dates for the Year

In 2021 we held six virtual 'Get Together, Get Involved' virtual meetings inviting Barnet Homes Tenants and Leaseholders and Opendoor Homes tenants, to share their thoughts and views on our housing services and areas that we can improve on. These virtual sessions were very successful and well attended.

We have decided to continue to roll out four more virtual sessions in 2022. Please put the dates in your diaries and contact getinvolved@barnethomes.org or getinvolved@opendoorhomes.org to register

your interest in attending.

The themes will be announced closer to the dates, although we welcome your suggestions on areas you would like us to consider

Thursday 14 April, 6.30pm

Thursday 14 July, 6.30pm

Thursday 13 October, 6.30pm

January 2023 (date tbc)

All meetings will be held virtually on Zoom.

Opendoor Homes Resident Scrutiny We are recruiting

As we continue to build new homes, we want to ensure our Opendoor Homes customers have the opportunity to have their say on how we deliver housing services to them. Over the coming months we will be encouraging Opendoor tenants to express their interest in joining our Resident Scrutiny Group.

If you are interested in finding out more please contact us using the details below.



Struggling to connect?



FIND OUT IF YOU CAN GET A FREE ONE YEAR INTERNET CONNECTION FROM COMMUNITY FIBRE:



You are a Barnet Homes tenant



You currently don't have broadband at home



You cannot afford fibre internet (you are currently unemployed or have a low-income)



You live in: Grahame Park, Burnt Oak, East Finchley or other area where Community Fibre is available.

**CONTACT
US FOR MORE
INFORMATION:**

**GETONLINE@BARNET.GOV.UK
WWW.BOOSTBARNET.ORG
0208 359 2442**

**OR COME TO GRAHAME PARK
THE OLD LIBRARY
4/5 THE CONCOURSE
NW9 5XA**



Community Fibre
better internet for everyone

BOOST Barnet Homes



OUR BARNET

OUR COMMUNITY'S HEROES

Inass Ibrahim tells us why she founded the Burnt Oak Women's Group and the BOWG Food Bank

In 2013, mum of four, Inass and family were living in private rented accommodation, when at very short notice the family were asked to vacate their home - their landlord had received a repossession order from his bank. Unable to immediately find suitable alternative accommodation and after living in temporary accommodation for 9 months, the family were eventually housed by Barnet Homes in Burnt Oak.

Settling down into her routine as a mum at the new school gates, Inass found it a little uncomfortable at first. She recalls, 'I noticed that in the playground mums were mostly segregated in their little huddles, and this seemed to be more about their origins, not about where your home demographic is. Friendship groups were along the lines of ethnicities - I saw everyone going with what they were familiar with, rather than getting to know your neighbour. The children had no issues talking to each other, it was the parents that were hesitant.'

Self-confident and bubbly Inass is no wall flower, she challenges stereotypes and gets people talking together at every opportunity. She decided to do something about this situation at the school gates. She explains, 'So in 2017 I thought I'd start regular coffee mornings for everyone and anyone. It was more about mums from all over Burnt Oak getting together for a friendly chat and breaking down barriers. Many discovered that they were neighbours living on the same road but didn't know each other! The coffee mornings were a great success with mums from all backgrounds attending. As the coffee mornings got bigger, we applied for funding and did a 'Community Day', which was my biggest success. We got all the local schools involved, they all have their own dance, choir team, performing arts teams. And



Inass Ibrahim. Photo by Ben Brewty

we invited all of them. We even had Irish dancing, ballet dancing, twirlers and Palestinian dancers - they all performed in 2018 as part of the 'Great Get Together' a national event taking place all over the UK.

Then I organised our first annual community trip and took 3 coach loads to Gulliver's Land and offered respite to children that needed it most. My view was let me get the funding, let me get these children out, especially the ones that don't get to go anywhere- so I spoke to local schools, offering them free tickets which included transport and entry fees paid for. Funding came from the Near Neighbours project. I then founded Burnt Oak Women's Group (BOWG) and continued to create opportunities and offering support to local families to gain key skills, have fun and break social barriers.



Then when Covid hit in March 2020 everything had to stop. By this time, we had 100 members on our WhatsApp group and over 300 members on Facebook. I had mums contacting me and crying, panicking about their budgets being squeezed, mothers were fearful and not knowing what to do and how to cope.

I contacted some friends and asked if they had any surplus food, fruits, and vegetables, that we could give to help a couple of families that needed it. I ended up with 32 crates of surplus items in my front garden!

I didn't have the space so I called Tim Blanc of Barnet Homes Community Engagement Team and asked for help to set up a centre that we could use as a food bank.

Tim Blanc said, 'Yes we'll support you to do it'- that's when the food bank was born, out of a centre based in the middle of North Road Estate. At its height we helped 323 people on the books, every week, once a week for a year. I'm so proud of my volunteers, and those who donated surplus items. It is 100% voluntary; everyone works on the basis of helping others.

A huge thanks to all the supporters of BOWG throughout the years. A special thanks to Tim and Deborah at Barnet Homes Community Engagement Team, without their support the food bank wouldn't be here - 70% of the local residents we support are Barnet Homes residents. And thanks to our core volunteering team namely, Amal, Asima, Phil and Sarah.



Pictured above, the group at Gulliver's Land and right, Inass standing by her portrait outside Burnt Oak Library. She was nominated as a Town Centre Hero this year.



Covid-19 Recovery Community Fund 2022

For the second year running and thanks to our generous sponsors we are pleased to announce the launch of our Covid-19 Recovery Community Fund 2022. The fund has helped to support Barnet based community projects during Covid-19 and will continue to do so throughout 2022.

2021 had a bumper year of projects that benefited from the fund:

Friendly Place Project

The project supported Barnet Homes residents with mental health issues, providing a safe place to meet, socialise and encourage their engagement. Your sponsorship has helped to launch and run this project for 12 months.

Homework Club

Funds helped to establish a much-needed homework club for children and young people living on West Hendon estate. This was a joint initiative with Middlesex University, FUSE Youth Project and Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing.

Community Garden Projects

Funding for two projects at our sheltered housing schemes (Little Larkins and Vale Court) one will improve open space to make it more accessible and the other will install a corner arbour to accommodate residents who have difficulty walking in other areas of the garden space.

Gift Campaign – Donation to Young Barnet Foundation to support their campaign in distributing gifts to children and young people during Christmas via local charities and community and faith groups.

Barnet Multi Faith Awards 2021 – We were proud to sponsor this initiative as it recognised the hard work the faith community has invested to support many communities across Barnet, all winners received £250.00 to help them continue their work.

If you have an idea for a community project, event or know of a Barnet based group that would benefit from the fund, please visit our website and click on Covid-19 Recovery Fund for more information and how to apply.



JOIN US FOR THE BIG LUNCH



The Big Lunch is the UK's annual celebration for neighbours and communities. Every year in June, since the idea began in 2009, millions of people stop what they're doing and get together with neighbours in a nationwide act of community and friendship. All made possible by The National Lottery.

A Big Lunch can be anything from a small gathering in a garden, park or driveway, to a larger party with trestle tables down the middle of your street. The idea is that by starting simple, all sorts of friendships, ideas and projects can come out of a Big Lunch. It gets people together and talking — and with a few inspired folks, it can lead to people doing more within their community and tackling the issues that matter to them most.

There are more reasons than ever to get together this year as The Big Jubilee Lunch will be an official part of HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations on the extended bank holiday weekend (2-5 June), and The Big Lunch kicks off a whole Month of Community, so plan a one off event or even make it a weekly affair for a

summer of fun, but make it work for you!

After 18 months of lockdowns, staying in our bubbles, and seeing people from afar, The Big Lunch became a special moment for us to support our communities, thank our neighbours and lift spirits after lockdown.

With changing guidelines and different restrictions across the four nations, The Big Lunch adjusted to suit, as an amazing 9 million of us gathered online, on doorsteps and for safely distanced street parties, to get to know our neighbours a little better.

If you have plans on hosting a Big Lunch event or need some advice, let us know as **we are offering up to £250 contribution towards events organised by our residents.** For more information email getinvolved@barnethomes.org or getinvolved@opendoorhomes.org or call Deborah Beckford on 020 8359 5307 or Junaid Mejroubi on 020 8359 4480.

The UK's annual
celebration for neighbours
and communities.

TheBigLunch.com

   @edencommunities | #TheBigLunch



eden project

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nextdoor

Iceland

**the food
WAREHOUSE**

**Pears
Foundation**

Paying your rent

Your tenancy agreement says you pay your rent in advance. Therefore, you should make your first weekly, fortnightly or monthly payment on or before 5 April 2021. If paying fortnightly, you should pay on the bold dates opposite.

Weeks 13, 26, 39 and 52 are rent free.

We offer monthly direct debits. You can pay by monthly direct debit and will be entered into a prize draw for one month's free rent.

If you have a debit or credit card, you can pay your rent by telephoning us on **020 8080 6587** between 8am and 6pm or online at **barnethomes.org**.

You can also pay your rent by telephoning the 24/7 automated telephone payment line on **0845 356 3456**. Please select 'housing rent' as the payment option and ensure that you have your nine digit rent account number to hand which starts with a '1'. This can be found on your rent statement or a rent letter.

For a full list of payment methods, please see the 'Rent & Money' section on our website, **barnethomes.org**.

Rent payment dates 2021/22

Date	Week	Date	Week
4 April	1	3 October	27
11 April	2	10 October	28
18 April	3	17 October	29
25 April	4	24 October	30
2 May	5	31 October	31
9 May	6	7 November	32
16 May	7	14 November	33
23 May	8	21 November	34
30 May	9	28 November	35
6 June	10	5 December	36
13 June	11	12 December	37
20 June	12	19 December	38
27 June	13 (rent free)	26 December	39 (rent free)
4 July	14	2 January	40
11 July	15	9 January	41
18 July	16	16 January	42
25 July	17	23 January	43
1 August	18	30 January	44
8 August	19	6 February	45
15 August	20	13 February	46
22 August	21	20 February	47
29 August	22	27 February	48
5 September	23	6 March	49
12 September	24	13 March	50
19 September	25	20 March	51
26 September	26 (rent free)	27 March	52 (rent free)

GARDENING

BARNET IN BLOOM

Get planting! Finest Flowers 2022 coming soon

Spring is in the air! Time to start getting busy in the garden and growing some beautiful flowers in time for this year's Finest Flower Competition. So come on, what are you waiting for? There's no time to lose! The entry and judging dates will be announced in the Summer Edition of Athome due out in June!



Hi everyone, my name is Junaid Mejroubi, and I am the Youth & Community Apprentice who joined The Barnet Group in September last year. My role is to support children and young people to develop their personal, social, and educational development and provide them the opportunity to share with me some of the challenges they experience as young people living in Barnet.

Over the past few months I have been meeting with youth organisations across Barnet and finding out more about the great work they do and provide to children and young people. This has included talking to and visiting F.U.S.E Youth Project, Unitas Youth Zone, Art Against



Knives, Youth Realities and creating a support page of information which is available on our website.

Over the coming months I will be promoting upcoming opportunities, activities and services available to children and young people as well as being available to talk to young people about any topics they feel are important to them.

If you would like to be involved in any conversations or find out more about what is available for young people in Barnet, follow us on Instagram @tbg_community1, visit our Voicebox Youth Page on our website or just email us at the addresses listed below.

Parents, and understanding your child's mental health



The beginning is perhaps more difficult than anything else, but keep heart, it will turn out all right"

Vincent Van Gogh

If you're a parent and worried about your child's mental wellbeing. There is also plenty local and national support and advice available to help you support the wellbeing of your child.

Resources for Parents

CAMHS is the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in the London Borough of Barnet, providing multi-disciplinary assessment and treatment of children and young people with mental health or severe emotional and behavioural difficulties Call 020 8702 4500 or their 24/7 helpline on 0800 151 0023

Anna Freud provides information for parents on supporting your child and has a directory of mental health services that you can search by your local area:

annafreud.org/parents/

MindEd provides safe and reliable advice about parenting and young people's mental health, created by experts and parents together:

mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people

Young Minds are committed to improving the mental health of babies, children and young people, including support for parents and carers. Call 0808 802 5544 (Parents Helpline) or visit youngminds.org.uk

Place2be offers advice and information to parents about how to deal with their children's mental health: place2be.org.uk

THE RESIDENT BOARD

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

A message from our Resident Board Chair

Dear Residents,

I would like to wish you all a belated Happy New Year, and I hope you are all keeping well.

2021 was another very busy year for the Resident Board. We held our final meeting on 2 December and were joined by Heads of Services from Barnet Homes, who presented reports on how they have been performing over the past three months. In this meeting, we discussed:

Resident satisfaction and safety: Although we saw an increase in overall satisfaction for both tenants and leaseholders, we also saw a decrease in satisfaction for residents who felt safe in their homes. The latter was primarily a result of issues with communal doors, so Barnet Homes' Head of Service promised to investigate these issues fully.

Equalities: The Board raised some concerns that English was not some residents' first language, and we're pleased that Barnet Homes will be looking into solutions to support these residents, especially around reporting repairs.

Survey data: Barnet Homes also explained to us how surveys were undertaken, which gave us the opportunity to request a bit more raw data - especially resident comments - so that we could get more of an understanding of the data we were being shown.

Complaints: There has been an increase in the time taken to respond to complaints recently, mainly due to reduced capacity in certain teams and hold-ups in the legal process.

Estate Inspections: We hope that more residents can take part in estate inspections in the future, and we're happy that Barnet Homes will be taking this into account when reviewing the process.

The Board continues to seek assurance that Barnet Homes learns lessons from the issues raised.

In November, the Board established a small sub-group to meet with the Head of Community Engagement, Tim Blanc to assist in the monitoring and delivery of their Community Engagement Strategy. Tim provided an overview of the strategy and how the priorities within the action plan had been identified. The sub-group agreed to meet four times a year, receiving regular progress reports. The first meeting was held in January 2022.

Best wishes and I hope that you keep well and enjoy the lovely Spring weather.

Aruna Bhatt
Resident Board Chair



Welcome to our new Resident Board member Anthea Ranjit-Singh



“I wanted to give something back to my local community since becoming semi-retired. Becoming a Barnet Homes Residents Board member allows me to share my previous social care and community safety work experience in a proactive way; supporting those neighbours around me and the wider diverse community. I look forward to supporting change to meet goals and objectives in collaboration with Barnet Homes and Barnet residents, as well as celebrating the positive achievements in our community.

We still have vacancies on the Resident Board, if you would like to find out more please use the contact details at the bottom of this page.



BOOST your job chances

Our BOOST services provides a wide range of employment and benefits support. Over the next few months they're running a wide range of sessions, both online and in person, so why not contact them to book your place and see what they can do for you!

Tuesday 5th April: CV Writing and job Searching for “Job Hoppers”

Thursday 14th April: Apprenticeships Information Sessions

Thursday 5th May: CV Writing for Graduates/ Early Careers

Thursday 12th May: CV Writing for ESOL Learners

Thursday 9th June: Job Searching online: Strategies for Success

Thursday 16th June: Want to work in Health & Social Care - guidance and information

Free Digital Skills drop-in sessions

- Mondays 1:00pm – 3:00pm in Burnt Oak Library
- Every Tuesday (except school term time) 12:30pm – 2:30pm at Grahame Park

Webinars and training (all are evening sessions)

Thursday 7th April: How to Produce a Community Newsletter

Tuesday 3rd May: Equality Diversity and Inclusion Training

Tuesday 10th May: How To Plan a Community Event

Find out more at boostbarnet.org

LEASEHOLDERS

OUR HOME OWNERS

Alterations - be sure to seek permission first!

As a homeowner, you may wish to undertake alterations or improvements to your property.

However, under the terms of your lease you are required to seek permission before carrying out any works to your home.

Please note that apart from obtaining your landlord's consent through Barnet Homes, some works may require other permissions, such as planning permission or building regulations permission. It is therefore crucial that you approach relevant departments before you start any works.

If you carry out home improvements without obtaining your landlord's consent where necessary, you will be breaking the conditions of

your lease. In this case, we will take enforcement action to ensure that the property is reinstated to its original condition and any legal and building costs that we incur will be recharged to you. Please be advised that if you purchase a property where unauthorised alterations were carried out by the previous owner, you will be responsible for rectifying the breach and the associated costs.

If you do obtain permission to carry out works, you should ensure that your builders are considerate, and clean up any mess they make in the communal areas. You should also not leave any items in the communal areas overnight. If you are concerned that one of your neighbours is carrying out alterations without permission, or if you have any questions then you can email us on TalkToUs@barnethomes.org

A new fee structure for leasehold alterations

If you are a Barnet Homes' leaseholder and wish to carry out alterations to your property, you must first obtain written consent from Barnet Homes. To date there has been one fee for all alteration applications.

From 01 April 2022, Barnet Homes will implement a new fairer fee structure which reflects the type of works you are proposing. Please see table below:

Fee band	Cost	Information
Minimum fee	£40	Charged for minor desktop-based exercises where no site visit is required, and where administrative processing is minimal.
Standard fee	£175	Charged for most alteration requests.
Enhanced fee	£300	Charged for works that include multiple alterations requests, works that affect the layout of the property, or whole property refurbishments.

Note: if required, legal fees will be charged on top of these fee bands.

Among our London-based peers, the average standard fee is £325 per application.

More information about leasehold alterations can be found on our website under the "Home Improvements" page of the Leaseholder section.

Removal of the 'express response' option for leaseholder pre-assignment enquiries alterations

Where Barnet Homes' leaseholders are in the process of selling their home, Barnet Homes puts together a Pre-Assignment Enquiry pack on behalf of the Council. Currently, before the pack is put together, the leaseholder pays an administrative fee to receive the pack in 10 working days (the standard option) or 5 working days (the express option).

From 01 April, Barnet Homes will remove the express response option, because the pack requires significantly more information in respect to fire safety and other measures than it used to, and for that reason the information can no longer reasonably be collated in 5 working days. We have benchmarked this activity with 11 other similar London housing providers, and have found that only 1 offers an express option.

Paying Service Charges

Annual Service Charges

You should now have received your new estimate service charges for 2022-2023.

Remember estimates are payable quarterly in advance, however you can choose to pay by ten monthly instalments to help spread the payment.

Major Works Charges

We are currently carrying out a number of essential health and safety related work programmes across the borough.

These include:

- replacing electrical rising mains
- installing or upgrading communal and emergency escape lighting,
- fire safety works
- works to the cold-water storage systems
- window and roof replacement programme.

Prompt payment incentives are available for both annual service charges and major works charges.

- £10 incentive for payment of annual service charges in full in the month of April
- £10 incentive for first set up of direct debit for annual service charges
- 2.5% incentive for payment of major works charges in full within 28 days of the invoice.

Whilst these works are necessary, we understand that the costs may place a financial burden on some of our leaseholders, particularly in the current difficult economic climate. If you are experiencing financial difficulty you are encouraged to contact your Income Collection Officer as soon as possible in order that payment options can be discussed with you.

In some cases, referrals can be made to organisations offering more specialist money management advice and support. The sooner you get in touch, the more chance we have of helping you. You can get help by contacting our Customer Contact Team on 020 8080 6587.

ONE BARNET OUR COMMUNITY

Spotlight on interfaith relations

The new Barnet Faith & Belief Awards 2022 were created by the Barnet Faith & Belief Forum with the support of Dangoor Education, Middlesex University and Barnet Homes, part of The Barnet Group. The aim of the awards was to shine a light on the contributions made by people and groups inspired by faith. The ceremony took place online on the 27th January, the winners also received a £250 donation from Barnet Homes to spend on their project. You can watch the ceremony at youtube.com/watch?v=qBE_1jrgYR4

Tim Mulvenna, CEO of The Barnet Group said, 'It's fantastic to be supporting this interfaith award and to recognise the positive work being done. Together in Barnet are our winners because of the longevity of the project and its successful collaboration between faith groups.'

Together in Barnet is a night shelter that opened in 2003 offering Barnet's only emergency night shelter provision. There are more than

300 interfaith volunteers from 32 multi-faith communities which includes Churches, Mosques and Synagogues in Barnet.

The night shelter provides 17 men and women with low to medium needs with a warm, welcoming, safe place to sleep, dinner and breakfast. Together in Barnet's client referring partner is Homeless Action in Barnet; a day centre providing case work and practical services for people experiencing homelessness. Last year 20 of the 21 single homeless people were successfully housed in private rented accommodation by housing partner Barnet Homes.

“ Amanda Weiss – TiB Operations Manager:

I am thrilled that Together in Barnet was awarded the Interfaith Relations Award. The shelter in Barnet has quietly been ensuring that people who needed it, had a safe and warm place to sleep, dinner and breakfast away from the streets of Barnet. Over the years the offer has developed as we were able to bring more communities on board and increase the amount of time, we were able to offer this safe haven. Nearly 19 years later, we have two employees, 32 faith communities involved, over 300 volunteers and were able to reinvent ourselves, finding a way to offer Covid-safe emergency accommodation during the pandemic. This really is a testament to the community we have here in Barnet.

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HOMELESSNESS

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN BARNET

Working with residents to prevent homelessness



We'd like to share a good news case study that highlights the effort and dedication of our Tenancy Sustainment Team at Barnet Homes.

Ms K. studies part-time at university, while supporting 3 children as a single parent. She is benefit-capped and has accrued significant rent arrears that began in 2011. In October, Ms K. approached Barnet Homes for assistance, when her family faced eviction in a matter of days.

Housing Options' Tenancy Sustainment Team got to work quickly to help Ms K. to keep her home. First, they persuaded Ms K's private landlord to pause the eviction while they sought a solution to her mounting rent arrears. Then, they obtained funding from let2barnet's landlord incentive scheme, and they supported Ms K. to apply for a discretionary housing payment (DHP).

Barnet Homes' DHP Team fast-tracked this application, and together these payments covered more than half of Ms K's rent arrears. The Tenancy Sustainment Team continued to negotiate with the landlord, and persuaded them to reduce Ms K's rent to the Local Housing Allowance rate. Ms K. is now working with BOOST – who aim to support Ms K. to build skills and to find work, and ultimately to enable the benefit cap to be removed.

The eviction has been prevented, and Ms K and her family can remain in their home - in an area that they have lived for most of their lives. Well done to everyone involved!

If you need housing advice or assistance, contact our Housing Options Service as soon as possible – by using the contact details below.

FOSTERING

SUPPORTING BARNET'S CHILDREN

Have you thought of fostering a child in Barnet?



There are 328 children currently living with foster families in Barnet, and more foster families are needed. Every child deserves a safe and loving home and we're on a mission to provide the best possible care for Barnet's looked after children.

Here, Barnet foster carer Shushma shares Olivia's fostering story.

"My mum and me foster together. We have had many children come into our care, of different ages and ethnicities. I am going to share Olivia's story.

Olivia came to us when she was nine years old. She has a bubbly funny personality, and she was obsessed with football and supported Arsenal. Olivia's age stage was a little behind when she came to our home and her reading level was four years behind. She couldn't tell the time, use cutlery, do her buttons, or tie her shoelaces. As a result, she suffered with low self-esteem. It wasn't because she was incapable of doing these

things - it was because she had never been taught.

We taught Olivia these life-skills and we advocated for the child's Pupil Premium funding to be used for Kumon, an English and maths programme for children of all ages and abilities. We saw her self-confidence improve as she was not being bench-marked or compared to other children her age. She really started believing in herself and even started reading novels.

This is what makes fostering so rewarding. The progress the child makes when they are given the love, belief, support and foundation needed as children, so that they can thrive. It is the little progress that makes my heart swell with pride.

We are reaching out to Barnet Homes residents that have a spare room, you may even be paying bedroom tax, why not do something rewarding whilst earning money too?

GOING GREEN

PUTTING THE ENVIRONMENT FIRST

Electric vehicle charging points



Barnet Council has obtained funding to install 500 on-street vehicle charging points on 34 of Barnet's residential streets by November 2022.

For more information, or to request that the Council installs a shared use charging point on your road, go to barnet.gov.uk and search for 'electric vehicles Barnet'

Or, you can contact Barnet Council at: EVCharging@Barnet.gov.uk

Chargers for personal use

Barnet Homes has begun to receive enquiries from residents who want to install a personal-use electric vehicle (EV) charging point outside of their home. Please note the following guidance

Requests that will not be approved:

- an installation at a flat

- an installation at a house with a shared driveway.

Requests that may be approved (for tenants or leaseholders):

- an installation at a house with a demised driveway.

Please note the following:

- residents should seek written permission from Barnet Homes before starting this work. Approval can only be given in certain circumstances. For more information, go to barnethomes.org and search for "electric vehicle chargers" or go to tinyurl.com/Electric-Vehicle-Charger
- If permission is granted, residents will arrange for the charging point to be fitted themselves.
- To request an application pack, contact talk2us@barnethomes.org

OUR APPRENTICES

LEARNING WHILE EARNING

The Barnet Group's apprentices continue to shine



Recently, it was National Apprenticeship Week, so we're sharing some of the stories of our people who have been apprentices at The Barnet Group and have now gone on to full time employment. Here, Stella Cooper tells her story:

"I knew in Sixth Form that university wasn't for me and I wanted to apply for an apprenticeship instead. When lockdown hit, I found it very difficult to find any work as I had no experience.

"I then found out about the apprenticeship programme with the Barnet Group through the Barnet First eNewsletter. I applied through the TBG jobs page where I had to attach my CV and write a supporting statement and the application closed in July. I then interviewed in August and was told that I was successful in August, and started in September. I was given the 'BOOST Apprentice' role. The wage is £14,000 per year.

"I gained so much experience over the 14 months and learnt about housing, benefits, social media and employment support. I also gained multiple qualifications including housing practice, safeguarding adults, and customer service. Being able to gain hands-on experience while gaining a qualification was essential in preparing me for my future career.

"All of this led to me acquiring a permanent position as a Youth Employment Officer with BOOST at the end of my apprenticeship as well as being awarded Apprentice of the Year.

And we also hear from Fardowsa Mahamed: "I started an apprenticeship with The Barnet Group as the BOOST Business Administration apprentice. I found out about the apprenticeship at Woodhouse Road where I spoke to Lawrence about the position. When I started the apprenticeship, I was enthusiastic as it was good to start working again after I had lost my job at the beginning of the pandemic. The apprenticeship gave me certifications in housing practice, customer service, and safeguarding adults. At the end of the apprenticeship, I applied for a job as a resident liaison officer with a construction company and was successful. I am grateful for the opportunities that the apprenticeship gave me and I am looking forward to my new role."



We will soon be recruiting our next group of apprentices - keep an eye on thebarnetgroup.org and the next issue of atHome to find out how you can apply.

PARTY TIME

QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2 - 5 June



This year sees Her Majesty's The Queen become the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee. To mark this historic 70-year reign, celebrations will take place over an extended bank holiday weekend from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June.

Residents, community, and faith groups can take part in any of the following:

Street Parties

Find out how you can arrange to close your street and organise a party:

barnet.gov.uk/community/get-involved-your-community/street-parties-and-special-events

The Big Jubilee Lunch

Communities are encouraged to come together over lunch, to connect and bring the Jubilee celebrations into the heart of the community. More details can be found at:

edenprojectcommunities.com/blog/the-big-jubilee-lunch

The Queen's Green Canopy

Residents, community groups, schools and businesses are encouraged to plant a tree to create a living legacy of the Jubilee. More details: queensgreencanopy.org

Apply for up to £10K for a creative or cultural project in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee via the Let's Create Jubilee Fund. Applicants are encouraged to partner with local artists and/or cultural and creative organisations. Deadline is 28 February. Find out more artscouncil.org.uk.

Contact strategy@barnet.gov.uk if you are planning an event or need more details on how to get involved.



Your Choice Barnet

PERSON CENTRED

Job opportunities at Your Choice Barnet

Your Choice Barnet (YCB) provides a range of social care services for adults in Barnet. They provide tailored support for people who have disabilities and for older people. YCB is registered with and regulated by the Care Quality Commission.

YCB supports adults who have profound and multiple learning disabilities, complex autism and people who have dementia and other age-related conditions.

YCB can provide support in peoples' own homes by a personal assistant or on a short-term basis to help people regain skills. Support can be provided from specially designed accommodation, including supported living, residential care, extra care, day care and respite services.

The staff who work in YCB's services have outstanding skills and knowledge around the needs of the people we support, which is backed up by an excellent programme of learning and development.

If you think that you have the natural empathy and ability to empower people to get the best out of life, then maybe a career working in social care is for you. The starting salary at YCB is £10.85 per hour, rising to £11.05 after April 1 2022.

If you are interested in finding out more about our services including our vacancies go to yourchoicebarnet.org.