

**Housing Matters**

Housing is an essential aspect of the council's ambitions in making Medway a great place to live, work, learn and visit.

It is a challenging time for all of us at present, and in this edition, we are sharing details of initiatives that can help keep you or someone you know warm and well this winter, including where to find details of financial support and practical advice on preparing your home for winter.

At this time of year it's particularly important to be safety conscious and be aware of potential hazards with christmas lights, candles, decorations etc. Most fires in the home are preventable, we just need to ensure we always follow simple safety measures and take action when we see something that's not right. We've included some fire safety tips in this newsletter, and we are publishing additional detail on our website and our Facebook page, follow us (Medway Council Housing Services) if you don't already and stay safe.

# [Fire safety](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200152/council_housing/92/keeping_your_home_safe/2)

Working smoke alarms can be essential in saving lives in the event of a fire🔥

When the smoke alarm detects smoke in your home, a high-pitched alarm will sound. Test the smoke alarms in your home weekly by pressing the button on the smoke alarm until the alarm sounds. All of our fitted smoke alarms are hardwired into the electrical system. Not all of them require a battery replacement, so if your smoke alarm does not sound when you test it, report it immediately to Housing Repairs on 01634 333601.

👉For more information visit: [**medway.gov.uk/Housing**](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200152/council_housing/92/keeping_your_home_safe/2)

# [Book a free home fire safety visit](https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/home-fire-safety-visits)

Making sure home is a safe place is important for everyone, especially if you have a long-term health condition or dementia, a young family, are an older person or a smoker.

One way to help make your home a safer space is to request a free home fire safety visit from a specialist firefighter or Safe and Well officer.

👉To book a fire safety visit go to: [**kent.fire-uk.org/home-fire-safety-visits**](https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/home-fire-safety-visits)

👉Information regarding Fire Safety can be found at:[**gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-tips-for-christmas**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-tips-for-christmas)



# [Help with the cost of living](https://www.medway.gov.uk/HouseholdHelp)

We understand that managing finances and household bills can be challenging, especially at the moment with the increase in the cost of living.

That’s why it’s important to know what help and support is available that could benefit you, a relative, friend or neighbour.

To make things simpler, we’ve created a dedicated page on our website which is full of advice and information about the support available which includes:

✔️council tax reductions

✔️help with childcare costs

✔️help with food and energy bills

✔️debt advice and much more

👉Find out more at: [**medway.gov.uk/HouseholdHelp**](https://www.medway.gov.uk/HouseholdHelp)



# [The Big Door Knock](https://www.medway.gov.uk/Housing)

On the 28October the team were out meeting tenants in the first Big Door Knock.

The Big Door Knock was a brilliant opportunity to talk in person with our customers, hearing about their challenges, and getting feedback that will help us adapt our services.

Over the coming months we'll be out in your area to introduce ourselves, let you know what support we can offer, how you can keep in touch with us and for us to find out what's important to you.

We look forward to meeting you personally and hearing your views about the services that we provide.





# [Have your say...](https://surveys.medway.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=166550426215)

It is important that you know how Housing Services are performing and who to go to should you need to report a repair to your property, have a complaint or want to report an issue regarding anti-social behaviour.

To help us make improvements to our service to you, we want to know your views on how we are performing and where you feel we are doing well, and what areas could be improved.

Complete our [**Tenant Satisfaction Survey**](https://surveys.medway.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=166550426215)by scanning the QR code with your smart phone camera which will take you directly to the online survey, alternatively you can email us and ask for a hard copy of the survey. Email us at: Tenant.Participation@medway.gov.uk

Anyone who completes the survey will have the opportunity to enter a free prize draw with the chance to win £50 of Love 2 Shop vouchers.



# [New play area opened](https://www.medway.gov.uk/Greenspaces)

There's a new play area at Hazlemere Drive open and ready for play.

Residents at Hazlemere Drive asked for a play area for young children in the area.

We worked with local tenants to choose new play equipment to create the new design that will provide lots of opportunities for children to discover and explore.

Equipment includes, a range of activity boards, a new slide and climbing frame.

To find out more about Medway's play areas, parks and open spaces visit: [**medway.gov.uk/Greenspaces**](https://www.medway.gov.uk/Greenspaces)





# [Make your home winter ready...](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200152/council_housing/107/repairs_to_my_home/1)

**Check gutters**

Your gutters are key to protecting your home from the elements. When bad weather hits, they are essential in diverting any rainfall away from your home. For them to work properly they need to be clear and free flowing. Gutters often become blocked with leaves, moss and sediment. A blocked or broken gutter can cause a number of issues inside the property if it is not cleared, resulting in major expensive repairs.

**How to check your gutters** - **Look Up**

Walk around your property and visually inspect the gutters and downpipes. Look for any key signs that there might be an issue, such as:

* Can you see any obvious gutter blockage?
* Is there water flowing over one point of the gutter?
* Are there any drips coming from any point in the gutter?
* Can you spot any rotting wood on the fascia’s?
* Can you see any vegetation growing from the gutter?

If you answer ‘yes’ to any of these questions then the chances are there is a problem and that the gutters need cleaning out.

**Home ventilation**

Ventilation is essential not just for comfort but also to prevent moisture damage and for health and wellbeing. Proper ventilation helps remove air pollutants, keeps moisture levels down, and helps remove unwanted smells from cooking or pets.

Preventing moisture build-up is essential. If you let it build up, it could not only affect the buildings structural integrity, but could also cause mould which is hazardous to health.

**How to check that your house is being ventilated effectively**

Your home should already have a number of items in place to help assist with ventilating your house. Kitchens and bathrooms often have extractor fans fitted and these should be used when cooking, showering and bathing to help remove the moisture in the air. You should be able to hear the fans working but you can also check by holding your hand up to it and feeling cold air where the air is exiting the building.

Your windows may have trickle vents fitted to them. These should be left open where possible and should not be blocked. If you do not have trickle vents, open the windows very slightly as and when you need to.

You may have other vents situated around your home such as pacifier vents and air bricks, it is important that these are kept clear to allow the building to breath and to prevent damp and mould forming.

## [**What to do if you’ve found a problem**](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200152/council_housing/107/repairs_to_my_home/1)

If you’ve carried out these checks and have found a problem that you are not able to fix you should contact your Housing Repairs Team.

Ther Repairs Team can be contacted on **01634 333 60**1 (FREEPHONE **08000 730 073** from a landline)

or via email **housingrepairs@medway.gov.uk**

# [How we're performing...](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200589/housing_performance)

The team work year-round to support our tenants and provide the best service they can.

It is our duty to be transparent about how we are performing as a landlord.  Therefore, we report on the work that we have done for our tenants and leaseholders and show this against the targets we have been set.

We report performance in the following areas:

* Customer service
* Repairs, maintenance and compliance
* Housing management

For detailed information on our performance visit:  [**medway.gov.uk/info/200589/housing\_performance**](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200589/housing_performance)



# [Complaints](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200422/complaints/1383/housing-complaints)

If you unhappy with the service you have received from the Housing Services Team please visit the [**Medway Council Housing Complaints**](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200422/complaints/1383/housing-complaints) page on our website.

Here you will find how to advise us of the issue, how to get assistance with your complaint, and how to escalate your complaint if you are dissatisfied with the response you have received.

To find out more or to make a complaint visit: [**medway.gov.uk/housing**](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200422/complaints/1383/housing-complaints)





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