

OPEN HOUSE

The newsletter for Croydon Council tenants and leaseholders

AUTUMN 2023



CROYDON HOUSING

CROYDON
www.croydon.gov.uk

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Foreword



Mayor Jason Perry
Executive Mayor of Croydon



Councillor Lynne Hale
Deputy Mayor and Cabinet
Member for Homes

Welcome to the autumn edition of our Open House newsletter.

We are excited to share some of the progress we've made since our last newsletter.

Our six-week consultation to involve Regina Road residents on the future of their homes was a success. After many conversations with our residents and inviting them to vote, 88% of the voters said 'yes' to the demolition and rebuilding of their homes. We will continue to work with the residents and listen to their views in the next phases of the project. Read more on [page 5](#).

A huge thank you to all our residents who helped to choose our new repairs contractors who started on 1 August 2023. This is an important milestone in getting our housing services back on track. Through November to December 2023, we are organising events across the borough to give residents the opportunity to meet the new contractors and ask them questions, see [page 13](#) for the upcoming events.

Tackling damp and mould remains one of the top priorities for Croydon housing services. We have now set up a new task force to respond to issues in council-owned properties, to ensure our tenants have warm, safe, dry homes they are proud to live in ([read more on page 7](#)). If you have any damp and mould issues please contact us, by emailing: dampandmould@croydon.gov.uk.

We are also reviewing our Building Safety Act concerning our High-Rise Residential Buildings (HRB's) i.e. buildings with seven storeys or above, or 18m and above. This is to ensure that we are compliant with new legislative changes regarding Fire Safety. We will give you more updates on this project in the next edition of Open House.

We know that the ongoing pressures from the increased cost of living is affecting our tenants, so we are pleased to have an update on the next round of Household Support Funding (HSF). The HSF is available to support eligible residents who need help with buying food and paying household bills etc. – more information about this is on [page 6](#). You can also apply for the hardship fund if you need support with your rent, see [page 5](#).

Results from our recent tenant satisfaction survey shows that residents' satisfaction has increased in most areas ([see page 10-11](#)). It's great that you're starting to see improvements in our services. This is good news, but we know we have a long way to go. We encourage you all to continue to give us feedback to help us keep you at the heart of what we do.

CROYDON LAUNCHES A TRANSFORMED HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE

REPAIRS SERVICE UPDATE

The council has launched its improved housing repairs service, which includes three new repairs contractors and an in-house contact centre. A huge thank you to all the residents who have been involved in the process!

Following your feedback, the repairs contact centre has been brought in-house to give the council a closer and more direct relationship with its residents. Anyone calling to report a repair will now speak to our professional team of advisers ready to help you with your enquiry. There is no change to how you report issues. **You can visit our website:**

croydon.gov.uk/repairs or call us on **020 8726 6101**, **Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.** We will only respond to emergency repairs outside of these hours. For any repair emergencies, please call us on the number above.

Also, based on resident feedback, we have split the housing repairs contracts to reduce dependency on one contractor. The companies Wates and Mears are now providing responsive repair, maintenance, and empty property works to council properties. K&T Heating is also delivering heating services, including boiler repairs and servicing. Our new providers have the Croydon Council's housing logo on their vans, uniforms, and ID cards/lanyards alongside their company logos for easy recognition.

As we make the necessary changes to bring our housing services to the standard you deserve, we kindly ask for your patience during this transition period as the service gradually improves. Residents have played a vital role in the decisions that we've made, and we invite you to continue to work with us in monitoring the service and maintaining the standard promised. **If you're interested in monitoring the repairs service, please email: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk or call us at 020 8726 6000, ext: 44524.**



www.croydon.gov.uk/repairs



HOUSING PRIORITIES SURVEY

Last year, we introduced the 'your housing priorities' survey as part of our commitment to put you at the heart of what we do. In line with the April 2023 rent increase, we wanted to understand what areas of the housing services matter to you the most to help us make decisions that reflect your needs. We are now running this survey again to hear your priorities for this year. Find out more on page 5.

A big thank you to all who completed the previous survey. There are your top three priorities for 2023 and what we have done so far.

1:

YOU SAID:
"It's important to you that the communal areas and exterior of the buildings are well-cleaned and maintained."

WE DID

As of July 2023, we have rolled out a deep cleaning programme targeting blocks that need a deep clean. We have attended to blocks in Longheath Gardens, and other areas at Whitehorse Road estate, Ruskin Road, and Tamworth Road.

We have also worked with residents to create a set of cleaning standards for our caretakers with details of how the communal areas should look when cleaned. This is to ensure we are providing services at a standard that meets your expectations.



2:

YOU SAID:
"You wanted a better housing repairs service."

WE DID

We have launched an improved housing repairs service, which includes three new repair contractors and an in-house contact centre (read more on page 3). The new contractors started on 1 August and are eager to help residents. Our new in-house contact centre has already taken over 12,500 calls from residents, leading to over 4,800 referrals to contractors.

3:

YOU SAID:
"You told us that you wanted us to prioritise internal repairs and maintenance needed in your homes."

WE DID

As of April 2023, we started a review of all our council properties to get a full understanding of their condition. This will help us to see where we need to invest in improvements and to help us be more proactive in delivering future maintenance work.

Our surveyors are also highlighting areas of concern and working closely with our specialist damp and mould team to identify homes that need emergency work.

TELL US YOUR TOP HOUSING SERVICE PRIORITIES FOR 2024/2025

We made a commitment to be open and honest with our tenants and to involve you in the decisions which affect you when we formally adopted the Residents' Charter. As part of that commitment, we would like you to have your say on the housing spending priorities for the 2024/25 financial year ahead of the annual rent increase in April 2024.

Scan the QR code to complete our survey. It will only take a couple of minutes. Closing date is Friday 15 December 2023.



www.getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/hse2024-25

RENT SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Following the 2023 rent increase, we have created a hardship fund to support council tenants who do not receive state benefits such as housing benefit and universal credit. This fund offers tenants the opportunity to apply for a one-off lump sum payment of £500 to be added to their rent account. In addition to this, we will assess your finances to advise if you may be eligible for welfare benefits that you have not receiving.

If you are interested, please call 020 8726 6100 and ask for the income recovery team or email: CouncilRents@croydon.gov.uk.



REGINA ROAD REDEVELOPMENT PROGRESS UPDATE

Following a ballot in May, Regina Road residents voted overwhelmingly in favour of homes being demolished and rebuilt on the estate, with 88.1% of residents voting for the proposal and only 11.9% against.

SO, WHAT'S NEXT FOR REGINA ROAD?

Since the 'yes' vote, the council has been progressing architectural designs, with residents actively involved and providing input through regular group meetings and drop-in sessions.

Croydon's cabinet has recently approved the next steps for the demolition and rebuilding of the Regina Road estate. This will be done in two phases.

Phase one would see the building of an estimated 86 new council homes on the north side of Regina Road, plus an estimated eight new homes to be built at nearby Malton House. Phase two would follow with an estimated 139 new council homes and a replacement nursery and community centre – with the details to be reviewed by cabinet next year.

The council is working closely with the residents to find alternative accommodation and will continue to consult with them every step of the way. For further information, visit: www.croydon.gov.uk/reginaroad

Summer of fun



Mayor Jason Perry at Regina Road with children from the estate and three staff members from Play Place

A massive shout out to all our young people who attended the summer of fun activities across the borough.

The programme presented a wide range of activities including sports, arts and crafts, gaming etc, on some of our council estates. This was organised for children aged 8 to 16years old to help support young families and to keep the children active over the summer holiday.

A big thank you to Play Place for running the activities and keeping our children engaged. See you next summer!



MERAH SMITH TURNS 111 YEARS!

We hope you remember Merah Smith (Mumma) who is one of the oldest residents in Croydon. We continue to celebrate her inspiring life as she turned 111years old in November 2023!

Earlier this year, Merah was awarded the Freedom of the Borough award in recognition of her lifelong service to others working in the NHS and for being one of our oldest residents.

Stormzy, who also received the Freedom of the Borough award, congratulated Merah in his message to the council saying: *"I send a massive shout out to Mumma because you are amazing, you are phenomenal. You love your exercise, so we have a few things in common, but I don't think I'll ever be as legendary as you are so congratulations to you Mumma."*

Our council officers visited Merah on her birthday to celebrate and gave her flowers and a gift. She already has plans for her 115th birthday and we're all rooting for her!

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND - ARE YOU FACING FINANCIAL CHALLENGES?

Croydon Council has relaunched its Household Support Fund (HSF) for residents who are in need of financial support. The council has received funding from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to support low-income households with the cost of food, gas and electricity.

To apply, residents need to complete the online application on the council's website. If you have applied to the fund before, you can submit a new application as long as it has been three months since your previous application.



For more information and to apply, please scan the QR code or visit www.croydon.gov.uk/hsf

CROYDON SETS UP TASK FORCE TO TACKLE DAMP AND MOULD IN COUNCIL HOMES

Croydon Council has established a task force to tackle damp and mould in council-owned properties to ensure our residents have warm, safe, and dry homes.

The taskforce has been inspecting homes that may be more susceptible to damp and mould, managing any issues early before they escalate and impact the condition of the homes. The council is also training more staff on the risks of living in a damp or mouldy environment, how to spot signs of problems, report and address any concerns.

If you have damp and mould in your property, please report it to us by emailing: dampandmould@croydon.gov.uk

HELP US SHAPE OUR SERVICES TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

As a housing service provider, it is important that we have accurate equality data for our tenants to help ensure that the services we provide are inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Over the next few months, we'll be conducting a customer information project designed to capture missing equality data from our residents. Please look out for these surveys and questionnaires to help us deliver services tailored to you.

Equality data includes the protected characteristics age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

Providing this information is entirely optional, and the data will be used in line with the council's privacy policy. For more information about the policy, please scan the code or visit www.croydon.gov.uk/privacy-notice



FIRE SAFETY **FIRE DOORS** YOUR SAFETY, OUR PRIORITY

Fire doors play an important role in keeping you safe during a fire. Here's why they matter, what we're doing, and how you can help.

WHAT ARE FIRE DOORS?

Fire doors are fire-resistant doors. In a council block of flats, you'll find fire doors in communal areas, ie stairwells, corridors, and flat front doors. They're designed to:

- Withstand fire for a period between 30-60 minutes.
- Protect crucial escape routes so that people can escape the building safely.
- Close automatically behind you to form a barrier.
- Prevent fire from spreading to other parts of the building.

HERE'S WHAT WE'RE DOING:

We've launched the Fire Door Inspection Programme to meet new government rules.

- Quarterly inspections of communal fire doors in council buildings over 11 meters tall (typically above five floors/storesys).
- Flat entrance doors in council buildings over 11 meters tall get annual inspections.

- We're upgrading communal fire doors as necessary, prioritising buildings assessed as higher risk.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Safety is a shared responsibility.

- Keep fire doors closed - Always shut fire doors when not in use; it slows fire and smoke.
- Please don't tamper with the self-closing mechanisms; they're there to close doors automatically during a fire.
- Report issues - **If you notice faults or damage to fire doors, contact our housing repairs contact centre immediately on 020 8726 6101, Monday to Friday | 8am-6pm (calls during evenings, overnight, weekends and bank holidays will be redirected to a contractor as part of our out of hours service). For more details on reporting a repair visit www.croydon.gov.uk/repairs.**

More fire door advice can be found on the London Fire Brigade's website at www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/fire-doors/ Scan the QR code to access the website.



STAY PUT OR EVACUATE?

One of the main concerns people have in the event of a fire is whether to 'stay put' or to 'evacuate'. Every building is different which is why we have a customised Fire Action Notice in your communal area to guide you as to what action to take. Here's what to remember:

- In the event of a fire in your flat, you should leave the building immediately taking family members with you and closing the front door behind them.
- If there is a fire in your building but not inside your own home, stay put if your building's evacuation plan advises so, unless the heat or smoke from the fire is affecting you.
- Follow the emergency evacuation plan which includes taking stairs instead of the lift and waiting at the designated safe area for the fire brigade.
- Call 999.

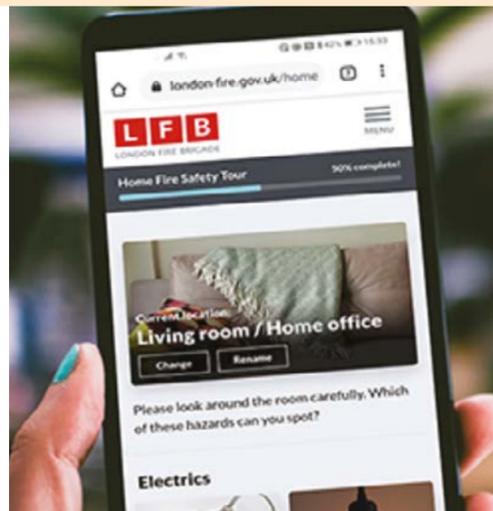
IS YOUR HOME SAFE?

London Fire Brigade has designed a helpful tool that allows you to carry out a thorough check of your home in only a few minutes. This will help you detect fire risks around the home and suggest changes to prevent unnecessary fires.



Scan this code for the safety checker or use the link below

www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/home-fire-safety-checker-hfsc/



HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE - ARE YOU COVERED?

Did you know that without contents insurance for your home, your belongings are not insured against damage or theft?

Croydon Council housing tenants are eligible to apply for a special council-run scheme. Premiums range from £1.78 to £6.22 per week, depending on the amount of cover you want - £10,000 (minimum) to £35,000 (maximum). The insurance covers the contents of your home, including items such as furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, electrical

items, jewellery, pictures and ornaments. The cost is cheaper than many other insurance companies and you can pay in weekly instalments instead of a large lump sum payment. To be eligible, payments on your rent account need to be up to date.

For more information on how to apply and details of the terms and conditions, email: housingrentaccounting@croydon.gov.uk, who will send a policy booklet to you.



www.croydon.gov.uk/hci



HERE TO HELP

Did you know that you may be eligible for disability benefits if you have a disability or care for someone who does?

There are benefits available to help you manage the extra costs if you fall into this category. These benefits are not dependent on your income or savings.

The main benefits available include:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA): for people with a child under 16 years.
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP): for people who are 16 years and above.
- Attendance Allowance: for people who have reached State Pension age and above.

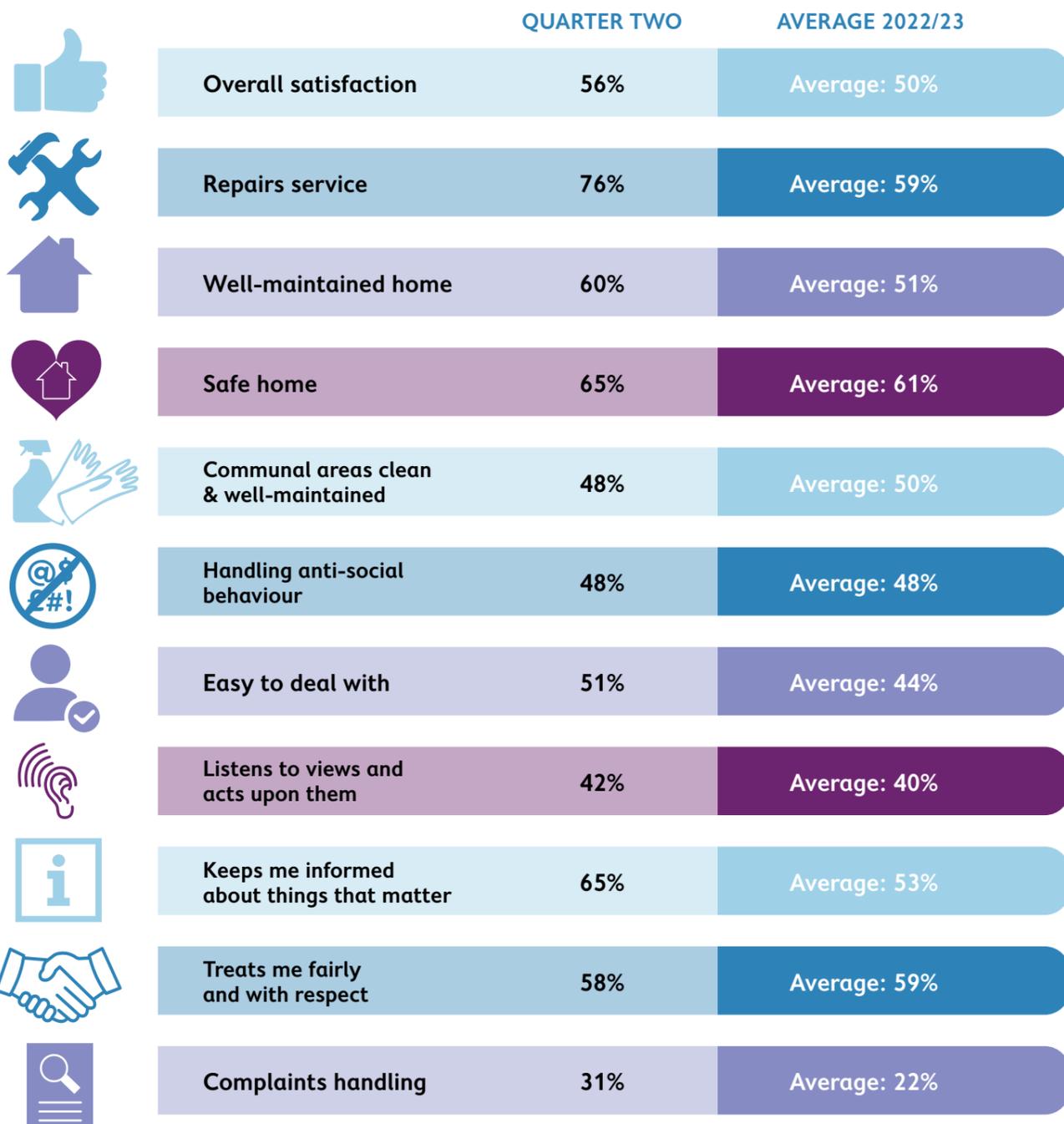
All claims must be accompanied by medical evidence from a registered medical practitioner. If you would like to learn more about what benefits you may be eligible for, please contact our Welfare Rights Advisers at: CouncilTenantsWBA@croydon.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can call 020 8726 6000, ext: 44524 to speak to an officer who will forward your details on to our Welfare Rights Team.

DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT US - WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES (TSMs)

HOW ARE WE DOING? - SATISFACTION RESULTS

Each quarter, we ask 250 tenants what they think of the housing services they receive from Croydon Council. The surveys are carried out on our behalf by an independent company, Acuity. Our latest survey results from quarter two (July - September 2023), shows an increase in our tenants' satisfaction as compared to the average satisfaction from last year (April 2022 – April 2023). While we are still not performing as well as we would like to, it is encouraging to see an improvement and we will continue to do our best to provide services at a standard that meets your expectation.



KEEPING PROPERTIES IN GOOD REPAIR AND MAINTAINING BUILDING SAFETY



There's a visible increase in tenant satisfaction across the area of repairs and maintenance of homes. Although the percentage is still far from what we aim to achieve, we hope that the changes we've made to our responsive repairs will further improve the service you receive.

RESPONSIBLE NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT



We noticed a decrease in your satisfaction with the maintenance and cleanliness of the communal areas. To address this, we have been working with residents to create a set of cleaning standards to help provide a better service. Our Neighbourhood Voice scheme and estate walkabouts are ways residents can give us feedback in this area. Scan the code to find out more. We're also increasing the number of security cameras on our estates to help tackle anti-social behaviour.



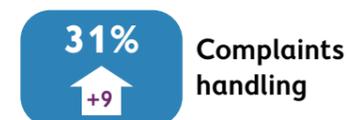
www.croydon.gov.uk/housing-get-involved

RESPECTFUL AND HELPFUL ENGAGEMENT



It has been one of our priorities to put our tenants at the centre of what we do, which is why the Residents' Charter was developed. As we continue to implement the values and standards in the Charter, and with a more customer-focused approach to handling repairs, we hope residents will have better experience in this area.

EFFECTIVE HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS



Complaints are an important way for us to understand how we are doing. We are pleased to see a slight improvement in how you feel we are handling your complaints. We are aware that we are far from what our standard should be, and we will continue to work hard to improve this.

We want to say a big thank you to residents for taking the time to talk to Acuity to help us understand how we are doing. If you receive a phone call asking you to take part in the survey, please do as your feedback will help improve our services.



BECOME A BLOCK REP

Are you interested in helping us improve the estate services you receive from us? If your answer is yes, why not become a block rep!

As a block rep (representative), you will get training to help us monitor the following services on your block or estate:

- caretaking services
- street cleansing services
- grounds maintenance services

For an informal chat about this important role, call 020 8726 6000, ext: 44524 or email: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk

Resident involvement strategy with Tpas underway!

Between July 23 and October 23, we have been working with Tpas (Tenant participation advisory service) to refresh our resident involvement strategy. This project is a major part of our housing transformation programme to ensure that our service users are at the heart of what we do.

The new resident involvement framework will help make our engagement channels more accessible to you and create even more opportunities for you to work with us to shape our service delivery.

We want to thank all residents who have already been involved in the process by way of giving us feedback or sharing their ideas. If you want to get involved in future projects, please email: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk or call 020 8726 6000, ext: 44524.



JOIN OUR MYSTERY SHOPPING VOLUNTEERS

Mystery shoppers help us improve our services by testing housing services through a series of pre-agreed tasks such as telephone calls or reception visits. Feedback from the experiences helps improve the quality of Croydon's housing services.

If you want to learn more or to apply, email: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk or call 020 8726 6000, ext: 44524



DO YOU HAVE IDEAS ON HOW TO MAKE CROYDON BETTER? – TELL US!

We are asking residents to get involved and share suggestions as part of the social value initiative to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of our local communities.

What is social value and what does it mean to you as a resident?

In simple words, social value is how companies will give back to the community in which they work. Examples can be providing local job opportunities, using local suppliers and doing their bit to protect the environment.

Our new repair contractors (Wates, Mears and K&T Heating) pledged to deliver social value as part of the contracts. To make sure that they will truly be meeting the needs of our residents, we're asking you to tell us your ideas. Ideas could be in the areas of:

- Initiatives to support the reduction in crime
- Employment opportunities – work experiences, apprenticeships
- Events and initiatives for young people
- Resident training
- Initiatives to support residents' cost of living / wellbeing
- Other local events

Please send your suggestions to socialvalue@croydon.gov.uk



MEET YOUR NEW REPAIRS CONTRACTORS



Thursday 23rd November 2023 // 10am - 12pm
Allington Court/ Tollgate - Communal lounge, Allington Court, 3 Chart Close, Addiscombe, Croydon, CR0 7YF

Friday 24th November 2023 // 10am - 12pm
Monks Hill - The Lighthouse @ St Francis, 146 Tedder Road, Monks Hill, South Croydon, CR2 8AH

Monday 27th November 2023 // 11am - 2pm
New Addington - CALAT Centre 61 Central Parade, New Addington, Croydon, CR0 9AZ

Wednesday 29th November 2023 // 1pm - 3pm
Fieldway - The Family Centre, Fieldway, New Addington, Croydon, CR0 9AZ

Thursday 30th November 2023 // 5.30pm - 7pm
Shrublands - Shirley Community Centre, Shrublands Avenue, Croydon, CR0 8JA

Monday 4th December 2023 // 4.30pm - 6.30pm
Thornton Heath - St Paul's Church Hall, St Paul's Road, Thornton Heath, CR7 8NB

Wednesday 6th December 2023 // 6pm - 8pm
Handcroft - Incl. Tamworth & Eastney, Hood Close Resource Centre, 18 – 19 Hood Close, Croydon, CR0 3SN

Thursday 7th December 2023 // 6pm - 8pm
Tollers - Tollers Community Centre, 23 Jutland Gardens, Goodenough Way, Coulsdon, CR5 1DW

RESIDENTS SHOUT OUT!



AUCKLAND RISE GARDEN OPENING

A huge shout out to our green-fingered residents at Auckland Rise estate for their beautiful community garden. The opening was attended by Mayor Jason Perry, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Lynne Hale and council officers, who were all impressed by what the residents have achieved together.

With support from the housing community development team, the residents worked hard to clear the overgrown area and make the ground suitable for planting. Their hard work has certainly paid off with a beautiful show of flowers and an impressive harvest of vegetables. This has sparked the interest of other residents in gardening- so much so that there's now a waiting list with residents who want to garden.

The community garden has become one of the focal points for bringing residents together and providing a place for family activities.

"The community garden has been great for my young family. Growing our own herbs and vegetables has made the boys more excited about trying new vegetables because they've grown them themselves."
- Natalie, an Auckland Rise resident.



Mayor Jason Perry with a young family of green fingers. Both boys have been actively involved in planting their own vegetables



Councillor Claire Bonham with a group of residents



A resident of Auckland Rise (L), Mayor Jason Perry, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Homes, Lynne Hale with Ken Constantine, council officer (R)



Residents with their homegrown courgette

SOUTHLANDS GARDEN CLEAN-UP

The community development team organised a two-day garden clean-up at Southlands Close. Together with residents, they achieved some fantastic results.

A special shoutout to all the residents of Southlands Close who helped in the garden or provided refreshments. Also, a big thank you to Councillor Margaret Bird and our council officers who were involved.



WINGATE CRESCENT RESIDENTS' FORUM

A massive shout out to our residents' forum at Wingate Crescent who met in-person for the first time since 2019. Our resident involvement officers were present to help them to reach their goals.

If you're interested forming a residents' group (forum or association) on your estate, please contact the resident involvement team at: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk or call: **020 8726 6000, ext: 44524**. Our resident involvement officers will be available to help set it up and support you every step of the way.



TAMWORTH ESTATE LITTER PICK

Thank you to residents at Tamworth estate and the New Life Christian Centre, who got together for an epic tidy-up on the estate!



[www.croydon.gov.uk/
clean-croydon](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/clean-croydon)

If you are a resident, local business or organisation and would like to organise a community clean-up in your area or in any part of the borough, you can find out more by calling 020 8726 6200 or emailing: champions@croydon.gov.uk or visit our website for more information by scanning the QR code above.

KEEP IN TOUCH!

We love to hear from you – tell us about the latest community activities on your estate.

If you want to share or invite us to an event on your estate, please call us at **020 8726 6000, ext: 44524** or email: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk and ask for the resident involvement team.

Keep in touch and follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/croydonresidentinvolvement.



Also subscribe to our e-newsletter: www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/residents/ohnews



DOWNLOAD YOUR BIN COLLECTION CALENDAR

You can visit our website (scan the QR code) to check when your bin will be collected. We provide a breakdown of what kind of bin will be collected and when. We will also tell you if there are delays with your bin collection and report any issues.

If you do not have communal bins, visit our website or scan the code and download your personalised bin collection calendar.



[www.croydon.gov.uk/
environment/randw](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/randw)

The Love Clean Streets smartphone app is the fastest way to report fly tipping, graffiti, abandoned cars and many other issues on Croydon's streets.

Help us keep our streets clean and download the app on any smartphone (IOS/Apple or Android), at www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/dont-mess-croydon/love-clean-streets-app



Or you can report it online at <https://croydon-beta.lovecleanstreets.com/reports>