Dear residents,

Welcome to the autumn edition of At The Heart.

Looking after people is the theme of this issue as we report on the tough action we are taking when tenants cause problems for their neighbours.

The Tenant Fraud Amnesty gives people who are illegally sub-letting their council property until Monday 30 November to relinquish their property and hand in their keys. Failure to do so could lead to prosecution, with a £50,000 maximum fine and/or up to two years in jail. As part of the same campaign, to make sure Council homes are available for those in real need, we are offering up to £500 reward for people who let us know about an illegal sub-let, that we then get back for proper use.

The Council’s fostering team is looking for carers who can look after brothers and sisters in the same home. There is an increasing need for families who have the room to keep siblings together. Not only is there the reward of helping young people develop in a loving home but there is also up to £433 available per child per week to help cover their costs.

Housing Services regularly run first aid courses for tenants, so do check out the article on page 29, and if you’re then interested in going on a course, let us know.

From October, new regulations come in requiring private landlords to fit carbon monoxide and smoke alarms in their properties. We are sharing details of those regulations and explaining where landlords can get free alarms for use in Havering.

Hallowe’en and Bonfire Night are fast approaching. Both are times when we can have fun, but we need to do so safely and without upsetting our neighbours. We have some tips to help both occasions go smoothly.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue and, as always, I welcome your feedback on any article or aspect of housing.

Councillor Damian White
Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing

Crack-down on tenancy fraud

Tenants who have illegally sub-let the home they are renting from Havering Council have until Monday 30 November to hand in their keys or face prosecution, as the Council launches a crack-down on tenancy fraud.

Tenants are committing fraud if they have a tenancy with the Council, but live elsewhere and sublet the property to another person.

Tenancy fraud also includes providing false information when applying for housing and illegally applying to take over a tenancy of someone who has died.

Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damian White, said: “We are determined to stamp out tenancy fraud so those homes can be used by people in real need of social housing.

“Since August 2011 we have had 92 properties made available to new tenants because of our fraud investigations and we are now stepping up our anti-fraud work.”

Amnesty

Councillor White added: “Anyone who has illegally sub-let their property can avoid prosecution by giving the Council vacant possession of their property by Monday 30 November. After that date we will be prosecuting anyone we discover who is sub-letting illegally.

“Successful prosecutions in the Crown Court bring a maximum fine of £50,000 and/or up to two years in jail.

“In addition anyone with a history of tenancy fraud will not be rehoused in Havering.

“Making use of this amnesty is a good way of avoiding prosecution.”

£500 reward

Many tenants know someone who is sub-letting and we want them to let us know.

Continued on page 5
**ASB leads to home ban**

Following months of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), a closure order has been placed and enforced on Charlbury Crescent, Harold Hill.

Local residents began to complain of increased noise and nuisance, drug use, alcohol use and regular fights both inside and outside the property. Nuisance diary visits and police officers and the local residents to clearly understand the issues they faced on a daily basis and encouraged a number of residents to keep a nuisance diary which logged all incidents of anti-social behaviour. Advice ignored

The tenant of the property, Mr Phillip Wood, was advised on numerous occasions of the negative impact his behaviour, and the behaviour of visitors to his property, was having on neighbours. The decision to apply to the Courts for a closure order was made following repeated visits to the property, and after requests to Mr Wood and visitors to modify and change their behaviour were continually ignored. The closure order was granted on 4 June 2015 for a period of three months.

**Safe place**

Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Councillor Osman Dervish, said: “We want to make sure that Havering is a safe place for our residents to live and this is the right outcome for the tenants at Charlbury Crescent. We will not tolerate anti-social behaviour towards our staff or residents”.

You asked, we acted

Residents of Sevenoaks Close, Harold Hill, contacted the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damian White with concerns about their local environment.

A Neighbourhood Officer visited Sevenoaks Close on 6 August 2015 to investigate the issues made by residents and reported:

- The residents have complained that the tenant at 91 Sevenoaks Close had approximately 18 bags of rubble at the side of their property. The Neighbourhood Officer noted that there is a large structure in the front garden. A Council surveyor will be visiting the property to investigate this further. The Neighbourhood Officer will continue to monitor the area.

**Fraud case won**

An investigation began on 9 June 2014 against a tenant in Heaton Avenue, Harold Hill, after an allegation that they were not using their council property as their main and principal home but had applied through right to buy. Full credit checks were made that found there were financial links to another property in Manningtree, Essex, going back as far as 2008. The tenant had also opened a BT account back as far as 2008.

Various unannounced visits were made to the Manningtree and Harold Hill addresses but each visit was unsuccessful, as the tenant was not available.

**Search warrants**

Joint working with Essex Police and Metropolitan Police led to warrants to search both addresses on 14 October 2014. A man was found at the Havering Council property, which indicated that the property was being sub-let, which is a criminal offence under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013.

There were also items found in the property which were associated with drug use, which could have led to Anti-Social Behaviour in the surrounding areas. A Notice to Quit the Manningtree address was given to the tenant.

Successful prosecution

The Harold Hill property was successfully recovered through the civil courts. The tenant was successfully prosecuted for benefit fraud as Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support were in payment at the tenant’s property and the tenant was found in the Manningtree property, which was privately rented. A Notice to Quit the Manningtree address was given to the tenant.
Could you be a Mystery Shopper?

Mystery shopping is an ideal way for tenants to give an anonymous reflection of Housing Services.

Housing Services is looking for some mystery shoppers to find out what level of help they receive in different situations. Mystery shoppers will be asked to complete just three shops per year, taking approximately 10 to 30 minutes per shop according to the service. A further additional 30 minutes will be required to complete a report template and checklist. Full support is given throughout which will include help to set the scenario and write the report, as well as feedback meetings.

Stopping Looking Local

Improvements to the information on Havering Council’s website, and the launch of At the Heart Online email newsletter, has led to a review of the way information is shared with tenants. That review showed that relatively few people use the Looking Local app and TV service, so we have decided not to renew the subscription. This service will end from October 2015.

The options on Looking Local are available elsewhere. Repairs can be reported via the SeeMyData service found on the housing section of the Council’s website. Information can also be got from those pages or from At the Heart online, which is free for you to subscribe to through the Havering Updates page on the website.

The money saved can be used to support other services, which are used by more tenants.

More info
www.havering.gov.uk/MysteryShopper

How shared ownership works

The apartments at Taplow House are available to purchase with a minimum of a 50 per cent share of the full purchase price, which can be funded through a mortgage or loan.

For the remaining share, rent is payable. You can purchase further shares in the future until you own 100%.

A service charge is also payable.

Sixteen new apartments are now available in Rainham for people wanting to get a foot on the ladder through shared ownership.

There are four one-bedroom and 12 two-bedroom new apartments at Taplow House, which is very conveniently situated within a short walk to Rainham Station and Rainham Village.

To qualify for an apartment you will need to meet specific criteria and there are earning limitations.

Priority is offered to Havering residents, Armed Forces personnel and Social Housing tenants.

Taplow House has been built to a high specification with a fully fitted white gloss kitchen with built in fridge/freezer, electric oven, gas hob and extractor, solid oak flooring to kitchen, dining and living areas and beige twist pile carpet to hallway and bedroom(s). Each apartment has a balcony and there is a lift to all floors.

The apartments are available through Liberty Housing.

More info
www.havering.gov.uk/LibertyHousing/taplowhouse

Safety first for street party

When residents of Highfield Estate in Collier Row decided to hold a street party, to commemorate Her Majesty The Queen becoming Great Britain’s longest reigning monarch, it was safety first for the steering group. Members decided to take a food safety course and met the standards of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Food Safety and Hygiene Level Two.

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Help available from Mary Ward

The Mary Ward Legal Centre is now available to offer free, independent and confidential advice to tenants.

If you are in debt and struggling financially, or if you need advice and assistance with housing, employment or welfare benefits, you can book an appointment with a specialist advisor at the Housing Services office at Chippenham Road, Harold Hill, using the askhousing link below.

More info
www.havering.gov.uk/askhousing
www.marywardlegal.org.uk

Keep your cash clean

Havering Council has to obey the Money Laundering Regulations so if you intend buying your property through Right to Buy you will now be asked to supply details of how you intend to fund the purchase of your home.

The additional form will be with the existing Right to Buy application form and you will be required to return both forms completed and signed. Failure to do so could cause a delay in your applications being processed.

The Money Laundering Regulations were introduced to make sure businesses, at risk of being used for money laundering, have controls in place to minimise the risk of this happening.

More info
www.havering.gov.uk/askhousing

Direct Debit is best for bills

Using Direct Debit means you don’t have to remember when your Council Tax or rent is due as the payment is taken automatically and for the right amount every month.

You can choose whether the payment is made on the 1st or the 15th of each month to suit your financial situation and it’s easy to set up too.

All you need is your bank account details, and your Council Tax or rent reference number, then contact us and we’ll do the rest.

The Direct Debit will continue until you cancel it, which you can do at any time, and we will tell you of any changes to the payments before they are taken so you know exactly where you stand.

And as long as the payments are made you will never get in arrears.

So why delay? Check out the website today and sign up to pay by Direct Debit.

More info
www.havering.gov.uk/pay
www.havering.gov.uk/counciltax

Job opportunities from council contractors

Havering Council encourages contractors to recruit local people to help deliver the work they do.

This summer Willmott Dixon Energy Services Limited brought together its subcontractors for a special event at Hillrise Community Centre in Collier Row.

Residents called in for information about the different jobs available and were also able to get advice on writing CVs and covering letters for job applications.

Four weeks to full-time

An introduction from Havering Council’s Sarah Johnson opened a door for Aaron Ryan to get four weeks’ work experience with Willmott Dixon Energy Services Limited and while there Aaron pushed that door wide open to get himself a full-time job with the firm.

Willmott Dixon Energy Services Senior Customer and Communities Manager, Sophie Reid, said: “In the short space of time Aaron was with us, he impressed the site team and managers with his willingness to learn, personable attitude and his IT skills. We were thankful that he volunteered and came back to help the team out at the Local Labour Event.

“When an opportunity came up for a temporary site administrator we offered Aaron a full time temp to perm position and were delighted he agreed to join our team.”
Which cut will you choose?

Making sure the gardens and grounds of our housing estates look good is important.

That is why residents are being asked to choose one of three options for the length of grass and frequency of shrub pruning in their communal areas.

Estate Services Manager, Roy Ojelade, said: “The grounds maintenance service level agreement is up for renewal and before going out to tender we are asking residents what level of service they would like to see, bearing in mind the different costs involved.

“Full details of the options available, including frequency of shrub cutting, emptying of dog waste bins as well as grass cutting standards will be circulated to residents who will be asked to choose between three options.”

The proposals will go out to consultation with residents in early autumn this year with the results then being used to help shape the tender for future grounds maintenance.”

More info www.havering.gov.uk/askhousing

Current service, grass between 40mm and 60mm costs £3.83
Grass between 60mm and 90mm costs £3.61
Grass between 70mm and 110mm costs £3.52

More info www.havering.gov.uk/hactonhall

Option 1
Option 2
Option 3

Costs shown are per week over 48 weeks in any calendar year.

Ideal for parties and clubs

The newly refurbished Hacton Lane Hall in Hornchurch is proving popular with a number of local community groups now holding their meetings there.

The facilities are also ideal for family parties, as it can accommodate 80 people seated or 120 standing.

Hire charges are £33 per hour, Monday to Thursday, and £50 per hour, Friday to Sunday.

The hall is reached from Haydock Close, Hornchurch, RM12 6EA, and has a modern kitchen with fridge freezer, microwave and cooker, as well as on-site parking.

More info www.havering.gov.uk/hactonhall

The new kitchen is ideal when catering for family parties

Letting options for Havering landlords

Guaranteed monthly payments ➤ no hidden costs

Property leasing service
➤ Long leases
➤ 100% guaranteed rent paid in advance with no hidden charges
➤ Some free repairs
➤ Guaranteed rent even if the property is empty
➤ Free annual gas safety checks
➤ Property management service

Shared accommodation service
➤ Pay you for each room – increase your income
➤ Pay for the gas, electricity, water and Council Tax bills
➤ Intensive property management
➤ Weekly cleaner
➤ Monthly gardener

For more information call 01708 431515
e-mail libertyhousing@havering.gov.uk
visit us at 163 High Street, Hornchurch RM11 3XS
Blooming lovely winners

More than 30 entries were received for the Housing in Bloom 2015 competition, giving the judges great difficulty to choose the winners in each of the five categories.

The winners for each category are:

• Best back garden Mrs Brenda Driscoll, Collier Row
• Best front garden Mrs Angela Bathurst, Hornchurch
• Best Communal Garden Susan Cotterill and Bernard Murphy, Hornchurch
• Best Hanging Basket Andrew Roberts, Collier Row and Thomas Sims Court, Rainham
• Tallest sunflower Mrs R Miles, Romford.

Prizes were awarded for the top three entries in each category and the green-fingered winners will receive their prizes at a special presentation this autumn.

More information:
www.havering.gov.uk/homes-in-bloom
Cabinet Member’s Surgery

During 2015, Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Councillor Damian White, is holding regular surgeries across the Borough so Council tenants can call in and discuss housing issues with him.

The surgeries are on a ‘first come, first served’ basis and any tenants are welcome to come along. All discussions will be confidential. The next dates are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 23 October</td>
<td>4pm to 6pm</td>
<td>Hacton Hall, Haydock Close, Hornchurch RM12 6EA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 20 November</td>
<td>4pm to 6pm</td>
<td>Highfield – room next to Highfield Towers, Hillrise Road, Collier Row RM5 3DQ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Email news for your local area

As well as At the Heart Online, there are new email updates highlighting what’s happening in Collier Row, Cranham and Upminster, Harold Hill, Harold Wood, Hornchurch, Rainham and Romford.

We have also launched a Health in Havering email update this summer too giving health-related news from GPs, local hospitals and Havering Council.

Sign up now to make sure you keep up-to-date.

Fun on Facebook

Pictures from the different summer activity days across the Borough have been proving popular on Facebook and you can also find out when the Do It In A Day repair teams are in your area, as well as the latest housing news.

More info www.facebook.com/haveringhousing

It’s easy to do it online

Sign up to Havering Council’s ‘My Havering’ service at www.havering.gov.uk/myhavering to access a wide range of services 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the website.

You can apply to move house, for energy efficiency advice, to rent a garage and much more at www.havering.gov.uk/applyhousing

You can also pay your housing or garage rent and Council Tax by Direct Debit (by completing and returning the online form), or you can pay online using credit or debit cards through www.havering.gov.uk/payforit

The Report It service is available to let the Council know about community and neighbourhood issues, housing issues and a lot more at www.havering.gov.uk/askhousing

Council tenants and leaseholders can get secure access to all their housing information online through www.havering.gov.uk/SeeMyData

More info www.havering.gov.uk/Havering-Updates

Call today: 01708 434 574
www.havering.gov.uk/fostering

Havering Council foster carers can earn up to £866 per week, keeping siblings together
Stopping drugs in the community

The Community Wardens were recently called to a council house in north Havering after residents were concerned that the house was being used as a drug factory.

There were obvious signs including foil blocking windows and, through an open door, intensive lighting and a rapid heating tube could be seen. Although the drugs had been moved before the wardens arrived, they worked with the police to make the property secure.

Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damian White, said: “If residents think a house, flat or other building is being used for illegal purposes, such as growing drugs, they should let us know. “If they don’t want to alert our Community Wardens they can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 and leave details so the local police can check it out.”

Ben is tennis champion

After competing in three previous finals, Community Warden Ben Clow (pictured on right) was successful in winning the Southend and District Men’s Doubles and Mixed Doubles Summer Championships.

In the men’s competition Ben and his partner were able to beat the top seeded pairing in the semi-final and the second seeded pairing in the final.

Combatting crime together

The Community Wardens recently organised a crime prevention event for tenants and residents at Malan Square and Bader Way, Elm Park.

Despite heavy rain on the day, many residents called in for tips on how to keep their homes safe from burglary and car crime.

Residents in turn provided staff with hot tea and sausage rolls.

The Community Wardens were joined on the day by tenancy officers and Family Mosaic to deal with advice on benefits and housing problems.

Havering Police’s Elm Park Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) also called in during the day.

Community Warden Manager, Barry Armour, said: “Although police crime statistics prove that Anti-Social Behaviour and burglary has reduced again this year, the wardens are not resting on their laurels. “We have planned events to visit other estates within the Borough to continue the momentum against the reduction of crime.”

Wardens on the web

Havering Council’s Community Wardens have their own web page, which is regularly updated.

The page contains information about how to contact the Community Wardens, where they have been on patrol and the type of work they do, including how they work with the CCTV control centre and Havering Police.

Is your Watch ticking

Neighbourhood Watch aims to prevent crime, reduce the fear of crime, and improve safety.

Neighbourhood Watch acts as the eyes and ears of the community. It has been shown that Neighbourhood Watch areas are far less likely to be targeted by criminals.
Fun in the sun

Traditional games proved popular when the Housing Services Community Engagement Team went on the road this summer holding activity days in five parts of the Borough.

1. Egg and spoon races are fun
2. Watermelon is a tasty addition to this picnic in Harold Hill
3. Ramilla and Tristan Ince play badminton at Harold Hill
4. Harry and Daniel Lambert try out the badminton
5. Evie Rankin demonstrates hopscotch
6. Finlay Brown, age 22 months, shows he has good coordination, watched by mum and dad
7. Hula hoop proved popular
8. Lee Osborne face painting Tony Thorpe
9. The tension mounts as Jenga is played.

Tracy Thorpe, of Harold Hill added: “It’s nice that it doesn’t cost anything to take part, and suggesting we bring a picnic is a good idea.”

Kelly Smith, of Elm Park, said: “There are a lot of different activities for children to do and that gives parents some peace and quiet too!”

Rainham resident, Donna Quy, added: “A flyer came round our flats and the kids have been looking forward to coming along. It’s nice for families to have something different to do.”
Alarming new rules for landlords

If you lease out your property there are new laws due to start in October which make you responsible for the safety of your tenants.

Under the new legislation all landlords must:

• fit at least one smoke alarm on each floor of their premises – preferably one alarm per room
• fit a carbon monoxide alarm in every room containing a solid fuel appliance – and also preferably one in each room where people are sleeping
• check that all alarms are working when a new tenancy starts.

The London Fire Brigade has a limited supply of free alarms available to help landlords meet the new laws and applications can be made via the link on the website.

Get involved – speak to Sandy

Havering Council’s Home Ownership Team, with the help of the Leasehold Focus Group, continuously seeks more efficient ways of working and transferring savings made to leaseholders.

Sandy is the Chairman of the London Borough of Havering Leaseholder Focus Group and she can help you bring general leasehold issues to the attention of Home Ownership.

The group meets four times a year with the aim of improving the service provided by the Home Ownership Team.

If anything about your lease is on your mind, feel free to email Sandy on sandystevenson44@aol.com

Service charge update

All leaseholders should by now have received a Statement of Actual Expenditure telling you about your service charge for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

The Actual Expenditure replaces the estimated service charge sent to you for this period in February 2014. The Statement of Actual Expenditure tells you whether the estimated amount we charged at that time was over or under the actual amount we spent on your block/estate.

If there was an underspend showing on your actual statement then you should pay by Wednesday 21 October 2015, to avoid any recovery action being taken against you. If we spent less than the estimated amount then your service charge account will be in credit.

Bought on the open market

However, if an actual account had not been calculated, your solicitor should have made provision with the seller’s solicitors to hold a retention until such time as the invoices are raised on the account. If this applies to you, please contact your solicitor and provide a copy of the Actual Statement to them so that any retention held can be released.

Also, please ensure all transfer documents have been forwarded the Home Ownership team, as required by the terms and conditions of your lease, so that all our records are correct.

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More info
www.havering.gov.uk/askhousing

More info
www.havering.gov.uk/pay
Remember, remember the fifth of November

Going to a properly organised display is the safest and most enjoyable way to celebrate Bonfire Night, as the professionals can buy bigger and better fireworks than individuals.

Such events are not only great fun, but often work out cheaper than buying your own fireworks and the money raised supports local schools and charities, so you're helping the community too.

If you decide to have a private bonfire party please read advice on how to be safe from the Council’s website.

More info
www.havering.gov.uk/bonfires

Keep on the right side of the law

Please remember:

• You can only buy fireworks (including sparklers) from registered sellers for private use between Thursday 15 October and Tuesday 10 November 2015.
• It is illegal to set off fireworks between 11pm and 7am, although on 5 November, displays can continue until midnight.
• It is an offence for anyone under the age of 18 to possess fireworks in public places and an offence for anyone, other than a firework professional, to possess professional display fireworks.
• Police have the power to issue fixed penalty notices to anyone under the age of 18 caught with fireworks in a public place.

Trick or Treat?
Hallowe’en can be scary

Hallowe’en falls on a Saturday this year and is a time that can be fun and enjoyable or one which is frightening and scary.

Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Councillor Osman Dervish, said: “We hope the evening will be a community event enjoyed by thousands of people. That can be achieved if the guidelines below are followed.

“The vast majority of young people in Havering are responsible citizens – there may be groups of children out in your street, especially at Hallowe’en, but only bad behaviour should be reported to the police.

“Havering police will be putting as many officers on the street as possible for Hallowe’en night and the Council’s Community Wardens will also be out and about.”

If you are a resident:

• You have a right to say ‘no’ to Trick or Treating. If you don’t want it, you can display a “No Trick or Treating” sign by your front door
• If someone calls at your door, be cautious. Use a door chain or door viewer to check the caller’s identity. If you are unsure, do not open the door
• If you are happy for Trick or Treaters to come to your door, remember to stock up on treats
• Report suspicious or criminal activity to the police:
  In an emergency dial 999
  To contact the police about something that is not an emergency dial 101.

If your children want to Trick or Treat please:

• have an adult accompany them for their own safety
• call early in the evening, in daylight is best and certainly before 8pm
• make sure part of what you’re wearing is reflective so motorists can see you
• if buying a fancy dress costume, make sure it is flame retardant
• avoid areas where you know elderly or vulnerable people live
• make sure that any trick won’t cause harm or damage – so no throwing flour or eggs please
• make sure they respect people’s gardens and property
• don’t call at any home showing a “No Trick or Treating” sign – someone there might be sick, or you could wake up young children.

More info
www.havering.gov.uk/Halloween
Improving access to psychological services

Everyday life can be tough for anyone. Our talking therapies in Havering, which we call improving access to psychological therapies (IAPT) are a free NHS service that can help with a range of problems such as depression, anxiety, stress, bereavement and relationship problems.

Talking therapies are proven to work, and our friendly, professional team offer a range of sessions that are designed to help you cope better.

Our services are confidential and easy to access.

More info www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-havering-iapt

Care Act financial changes delayed

The Government has postponed phase two of the Care Act until 2020. The changes, which were due to be introduced in April 2016, planned to cap the amount people pay for their care and give more people help with their care bills.

Havering has London’s oldest population and this decision has implications for anyone planning for their future care needs, or for those who unexpectedly find themselves having to pay for social care.

More info www.havering.gov.uk/careact

Need a fresh start this autumn?

Summer is over and children are knuckling down back at school, and for many families, older children are moving away to start university.

But anyone not ready for an empty nest could find fostering is the perfect thing to fill their time and boost their bank balance.

Havering Council needs foster carers to look after brothers and sisters, to help keep families together at a challenging time for children and young people.

There are more than 250 children in care at any time, and most are small groups of brothers and sisters.

Council foster carers, like Havering resident and foster carer Sharon Reeve, can boost their bank balance by looking after more than one child, with allowances of up to £433 per child.

Sharon, who looks after brothers aged five and three, said: “I look at it as my job to help these children, then me and family don’t look upon it as a permanent arrangement.

“We’ve been lucky to have positive outcomes. It can be tough, but you need to persevere in difficult times, and we get a lot of support from our social worker.”

More info www.havering.gov.uk/fostering

Need a garage?

Council tenants can receive preferential rent rates for council garages. Weekly charges for council tenants range from £7.41 to £12.64 while costs for non-council tenants start from £9.02 to £15.30 a week.

There is a waiting list for some areas and you will need to ensure you are using the garage for a vehicle and not just for storage.

If you would like to apply to rent a garage you will need a driver’s licence, log book, MOT certificate and valid insurance.

Applicants with rent arrears will not be considered.

More info www.havering.gov.uk/garages

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**Insurance worth every penny**

Losing your keys can be a nightmare but Sally Clark, of Harold Hill, got quick service from the Council insurance scheme.

In less than a week she received the full £136.18 to replace the locks and keys. Sally said: “I’ve had the Council’s insurance cover ever since I moved in nine years ago and encourage other people to use it too. I pay 90 pence a week and get £10,000 worth of cover which is a very low premium. “This was the second claim I had on the policy and again found it very good. A man visited very quickly and within a week I’d received the cheque to cover the cost of new lock and keys. It really is a very good service and quite cheap too.”

**TV fell from wall**

When the wall brackets holding her 42 inch TV came out of the wall smashing the TV to bits, Debbie Steans of Romford quickly got in touch with her insurance company and made a claim. Less than a week after receiving the claim an assessor had visited and settled the claim for the full £500 cost of replacing the TV.

**Water leaks**

Water leaks can cause a lot of damage and are the most common insurance claims in blocks of flats. Here are some tips to avoid problems:

- If you are going away, turn off the water at the stopcock in your flat
- If you have a key holder while you are away, let Havering Council know in case there is an emergency and we need to contact them
- If you carry out any plumbing work in your property, this should be carried out properly and by a qualified tradesman to minimise the risk of any future leaks.

If you have work done in your flat which then leaks you are responsible for any damage caused, including in flats below or nearby.

If your property is below another flat and water leaks into your property, inform your neighbour as soon as possible, asking them to get the leak rectified.

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**Family Information Service**

The Family Information Service (FIS) provides up to date information and guidance to families on childcare and other local services that may be beneficial to them.

FIS supports families to find the best possible childcare for their children and only promotes childcare that is Ofsted registered (e.g. childminders, day nurseries, pre-school playgroups). It also makes parents aware of childcare that does not have to be Ofsted registered (e.g Parent and Toddler Groups).

Havering FIS has again been awarded the Families First Quality Award by the National Association of Family Information Services (NAFIS). The award recognises Havering FIS as providing an excellent, high quality service to families and professionals in the Borough. Havering FIS is one of only a handful of Family Information Services nationwide to achieve this award three times. The Families First Award was developed and introduced by NAFIS in line with the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

**Tell us what you think and win an iPad**

This autumn we will be sending every tenant a survey to find out what you think about Housing Services and the quality of the work we do for you. The survey is being sent by post and you can either complete it and return by freepost to an independent company which is running the survey, or you can complete it online. The winners will each receive an iPad, so make sure you send your survey back to stand a chance of winning. The survey is extensive because we need as much information from you as possible, to help us provide the housing services you will need in the future.
Do It In A Day

Getting repairs done quickly and effectively is important and the Do It In A Day programme means that all routine repairs will be tackled on one day by the Council’s contractor, Breyer Group plc.

Housing Services Maintenance Manager, Paul Wallis, said: “The aim is to improve the repairs service to Havering’s tenants and leaseholders.

“By having a known day residents can plan ahead and the Council will do more repairs on time and at the first visit. Because we will be in one location, if a tenant needs something done, we will be available to assist.”

Tenants should report repairs in the normal way and the Council will programme non-urgent repairs to be carried out during these special days. Also, if there is a repair that hasn’t been reported, we may be able to complete it for you on the day.

The dates for the events are:

30 Sept 2015 Prospect Place


14 Oct 2015 Brunswick Avenue, Macon Way, Lexington Way, Roseberry Gardens, Waycross Avenue, Moutrie Way, Griffin Avenue, Brunswick Court

21 Oct 2015 Brunswick Avenue, Macon Way, Lexington Way, Roseberry Gardens, Waycross Avenue, Moutrie Way, Griffin Avenue, Brunswick Court.

11 Nov 2015 The Rotunda, Farbridge Court, Cottons Court

18 Nov 2015 Farnham Road, Hildene Avenue, Chippenham Road, Kings Lynn Drive, Dartfields, Rothbury House, Credon House, Wantage House, Ingleton House, Stratford House, Ripon House, Keswick House, Ringwood House, Morpeth House, Matlock House, Lincoln House

25 Nov 2015 Malan Square, Bader Way, Wood Lane, Thomas Sims Court


9 Dec 2015 Carnforth House, Marsden House, Bracknell House, Brackley House, Bedford House, Armson House, Heathfield House, Hungerford House, Lodden House, Marsden House


20 Jan 2016 St Helens Court

27 Jan 2016 Napier House, New Plymouth House, Dunedin Road, Gisborne Gardens, Queenstown Gardens, New Zealand Way, Christchurch Avenue, Auckland

First Aid can save lives

You’re visiting a friend, arrive to find the door open and they are unconscious on the floor.

After dialling 999 for an ambulance, how do you keep them alive until help arrives? If the answer is “I don’t know”, then you need to sign up for one of the first aid courses run by the Ambulance Services College for Havering Council.

Held at Heaton Close, in Harold Hill, the one day course teaches you the skills you need to give emergency first aid, including CPR and how to use a defibrillator if someone’s heart has stopped beating.

**Accident at work**

One person who recently completed the course is Kat Kaczorowska, of Harold Hill, who said: “There was an accident at work when a lady collapsed and I realised I didn’t know what to do to help her, That made me decide to take a first aid course so I would know what to do if something like that happened again.

“Often those first three or four minutes are vital to save someone’s life, which means you need to know what to do while waiting for the paramedics or ambulance to arrive.

“I would recommend everyone does a basic first aid course, and these free-to-attend courses are a good way to get those important, and possibly life-saving skills.”

“You're visiting a friend, arrive to find the door open and they are unconscious on the floor. After dialling 999 for an ambulance, how do you keep them alive until help arrives?”

Kat Kaczorowska is shown how to resuscitate a baby.

**Vital three minutes**

Ambulance Service College Course Tutor Andrew Cottington said: “First aid courses are the first part of the emergency medical services as they train people what to do if they come across an accident or person with an injury.

“Often those first three or four minutes are vital to save someone’s life, which means you need to know what to do while waiting for the paramedics or ambulance to arrive.

“I would recommend everyone does a basic first aid course, and these free-to-attend courses are a good way to get those important, and possibly life-saving skills.”

Emma Curtis demonstrates CPR while Kat Kaczorowska prepares a defibrillator.

More info www.havering.gov.uk/repairdays
Councillor Damian White said:

“It was with great pleasure that I accepted the job as Cabinet Member for Housing Services.

“I firmly believe that the Council needs to focus on the needs of tenants, listen even more to their views and, most importantly, act on them so they are reflected not just in housing policies but also in our day to day work that has such a big impact on where people live.

“That is why any tenant or leaseholder can contact me directly to raise any housing-related issue they wish.

“Whether you contact me by email or post when you send the form back to me I guarantee that it will be seen directly by myself and you will receive a reply from me.

“I look forward to hearing from you.

“If you want to get in touch please email: Damian.White@havering.gov.uk

or complete the form on this page and then post it to:

Councillor Damian White, Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Town Hall, Main Road, Romford RM1 3BB.

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