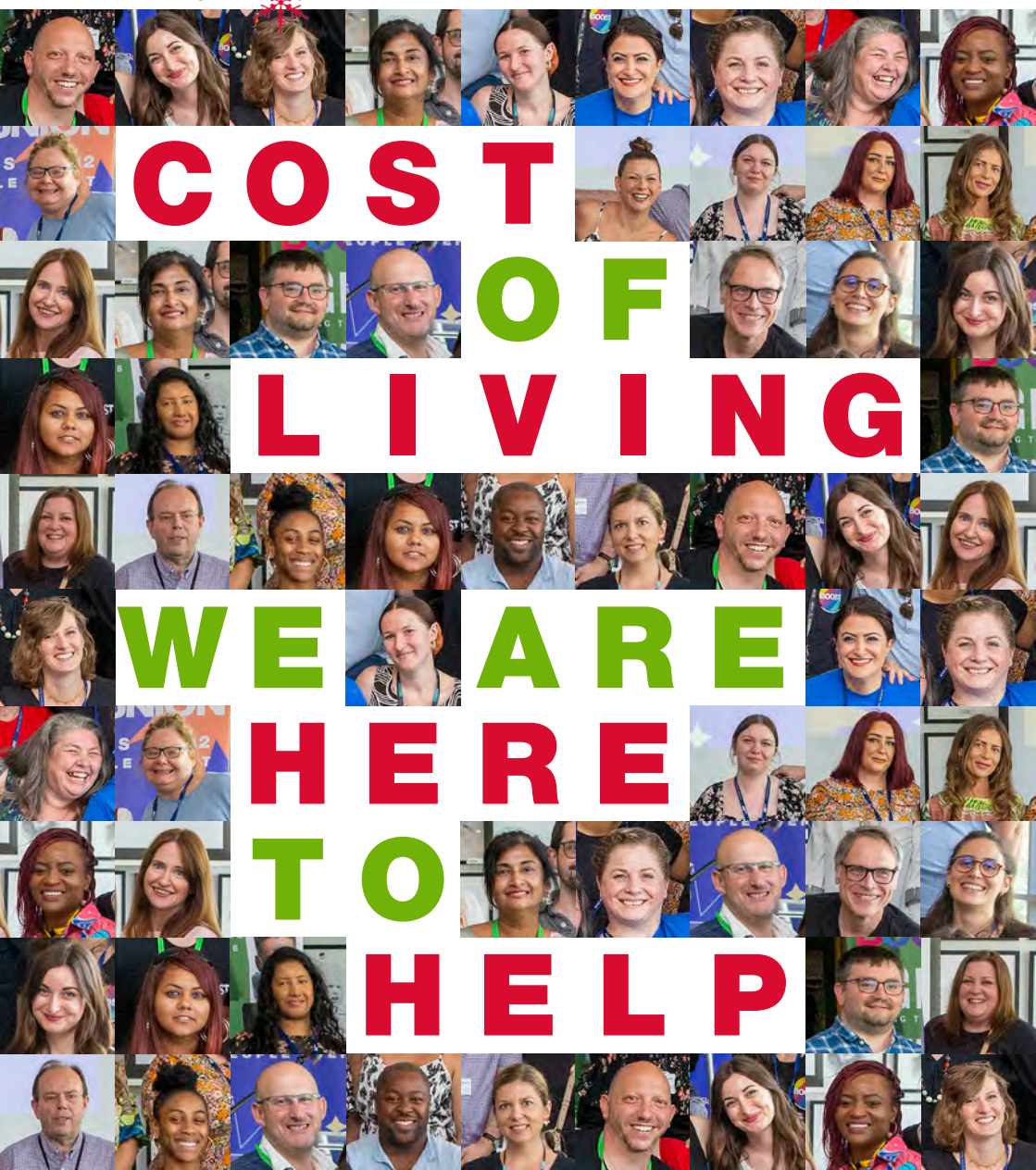




atHome





Supporting a resident - page 6

GET IN TOUCH

- ✉ TALKTOUS@BARNETHOMES.ORG
- ✉ CUSTOMERCONTACT@OPENDOORHOMES.ORG
- 📞 020 8080 6587 (BARNET HOMES)
- 📞 020 8080 6586 (OPENDOOR HOMES)
- 🌐 BARNETHOMES.ORG | OPENDOORHOMES.ORG
- 🐦 [@THEBARNETGROUP](https://twitter.com/THEBARNETGROUP) | [@BARNETHOMES](https://twitter.com/BARNETHOMES)
- 🐦 [@OPENDOOR_HOMES](https://twitter.com/OPENDOOR_HOMES) |
- 🐦 [COMMUNITY_TBG](https://twitter.com/COMMUNITY_TBG) | [@TBG_COMMUNITY1](https://twitter.com/TBG_COMMUNITY1)

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

Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes are committed to continuously improving what we do and the way we do it as a result of feedback from customers. We aim to listen to and learn from our customers so that we can address any service failures 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, by letter, through our websites and social media, by telephone, and in person. You can find our contact details above. Please visit barnethomes.org/complaints or opendoorhomes.org/complaints to find out more about our complaints process and about the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint-Handling Code to which we work.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 03 Welcome
- 04 News in brief
- 05 Resident Snapshot
- 06 Tenancy sustainment
- 07 You said, we did
- 08 Young people
- 09 Covid-19 support fund
- 10 Our community
- 11 Urban Gamez
- 12 Cost of Living support
- 13 Money saving tips workshops
- 14 Financial support
- 16 Healthy start scheme
- 17 Free cookery classes
- 18 Warm spaces and energy
- 20 Community Awards
- 21 Job opportunities with Your Choice Barnet
- 22 eScooter and eBike safety
- 23 Fire safety
- 24 The Resident Board
- 26 New homes for Barnet
- 27 Opendoor Homes Property Management
- 28 Cost of living support in Barnet



THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

TIM MULVENNA

Welcome to your winter 2022 edition of atHome, the magazine for Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes residents. This edition is packed with helpful advice and information for our community on the cost-of-living support measures that are available. Our Income Collection Team, Customer Contact Team and colleagues in BOOST are here to assist you. So please do get in touch if you are struggling to pay your rent or bills, or need advice on benefits.

The Barnet Group are offering our tenants the chance to attend a free Money Saving Tips Workshop that provides tips and advice on making savings or accessing funds that may be available for you. On completion of the course, customers will receive a £75 voucher that is redeemable either as a fuel voucher (gas/electric) or added to the rent account (one per household) - that's in the handy cost of living section in the middle of this magazine.

You will see on page 24 that your Resident Board representatives have been busy this year meeting all Heads of Service to review our quarterly performance and to consult on many strategies and policies. We are now actively recruiting new members to join the Barnet Homes' Resident Board - a position that requires a high level of commitment, but is both an exciting and rewarding opportunity - that's on page 25.

On page 27, you will see that we are also recruiting Opendoor Homes Service Champions as we are keen to ensure the



services you receive meet the standards you expect from us.

There's still time to make your nominations for our annual Community Awards. So please spend a moment to nominate and help recognise a good neighbour, an inspirational person, a Community Group, or fantastic volunteer. Find out more about that on page 20. The winners will be announced at an in-person event in January.

Finally, I'd like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

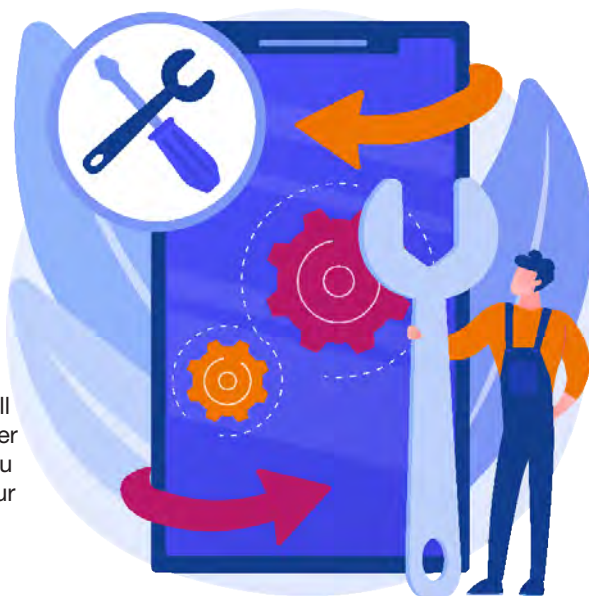
All the best,
Tim

Would you like to help test our new online repairs service?

As part of The Barnet Group's (TBG's) new Customer Experience Strategy, we are developing a repairs online self-serve option so that residents can diagnose their repair issue and book their repair appointment through our website, without having to call or email us. Before we launch repairs self-serve to all residents, we will run a pilot session with a group of Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes tenants. The pilot will allow us to test whether everything works and to make any improvements using resident feedback. We are aiming to start the pilot in December 2022.

To make the pilot meaningful, we would like as many tenants as possible to participate. If you are a Barnet Homes or Opendoor Homes tenant and would like to help us test our repairs self-serve option please send us an email at Talktous@barnethomes.org or customer care@opendoorhomes.org and include 'I want to pilot repairs self-serve' as the subject of your email.

When emailing us, please include your name, address and your tenancy or account number. Alternatively, please call us on 020 8080 6587 and our Customer Contact Team will be able to provide you with further information and register your interest for the pilot.



Concerns around possible blackouts

You may have seen or heard some news articles circulating in the press recently which discuss the prospect of blackouts taking place this winter in the UK, due to the current energy crisis which we are facing. If

the blackouts do go ahead, Barnet Council will provide and share more information nearer the time, including their plans to support vulnerable people.

Meet Barnet resident Lisa, who is passionate about being a BOOST Employment Coach and a Girl Guide leader

Resident Lisa has been a Barnet Homes' tenant for 28 years. She has a passion for supporting people into apprenticeships in her day job working as an Employment coach for BOOST, and for helping children into Girl Guiding in her spare time, here she tells us why.

"Six years ago, I was reading atHome magazine and there was an article in there about apprenticeships. I looked at the transferable skills I had developed in the past 20 years of being a mum of 5 at home. I was age 43 and I applied! After completing the apprenticeship, I joined the Neighbourhood Housing team as a Housing Support Officer. A few years later I decided to join BOOST as an Employment Coach because having been an apprentice, I really wanted to be an advocate for adult apprenticeships. One of my clients who's 55 years old, got an adult apprenticeship doing childcare level 2, I'm proud of that.

"My other passion is Girl Guiding. It started 10 years ago when I was a parent of a girl guide, then I became a parent helper, over 10 years I became a unit leader for the Barnet Ewan Hall 7th Brownies and Rainbows. During the pandemic like every other parent in the UK, I had to work from home, and home school my children. On top of all of that I carried on doing weekly zoom Girl



Lisa (pictured right) receiving her Jack Petchey award from County Commissioner Karen Binns

Guiding meetings. We were the only unit in the division to actually run every week throughout the pandemic, through zoom, doing interactive activities with the girls to try and keep things normal.

"In 2021 I received a Jack Petchey Award for outstanding leadership through the pandemic and for giving girls opportunities. It was one of the highlights of my Girl Guiding career. Girl Guiding plays a massive part in my life, I want to give girls an opportunity to blossom and bloom."

To find out more about Girl Guides visit girlguiding.org.uk

To find out more about apprenticeships visit boostbarnet.org

Lucy shares her story of sustaining her tenancy with help from Barnet Homes



Lucy, a Barnet resident, recently popped into the Barnet Homes office with flowers and chocolates for her Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Patricia. Lucy wanted to thank Patricia for all the support that has enabled her and her 8-year-old autistic son to move into a new apartment in Barnet. Lucy describes her housing story below in her own words.

“I was living with my autistic son in private rented accommodation in Barnet. For six years of this time, I was dealing with a landlord who was always after more money. He knew my difficult personal circumstance, but each year he served with me with an eviction notice, and each year I went back to Patricia and her team as I was being made homeless again. Barnet Homes always helped me to sustain my tenancy, until the point that my housing benefits were maxed out.

“When you live somewhere and you are stressing constantly about your living situation it can be really damaging to you because there’s not much you can do - I don’t drink, I don’t smoke, I don’t have many visitors because of my son’s reaction to them. I’m a single mum, paying my

rent, being a good tenant, and trying to do the right thing, but I had no control over what the landlord was doing.

“It got to the point this year that when my private landlord served me with another eviction notice, Patricia said we can’t pay any more towards the rent because it’s outside of housing allowances. Patricia was really understanding and advised that although I’d have to leave my rented home, she would help look for longer term accommodation, something more suitable and stable for me. She had a new property in mind but needed to check. It was a leap of faith. We did all the official paperwork together and then I was offered a new home with a Housing Association in Barnet. I signed the lease immediately.

Last month I moved into a two-bedroom flat in a new build property. It’s got a large balcony with a safe, high rail which my son can’t climb over, which is reassuring because he hasn’t got any sense of danger. And the flat is just perfect - everything is brand new; everything is lovely. It’s well insulated and warm so I don’t have to worry about the heating costs - I think that will help us a lot. I still can’t believe that this actually happened to us because the situation with my previous landlord had been dragging on for years. But I’ve ended up being in such a positive situation, thanks to Patricia and the team at Barnet Homes! I know there were a whole lot of people involved in nominating me and I feel really thankful and happy.”

Patricia said, “It makes my job worthwhile when I can make a real difference to somebody’s life, especially making the child’s life a lot better. I’m so pleased that it’s a new beginning for Lucy and her son.”

If you are facing eviction or homelessness, please talk to our Tenancy Sustainment team, call 020 8610 3539.

Learning from your feedback



Contact Team has been making outbound calls to customers to keep them updated about progress.

You said: That it sometimes takes too long for some areas of work to be completed

We did: like other housing providers, we have recently experienced a large number of vacancies in certain trades,

which has caused delays for customers. To address this, we recently completed focussed recruitment exercises for plastering and carpentry which has improved resourcing in these critical areas. Whilst plastering is still a challenge nationally, our waiting time for carpentry appointments has reduced significantly over the past 4 weeks.

Barnet Homes

Between 1 July and 30 September, Barnet Homes had 299 Stage 1 complaints to respond to. Of these, 26 were escalated to Stage 2 of our complaints process. We answered **96%** of Stage 1 complaints and **96%** of Stage 2 complaints within our target of 10 working days. Examples of learning from complaints is included below.

You said: staff in the Repairs service aren't always keeping you updated about appointment changes and repair delays

We did: we have introduced weekly monitoring of repairs appointments that are rescheduled and have taken action to reduce the volume of appointments that are moved. Where an appointment has to be moved, members of our Planning team now try to contact customers by phone at least twice before the appointment is rescheduled. Where repairs have been delayed due to unforeseen circumstances, a member of our Customer

Opendoor Homes

Between 1 July and 30 September, Opendoor Homes had 11 Stage 1 complaints to respond to. Of these, none were escalated to Stage 2 of our complaints process. We answered **100%** of Stage 1 complaints within our target of 10 working days. An example of learning from complaints is included below.

You said: that too many appointments were being rearranged without you being notified

We did: a session on the importance of contacting our customers when appointments need to be changed with all planners. We are actively tracking appointments moved and calls made to improve communication with our residents.



Recently, young people from Childs Hill, Grahame Park and Dollis Valley were treated to the opportunity of learning new skills and showcasing their musical talent through a four week innovative programme hosted by DJ and MC Academy.

Funded by The Barnet Group's Covid-19 Recovery Community Fund, 60 young people attended workshops and were taught how to DJ and learn how to become a radio presenter. Many of them also sang and rapped over their own music as well as learning how to produce a TikTok mash up DJ set.

DJ and MC Academy deliver their project by way of a mobile music studio, that helps to remove the barriers of accessibility and increases engagement, as there is no distance for young people to travel.

The project was a great way for the young people to gain confidence, make new friends, work as a team, and learn new skills.

Many of the young people had never had a chance to get involved in any DJ'ing or have the mobile studio come to them, which was a unique experience. A young person attending the event said, "It was great fun, exciting, interesting with kind tutors that were amazing and cool."

The workshops were a great success, and we hope to repeat them again in Summer 2023.

DJ and MC skills delivered on the doorstep for Barnet's young people

Apply now to the Covid-19 Recovery Community Fund

The Covid-19 Recovery Community Fund is financed by our contractor partners as part of their social value investment. The fund has supported Barnet based community projects during Covid-19 and will continue to do so throughout 2023.

If you have an idea for a community project, community social get together event or know of a Barnet based group that would benefit from the fund, please visit barnethomes.org and click on the community section and then Covid-19 Recovery Fund. Alternatively, if you have a smart phone, you can scan the QR code below which will take you to the application

form.

You can apply for up to £250 by filling out our online form which will ask for the following details:

- What will the funding cover?
- When and where you plan to hold your event?
- How many people are likely to attend?
- How much funding are you requesting?

All applications will have to demonstrate:

- The event aims to bring the community together
- That it is inclusive to all
- That you have an achievable outcome



USE THIS QR CODE TO MAKE YOUR APPLICATION TO THE FUND!

A new Health and Housing Navigator post

Barnet Homes has been working in partnership with North Central London NHS services. Together, we have identified a need to improve support for vulnerable Barnet residents who are experiencing housing difficulties while they are being treated in hospital. A resident may have no fixed home to return to after their stay in hospital, or they may need help to ensure that their home is medically fit to return to.

Once they are well enough to leave hospital, if a resident cannot move to a property that is medically suitable, they may need to extend their stay in hospital until a suitable property is found. In some cases, this can cost the NHS around £700 per bed per day.

To help address this problem, Barnet Homes has secured funding to recruit a 'Health and Housing Navigator'. The Navigator will work within hospitals to help Barnet residents with housing-related issues. The Navigator will aim to improve the wellbeing of Barnet's vulnerable residents by helping them to access necessary services. In turn, this should help to ease pressure on NHS bed spaces.

If this one-year pilot activity is successful, we will seek to access more funding to improve the support for residents who face complex issues in health and housing.

'Center of Excellence' Black History Month celebrations

'The Center of Excellence' is a non-profit community organisation based on the Grahame Park Estate. They are committed to building bridges and strengthening connections between young people and parents, focusing first on the Somali community and reaching out to others as they develop. Their intention is to create a safe space for people to share experiences and embrace, enrich and elevate each other to achieve excellence.

The Barnet Group recently funded Center of Excellence to help them stage their Black History Month event on Grahame Park, through our Covid 19 Recovery Community Fund.

Hawa from the Center of Excellence said, "The aim of the event was to celebrate Black History Month and the funding helped us share our Somali culture and tradition with the community. The event was very successful, we had our own stand decorated with our traditional clothing and displaying cultural artifacts and samples of our most popular Somali snacks. This was the first



time a Somali community organisation exhibited, attracting over 40 Somali family residents visiting our stand with pride, but also over 200 non-Somali visitors were able to experience our food and learn more about Somali culture on the day. Thank you for the funding, we appreciate all the help from The Barnet Group and its contractor partners."

Age UK delivers IT classes in our sheltered housing schemes

Six Barnet Homes' residents living in our sheltered housing recently enjoyed four weeks of one-to-one IT classes arranged by AgeUK with young volunteers from Woodhouse College 6th form.

Participant Ms Foulkes said, "I would like to say how helpful and interesting I found the computer course. It helped with problems I had with my laptop and my mobile phone, and it has given me more confidence to use them. The students were patient and kind. I really hope there will be more



Urban Gamez celebrates bigger than ever tenth anniversary



After two pandemic-hit years, Barnet's favourite sporting event Urban Gamez was back at the end of August 2022 for its tenth outing.

Having now outgrown The Concourse, this year's event was bigger than ever and held in Heybourne Park. There was, of course, the traditional 60 metre track to find out who Grahame Park's fastest children are. This year it was joined by an inflatable climbing wall, a rodeo bull, health and fitness tips from Better Gyms, a football target game, a bouncy castle and smoothie bike, as well as a visit from the London Fire Brigade who gave children the chance to test out their fire-fighting equipment.

And once everyone had raced and the winners had been decided, the Worshipful the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Alison Moore visited to give all the worthy winners their medals.

Blessed with great weather, Urban Gamez brought out the whole Grahame Park community together, and gave residents the opportunity to have an enjoyable day. As well as all the fun and games, the day gave residents the chance to speak to Barnet's community organisations who provided information on work and training, substance abuse, the regeneration of the area and community safety.

Group Director, Operations and Property, Elliott Sweetman said: "This is the best Urban Gamez we've had since it all began, which is a real testament to the team who put it together."

The Barnet Group would not have been able to host Urban Gamez without the generous support of its sponsors: Ad Hoc, Morgan Sindall Property Services, Notting Hill Genesis, Procom, Purdy, Quinn London, WG Wigginton and WSP.

Cost of living *Special*

We know things are going to be tough this winter. Working with Barnet Council, we have put together this handy guide to all the support available to you.

Barnet launches cost-of-living support including £2m Resident Support Fund

Barnet Council has approved a financial package to support residents through the cost-of-living crisis.

The measures include the creation of a £2million Resident Support Fund, which provides immediate support to residents experiencing a crisis and is part of a wider £9million financial support package, which includes:

- A new online application form that streamlines applications for Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Discretionary Relief and Resident Support Fund which launched on Monday 3 October. Please speak to your **Barnet Homes or Opendoor Homes Income Collection Officer** for more information on how to access it by calling **020 8610 3538** or visit the Barnet Council website on barnet.gov.uk/benefits-grants-and-financial-advice/barnet-resident-support-fund
- Partnering with the employment, benefits and advice service **BOOST** to fund additional outreach workers who provide specialised advice to residents experiencing financial difficulties. Read more about how BOOST can help you on page 14: AND
- Match funding £150k to the Barnet Together Alliance Community Response Fund, providing a £300k fund to enable community-led initiatives, such as warm spaces.

Further information on support with the cost-of-living is available on Barnet Council's website barnet.gov.uk/benefits-grants-and-financial-advice/cost-living-support

The Barnet Group's festive gift to you...

Money Saving Tips Workshop

As we all feel the impact of the **Cost of Living Crisis**, The Barnet Group are offering our residents the chance to attend a **free** Money Saving Tips Workshop.

The sessions are three hours long, the **fun interactive session** will provide tips and advice on making savings or accessing funds that may be available to you.



Workshop sponsored by our partners:



Travis Perkins

On completion of the course, participants will receive a **£75 voucher** (one per household) redeemable for household fuel or rent.

The courses will start in **January 2023.**

To book onto a course please email: ozge.karabulat@barnethomes.org or telephone: **020 8359 5593.**

The workshop is open to Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes tenants and leaseholders.

Our Income Collection Team: here to help

If you fall into difficulty paying your rent, please get in touch with our Income Collection Service on **020 8610 3538**. We can support you with discretionary housing payments, welfare benefits, money management and hardship funds and can also refer you to our in-house welfare benefits advisors who can carry out further checks to see if you may be entitled to further state benefits. Further advice is also available on our website at barnethomes.org

Over the coming months, the Income Collection Team will be introducing an alternative method of communication to get in touch with you to discuss your rent account. You may start to receive calls & messages from **020 8068 0301**. Please be assured that calls and texts from this number are from Barnet Homes, and that we are making contact to help sustain your tenancy. You will also be able to make payments via an automated link sent to your phone from this communication.

BOOSTing your prospects

BOOST is an employment, benefit advice and skills project helping Barnet residents, and is part of The Barnet Group. We use a personal approach to understand your circumstances, help you overcome obstacles and gain the confidence and skills to make positive change.

By registering with us you get access to all our free services:

- Weekly job bulletin
- Weekly webinars
- Your own dedicated employment

advisor

- Get access to our skilled benefit advisors
- Help with anything digital until it clicks
- Services for 16-24 years old

BOOST regularly hold events to bring help and exciting job opportunities to Barnet residents. We are planning to host a **Winter Job Fair** in February 2023.

Stay tuned for more information and keep checking boostbarnet.org for the latest upcoming events.

Household Support Fund

Barnet Council has provided BOOST with funding to support vulnerable households most in need of help with rising essential living costs over the winter months. You can find more information on eligibility, types of support available and how to apply for

support at boostbarnet.org.

You can also drop-in to Burnt Oak Library Monday to Thursday from 9:00am - 1pm if you require additional support.

Visit our housing surgery on 23 February for in-person support

Following the success of our two housing surgeries for Barnet Homes residents, we have decided to make these a regular feature. We are pleased to announce that the first surgery of 2023 will be held on **Thursday 23 February** from **3-8pm** at **Cricklewood Trades Hall, 134 Cricklewood Lane NW2 2DP**.

This is your opportunity to meet with officers from across all of our housing services, including our BOOST Team, who will be available to provide information and advice

on support available to assist with the cost of living.

We received positive feedback from residents with many saying that it was good to meet staff face to face to answer their questions.

For more information email us at getinvolved@barnethomes.org or call Deborah Beckford on **020 8359 5307**.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Get Together, Get Involved - Join our online meeting for advice and support

Every three months we host an online meeting for residents of Barnet Homes and Opendoor Homes to meet with officers and have the opportunity to find out more about how we are providing services to them.

The next meeting will be hosted by BOOST, providing support available for residents to help with the cost of living. This online meeting will be held on **Thursday 9**

February between **6.30pm-7.30pm**.

To register your interest in attending, email: getinvolved@barnethomes.org or get.involved@opendoorhomes.org

If you are unable to attend, or have limited online access, to gain information on cost of living support call the BOOST team on **020 8359 2442**.

Digital support and free broadband

Free digital drop-ins and workshops:

- Mondays in Burnt Oak Library
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- Tuesdays at Grahame Park Library
12:30 PM – 2:30 PM

BOOST are working with Community Fibre to offer free fibre broadband for 12 months

to Barnet residents. This scheme has been set up to support Barnet residents who can't access broadband in their home. Applicants will be required to provide Direct Debit details as security for the broadband router to Community Fibre. If you'd like to find out if you're eligible, please complete the form on boostbarnet.org.

Healthy Start support for families

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk.

If you're eligible, you'll be sent a Healthy Start card with money on it that you can use in some UK shops. Money will be added to this card every 4 weeks.

You'll get:

- £4.25 each week of your pregnancy from the 10th week
- £8.50 each week for children from birth to 1
- £4.25 each week for children between 1 and 4

Who can apply?

You'll qualify for the Healthy Start scheme if you're at least 10 weeks pregnant or you have at least one child that's under 4.

In addition, you must be receiving any of the following:

- Child Tax Credit (only if your family's annual income is £16,190 or less)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (which includes the child addition)

- Universal Credit (only if your family's take-home pay is £408 or less per month from employment)

You will also be eligible for Healthy Start if:

- you're under 18 and pregnant, even if you are not claiming any benefits
- you claim income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are over 10 weeks pregnant
- you, your partner or your carer get Working Tax Credit run-on only after you have reported you're working 16 hours or less per week

How to Apply

You can apply online: Please visit: healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply

You can also use your card to collect:

- Healthy Start vitamins – these support you during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Vitamin drops for babies and young children – these are suitable from birth to 4 years old



Free cookery classes

The BreadnButter project is running free cookery classes for residents living on the **Grahame Park Estate** and surrounding area including **Colindale**, **Edgware** and **Burnt Oak**.



Local residents pictured at a recent Thursday Takeaway session

Every **Thursday** between
5th January to 4th March 2023

To book your place email:
Filomena@breadnbutter.org.uk
or call **0794 057 1676**

Grahame Park,
The Concourse,
Colindale, NW9 5UY.

All ingredients and equipment will be provided!

Top tips for energy efficient cooking

- 01** The microwave is generally the most efficient way to heat up and cook food - it's always quicker and its smaller size (as opposed to the oven) means that the heat is more focused on whatever's being cooked.
- 02** A stir-fry is a healthy quick hob based way to cook vegetables so uses less energy to cook - the less cooked the vegetables the more goodness they contain.
- 03** When using water to boil anything in a pan, make sure that you only use as much water as is needed to cover the amount of food you're cooking - one of the most common forms of energy wastage is the energy it takes to boil water you don't need.
- 04** Slow cookers are also an energy-efficient cooking appliance - they use just a little more energy than a traditional light bulb, and you can leave your food to cook slowly throughout the day while you're at work or when you need to get on with other things.
- 05** Cook as much as possible in the oven in one go to make sure all the space and heat is being used. If you make lunches for work, do them all at once - you can always keep them in the fridge or freeze them to warm up when you need them.
- 06** When using an electric oven, turn it off ten minutes before the food's finished cooking. The oven temperature will remain the same so the food will still cook through to completion without the oven using energy.

Warm spaces - Barnet's libraries

Libraries are supporting local residents though the cost-of-living crisis with free services for all. Barnet libraries offer extensive opening times and high quality resources to borrow as well as FREE WiFi and computer access to members.

Libraries are available for reading, study, and leisure activities. A range of independent activities for adults, children, and families to do whilst spending time in a library will be coming to libraries soon.

The Libraries events programme provides a range of free and low cost early years activities, school holiday events for children and Conversation Cafes and

Reading Groups for adults. The Creative Communities Programme at Colindale library is providing a wide range of cultural events too.

Each Barnet library is setting up a cost of living information point to signpost residents to a range of resources, including the Barnet Council cost of living support.

Libraries are working in partnership with BOOST, to deliver Advice Drop-ins offering financial guidance in selected libraries.

For more information on support from libraries on the Cost-of-living visit

barnet.gov.uk/libraries



Save energy and keep warm this winter

We understand the cost of living and energy crisis is worrying. Many of us will be thinking about the ability to heat our homes, cook and stay warm this winter. Around 21% of the UK's carbon emissions come from our homes. These emissions come from heating or cooling properties, generating hot water and powering appliances.

How and when you use appliances around the home can help lower your energy and utility bills.

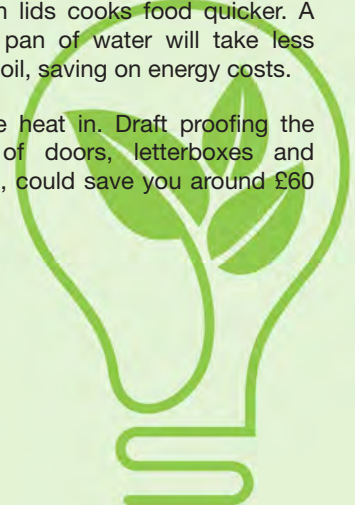
We have worked with energy experts to create a list of tips to help reduce energy and keep warm this winter. This will help to:

- save money during the cost-of-living crisis
- tackle climate change as a borough

Top tips to save energy in the home

- 1** Switch to using LED lightbulbs. These use 90% less energy than traditional bulbs. In a few months, LED light bulbs can pay for themselves through their energy saving quality.
- 2** Switch off electrical appliances when they're not in use. You can save around £65 a year by turning off your appliances instead of leaving them on standby mode.
- 3** Turn your lights off when you're not using them. This will save you around £25 a year on your annual energy bills.
- 4** Wash your clothes carefully. You can save around £34 a year by washing clothes at 30 degrees and reducing your wash to one run per week.

- 5** Turn down the temperature. Every degree you lower on your thermostat by could lower your heating bill by 10%.
- 6** Take shorter showers. Keeping your shower time to 4 minutes could save a typical household £95 a year on their energy bills.
- 7** Put a lid on cooking pans. Trapping heat with lids cooks food quicker. A covered pan of water will take less time to boil, saving on energy costs.
- 8** Keep the heat in. Draft proofing the bottom of doors, letterboxes and windows, could save you around £60 a year.



It's not too late to nominate a worthy neighbour or group!

It is not too late to make a nomination, so with no time to spare, let's GO, GO, GO!

What better way to say thank you to a neighbour who has gone the extra mile, or local group or charity that continues to make a difference in the community. The last few years have been challenging and difficult for so many people, but as usual it is when things are difficult that we all pull together to help each other.

How to nominate

A smile and a kind word goes a long way and can really make a difference. So spare a few minutes to either

1. Scan the QR code from your mobile device
2. Visit barnethomes.org to make a nomination or
3. Call Deborah Beckford on 020 8359 5307



The categories are

- Covid 19 inspirational person of the year
- Good neighbour of the year
- Community Group of the year
- Charity of the year
- Volunteer of the year, Over 25
- Volunteer of the year, Under 25

The closing date for the nominations is the Monday 9 January and the winners will be announced at our awards event on the Thursday 26 January.

THE BARNET GROUP'S COMMUNITY AWARDS 2022



Do you have what it takes?

Jobs in care and support with Your Choice Barnet

Your Choice Barnet offers specialist care and support to adults with a diverse range of support needs. We enable people to live their lives as they wish, giving them support they need to become as independent as possible.

We offer:

- London Living Wage (as a minimum)
- Additional benefits such as store vouchers
- Sites across Barnet
- Competitive terms and conditions

If you don't have experience working in care, then don't worry we will provide you with all the training you will need. All we ask is that you have the desire to make a difference.

Our services

Ansell Court: an extra care scheme for people over 55 in Mill Hill

Atholl House: an extra care scheme opening soon in Burnt Oak

Barnet Independent Living Service: support to adults with a range of physical and sensory needs based in Edgware

Care homes: two care homes in Finchley for older people

CommunitySpace: support for adults who have learning disabilities to access the local community based in Edgware

Enablement: supporting people for up to six weeks to regain skills and abilities they may have lost due to an accident or operation

Flower Lane: specialist support for people on the autism spectrum

PA Choices: matching people who are in receipt of direct payments with personal assistants

Rosa Morison Day Centre: a day service for adults with profound and complex learning and physical disabilities

Supported Living: supporting people with learning disabilities to live as independently as possible in their own home

Valley Way Respite Service: a respite service for adults with complex learning disabilities, physical disabilities and autism

Visit thebarnetgroup.org/careers

Warning about the fire safety risks of e-bikes and e-scooters

E-bikes and e-scooters are becoming increasingly popular. Most are powered by lithium-ion batteries which can be charged in the home. Batteries can fail catastrophically, they can 'explode' and/or lead to a rapidly developing fire.

With an increased use of e-bikes and e-scooters, comes a corresponding fire safety concern associated with their charging and storage. It is important when charging e-bikes and e-scooters, you do so safely to avoid a risk of a fire starting and putting your families and homes at risk. Here is some safety advice:

Charging

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when charging and always unplug your charger when finished.
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms. If you charge or store your e-bike or e-scooter in a garage or kitchen ensure you install detection, we recommend heat alarms rather than smoke detectors for these areas.
- Charge batteries whilst you are at home, awake and alert so if a fire should occur you can respond quickly.
- Always use the manufacturer approved charger for the product, and if you spot any signs of wear and tear or damage buy an official replacement charger from a reputable seller.
- Do not cover chargers or battery packs when charging as this could lead to overheating or even a fire.
- Do not charge batteries or store your e-bike or e-scooter near combustible or flammable materials.
- Do not overload socket outlets or use inappropriate extension leads.
- In the event of a fire – do not attempt to extinguish the fire. Get out, stay out, call 999.

Storage

- Avoid storing or charging e-bikes and e-scooters on escape routes or in communal areas of a multi occupied building. If there's a fire, it can affect people's ability to escape.
- Store e-bikes and e-scooters and their batteries in a cool place. Avoid storing them in excessively hot or cold areas.

Buying

- Buy e-bikes, e-scooters and chargers and batteries from reputable retailers. Many fires involve counterfeit electrical goods. Items which don't meet British standards pose a huge risk. It's not worth putting your life at risk and potentially destroying your home by buying a fake charger to save a few pounds.

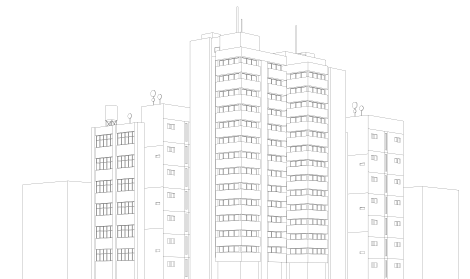
Damage and disposal

- Batteries can be damaged by dropping them or crashing e-bikes or e-scooters. Where the battery is damaged, it can overheat and catch fire without warning. Check your battery regularly.
- If you need to dispose of a damaged or end of life battery, don't dispose of it in your household waste or recycling, but take it to your local recycling centre. When punctured or crushed, they can cause fires. Your e-bike or e-scooter manufacturer may offer a recycling service.

Enjoy and ride your e-bike or e-scooter safely.



Fire safety - keeping communal areas clear



The safety and peace of mind of our residents is our top priority. Please help us keep you safe by making sure your shared areas such as hallways, staircases (including the areas underneath staircases) and spaces outside your flat are clear. This means everyone will be able to get out of your building as quickly as possible, should they need to.

We want you to take pride in your homes, and make them your own, but please be considerate of your neighbours and help keep each other safe.

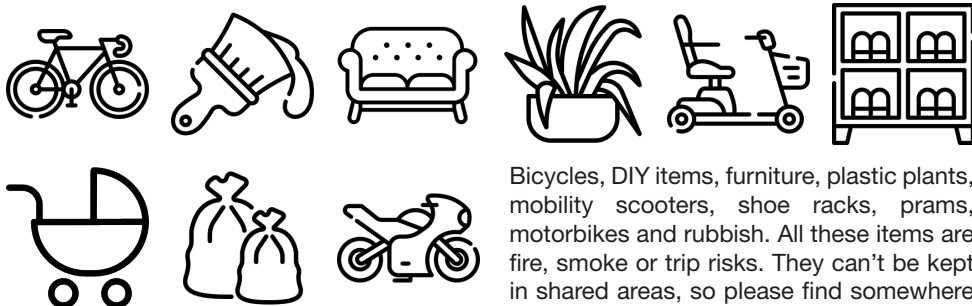
The areas in your building that you share with neighbours, such as corridors, stairways and fire escapes are everyone's way out in the event of an emergency. There are two main hazards that can stop people getting out of the building safely:

- ➔ Areas filling with smoke, making it hard for people to get out
- ➔ Tripping over items left in shared areas as people try to leave.

Shared areas need to be kept clear at all times. This means items that could catch fire or get in someone's way, including bikes, prams and mobility scooters, should never be left in a shared area.

- ➔ In buildings where shared areas are closed - they have a higher risk of filling with smoke
- ➔ In buildings where a lot of people live

They've got to go



Bicycles, DIY items, furniture, plastic plants, mobility scooters, shoe racks, prams, motorbikes and rubbish. All these items are fire, smoke or trip risks. They can't be kept in shared areas, so please find somewhere else safe to keep them.

Our Resident Board Chair's Report

Dear Residents,

I hope you are all keeping well. I can't believe how quickly the year has gone by considering how busy the Resident Board has been.

Apart from the four business meetings a year the Board attends with all Heads of Service to review quarterly performance, the members have been involved with various internal consultations including:

- Accessible Communications Policy
- Complaints and Compliments Policy
- Customer Experience Strategy
- Fire Safety
- Sustaining Tenancies Strategy
- Residents Annual Report
- Leasehold Alterations Policy

The Resident Board members have worked throughout the year with Barnet Homes, constantly striving to streamline and improve the services which matter most to you!

Some of our members are also on sub-groups and I am very proud of the work all the members do and proud to be the Chair of these dedicated people.

We also work closely with the Resident Support Group which is a database of over 100 tenants and leaseholders who also get involved to shape services by joining focus groups, attending 'Get Together, Get Involved' virtual meetings that all residents are invited to join, including telephone surveys and mystery shopping.

If you would like to find out more about getting involved or becoming a Resident Board member, why not make a new year's resolution to contact Deborah Beckford on 020 8359 5307 to have a chat?

Finally, I would like to say thank you to all the individuals and groups that do so much good work throughout the year in our community and I am delighted to say this year's Community Awards event is being held in person for the first time in two years since the lock down. So please take the time to nominate someone you know who goes the extra mile. Turn to page 20 to find out how to nominate someone.

I wish you all a peaceful winter season and a hopeful 2023.

Best wishes,

Aruna Bhatt, Chair of the Resident Board



Join the Barnet Homes' Resident Board

We are actively recruiting new members to join the Barnet Homes' Resident Board. Being on the Board is the highest level of involvement that requires a good level of commitment, although it is an exciting and rewarding opportunity for residents.

The Resident Board is accountable to the Barnet Homes' Group Board, tenants and leaseholders living in properties managed by Barnet Homes. The Board plays an important role in monitoring our operational

services, performance and influencing strategic priorities, including policy and making recommendations to the Barnet Homes' Group Board.

To recognise the commitment required this role is financially incentivised.

If you would like more information or just to have an informal chat email Getinvolved@barnethomes.org or call Deborah Beckford on 020 8359 5307.

Join Barnet Homes' Resident Support Group

The Resident Support Group is open to all Barnet Homes tenants and leaseholders to join. As a registered member, you will receive invitations to take part in various activities to have your say on how we are doing in providing housing services.

Activities include focus groups, surveys, feedback on policies, strategies, mystery shopping and access to a range of theme-based meetings. Some of the activities may also be financially incentivised.

The group feeds directly into the Barnet Homes' Resident Board and requires very little commitment, which may be of interest if you have a limited amount of time available.

We are keen to ensure the Resident Support Group is fully representative of our diverse resident community and supports our commitment to inclusion across gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and physical or mental ability.

For more information visit our get involved page on the Barnet Homes website or simply scan the below QR code on your smart phone.



BUILDING NEW HOMES

FOR BARNET



New development milestone for Opendoor Homes

Opendoor Homes has recently completed 52 new homes at Hermitage Lane in Childs Hill; a landmark scheme delivering homes for affordable rent, market sale and shared ownership.

Working with development partners Hill, this is the first scheme where homes for market sale and shared ownership have been built by Opendoor Homes, as well as increasing our stock of affordable housing.

The freehold for the site will remain within the Barnet family, and the financial proceeds will be reinvested into providing more affordable accommodation and delivering housing-related services.

Opendoor Homes were instrumental in delivering the planning for the scheme, and getting it 'on site'. These high quality and attractive homes will provide much-needed housing, particularly for affordable rent.

Speaking at the launch of the new homes, Meera Bedi, Head of Development at The Barnet Group said, "We are delighted to have delivered this attractive scheme in a very popular part of Barnet.

"The scheme is made up of fourteen brand new flats that will be let at Barnet Affordable Rent. There is one flat suitable for a wheelchair user as well as well-designed communal landscaped gardens. There were a lot of shared boundaries on this site which we have significantly re-built and so helped to make the scheme more secure for both our residents and our neighbours."

The market development has been branded as "The Artisan", and you can find out more about shared ownership opportunities at redloftproperty.co.uk/developments/the-artisan.

Meet the Opendoor Homes' Property Management Team

Opendoor Homes is a housing association and registered provider, it was established by The Barnet Group in 2017. Opendoor Homes' purpose is to increase the supply of affordable accommodation by building and purchasing new homes. Opendoor Homes currently manages over 700 properties.

Opendoor Homes' Property Management Team (pictured right) is led by Manager, Joe Rodriguez with three Property Management Officers, Denil, Sarah and Yasini, who are all supported by a dedicated administrator, Hayley.

Joe explains, "Our Property Management Team is dedicated to providing housing management services for Opendoor Homes' residents in Barnet. The main duties of the team are to carry out estate visits to our new homes, block inspections, and to conduct quality inspections. The Team also deals with Opendoor Homes' acquisition properties as well as responding to general housing enquiries. The team works with our wider supporting services including repairs, estate services and the contact centre.



We are a passionate team that is keen to listen to residents on how we can ensure the services you receive meet the standards you expect from us. We encourage you to express an interest in becoming an Opendoor Homes' Service Champion."

Become a Service Champion and help us shape Opendoor Homes' housing services

As we continue to build new homes, we want to ensure residents of Opendoor Homes have a voice and the opportunity to shape how we deliver housing services to them.

We are now inviting Opendoor residents to express an interest in becoming an Opendoor Homes' resident champion.

As a resident champion, you will act as a critical friend, providing us with important feedback on your experience in accessing our housing services and sharing your thoughts on how we can improve.

We are keen to ensure the Resident Champions are representative of our diverse resident community and support our commitment to inclusion across gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and physical or mental ability. This role is financially incentivised.



To find out more email get.involved@opendoorhomes.org or simply scan the QR code from your mobile device or call Deborah Beckford on 020 8359 5307.

Cost of Living **Support** in Barnet

The rising cost of living is affecting many people in the London borough of Barnet. To support residents who may be feeling the financial pressures of these rises Barnet Council and other local organisations are here to provide guidance on the financial support available to you.

ACCESS OUR ONLINE COST OF LIVING PAGE

What support is available?

You'll find
information on:



Finances and housing



Employment services



Children and adult social care



Mental health and wellbeing

There are also other support services available to residents, including food and meal support, debt management, care services and more.

www.barnet.gov.uk/costofliving

If you would like to talk to someone about these services,
please call us on 0208 359 2000



SPEAK TO SOMEONE ABOUT EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFIT ADVICE

BOOST

Boost provides personalised benefit advice, skills
and employment services to Barnet residents.

This support includes a team committed to helping residents get back on their feet, and includes services such as CV writing, interview workshops, and weekly updates on new jobs and apprenticeship opportunities.

To learn more visit **www.boostbarnet.org**

Or call us on **0208 359 2442**



BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH