

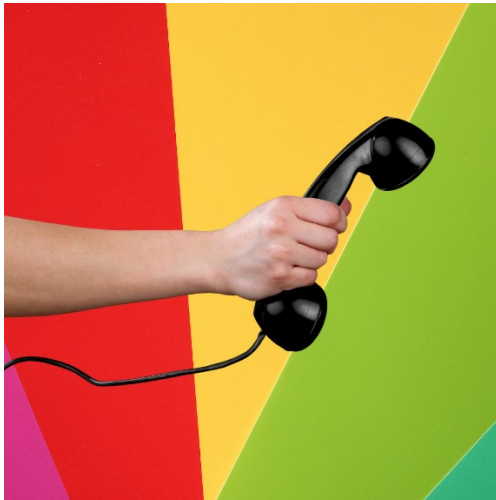


YOUR HOUSING NEWSLETTER

CONTENTS

- Communication Open Meeting
- HFIL Activity Days
- Budget Consultation
- Customer Drop-In Session
- Social Housing Stigma - What You Said
- Update from Senior Development and Property Services Manager
- Why Respond to a Text From Mears?
- TPAS Courses for Tenants
- Household Support Fund
- Help for Rough Sleepers
- Christmas Activities
 - Mini Youth Camp
 - Sports & Festive Fun
 - Christmas Party
- Activities in the New Year
 - FitFix
 - Tri For You
- Paying Your Rent
- Group for Medway Housing Tenants
- Reduce Covid Risk Indoors
- Christmas Opening Hours

COMMUNICATION OPEN MEETING



January 17 | 12am-1pm | Teams

A chance to discuss your Social Housing Stigma survey responses with our staff and any other communication issues or suggestions you may have. Help us to improve! [You can join on the day by clicking this link.](#)

HFIL ACTIVITY DAYS



January 19 | 11am-3pm | St Marks House

February 11 | 10am-4pm | Suffolk Court

We're working with Medway Sport to deliver two activity taster days for our Homes for Independent Living residents. The activities will include bowls, chair exercises, yoga and salsa. We'll also provide a light lunch!

BUDGET CONSULTATION



January 26 | 11am-12pm | Online (Teams)

We would like to invite you to a consultation on our budget for 2022/23. We'd like to hear your views before any final implementation decisions are made. If you'd like to hear about our plans and share your views, [click on the link on the day to join the meeting](#).

CUSTOMER DROP-IN



January 27 | 1pm-4pm | Twydall Library

Pop in at any time between 1-4pm and talk to us about anything related to your home or tenancy. Whether you'd like to talk about rent payments, your neighbourhood or estate, money and bills, home adaptations or anything else - we're here to help.

SOCIAL HOUSING STIGMA - WHAT YOU SAID

Contractors or Staff to be aware that if you are a council tenant does not mean you sit at home all day not working

Being told that the private sector are paying your rent and repair bills

Understand we are not all on benefits and can't sit in waiting for repairs

There's a them and us attitude sometimes

We would like to thank everyone that took the Tackling Social Housing Stigma survey. The responses have been extremely valuable in helping us to understand what we need to do to help change the way that some staff may perceive social housing tenants.

We are developing training on social housing stigma to deliver to Medway Council staff. Thanks to your survey responses, we'll be delivering the training to our contractors as well as our office staff.

Communication Meeting

We'd like to invite you to join a Teams meeting with us to talk about the responses to the Social Housing Stigma survey, as well as our general communication with you and how we can do better. Please join and share your views!

The meeting will be on Monday 17th January at 12pm to 1pm. [You can join on the day by clicking this link.](#)

UPDATE FROM SENIOR DEVELOPMENT AND PROPERTY SERVICES MANAGER



We are reinvigorating our stock condition surveying programme again. STG will be undertaking surveys to a proportion of our properties, capturing data which will inform our asset management system when elements such as kitchens, bathrooms, boilers...etc are due for replacement.

We are also ramping up our EPC surveying programme which Mears will initially be undertaking on our behalf. Mears will be completing EPC surveys to between 250-400 HRA properties over the next few months. An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) measures the energy efficiency and Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions of a property on a scale of A-G, with 'A' being the most efficient home. Energy Performance Certificates were introduced in 2007, are valid for 10 years and show the amount of CO₂ emissions produced by the property in tonnes.

The HRA will be reviewing the EPC data with a view to creating new planned works programmes which will be aimed at improving energy efficiency whilst reducing CO₂ omissions across our housing stock.

WHY RESPOND TO A TEXT FROM MEARS?



Hi Lisa from Mears here,

Last month I mentioned part of my role was to look at how satisfied residents are with the work that we undertake. We do this by sending a text to residents whenever we carry out any work, asking them to rate us on a scale of 1 – 10 and any comments they have. This gives us really valuable feedback of what we are doing well and what we can improve on.

It's always good to get any type of feedback, if it's something we haven't done well, it gives us the opportunity to talk it through and see what we can

learn. If it's great feedback, this gives our operatives a real boost when they know someone has appreciated the work they do.

So please do respond to the texts and help us to improve our service or continue to give great service.

Have a very Happy Christmas from all at Mears.

TPAS COURSES FOR TENANTS

As Tpas members, our residents and colleagues can access a number of training courses. One of our residents has undertaken the Housing Law course, and this is what she has to say:

"Because I have a keen interest in Housing and have been a Tenant of 30+years I decided to take the TPAS Introduction to Housing Law course. I really didn't realise the many different aspects of Housing Law ; from the different types of tenancies through to how the Social Housing white papers become Law. It's great to have some kind of "insider " knowledge now especially an understanding of why some Laws take so long to get implemented."

Why not browse the huge selection of [Tpas training courses](#) and see if there's a topic that you'd be interested to learn about?

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND



Vulnerable households in Medway can now access the support fund to help them with essential household costs over the coming months as the country continues its recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Through the Household Support Fund, eligible Medway residents can apply up to 3 times between October 2021 and 31 March 2022.

To be eligible for a payment through the Household Support Fund, you must:

- live in Medway
- be aged 16 or over
- be in receipt of benefits or be on a low income (earning less than the National Living Wage of £9.50 per hour), and able to evidence this. Accepted benefits can be found below
- not have access to any funds that can be relied on to meet the need you are applying for, and where you would be left with insufficient resources which would cause serious risk.
- your own, or your family's, health, or safety
- have less than £500 in your bank account and be able to evidence this with a statement dated within the last month
- not have applied more than 3 times for the scheme between October 2021 and 31 March 2022.

To apply or for more information, [please click here](#).

HELP FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS

The Rough Sleeper Initiative helps rough sleepers access a range of services and find accommodation.

Tell us if you see someone sleeping rough in Medway

You can tell us about a rough sleeper by [filling in this online form](#). You can also phone us and leave a message on 01634 334008.

Our team is often out of the office working with people. So please leave a message describing where you saw the rough sleeper and the time of day and date when you saw them.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

MINI YOUTH SPORTS CAMP



Children's

Mini Youth Camp

20 to 23 December with venues across Medway

MedwayGo

Medway Sport and partners are proud to be providing FREE activities and a hot meal as part of the Medway Go holiday programme. Follow the links below to find out more and to book. Open to children in receipt of benefit-related free school meals.

- [Mini Youth Sports Camps](#) (including Christmas lunch and party) at Medway Park and Strood Sports Centres
- [Crash course swimming lessons](#) at Medway Park, Strood and Hoo Sports Centres
- [Football](#) at Anchorians FC
- [Skiing/ snowboarding & toboggan](#) fun at Chatham Snowsports Centre
- [Trampolining](#) at Jumpers Rebound Centre
- [Boxing and Kickboxing](#) at BBMA
- [Dance](#) with Upside Down Dance Academy
- [Mini Youth Sports Camps](#) at Medway Park and Strood are also available to book for all children aged 7-12. Cost £10 per half day

SPORTS & FESTIVE FUN

A promotional poster for MedwayGo's 'Strive PE & Sports & Festive Fun' event. The background is split into dark green and light yellow sections. On the left, a circular inset shows two children, a girl and a boy, playing with a yellow ball. The text 'MedwayGo' is in the top right. The event title 'Strive PE & Sports & Festive Fun' is in large green letters. Below it, smaller text says 'Plus arts and crafts for children in year 1-6, running 20 & 21 Dec.' and a green box contains the website 'go.medway.gov.uk'. Decorative elements include green bows and white reindeer silhouettes.

MedwayGo

Strive PE & Sports & Festive Fun

Plus arts and crafts for children in year 1-6, running 20 & 21 Dec.

go.medway.gov.uk

Children in years 1 to 6 in Medway are invited to join our fun activity sessions filled with exciting sports as well as arts and crafts projects. A tasty meal is included with each session. FREE for children who receive benefits-related free school meals.

Running 20 & 21 December at Chatham Grammar. [Click here](#) to book your place.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

A festive poster for the MedwayGo Christmas Party. The background is light yellow with a red diagonal stripe. It features illustrations of green bows, red reindeer, and a large cartoon Santa Claus. The text 'You are invited to the MedwayGo Christmas Party' is in red, followed by '23 December 2021: Venues across Medway'. A list of activities is provided in red bullet points, and the MedwayGo logo is at the bottom left.

You are invited to the

MedwayGo Christmas Party

23 December 2021: Venues across Medway

- Festive games and fun
- Meet Santa
- Christmas lunch included

MedwayGo

Children in Medway are invited to the tree-mendous MedwayGo Christmas Party! There will be the opportunity to meet Santa, play festive games and make new friends. A tasty hot meal is included with each session.

FREE for children who receive benefits-related free school meals. Taking place 23 December in venues across Medway. [Click here to book now.](#)

ACTIVITIES IN THE NEW YEAR

FITFIX

Fitfix is a healthy lifestyle course for teenagers that helps them learn about healthy habits and builds body confidence. They will also receive a free fitness tracker and a free gym membership!

The course starts Wednesday, 12 January at Brompton Academy. [Click here](#) to find out more.

TRI FOR YOU

[Our Tri For You](#) groups help children build healthy habits through fun interactive sessions. Little ones learn about healthy food through play, story time and crafts while older children explore topics like positive body image, what's in our food and cravings. We offer:

Tri Tots for 2-4 year olds

Tri Club for 8-12 year olds

PAYING YOUR RENT

Every Christmas there are people who don't pay their rent and find it hard to get back on track with payments. Make sure you pay your rent on time at medway.gov.uk/paycouncilrent.

Remember we are always here to help. If you are experiencing financial difficulties, need benefit advice or help with budgeting, please phone our Tenancy Sustainment Team free on 0800 408 8080 or 01634 333344.



Alternatively, for debt advice the following organisations may be able to help: Citizens Advice Bureau on 01634 383760 and Step Change Debt Charity on 0800 138 1111.

GROUP FOR MEDWAY HOUSING TENANTS

You told us that you wanted a Facebook group for Medway Housing tenants, and [here it is!](#)

The group is intended for engaging in discussions and sharing information and ideas. It will be a great way for you to easily get involved in giving us your opinions to directly influence our services.

We want to make sure that this will be an inclusive and beneficial community group, so all tenants must agree to and comply with the following rules: be kind and courteous; no hate speech or bullying; respect everyone's privacy; no promotions or spam. We look forward to chatting with you there!

REDUCE COVID RISK INDOORS

Open windows to let fresh air in to help disperse COVID-19 particles when meeting others indoors.

Now the days are shorter and we are spending more time at home or inside, it is important for us all to take steps to reduce the risk of COVID-19 indoors. COVID-19 is spread through very small droplets released when we breathe out.

Letting fresh air in for just 10 minutes, regularly, can help remove these small coronavirus particles lingering in the air.

- A well ventilated room can reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection by 70%.
- In airless rooms Covid-19 can build up over time, so its harder to avoid breathing it in
- When you're inside with others , open the window and let fresh air in.
- Follow all safer behaviours to keep COVID-19 from spreading.
- If you are eligible, get your booster jab as soon as you can.

CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

Housing Officers & Welfare Reform Team Duty Line 01634 333344

The Medway Council phonedlines will be closed on:

- 24 December
- 25 December

- 28 December
- 1 January

Out of hours services will run as usual over this period.

For out-of-hours emergencies only, phone 01634 304 400.

