



# housing matters

Housing Matters is the newsletter for Medway Council tenants and leaseholders

**Inheriting your tenancy**

**Twydall Area Residents  
Association**

**Meet the housing officers**

**Cracking down on  
housing fraud**

## Information for tenants

Below you will find a list of useful numbers for council services. Please cut this out and retain for your future reference.

### Repairs

For urgent and non-urgent repairs inside normal working hours, phone **01634 333601** or email [cfhousing.repairs@medway.gov.uk](mailto:cfhousing.repairs@medway.gov.uk), freephone **0800 073 0073**

### Out-of-hours

For emergency repairs outside of normal working hours, phone **01634 304400**

### Gas

If you have a problem with your boiler or gas fire, phone **01634 733488**

### General council enquiries

Phone: **01634 333333**

Email: [info@medway.gov.uk](mailto:info@medway.gov.uk)

### Housing benefit/council tax

Phone: **01634 332222**

Email: [ctax@medway.gov.uk](mailto:ctax@medway.gov.uk)

### Bulky waste collection

If you have a large unwanted item such as a sofa, fridge or washing machine that you would like to dispose of phone **01634 333333** or book online at [www.medway.gov.uk/bulkywaste](http://www.medway.gov.uk/bulkywaste)

This magazine has been approved by the Resident Communication and Editorial Panel; Shirley Griffiths, Mary Butcher, Mary Faulkner, David Bournier and Tony Phillips.

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### FREEPOST ADDRESS FOR ALL TENANT PARTICIPATION/CORRESPONDENCE

**Community Development Officer,  
Tenant Participation, Freepost Licence No.  
RRXB-CCXR-JGZJ, Medway Council,  
Housing Services, Gun Wharf Level 2,  
Dock Road Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR**

Or email [tenant.participation@medway.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.participation@medway.gov.uk)  
Please make sure you put *Housing Matters* in the subject line.


## Who to contact

 **Customer services: 01634 333333** 8am to 8pm (Mon-Fri) 9am to 1pm (Sat)

Please note: Calls to customer services may be recorded or monitored for security and staff development purposes.

 **Housing Services, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR**

 Email: [housing@medway.gov.uk](mailto:housing@medway.gov.uk) Website: [www.medway.gov.uk/housing](http://www.medway.gov.uk/housing)

 Miniom: **01634 333111**

This information can be made available in other formats from **01634 333333**

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please ring **01634 335577**

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中文	331781	हिंदी	331783	Polski	332373	ଏକ୍ସକ୍ସକ୍ସ	331786	فارسی	331840	Lietuviškai	332372

## Dear resident

Welcome to the summer/autumn edition of *Housing Matters*. In this edition we are providing you with the results of our status survey, which hundreds of you replied to in March. This widespread and in depth survey was the first of its kind to be sent to you since 2008 and it really was important that we obtained as much feedback as possible.

The results and feedback are being used to develop and improve the services that we provide to you. We will be working with our tenant forums to develop an action plan arising from this survey.

We are also going to be speaking to as many of you as possible during the summer as staff from Housing Services will be out and about visiting the area. We want to hear from you first hand what it is like to live in the area, what more we could do and also what you like best about your home.

The council is undertaking a radical review of the way in which it delivers its services and this review is expected to lead to a transformation for the way in which you as customers can expect services to be delivered in the future. As part of this project Derrick Singleton, Head of Landlord Services has been seconded to the project team for the next 18 months. As a result of this Marc Blowers, Head of Service

Improvement, has assumed responsibility for the Landlord Service. Marc has worked for Medway Council in Housing for the last two and a half years and has over 25 years' housing management experience.

We have extended the repairs and maintenance contract with Mears for a further two years from March 2012. This follows consultation with residents and our Housing Services Scrutiny Panel and taking in to account high levels of customer satisfaction. We will work with Mears to continue to improve the repairs and maintenance service provided to you, streamlining processes where possible and reinvesting savings back into services.

I hope that you find this edition of *Housing Matters* informative and useful. As always, feedback is welcome on what is both good and bad about the way we present this information to you. Please do let me know what you think.

In the meantime, enjoy the summer.



Yours sincerely,  
**Deborah Upton**  
Assistant Director  
Housing & Corporate  
Services

# Make a real difference to your housing services

**We have been busy developing our new scrutiny panel, which we are calling the Housing Services Scrutiny Panel.**

The Housing Services Scrutiny Panel sit independently of all other resident focus groups. The panel review performance reports, policies and procedures and any referrals received from other resident focus groups and meet regularly with Marc Blowers, Head of Landlord Services and Service Improvement, Deborah Upton, Assistant Director Housing and Corporate Services and other managers or officers as requested.

Recent applicants for the Housing Services Scrutiny Panel have been undertaking workshops and interviews with the panels independent mentor Oonah Lacey.

The panel meet independently of the council and scrutinise and challenge the policies,

procedures and housing services that the council provide. We will be providing you with a meet the Housing Services Scrutiny Panel article in the winter edition of *Housing Matters*.

All tenants are welcome to apply to join the Housing Services Scrutiny Panel. If you would like to scrutinise and challenge the services we provide, please phone Katherine Clark on **01634 333201** or email **tenant.participation@medway.gov.uk**



## Get active with a Passport to Leisure

Medway Council offers a **Passport to Leisure discount card** that makes sport and leisure more accessible to a wider group of people who live in Medway. It gives them and their dependants reduced prices or free access to some facilities in Medway at certain times.

To qualify, one of the following must be applicable to you:

- registered unemployed;
- registered disabled and a social services recipient;
- a senior citizen;
- on social security and income support;

- an asylum seeker;
- on incapacity benefit.

For an application form visit [www.medway.gov.uk/leisureandculture/leisurecentres/passporttoleisure.aspx](http://www.medway.gov.uk/leisureandculture/leisurecentres/passporttoleisure.aspx) or phone Customer First on **333333**.

**FREE SWIMMING** for under 11s and over 60s  
Medway residents aged under 11 or over 60 can swim for free at any of the council's five swimming pools. To qualify simply apply for a Medway City Card, its quick, easy and free. Visit [medwaycitycard.co.uk](http://medwaycitycard.co.uk) or visit your local leisure centre.

# Estate Champions - Help make a difference to your neighbourhood

## Do you want to help make a real difference to where you live?

We are launching a scheme where residents can volunteer to become the eyes and ears of your neighbourhood, reporting problems on various issues such as graffiti and anti-social behaviour to grass cutting or horticultural issues.

We are seeking to recruit estate champions to report directly back to us any caretaking or estate management issues that require resolution in your area.

This will allow us to respond quickly to any issues reported in each area and ensure that it is dealt with promptly and efficiently.

## What is an estate champion?

An estate champion is someone who wants to help us make a real difference to the area where they live. We want residents in each local neighbourhood to talk to each other and tell us about the issues that are affecting them.

## What does it involve?

We would like estate champions to monitor conditions on our estates, on a regular basis and report to us any caretaking or maintenance issues that are affecting their area. Estate champions will meet with staff on council owned estates and other estate champions to discuss how their neighbourhoods could be improved.

**If you are interested in the scheme and would like to find out more please phone the community development officer on 01634 333201 or email [tenant.participation@medway.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.participation@medway.gov.uk)**

***Training will be provided to Estate Champions on the standards we expect from our Estate Services Team.***



# Cracking down on housing fraud

Medway Council is committed to tackling housing fraud; we have a duty to protect our residents and to make sure people don't abuse the system. You can now report suspected housing fraud direct by phoning 01634 306000 or emailing [neighbourhoodhousingofficers@medway.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodhousingofficers@medway.gov.uk).

Calls are treated in strict confidence. You can remain anonymous, or you can leave your name and contact details if you want us to keep you informed about the action we take.

You may know or suspect someone who:

- is not living at their council property, who is illegally subletting;
- has obtained a council tenancy using a false identity;
- has abandoned their property.

We will offer a reward of £50 for information that leads to the recovery. To qualify for a reward you would need to provide us with your name and contact details.

## What is illegal subletting?

Residents with tenancies are not allowed to rent out their home and live somewhere else – this is called illegal subletting. We take illegal subletting very seriously as the demand for housing in Medway

is very high and illegal subletting deprives people who want to transfer or who are in housing need. We will investigate every case and take legal action if necessary.

We are proposing to introduce regular tenancy reviews on a programmed basis and in response to reports from residents and other sources. If we find someone else in your home that you have not told us about and you appear to be living elsewhere we will take legal action to end your tenancy.

Tenants have the right to take in lodgers with our permission. Residents who own their own home (known as leaseholders) can rent a room or sublet their home without our permission but they should let us know as it can affect their building insurance.

## Abandoned properties

Residents with secure tenancies are required to live in the property as their only or main home. If it is a joint tenancy at least one of the tenants named on the agreement must occupy the property as his/her only home. If you discover a property has become empty or the residents have left and not returned then this may be an abandonment, and a breach of tenancy conditions. We will carry out a full investigation and if the property has been abandoned will take the necessary legal action to gain possession of property.



# Keep Medway tidy



Dumping unwanted items is not only unsightly but is also illegal and a breach of your tenancy agreement. We realise that from time to time there will be large items that you need to dispose of. There are a number of easy ways you can dispose of or allow someone else to benefit from your items.

## Free Collection Service.

The council will collect up to three items per collection. The first collection booked in any six-month period is free but each additional booking (of up to three items) costs £16.30 per booking.

An express service is available for collection within 48 hours at a cost of £27.

Items eligible for bulky waste collection:

- armchairs
- barbecues
- baths (not cast iron)
- beds
- bidets
- cabinets
- carpets
- central heating
- radiators
- chests of drawers
- computers
- cookers
- cupboards
- desks
- dining room chairs (per item)
- dishwashers
- electric fires
- extractor fans (kitchen)
- freezers
- fridge or freezers
- garden chairs (per item)
- garden gates
- garden tables
- gas fires
- hi-fi systems
- internal doors (without glass)
- ironing boards
- lawn mowers
- mattresses
- microwaves
- ottomans
- prams
- settees
- sewing machines
- shower trays
- sideboards
- sinks
- strimmers
- tables (not glass)
- televisions
- tumble dryers
- underlays
- vacuum cleaners
- wall units
- wardrobes (not mirrored)
- washing machines
- WCs
- wheelbarrows
- worktops, up to 6ft (1.83m)



## Neighbourhood Furniture Store (NFS)

The Neighbourhood Furniture Store is a re-use project operating throughout the borough of Swale and surrounding areas. It offers good quality furniture and electrical appliances at affordable prices to help people create more comfortable homes for their families.

Call the Neighbourhood Furniture Store on **01795 478550** to arrange free collection but make sure:

- the item is in working order;
- soft furniture has a fire safety label fixed to it, in accordance to the Furniture and Furnishings Fire Safety Regulations 1988 ([www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1988/1324/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1988/1324/contents/made)).

The following items can be collected:

- beds
- cabinets
- chests of drawers
- cookers
- dishwashers
- freezers
- fridges
- settees with armchairs
- tables
- televisions
- tumble dryers
- wardrobes (not mirrored)
- washing machines

## RE Computer Recycling



RE-Computers works very closely with Computer Aid International, providing professionally refurbished equipment of the highest quality from its workshop, which is run to help people who are unemployed and have difficulties in gaining employment. Phone Re-Computers on **01634 715382** if you have any:

- computers
- plasma or flat screen televisions
- monitors
- other electronic office equipment



## Land surveys

Medway Council is about to start a pilot land condition mapping survey on various pieces of housing land. The pilot will take place over the summer and the full survey exercise is expected to take place later in 2011 and is likely to extend into 2012. The surveys will include external communal areas and other miscellaneous areas of housing land, for example alleyways. The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that the information held on the council's records is accurate and up to date.

Information will be captured during the surveys to identify any immediate work related issues that may exist and to make sure that these are recorded as appropriate to enable either prompt remedial action or to inform future planned maintenance programmes.

The surveys only relate to external areas so access will not be needed into either your home or to the internal common parts where you live. Repair issues – either to your home or to communal areas – should still be reported in the normal way by contacting Customer First on **01634 333601**.

Our agency partner South Thames Gateway, will be undertaking the surveys and the surveyors will carry full identification with them at all times.

If you wish to make any comments or have any concerns during the survey exercise, then please contact Customer First.

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## Electrical testing

Medway Council, in conjunction with The Mears Group, will be carrying out electrical installation tests to ensure that your home is a safe place to live.

Tests will be carried out to the communal areas such as power and lighting in entrance lobbies and hallways. You may see Mears electricians in these areas.

The testing may also include inside your home if your home is part of the current programme. In every instance, Mears will contact you by phone to arrange a convenient appointment. These programmed inspections are important to ensure that all homes continue to be safe, so it is important to allow the Mears electricians access to enable the tests to take place.

Minor improvement works may be identified during these tests. This is not uncommon and you

should not be alarmed by this. The electricians will undertake any urgent work while on site, and a planned programme of improvements will be carried out on non-urgent work. If access is required to your home you will again be contacted in advance by Mears to arrange a convenient time to undertake the identified works. These remedial works will be undertaken before April 2012.

Please remember to insist on seeing identification before you allow a worker into your home. All Mears operatives carry full identification with them at all times so please do request to see this important documentation.

If you wish to make any comments or if you have any concerns during the testing programme, then please phone **01634 733499**.

# How to bid on Kent Homechoice

It has been over a year since Medway Council joined Kent HomeChoice and changed the way we advertised our properties. There are now six ways of expressing interest in Kent Homechoice properties:

## On the Internet

Go to [www.kenthomechoice.org.uk](http://www.kenthomechoice.org.uk) and log on with your unique Kent Homechoice number and your date of birth. Follow the instructions on screen.

## By digital TV

You can bid for homes using your TV remote control or mobile phone using digital TV. Your phone line must be connected to your Digi-Box. You can also bid using digital TV through Wii or a personal computer, or through a web-enabled mobile phone.

## By automated telephone

Call **0906 294 0020** and follow the instructions. Calls cost 25p/minute. Calls will normally take less than one minute.

## By coupon

When you are first registered, you are sent blank coupons with your registration pack. The coupons have your name and Kent Homechoice number printed on them. This number is unique to you so no one else can use your coupons. You must get the coupon posted in good time to arrive before bidding closes.

## By text message

Text your Homechoice number and property reference number to **07781 472 726**

## By contacting Customer First

You can contact customer first on **01634 334433**. The advisor will be able to tell you what properties are available and place bids for you.

# Gas safety inspections

Medway Housing Services continues to achieve 100 per cent success in ensuring that all our homes are inspected by Gas Safe qualified contractors and have up to date gas safety certificates. This programme ensures that our customers and their families are protected from the dangers of faulty gas appliances and that their gas equipment is working at maximum efficiency to reduce tenants' bills.

We need your co-operation to continue this excellent performance. When you receive notice of an intended gas inspection, please make every effort to be available to allow the contractor access to carry out the inspection. If you can't be there at the time offered, please call Mears directly on **01634 733488**, selecting option three (for gas services), to arrange an alternative appointment.

Medway Council takes gas safety very seriously. We will take action against anyone who refuse us access to undertake this essential annual check.

## What to do if you smell gas?

- Turn off the gas at the meter unless it is in the cellar or basement.
- Do not smoke or strike matches.
- Do not turn electric switches on or off.
- Put out any naked flames.
- Open doors and windows.
- Keep people away from the affected area.
- Phone the National Grid emergency number **0800 111999** and report the suspected gas leak.

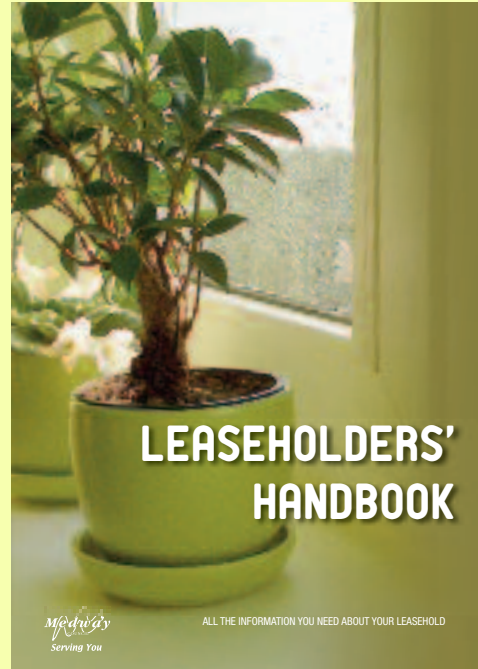
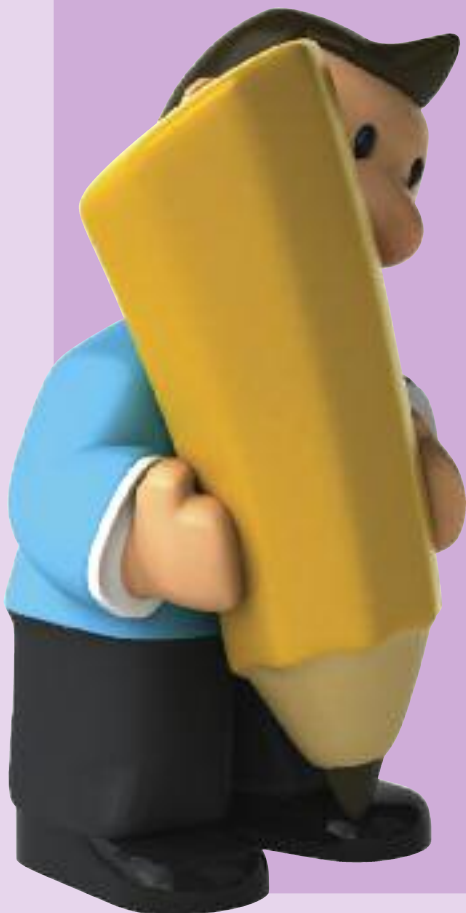
# Leaseholder corner

## Leaseholders, we want to hear from you

Leaseholder Corner is a section of Housing Matters that was designed for and is written specifically for leaseholders. While Housing Matters as a whole provides news, views and articles that are relevant for all residents. Leaseholder Corner is just for you. Housing Services staff write the articles for leaseholders, but we want you to have a direct input into your housing magazine.

An original intention behind Leaseholder Corner was to feature regular questions and comments from leaseholders on any leasehold issue or housing service provided by Medway Council – the good, the bad and the inbetween.

The council would then provide answers or comments in return. All questions or comments will be featured anonymously. Please help us to help you. Send your questions/ views direct to [leaseholders@medway.gov.uk](mailto:leaseholders@medway.gov.uk)



## Leaseholder Handbook

Housing Services has worked closely with the Leasehold Forum over the last year to create a Leaseholder Handbook.

After consultation exercises and research, Housing Services is very pleased to announce that the handbook has now been published and posted to leaseholders. If you have yet to receive your copy or need a larger print version, simply contact Miss Lawrence, Home Ownership Officer and let her know.

The handbook has been designed and written to reflect the needs of leaseholders and to provide essential information in a concise and user-friendly format. The handbook should help you understand your rights and obligations as a leaseholder and the role of Medway Council as both the freeholder and landlord. You should read the handbook alongside your lease; the lease is still your legal document and the handbook does not replace it. Housing Services hopes you will find the new Handbook useful and informative and would welcome your feedback. Please use the contact details on the right-hand side of Leaseholder Corner to do this.

# Leaseholder Information Day

In March 2010 Housing Services worked with MHS Homes to deliver an information day for leaseholders.

The event was based at the King Charles Hotel in Brompton, lunch was provided, a speaker from Lease (an independent advisory body for leaseholders) gave a presentation and individual advice and workshops were run by Medway Council and MHS staff around issues such as repair obligations under the lease and 'Section 20' consultation for major works. The event resulted in the creation of the Leasehold Forum at Medway Council and from feedback obtained after the event; it was a day that proved very worthwhile to those who attended. Housing Services is keen to further this event, in consultation with leaseholders and its Resident Involvement Strategy and are looking to run a Leaseholder Information Day on an annual basis. We are very keen to hear your views. Please let us know whether you would like a future leaseholder event of this nature and the type of topics or speakers you might like to hear about?

This could include leasehold professionals from other nearby housing organisations and advisory bodies such as Shelter, Kent West Lifeways and Citizens' Advice Bureau.



## Leasehold Service charge arrears and DMH Stallard

Service charges and ground rent are legally due and must be paid on time and as stipulated in your lease. Medway Council has a duty to protect public finances and ensure that all monies owed to the council for services it provides, are collected.

As a result, Housing Services has a set policy for pursuing leasehold service charge arrears in a firm, but fair and consistent way. Leaseholders need to work with Housing Services to manage their leasehold accounts. The council will explore all avenues to help leaseholders who may struggle to pay their charges, including a possible referral to the Housing Option Prevention Team. As a last resort, Housing Services will transfer outstanding service charge debt to DMH Stallard; an outside firm of solicitors, who will start court action to recover money owed. Any action taken by the solicitors will result in the leaseholder having to pay additional legal fees and you could find gaining future finance credit difficult. Housing Services has successfully worked with DMH Stallard to take recent action against several leaseholders who have failed to address their arrears and will continue to do so, where all other recovery methods have failed. Please do not ignore your service charges; they must be paid on time and in full and any queries/disputes must be put in writing.

### Useful leaseholder contacts

**General enquiries or complaints**  
[leaseholders@medway.gov.uk](mailto:leaseholders@medway.gov.uk)

**If you are experiencing problems with other residents**  
 01634 333601  
[neighbourhoodhousingofficers@medway.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodhousingofficers@medway.gov.uk)

**Faults or repairs**  
 freephone:  
 0800 073 0073  
[cfhousing.repairs@medway.gov.uk](mailto:cfhousing.repairs@medway.gov.uk)

**Service charge payments**  
 01634 333219  
[leaseholders@medway.gov.uk](mailto:leaseholders@medway.gov.uk)

**Rubbish enquiries**  
 01634 333333  
[customer.first@medway.gov.uk](mailto:customer.first@medway.gov.uk)

**Ground maintenance enquiries**  
 01634 333333  
[customer.first@medway.gov.uk](mailto:customer.first@medway.gov.uk)

**Gas safe register**  
 0800 4085500  
[www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)



## Dates for Resident Surgeries

Following your request we are pleased to announce that we will be holding residents' surgeries in your local area. This will be a good opportunity for residents to report repairs, or household issues.

Come along and speak with Mears' customer care manager, Medway Council community development officer or your housing officer.

Please note that complaints are to be dealt with in the usual way and not at this forum.

### **Rainham Library**

**Tuesday, 16 August**

10am to 12noon

and every four weeks at the same time:

**13 September, 11 October, 8 November and 6 December**

### **Gillingham Library**

**Wednesday, 24 August**

10am to 12noon

and every four weeks at the same time:

**21 September, 19 October, 16 November and 14 December**

### **Twydall Library**

**Monday, 5 September**

10am to 12noon

and every four weeks at the same time:

**3 October, 31 October and 28 November**

## Housing standards consultation

To make sure that we are prioritising the right elements of the service, we would like to ask you for your views on these standards.

### Housing revenue account customer service promise

- Give our name when answering the phone or visit you in your home.
- Answer 95% of phone calls within 15 seconds (5 rings).
- Only use voicemail when we are out of the office.
- Respond to all messages within 1 working day.
- Tell you what will happen next when you make a service request to us.
- Keep you updated on progress of cases and enquiries.
- Wear name badges when dealing face to face with customers.
- Answer all written correspondence within 10 working days.
- Be quick to put things right when they go wrong, without quibble, and to apologise.
- Regularly review feedback from you on the services we deliver and continually aim to improve these - involve customers in these where appropriate.

To discuss and provide your feedback regarding the proposed service standards please call the community development officer on **01634 333201** or email your feedback to [tenant.participation@medway.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.participation@medway.gov.uk).

# New water meters coming to your area

## Southern Water will soon be installing water meters in your area as part of a five-year work programme across the south east.

Under the programme, Southern Water are installing more than 500,000 water meters in Kent, Sussex and Hampshire by 2015 to help secure water resources for the future. This is alongside tackling leaks and developing new resources.

Water resources in the south-east are under pressure and our region is classified as one of serious water stress by the government.

The new meters Southern Water is installing are intelligent and are equipped with leak alarms which will help us, as a company, detect leaks on supply pipes and inside properties, as well as on our own mains network.

### How the programme works

Southern Water will contact customers before their meters are fitted.

Installation is free and in most cases the meter will be fitted in the public footpath outside a property so there is no need to enter customers' homes.

Customers will be provided with lots of written information about their meter and metered bill, as well as easy ways in which they can save water, energy and money;

Southern Water's installation teams will work on a street-by-street basis and when they are in an area, an exhibition unit will be parked in the street so customers can talk to Southern Water's advisors directly.

### Progress to date

Since the metering programme began in late 2010, more than 14,000 meters have been installed in Kent, including the postcode zones below:

**ME22** - Strood, **ME21** - Cuxton  
**ME24** - Lower Upnor, **ME44** - Chatham

### Coming to your area

Southern Water will be installing meters in the following postcode areas during the period from late summer/autumn this year to early 2012:

**ME73** - Gillingham, **ME80** - Rainham,  
**ME86** - Wigmore **ME87** - Twydall,  
**ME88** - Lower Twydall, **ME89** - Lower Rainham

### How customers can find out more

Customers can visit Southern Water's dedicated exhibition unit, which is stationed in their area, on the day of their meter installation to talk face to face to an advisor. Alternatively they can speak to an advisor as they are delivering information packs before the meter is installed.

Customers can also call Southern Water's Metering Customer Contact Centre on **0333 2003 012** to find out more. Detailed information about the metering programme is available at: [www.southernwater.co.uk/metering](http://www.southernwater.co.uk/metering). Customers can input their postcode to find out when their meter is due to be installed.



# Protect your family and yourself

**Carbon monoxide is colourless, odourless and toxic, and that's why we'd always recommend that you fit carbon monoxide detectors in your home to protect yourself and your family.**

About 30 people a year die accidentally from carbon monoxide poisoning related to gas appliances.

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no colour, taste or smell. The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to those of flu and other virus infections and include aches, drowsiness, weakness, headaches and nausea. If anyone in the home has any of these symptoms while a gas appliance is being used, they must stop using the appliance until it has been checked and must consult a doctor.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can affect the way the brain works, so people affected cannot always tell that anything is wrong or take any action before it is too late.

While most people have smoke alarms fitted to their homes, and are well aware of the risks associated with smoke inhalation, many still don't think about carbon monoxide detectors in the same way. In fact, many people don't even really know what carbon monoxide is and still don't understand how dangerous it can be.

## **What can I do to avoid carbon monoxide?**

There are lots of things you can do to prevent carbon monoxide from building up in your home.

- Make sure all the rooms in your home are well-ventilated. Don't block vents and, if you have double glazing or draught proofing, make sure there is still enough ventilation for any heaters.
- Check that all portable heaters are well-ventilated.
- Keep chimneys and flues clear and get them swept regularly by a reliable chimney sweep.
- Make sure that carbon monoxide detectors meet British Standard 7860 (these should not be used as a substitute for regular services of your appliances).
- Get your boiler, heating systems and appliances installed, maintained and regularly serviced by a qualified engineer. For gas appliances, make sure your engineer is registered with the Gas Safe Register.

## **What are the signs of carbon monoxide?**

Because it is a gas, carbon monoxide can be hard to detect. However, there are some signs to look out for. These include:

- gas flames which burn orange or yellow instead of blue
- soot stains on or just above your appliances (regardless of the type of fuel you use)
- coal or wood fires which burn slowly or go out
- trouble lighting your fire
- a blocked chimney or flue
- not having enough ventilation in a room
- fatigue, muscle pains, headaches, drowsiness, dizziness, chest pain or nausea.



# from carbon monoxide poisoning

## What should I do if I suspect carbon monoxide?

If you think there are carbon monoxide fumes in your home or suspect that a flue or heating appliance is blocked or faulty, you should switch off the appliance and open your window. **You should not sleep in the room. Phone us.**

## How do I avoid the dangers of carbon monoxide?

Make sure that:

- appliances are properly fitted and serviced at least once a year
- flues and chimneys are checked and swept by a qualified chimney sweep as necessary to remove any blockages
- any permanent ventilation openings are kept clear
- you install a carbon monoxide detector.

If you're fitting a new appliance make sure:

- it's fitted by an approved installer (Gas - Gas Safe Register, Solid fuel - HETAS, Oil - OFTEC)
- you make an application to our building control service. They'll make sure the appliance, it's associated flue and any other requirements meet the Building Regulations.

## Advice on carbon monoxide detectors

The Building Regulations require smoke detectors but at present don't cover carbon monoxide detectors. This is likely to change in the future, at least for new building work. Homeowners should

protect themselves now by installing a carbon monoxide detector.

## Where do I get a carbon monoxide detector?

You can buy carbon monoxide detectors from most hardware shops and DIY stores. Make sure it has either a BS Kitemark logo and the letters BS EN 50291, or alternatively the CE markings.

### Council tenants should:

- allow the council to have access to service all gas appliances;
- never tamper with any gas appliance;
- call the council if they have any concerns.

### Find out more about gas safety by:

- visiting the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website, [www.hse.gov.uk/gas](http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas)
- phoning the Gas Safety Advice Line on **0800 300 363**.

For more information contact the Housing First Repairs Team by phoning **01634 333601**, emailing [maintenancehosingsupport@medway.gov.uk](mailto:maintenancehosingsupport@medway.gov.uk) or writing to Customer First Repairs Team, Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR



# Inheriting a tenancy

**What is succession? Succession is a right given under the Housing Act 1985 for secure tenants to pass on their tenancy to their husband/wife/civil partner or family member following their death, provided they were not a successor to the tenancy.**

In the case of family members where there is no spouse qualified to succeed the tenant, the family member must have been living in the property as his /her only or principle home with the tenant continuously for twelve months prior to the tenants death. A family member includes a tenant's parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece (s113 Housing Act, 1985). Where more than one family member is eligible they should reach an agreement between themselves as to who inherits the property. If they cannot, then Housing Services will select a successor to the tenancy.

Where a tenancy is held in joint names and one of the tenants dies, the surviving tenant succeeds to the tenancy as a sole tenant. There is then no further right of succession so the tenancy cannot be passed on again.

Tenants with an introductory tenancy also have the right of succession, providing that the successor occupied the tenant's property as their only or principle home immediately before the death of the tenant and they were not a successor themselves. Any qualifying successor would succeed to the remaining period of the introductory tenancy, which would then become secure at the end of that period.

There can only be one succession of a tenancy. This means that if the deceased tenant was already a successor in his or her own right, the tenancy cannot be passed on again to another person. On receiving a succession claim, we will carry out checks to establish whether or not there has already been a succession of the tenancy.

In all cases, if you are living with a family member who has died you must inform Housing Services as soon as possible. Any person who wishes to claim a tenancy following the death of a tenant must make a claim within one month of the death of a tenant. Housing Services will investigate and respond to an application for succession within 10 working days of receipt of a written application.

## Legal assignment of a tenancy

Any secure tenant who has not succeeded to the

tenancy, has the right to assign (pass) the tenancy to their husband/wife/civil partner, or a family member who is living with them in the property as their only or principal home and has lived with them for the past twelve months. However, this must be done by a legal document called a Deed of Assignment. Assignments use up the right of succession and a tenancy can only be succeeded on one occasion. A successor cannot assign a tenancy.

The courts can also order an assignment between married partners and civil partners as a result of divorce proceedings, or dissolution of a civil partnership. This is called a "tenancy transfer". Housing Services will abide by any assignment made by the court.

## If a member of my family succeeds to the tenancy, can they stay in the family home?

If the member of the family succeeding is the husband, wife, or civil partner they have the right to remain in the family home. However if the successor is anybody else (including an unmarried or unregistered (same sex) partner) the council reserves the right to ask him or her to move to an alternative property, if their current property is larger than they need.

## What happens if you do not have the right to succeed a tenancy?

Where the death of a tenant leaves someone in the property with no right to succeed Housing Services will consider granting an introductory tenancy at that or an alternative property (if the current property would be under occupied) in cases where:

- a non qualifying person has lived at the property for at least a year before the tenant died;
- the deceased tenant was already a successor;
- someone has accepted responsibility for the deceased tenant's dependents;
- someone would be homeless if required to vacate the property.

Your Housing Officer can advise you on successions. However, you may also want to take legal advice from the Citizens Advice Bureaux.

**Medway Citizens Advice, 5A New Road, Chatham, ME4 6BB.** Phone **01634 888182** 9.30am-12.30pm and 1-4.30pm

Email [advice-medwaycab@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:advice-medwaycab@hotmail.co.uk) or visit [www.medwayadvice.org.uk](http://www.medwayadvice.org.uk)



## Looking to downsize?

If you are a council tenant and are looking to downsize from your current property but need help with moving then look no further. In light of a growing list of people in need of social housing, Medway Council is operating a scheme to ensure that homes are used to their maximum occupancy.

### Can you or your family help someone else?

This will free up accommodation for existing tenants living in overcrowded accommodation, or enable accommodation to be offered to other people on the waiting list for social housing.

### Why else is Medway Council encouraging this scheme?

Help us to help you. From April 2013 the proposal is that new size criteria will be introduced for new and existing housing benefit claimants renting a council or housing association property.

### What this may mean for you?

Housing benefit claimants living in accommodation which is considered to be too large will need to

make up any shortfall between the rent and their Housing benefit entitlement.

### What do you need to be able to take part?

You must hold a secure Medway Council tenancy, with at least a two-bedroom property in good decorative, clean order.

**One of those who took part in this scheme is Mrs Trotter. Here is what Mrs Trotter had to say:** "Despite living in my previous property for many years, it has been a surprisingly easy transition to downsize. I have found energy bills and the rent is a lot more affordable. I am grateful for the new start and am pleased to be able to help other families in need of a larger property which my family had outgrown."

If you are interested in this scheme and wish to find out more, please phone the Neighbourhood Housing Officers on **01634 333601** or write to: **The Neighbourhood Housing Officers, Medway Council, Housing Services, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR.**

## Have you paid your rent?

In 2010, Medway Council evicted 17 Medway Council tenants due to rent arrears.

If you are having trouble paying your rent or are concerned about problems with debt, contact your housing officer on **01634 333601** or call Medway Citizens Advice Bureau for free, independent legal advice on **01634 888182**.



## Resident involvement corner



### Twydall Area Residents' Association (TARA)

On the evening of 17 May an open meeting was held at the Holy Trinity Church Twydall, for Medway Council tenants.

The aim of the meeting was to provide help and support for tenants by forming a tenants' association. The meeting was arranged and attended by Mary Butcher; a lady who has worked voluntarily on various projects within the community over the past 10 years and representing Medway Council were Katherine Clark from the Community Development Office and Sarah Thompson who is a Housing Officer for the Twydall area.

I have to confess prior to attending this meeting, I was one of those sceptics who questions the motives of people joining such committees or the effectiveness such groups have, if any, on local policies etc. Some residents had specific problems that affects everyone in the community such as speeding traffic or anti-social behaviour. By the end of the meeting my scepticism had slowly been eroded.

Over the next few days I surfed the internet for information on tenant associations in the UK. I was surprised as to how many tenant associations there are dotted around the country and what great things they have achieved within their communities

over the years: from attracting major funding for play areas, to making sure everyone knows what's going on by holding regular meetings and producing newsletters.

So what sort of people make up a tenants association? The simple answer is a group of people diverse in age and skills who work together to give a voice to their community on housing and other community issues and they have no political allegiance - so this is people power at its best.

I believe that tenant associations are helping to shape and build healthier communities. The purpose for forming a Twydall Tenants' Association covers many levels, to improve the condition of homes and estates by working with Medway Council's Housing Service to ensure that local people can get involved in making decisions, improve local services, campaign or fund-raise for a play area or community garden, organise and encourage community and social activities such as bingo, playgroups, trips for the elderly, coffee mornings and discos. Remember one person alone can't do these things. But when people get together in tenants' associations - they can do all that and more.

*Article by David Bournier, Twydall resident*

#### Prize Draws

The winners of the Status Survey prize draw are:

1st prize of £150: Mrs Mcdermot, Gillingham

Runner up prizes of £50: Mr Davis, Rainham and Mr Denby, Gillingham

# Meet the housing officers



*From left to right: Chris Rourke, Sarah Thompson, David Crofts and Michael Bull (interim)*

We are pleased to introduce you to the housing officers at Medway Council. While many customers may know the housing officer for their area, we would like to tell you about the role we provide and how you can contact us.

The main duties of a housing officer are to develop an effective working relationship with tenants and leaseholders. This includes attending estate inspections, attending residents' associations and focus group meetings and working with the community development officer to ensure that tenants and leaseholders can feed back on the services we provide. By engaging with customers the housing officers will be able to help with the prioritisation of local need.

Other duties include managing rent arrears which includes attending court, helping with the voids process, managing anti-social behaviour from early intervention such as mediation through to Anti-social Behaviour Orders and other orders via the courts. Housing officers also deal with enquiries from our customers including tenancy management, ensure that customers comply with their tenancy and leasehold agreements, to engage with partner organisations as required.

We are here to help ensure that you enjoy your home. Please see the details over the page for the housing officer for your area.



Following your requests for a central email for estate wardens, we are pleased to advise that all queries regarding caretaking issues can be emailed to

**[estate.services@medway.gov.uk](mailto:estate.services@medway.gov.uk)**



# Join us on an estate inspection

Below is a list of estate inspections that we will be conducting in your area. Come along and join the inspection to tell us your views and issues about the area you live in. Start times and meeting points will also be published on the notice board in your area.

## Albert Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Vidal Manor garages  
**Date:** 14 October  
**Time:** 10am

## Andrew Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Vidal Manor garages  
**Date:** 14 October  
**Time:** 10am

## Arden Street Garages

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Arden Street garages  
**Date:** 2 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Austell Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Arden Street garages  
**Date:** 2 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Barfleur Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Barfleur Manor  
**Date:** 19 August, 12noon and 15 November, 11am

## Beatty Avenue Flats

**Inspector:** Michael Bull  
**Start Point:** Beatty Avenue flats  
**Date:** 13 September  
**Time:** 10am

## Bowers House

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Bowers House  
**Date:** 9 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Benenden Manor

**Inspector:** Chris Rourke  
**Start Point:** Benenden Manor  
**Date:** 19 October  
**Time:** 1pm

## Braithwaite Court

**Inspector:** Michael Bull  
**Start Point:** Outside block 15-20  
**Date:** 26 October  
**Time:** 12noon

## Britton Street

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Vidal Manor garages  
**Date:** 14 October  
**Time:** 10am

## Cambourne Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Arden Street garages  
**Date:** 2 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Camperdown Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Barfleur Manor  
**Date:** 19 August, 12noon and 15 November, 11am

## Charlton Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Vidal Manor garages  
**Date:** 14 October  
**Time:** 10am

## Charlecote Court

**Inspector:** Sarah Thompson  
**Start Point:** Outside Charlecote Court  
**Date:** 24 August, 2pm and 25 November, 11am

## Cheffins House

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Bowers House  
**Date:** 9 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Clopton Court

**Inspector:** Sarah Thompson  
**Start Point:** Outside Charlecote Court  
**Date:** 24 August  
**Time:** 2pm

## Cornwallis Avenue flats

**Inspector:** Michael Bull  
**Start Point:** Beatty Avenue Flats  
**Date:** 13 September  
**Time:** 10am

## Davenport Avenue and Davenport Road flats

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Bowers House  
**Date:** 9 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Derwent Way

**Inspector:** Sarah Thompson  
**Start Point:** Outside Charlecote Court  
**Date:** 24 August, 2pm and 25 November, 11am

## Flaxmans Court

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Flaxmans Court  
**Date:** 11 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Forge Lane

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Bowers House  
**Date:** 9 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Grange Road

**Inspector:** Michael Bull  
**Start Point:** Outside Holly Close flats  
**Date:** 16 August  
**Time:** 10.30am

## Greenview Walk flats

**Inspector:** Michael Bull  
**Start Point:** Beatty Avenue flats  
**Date:** 27 October  
**Time:** 1.30pm

## Harbledown Manor

**Inspector:** Chris Rourke  
**Start Point:** Benenden Manor  
**Date:** 19 October  
**Time:** 1pm

## Hathaway Court

**Inspector:** Sarah Thompson  
**Start Point:** Outside Charlecote Court  
**Date:** 24 August, 2pm and 25 November, 11am

## Hawkhurst Road flats

**Inspector:** Chris Rourke  
**Start Point:** Benenden Manor  
**Date:** 19 October  
**Time:** 1pm

## High Street, Brompton

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Flaxmans Court  
**Date:** 19 August at 12noon, 11 November, 11am and 15 November, 11am



**David Crofts**  
01634 333506



**Michael Bull**  
01634 333599



**Chris Rourke**  
01634 333569



**Sarah Thompson**  
01634 333988

## Holly Close flats

**Inspector:** Michael Bull  
**Start Point:** Outside Holly Close flats  
**Date:** 16 August  
**Time:** 10.30am

## James Street flats and car park

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** James Street car park  
**Date:** 17 October  
**Time:** 11am

## Jubilee Terrace

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Arden Street garages  
**Date:** 2 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Keswick Court

**Inspector:** Michael Bull  
**Start Point:** Outside block 15-20 of Braithwaite Court  
**Date:** 26 October  
**Time:** 12noon

## Lock Street Garages

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Vidal Manor garages  
**Date:** 14 October  
**Time:** 10am

## Manor House

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Flaxmans Court  
**Date:** 11 November  
**Time:** 11am

## McCudden Row, Brompton

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Barfleur Manor  
**Date:** 19 August, 12noon and 15 November, 11am

## Nursery Road garages

**Inspector:** Sarah Thompson  
**Start Point:** Outside Charlecote Court  
**Date:** 24 August, 2pm and 25 November, 11am

## Padstow Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Arden Street garages  
**Date:** 2 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Pier Road flats

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Pier Road flats  
**Date:** 16 August  
**Time:** 12noon

## Penrith Court

**Inspector:** Michael Bull  
**Start Point:** Outside block 15-20 of Braithwaite Court  
**Date:** 26 October  
**Time:** 12noon

## Penryn Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Arden Street garages  
**Date:** 2 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Perie Row, Brompton

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Barfleur Manor  
**Date:** 19 August, 12noon and 15 November, 11am

## Plewis House

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Bowers House  
**Date:** 9 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Redruth Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Arden Street Garages  
**Date:** 2 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Saunders Street flats and car park

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** James Street car park  
**Date:** 17 October  
**Time:** 11am

## Snow House

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Bowers House  
**Date:** 9 November  
**Time:** 11am

## St Albans Close

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Bowers House  
**Date:** 9 November  
**Time:** 11am

## St Marks House

**Inspector:** Lucy Jacobs  
**Start Point:** Lounge  
**Date:** 4 November  
**Time:** 11.30am

## Temeraire Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Barfleur Manor  
**Date:** 19 August, 12noon and 15 November, 11am

## Tintagel Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Arden Street garages  
**Date:** 2 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Twydall flats and shops

**Inspector:** Chris Rourke  
**Start Point:** Benenden Manor  
**Date:** 19 October  
**Time:** 1pm

## Upper Britton Place

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Vidal Manor garages  
**Date:** 14 October  
**Time:** 10am

## Victory Manor

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Barfleur Manor  
**Date:** 19 August, 12noon and 15 November, 11am

## Vidal Manor and garages

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Vidal Manor garages  
**Date:** 14 October  
**Time:** 10am

## Welcome Court

**Inspector:** Sarah Thompson  
**Start Point:** Outside Charlecote Court  
**Date:** 24 August, 2pm and 25 November, 11am

## Wood Street, Brompton

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside Flaxmans Court  
**Date:** 11 November  
**Time:** 11am

## Wollaston Close

**Inspector:** David Crofts  
**Start Point:** Outside 1 Wollaston Close  
**Date:** 7 September, 12noon and 9 December, 11am

# Homes for independent living corner



## Esmonde House celebrations

**Esmonde House, a sheltered housing scheme in Brompton, celebrated its 30th anniversary on 27 May. Celebrations were attended by residents, staff and friends from each of the eight sheltered housing schemes run by Medway Council.**

Esmonde House is home to 29 residents, one of which has lived there for 20 years. The eldest resident, aged 93, met and fell in love with his wife here, who have now been happily married for over two years.

Celebrations included a large anniversary cake, party food, and music by a brass band and bagpipes.

Since its opening the scheme has held a variety of activities including exercise classes, activity classes, social events, regular day trips and Wii fit classes.

Sue Mitchell, Sheltered Scheme Manager, said: "Esmonde House is a home and a community. We are delighted to be celebrating 30 years of supporting residents and being involved with the

local community. This is a very special occasion for all of us and I am delighted that so many residents and friends were able to join us in celebrating our 30th anniversary."

**If you are interested in Homes for Independent Living please phone Housing Services on 333333.**



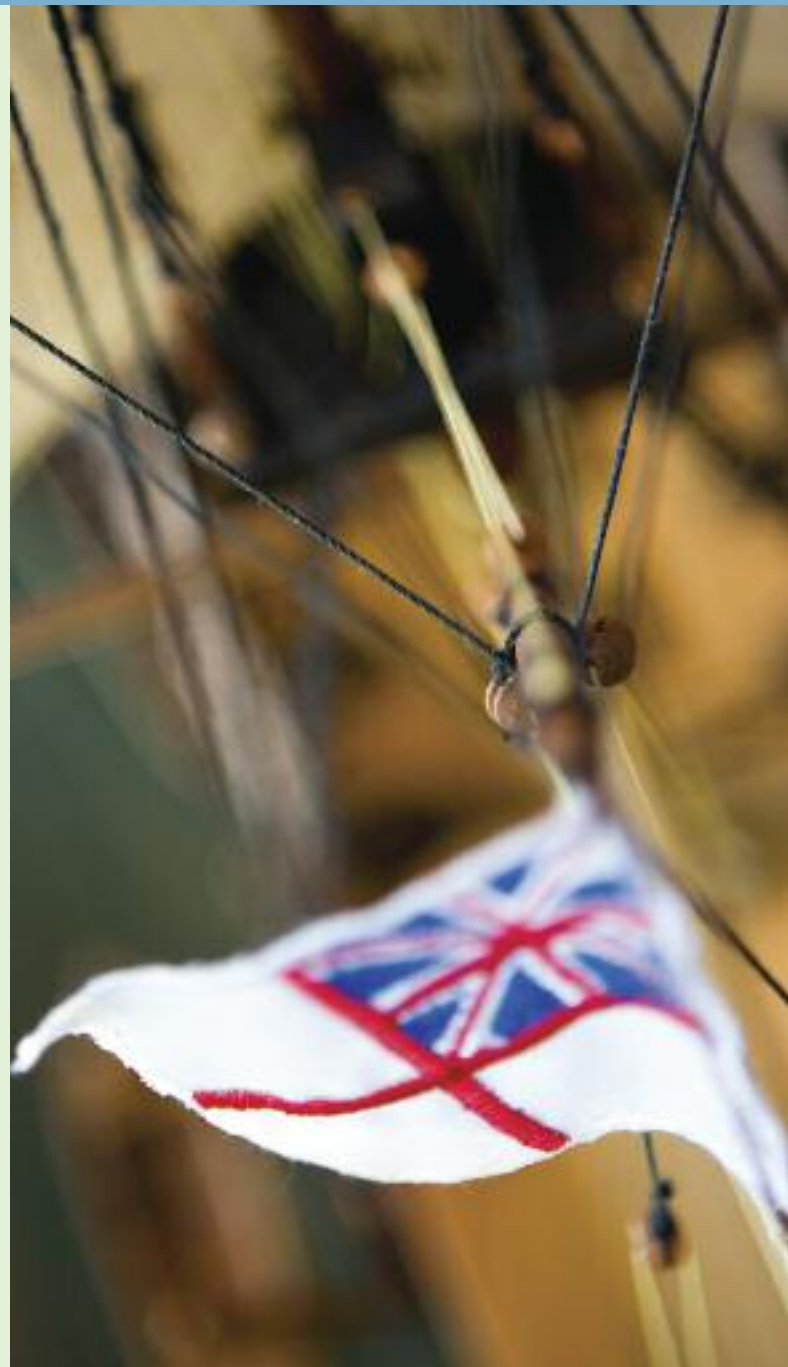
# Now we have time on our hands

*This article has been written by Tony Phillips, a resident at one of our Homes for Independent Living Schemes.*

**As we are becoming more senior in our years, we all discover sooner or later that we have more of one commodity on our hands than any other and, that is time. Whether we own up to this or not is irrelevant as it is an inescapable situation.**

So, what are we to do in order to make the best use of this valuable commodity whilst at the same time keeping our brain busy and increasing the day-to-day quality of our lives? Some of us like me have had lifelong hobbies while others indulge in doing crossword puzzles, jigsaws and other brainteasers to keep the boredom at bay, even if only for short periods. I believe that it's only necessary to be able to concentrate for relatively short periods of time in order to take on a longer term and worthwhile activity such as a full-blown hobby or craftwork project. The reason behind this thinking is, that regardless of how long the estimated time of completion of the project is, we only need to work on it for as long as our concentration will permit us to and, then put it down until we have the inclination to do some more, thus completing the project in our own time rather than the estimated time that it may state on the box or packaging.

There are certainly more choices of hobbies and craft projects available today than ever before and choosing which to undertake may prove a challenging task in itself but, speaking from personal experience, it only takes a visit to your local craft or hobby shop and in most cases the proprietor will be only too pleased to help you with a choice that suits you and, to guide and help you throughout the project if needed. As for cost of hobbies; it can be as little or as much as you choose, depending on your disposable income and inclination but, you need to bear in mind that if a project appears to be costly it is also quite likely to take some time to complete, therefore, the cost per hour is still relatively small, especially when set against the pleasure and



occupational therapy you are gaining from it.

I can appreciate that some of us are not as mobile as others but regardless of mobility as long as we have the use of our hands and eyes we can all produce something that we, ourselves and others can be proud of.

So, if this article has inspired you to have a go yourself, why not pay a visit to your local craft or hobby shop and see what is on offer and, I'm sure you will be both surprised and spoilt for choice.

As for me, my next project will be a 1:72 scale, plank-on-frame wooden model of H.M.S Victory as she was at the battle of Trafalgar. Hopefully, I will be able to keep Housing Matters supplied with some photos of various stages of construction as the build progresses.

# Status survey 2011

In April 2011 Medway Council Landlord Services conducted a status survey to find out what our residents thought of the services that we provide. Residents' opinions play an important part in shaping our service as they help us to gauge what we are doing well, and what areas we need to improve on further. In total 1,519 residents responded to the survey giving us a 51 per cent response rate. Senior management will review your responses and an action plan will be developed with residents to address the issues that you have highlighted. Thank you to all who took part in the survey.

## Key findings from survey

### Overall Service

- 1 77% of residents are satisfied with the overall service provided by Landlord Services.**
- Residents with tenancies under one year and over 21 years old are the most satisfied overall with our service.
- 3 85% of respondents are satisfied with the value for money of their rent.**
- Car parking, rubbish and litter at 38% and 30% respectively were considered by residents to be the biggest problem within their neighbourhoods.

### Contact with Landlord Services

- 5 73% of respondents have contacted Landlord Services within the last 12 months. Out of those respondents 61% were satisfied with the final outcome of that contact.**

### Quality of housing and repairs

- 6 80% of residents were satisfied with the overall quality of their home.**
- Residents consider repairs and maintenance to be the most important aspect of Landlord Services.
- 8 71% of residents are satisfied with how repairs and maintenance are dealt with and 82% of residents are satisfied with the overall quality of the work.**

### Neighbourhood and anti-social behaviour (ASB)

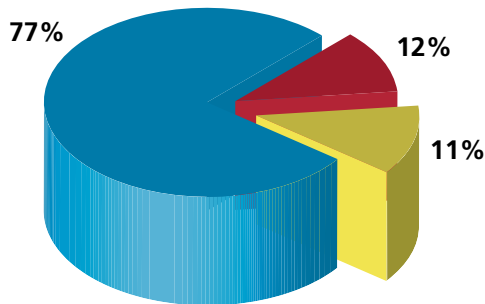
- 9 80% of residents are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.**
- 37% of residents think that their area has become a better place to live in the last 12 months.
- 52% of residents do not think that anti-social behaviour is a problem within their area. Out of those that had reported a case of ASB within the last 12 months 45% were satisfied with the way it was handled.

### Resident Involvement

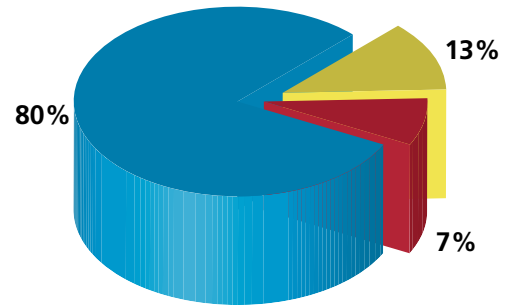
- 12 59% of residents are satisfied that their views are taken into account by Landlord Services.**
- 17% of residents would like to take a more active role in informing how our services are run.



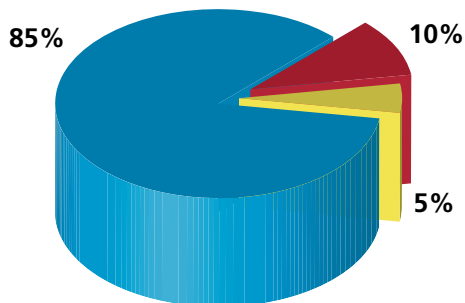
**1** Satisfaction with the overall service provided by Medway Council Housing Landlord Services



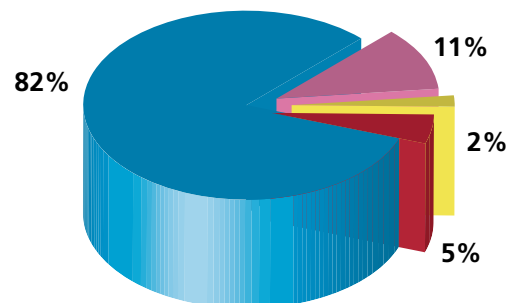
**6** Satisfaction with the overall quality of your home



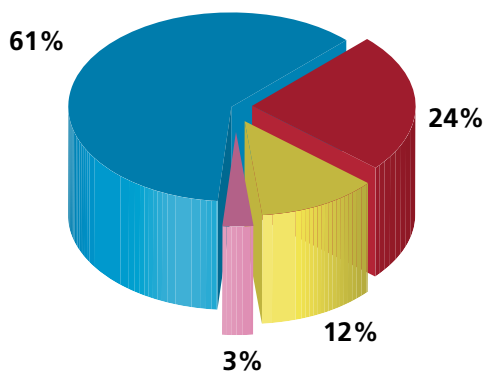
**3** Satisfaction with the value for money for your rent



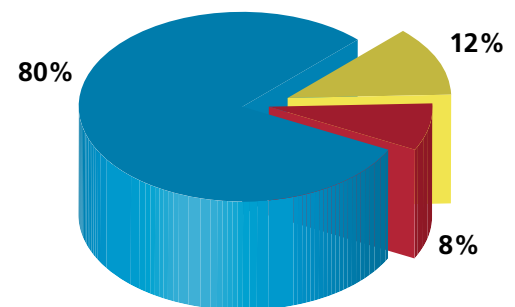
**8** Satisfaction with the overall quality of repair work



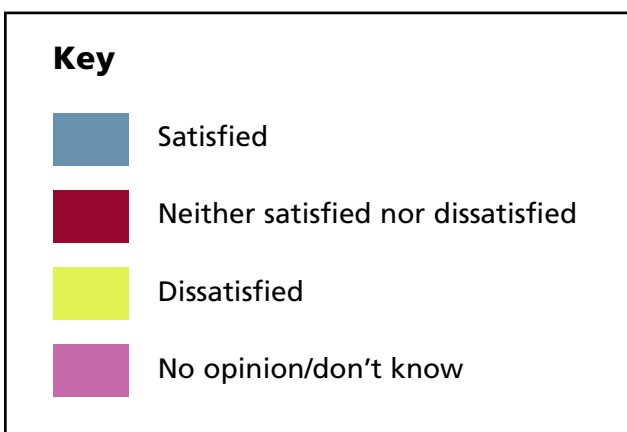
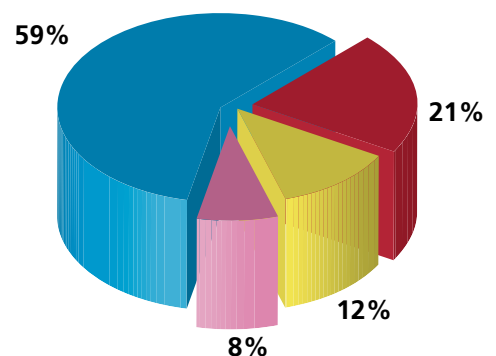
**5** Were you satisfied with the final outcome after you contacted Landlord Services?



**9** Satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live



**12** How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your views are being taken into account by Housing Landlord Services?





# Bag it and bin it

Lots of hard work is done to make sure that Medway's streets and green spaces are clear of dog poo. Much of that work is done by Medway's residents, by bagging their dog's business and binning it. However, dog fouling is still an issue. So, in late summer and autumn the council will run a campaign to remind dog owners that the business is only over when it's bagged and binned.

## Why bag it and bin it?

Most importantly dog poo can be a health hazard, particularly for young children. The roundworms in dog poo can live in soil for a long time and if swallowed, can lead to all sorts of nasty illnesses.

It's also unfair to everyone else in the community...and those who have to clean up. As well as this, it's an offence to let a dog foul in a public area without immediately disposing of the mess. The offence carries a fixed penalty notice of £80. Those who persistently fail to clean up after their dog face a fine of up to £1,000.

## Responsible dog ownership

Help promote the benefits of dog ownership to the community by being a responsible dog owner and following this advice.

- Always carry the means to clean up after your dog immediately, and dispose of it in a dog waste bin or a rubbish bin, if a dog waste bin is not available.
- Respect dog-free areas.
- Speak with a vet about regularly worming your dog.
- Ensure your dog has a name and address tag or microchip.

## What's being done

Medway Housing Services has recently sent letters to residents in affected areas. The council's community officers and plain-clothed officers regularly patrol areas to educate dog owners and investigate complaints. To help dog owners, free poop bags are available from all Medway Council Contact Points. There are over 700 dog waste bins in Medway and a dedicated cleaning machine to remove dog fouling from green space land.

## Unbagged, unbinned?

We can all help to reduce unbinned business. If someone fails to clean up after their dog, note a quick description of them and their dog, log details of their car and registration (if applicable) and the date and time. You can report offenders or problem areas that need attention by phoning the hotline on **01634 336699**.

# How are we doing?

The following statistics reflect the performance of landlord services

	Target 2011/12	Year end 10-11	Apr	May	Year to date	Year-to-date performance against target
Percentage of day time emergency repairs completed in time	99%	97%	100%	96%	98%	😊
Percentage of urgent repairs completed in time	99%	95%	99%	93%	96%	😊
Percentage of routine repairs completed in time	96%	94%	97%	89%	93%	😊
Percentage of out-of-hours emergency repairs completed in time	99%	99%	100%	100%	100%	😊
Percentage of day time emergency repairs raised	15%	20%	22%	22%	22%	😊
Percentage of urgent repairs raised	25%	22%	23%	23%	23%	😊
Percentage of routine repairs raised	60%	59%	55%	55%	55%	😊
Percentage of customers satisfied with work done by Mears	95%		100%	100%	100%	😊
Percentage of customers satisfied overall with the repairs service	95%	96%	98%	100%	99%	😊
Average re-let time (calendar days) - general needs only	25 cal days	28	19	25	22	😊
Average re-let time (calendar days) - homes for independent living only	25 cal days	53	35	25	30	😊
Average time taken to re-let ALL council dwellings	25 cal days	33	22	25	24	😊
Percentage of customers with a compliant gas safety record	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	😊
Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit	2.86%	3.09%	3.06%	2.98%	2.98%	😊
Percentage of tenants served a notice of seeking possession	15%	13%	2%	6%	6%	😊
Percentage of tenants evicted	0.2%	0.5%	0%	0.07%	0.07%	😊
Percentage of calls to the customer first repairs team answered	90%	89%	95%	98%	97%	😊
Percentage of written correspondence answered within 10 working days (Landlord Services)	100%	98%	100%	96%	98%	😊
Percentage of emails answered within five working days (Landlord Services)	99%	99%	100%	89%	94%	😊

The following statistics reflect the performance of all of Housing Services

	Target 2011/12	Year end 10-11	Apr	May	Year to date	Year-to-date performance against target
Percentage of stage one complaints answered on time	100%	70%	100%	100%	100%	😊
Percentage of stage two complaints answered on time	100%	76%	Not applicable	100%	100%	😊

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can't afford it?

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