

A source of support

Through her work with Christians Dagenham Together and The Church Elm Hub, Merrow Street's Jocelyne has turned the experience of a difficult few years into a powerful source of support for others.



A powerful journey

In 2021, Jocelyne contracted Covid and spent 12 nights in King's College Hospital. During that time, she was unable to see her daughter and sadly lost her father without the chance to say goodbye. She later came out of hospital with a diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes and describes that period as one of the darkest times of her life.

Although Jocelyne had always enjoyed organising events, the impact of Covid, grief and her health diagnosis affected her confidence. However, an approach from Christians Dagenham Together opened the door to a new role focused on helping people reconnect and move forward.

Bringing people together

The wellbeing group Jocelyne now runs offers a wide range of free activities for residents, all linked by a shared aim: to support mental health, confidence and community connection.

Activities include: workshops and practical sessions; cooking activities; health talks; exercise classes; choir sessions; community events; a foodbank; opportunities for work experience students to learn real-life skills.

With long waits for some therapy, physiotherapy and other NHS services, Jocelyne sees the group as helping to bridge the gap by giving people a welcoming place to connect, be heard and feel less alone.

She says: "It's important to know we are not alone. People need to be heard and they need people around them."

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Royal performance

In February this year, Jocelyne's group was selected from among many community groups to perform as a choir during a royal visit to the borough. The choir has around 30 members, with 15 able to attend on the day. The performance was a proud moment for a diverse group of residents, who have built friendships across different backgrounds through singing, shared activities and mutual support.

Building confidence and everyday resilience

Jocelyne says the work is about recognising the difficulties people face, including trauma, ill health, depression, isolation and helping to make everyday life feel a little better. She continues to manage her own health challenges, which gives her a deep understanding of why community support matters. Her current role is also more flexible than her previous nine-to-five job in Blackfriars, allowing her to do work that feels meaningful and closely connected to local residents.

As someone who describes herself as visual and dyslexic, Jocelyne also encourages people to recognise their own strengths. Her message is simple: "No matter where you are lacking, you are rich in other areas."

You can find out more about the group's activities through The Church Elm Hub website at: <https://thechurchelmhub.org/>

Paying your rent

You should pay your rent in advance, as set out in your tenancy agreement.

If you are currently paying in arrears, please contact your Rent Income Officer. They can talk you through your options and help you set up a payment arrangement to bring your account up to date.



How we allocate homes

We know some of you get concerned at times about who is moving into your area.

We want to reassure you that our process for allocating homes is careful, regulated and focused on fairness, safety and creating stable communities.

Local authorities nominate many households to us, and we have to allocate homes fairly and without discrimination. However, we assess every applicant before we make an offer. We carry out interviews, affordability checks, tenancy

history reviews and, where needed, we work with partner agencies to make sure this person has the right support in place.

If we have clear concerns about someone's suitability or the risk they pose, we can refuse to offer them a home, or put extra safeguards in place. We usually offer a 12-month starter tenancy to new residents, if they haven't had a tenancy before. This allows us to monitor how the tenancy is going and step in early if there are problems.

Our aim is to give new tenancies the best chance of success, while protecting existing residents and the wider community. We take reports of anti-social behaviour seriously and will work with residents, the police and other agencies where action is needed. If you have concerns about your neighbourhood, please let us know so we can look into them and support you.



Keep communal areas clear

Please do not leave household items, planters, plant pots or personal belongings in shared areas, including stairwells, landings, walkways or shared balconies.

These spaces are important

escape routes and must always be kept clear.

We have a legal responsibility, as part of our fire risk assessments, to make sure your communal areas remain safe and free from hazards.

If we find personal items in these communal areas, we may ask you to remove them.

Complaints update

Between April 2026 and June 2026, we received four Stage 1 complaints.

We did not uphold two of these complaints, which were about our repairs service. Or a third complaint, which was about nuisance.

We received a fourth complaint, which the resident withdrew after they had discussed things with the team involved.

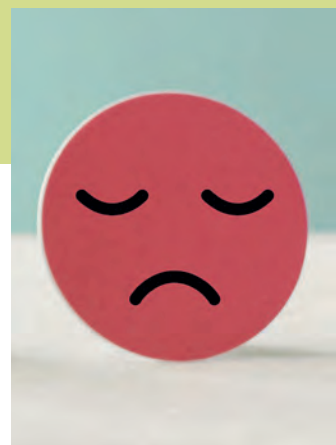
We also received, but did not uphold a Stage 2 complaint.

We responded to all the complaints within the timescales set by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

How well we perform

To find out more about our complaints' performance, go to the complaints section on our website.

This includes our complaints



performance and service improvement report for 2025-26, along with the Board's response.

You are always welcome to contact us for more details about our complaints process.

Smart doorbells and CCTV – getting the balance right

We know that smart doorbells and CCTV can help you feel safer at home. They can be useful for checking who is at the door, or keeping an eye on your property.

However, you must set them up in a way that also respects your neighbours' privacy.

As a general rule, cameras should only cover your own home, such as your front door or private garden. They should not point at neighbours' homes, shared paths, car parks, stairwells, entrances or other communal areas. Where possible, please use privacy zones, turn off audio recording, and avoid settings that record or alert you to everyday movement outside your property.

If a device records beyond your property boundary, you may have responsibilities under UK data protection laws. Also, bear in mind that we may not be able to use footage if you have collected it in a way that affects someone else's privacy.



The key message is simple: these devices should help protect your home, not monitor other people. If you are unsure whether your camera is set up correctly, or you are thinking about installing CCTV, please contact us first. We will be happy to offer advice.

A summer reminder



The summer holidays and the hot weather mean that we are all spending more time outdoors. Please think about your neighbours and keep noise to a minimum, especially during the evenings and early mornings.

We ask children to use foam or plastic footballs – not leather balls, which can damage property and be noisier. Please also remember that we do not allow BBQ use in communal areas or on balconies.

How to complain

You can complain by email, phone or letter, meet us face to face, use our social media, or the contact form on our website. Alternatively, you can call the office to ask for a form – on paper or by email.

If, at any stage, you aren't happy with our responses, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service in the following ways.

- Go online to: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>
- Email: info@housingombudsman.org.uk
- Phone: 0300 111 3000
- Write to: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET



Stay cool, stay well

Overheating in UK homes is an unfolding public health crisis, because homes in this country are not designed for the rising temperatures we have been seeing in recent heatwaves.

Keeping cool at home

During hot weather, it is important to keep your home as cool as possible, especially overnight. Here are some simple, low-cost tips.

- Keep windows closed during the hottest part of the day, then open them in the evening or early morning, when it is cooler.
- Close curtains or blinds during the day to block out sunlight.
- Turn off lights, appliances and electronics when you are not using them, as they can add extra heat.

- Try to cook at cooler times of the day, or make meals that do not need the oven or hob.
- Use fans, but avoid relying on them if the room temperature is above 35°C.
- If possible, choose one cooler room to spend time in and keep doors closed to stop warm air getting in.

If your home is too hot, go to a cooler public place, such as a library, supermarket or shopping centre, if you can do this safely.

Win a neck fan in our prize draw

We are giving away rechargeable neck fans to three residents.



Opt in for the prize draw by phoning 01689 889700 to leave a message for Lynn, or by emailing LynnRuss@kenistonha.co.uk – closing date 14 August 2026.

We will use a random name selector to pick the winners.

Take extra care if someone is more vulnerable to heat. This can include older people, young children, people with long-term health conditions, and anyone who may struggle to keep cool. If the heat is affecting someone's health, seek medical advice.

Sheltered residents get active

Residents at Sunningdale Court and Perryfield House in Crawley have been enjoying a busy few months, thanks to the support and encouragement of Sheltered Scheme Manager Trina.

Festive celebrations began with a bauble-making afternoon in December, where residents and their friends each created a decoration to hang on the Christmas tree in the communal lounge. It was a relaxing and creative afternoon, with coffee and mince pies – and even some who were initially reluctant had plenty of fun.

Residents have also been busy completing **jigsaw puzzles** together. Nine finished puzzles



have now been framed and are displayed on the wall.

The social calendar has continued with **quizzes, fish and chips** in the lounge and the launch of a **walking club** to encourage residents to get active.

The walking club has been particularly successful, helping residents get out of their seats, enjoy gentle exercise and spend time together.

Healthier living

Trina has also been encouraging residents to drink more water and think about easy ways to prepare healthier meals. A new water filter jug has helped make drinking water more appealing, while simple cooking sessions have shown how fresh ingredients and a slow cooker can offer an alternative to microwave meals. These basic cooking lessons have been especially helpful for some vulnerable residents, who may not feel confident in the kitchen.

Through all these activities, it has been wonderful to see confidence grow, friendships strengthen and the communal spaces become even more welcoming for everyone.

Investing in your homes

These are works we are carrying out during 2026-27.

Ongoing works	Homes
Merrow Street – phase two of new bathrooms	24
Darrick Wood – window replacements	29
Silver Court – heating	20
Lyham Road – heating	6
Darrick Wood– heating	5
Foxley Hall – upgraded kitchens	21
Darrick Wood – upgraded kitchens	21
Electrical testing	Various



Cyclical decorations	Homes
Hornsey Road	21
Tollington Park	6
Byers Court	10
Hayles Street/Elliotts Row	7

Limescale reminder

Limescale can be damaging. Remember, removing limescale from taps and shower heads is your responsibility. We often get called to repair defective taps/showers which are just heavily scaled with limescale. To get the best performance from your taps and shower heads, you should regularly clean and descale them with a suitable product, including removing the aerator. Please follow the instructions carefully when using descaling products.



Safe planters

Keep everyone safe by not hanging baskets, troughs or other items over ledges, windowsills or on the outside of your balcony.

Within your balcony, your plants should be on a stable surface, secured against the wind, have drip trays, and be easy and safe to reach. We may ask you to remove an item if it looks unsafe.

Ideally, you can opt to use rail planters, over-rail planter boxes (as pictured), or stable freestanding frames that do not swing in the wind and that allow water to drain away safely.

Self-seeded trees

If you have new trees in your garden that no one planted, these are known as 'self-seeded'. Self-seeded trees can cause a nuisance, or structural damage to foundations, drains and boundary walls.

If a self-seeded tree in your garden grows to an unmanageable size, it may be difficult for you to maintain and you may be asked to remove it at your own cost. For a very large tree this can cost as much as £800. So, it's best to remove them early:

- **Seedlings** (under two years): Hand pull them when the soil is damp, or use a trowel to lever out the full taproot so they don't grow back.
- **Saplings** (one to three meters high): Dig a trench around the root ball and sever the deep roots with a spade or loppers.
- **Stump treatment:** If you cut down a larger sapling, you can use 'Ecoplugs', which are hammered directly into the stump, to stop regrowth.

Our parking rules

We only allow you to park on our land if your vehicle is registered and has valid road tax and an MOT. Your vehicle must be roadworthy, safe and parked considerately – otherwise, we may issue a notice, or even get it removed.

We do not allow heavy goods vehicles, commercial vehicles, boats, caravans, trailers or heavy machinery to be parked on our land, in communal areas or on land alongside a property, unless we have given permission.

Please make sure you have the correct permit before parking, if there is a parking scheme.

Most of our housing schemes have non-allocated car parks, or on-street parking. At schemes without allocated bays, anyone with a valid Blue Badge can use the disabled bays.

Starters and leavers

We are pleased to welcome our newest Customer Services Officer, **Lauren Hepper**.

We have said farewell to: **Carole Smith**, Property Services Administrator; **Jamie Brown**, Technical Officer; and **Tara Couldridge**, Finance Officer. We wish them all well.

Please report tenancy fraud

Housing providers are under ever-increasing pressure to provide social housing, so we must make sure that our homes go to, and are occupied by, people who are entitled to them.

The National Fraud Authority estimates that social housing tenancy fraud costs up to £1 billion every year.

Tenancy fraud is a criminal offence and offenders can be prosecuted under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013. Convictions can result in a fine, imprisonment or both. The courts also have the power to make the tenant pay back any profit made from the fraud.

If you suspect tenancy fraud, you can report it to us confidentially.

- Phone: 01689 889700
- Email: fraud@kenistonha.co.uk
- Go to www.kenistonha.co.uk/you-and-your-home/advice-and-information/tenancy-fraud

Meet Holly Eaton Rent Income Officer

Holly joined us in January as our new Rent Income Officer, bringing with her several years' experience with another housing association.

We caught up with Holly to find out how she has been settling in.

"I love being at Keniston – the smaller housing association vibe and sense of community is really good here. All the staff are so nice, it's much better to have closer relationships to residents and I really like how Keniston look after the schemes."

Since joining Keniston, Holly has been busy supporting residents. She has secured white goods grants for some residents and helped others to claim additional benefits. She has also hosted two rent surgeries, giving her the opportunity to meet more residents and help answer their queries.



"It would be great to see more residents come to these rent surgeries when I host them."

Away from work, Holly enjoys cooking and has recently learned to fish with her boyfriend. She also enjoys going to the gym and watching Arsenal, and doing a spot of pottery in her spare time.

One of Holly's proudest achievements has been setting up a Seafood Boil company, which she is continuing to develop.

She is certainly busy!

A new provider for home swaps

Keniston residents wanting to register their home for a home swap can now use the online service at <https://www.homeswapper.co.uk>

We changed over to this provider on 1 July and you can use this service for free.

If your home was previously listed on HouseExchange, we contacted you about making the change.



For more information about making a mutual exchange, please get in touch.



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