

January 2021

# Tenant & Leaseholder News

Improving  
service: what  
we've done so  
far

NEW Financial  
Wellbeing Team,  
we are here to  
help

Exclusive free  
accredited  
training

Saving energy

Complete the survey  
and have your say!

What improvements are important to you?

Be  
in with  
a chance to win  
one of THREE

**£100!**  
prizes



# Tenant & Leaseholder Survey

Have your say on future improvements!

Tell us what you think about the housing service we provide and help us prioritise what improvements are most important to you.

We are developing an improvement plan for 2021/2022 and want to know what you'd like to see in the plan. We also want to know how you feel about the service right now.

To help us shape our new service and to be in with a chance to win one of three £100 prizes, complete the enclosed survey and return it in the enclosed Freepost envelope by 29 January 2021.

You can take part in the survey online at [thanet.gov.uk/TLSurvey](https://thanet.gov.uk/TLSurvey)



Complete the enclosed survey and have your say!

What improvements are important to you?

Be in with a chance to win one of THREE £100! prizes

Just tell us your views in our short survey

Competition Terms & Conditions apply and can be found at [thanet.gov.uk/myhome](https://thanet.gov.uk/myhome)  
Find out how we use your data, you can see our updated privacy notice on our website : [thanet.gov.uk/privacy-statement/](https://thanet.gov.uk/privacy-statement/)

## Other ways to get involved....

Completing surveys is just one way you can get involved. There are lots of ways to get involved, so you can find one that best suits you.

- Join the **Thanet Tenant and Leaseholder Group** and have a say on housing issues.
- Take part in a **resident focus group** we set up to review parts of the service and recommend improvements.
- Join in the local **estate inspection** and make sure your area is being well maintained.
- Become a **resident estate inspector** to help us inspect things like the standard of grounds maintenance and communal cleaning.

Let us know if you are interested in getting involved by completing the Get Involved section in the attached survey.

### Why get involved?

People get involved for a variety of reasons such as wanting to:

- Give something back
- Help improve housing services
- Receive free training
- Learn new skills
- Meet new people and make friends
- Gain confidence
- Be a part of your community

For more information about getting involved, contact our Resident Involvement Team by email: [residentinvolvement@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@thanet.gov.uk) or call **01843 577205**.



# Improving Services, what we've done so far...

The Tenant and Leaseholder Services team have been working hard to improve your housing service since taking responsibility on 1 October and we have faced many unexpected challenges.

Since October, we've focused on improving the following areas:

## Our Customer Service Team

We know how important it is that you get to speak to the right person when you need to. Our Customer Service Team members are being trained so that they can respond to your query themselves when you call. Calls which require a call back from another team or specific person will be made by the end of the next working day.



## Housing Officers

Our housing officers now have their own patches and are a 'one stop shop' for all your tenancy matters. They are undergoing training to make sure they have the tools they need to help you.



## Collecting your rent

Our Rent Officers have changed the way they work, helping you to reduce the stress and anxiety felt if you get behind with your rent payments.

They can help you apply for the correct benefits for your situation, make referrals for further assistance if needed. Find out more about our new Financial Wellbeing Team on page 6.

## Providing safe homes

Our Landlord Compliance team is making sure your homes are safe, comply with current legislation and there are no obvious hazards.

For example, if you have a gas appliance in your property, you must have a gas safety inspection carried out once per year by law.

We have adopted new policies and procedures to help the team carry out their work and developed new targets to help us monitor and report on what we are doing to provide safe homes.



## Repair contractors

We have been working closely with our repairs contractors, to improve the service they provide to you.





# Money matters, we are here to help!

## Has your income been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

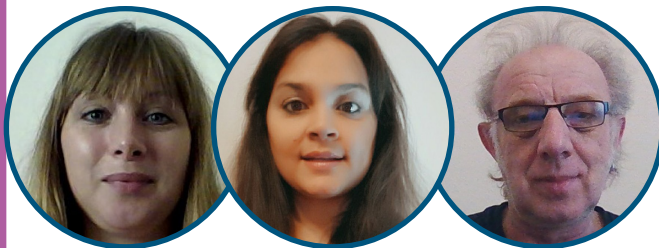
Our friendly and understanding Rent Officers can talk through any financial worries you have, identify further support you may require and can help you make a rent payment or set up an affordable repayment agreement.

We will be writing to you in February to let you know about any changes to your rent due in 2021/22. If you need help changing your direct debit payment or repayment agreement get in touch.

Contact our Rent Officers by:  
Phone: **01843 577 259**  
Email: [myrent@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:myrent@thanet.gov.uk)

## Our NEW Financial Wellbeing Team

Supporting the needs of our community.



Danielle Cude    Nicola Palmer    Jaime Cortinas

Our new Financial Wellbeing Team, give advice and support to our tenants and leaseholders, helping to get through tough times and look to the future. Here is what the team can help you with:

- help with applications for charitable grants and accessing food bank vouchers
- Budgeting advice - Including tips on saving money
- Guiding you through a change in circumstances
- Managing energy bills
- Debt advice - including: help to resolve personal debt including rent, council tax arrears, utilities, credit cards, bank loans, rent arrears, personal loans, problems with bailiffs and any other financial difficulties maximising income, help to negotiate with your creditors and help and advice with insolvency options
- Wellbeing - referrals to relevant agencies to support any additional needs, goal setting and future planning

If you are struggling to make ends meet talk to our Rent Officers who can refer you to our Financial Wellbeing Team.

# Training

## Exclusive - FREE accredited training courses

Boost your CV with these accredited courses, certificates are valid for up to three years

Free training is available to Thanet District Council Tenants who are over 19 years and either unemployed or on a low income as part of the Thanet Step Up Project.

Spaces are limited, call now to book your place!

For more information and to book your place on any of the courses call Debra on **07920 085 517**.

Free hot drinks will be available on the day, but you will need to bring your own lunch.

All courses are subject social distancing and government COVID-19 guidelines.

Dates are also subject to change depending on local COVID-19 restrictions.

## Food Safety Level 2:

Thursday 21 January 2021  
Millmead Hall, Millmead Road, Margate  
Hours: 9.30am - 4.30pm

You will learn all aspects of Food Safety which are the current rulings for working in food kitchens and some of you may have known this as Food Hygiene previously.

## Manual Handling:

Wednesday 27 January 2021  
Millmead Hall, Millmead Road, Margate  
Hours: 9.30am - 4.30pm

You will learn all aspects of Manual Handling safely and within health and safety guidelines.

## Emergency 1st Aid at Work level 3:

Wednesday 3 February 2021  
Millmead Hall, Millmead Road, Margate  
Hours: 9.30am - 4.30pm

Once the course is finished you will become a known First Aider for giving emergency first aid to the public with a 3 year certificate to do so.

# Energy in the Home

This winter stay warm and save money. Winter fuel bills have risen over the last few years and while we can't do anything about the weather there are lots of ways to reduce the cost of heating and Thanet District Council can help

Our new energy saving service can offer help and advice to people wanting to save money on their bills, to find out more contact [energysaving@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:energysaving@thanet.gov.uk) or call **07920 784 779**. The kind of advice they can offer includes:



## Grants to help pay off your energy debts

If you have large arrears on your gas or electricity bills British Gas Energy Trust offer grants to help pay off these debts and you don't have to be a customer. Find out more by visiting [britishgasenergytrust.org.uk](http://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk)

Other companies also offer grants and schemes specifically for their customers. Contact your energy supplier to find out more.

## Energy switching

Changing your supplier may save money on your bills by using one of the cost comparison sites.

## Winter Fuel Payment

If you were born on or before 5 October 1954 you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. Find how much you can get, and how to claim. Visit [gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)

## Warm Home Discount Scheme

Some energy suppliers offer the Warm Home Discount – not all suppliers are part of the scheme. If you are on Pension Credits or on a low income you might be able to get £140 off your electricity bill. Find out more about the Warm Home Discount Scheme on the Government's website. Visit [gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](http://gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme)

## Cold Weather Payments

A one-off payment to help you pay for extra heating costs when the temperature drops below a specific temperature for a set period of time. To find out if you are eligible visit the Government's Cold Weather Payments website. Visit [gov.uk/cold-weather-payment](http://gov.uk/cold-weather-payment).



## Help with paying energy bills

If you are struggling to afford your energy bills, the government and energy suppliers offer benefits and grants that can help.

# Stop Loan Sharks!

A new app has been launched to help victims of illegal money lending.

The England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) has launched a new app to make it easier for people to report loan sharks and access support.

The Stop Loan Sharks app is aimed at anyone who may be a victim of illegal [thanet.gov.uk](http://thanet.gov.uk)



money lending, and offers advice on the tell-tale signs that someone is a loan shark, and a search tool to help users find credit unions and legitimate lenders.

Anyone needing support can get in touch via the Stop Loan Sharks app or by calling the 24-hour helpline on **0300 555 2222**. Alternatively, you can email the team on [reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk](mailto:reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk) or complete a form online to request support at [www.stoploansharks.co.uk](http://www.stoploansharks.co.uk). Live Chat is available on the website Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

The Stop Loan Sharks app is free to download on both iOS and Android [thanet.gov.uk](http://thanet.gov.uk)

devices from the App Store and Google Play Store. You can also scan the QR code on your phone to download the app.



**NEED TO REPORT A LOAN SHARK?  
GET HELP AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON**



# Home condensation advice



## What is condensation?

Condensation is the process where water vapour becomes liquid.

## What causes condensation?

Condensation occurs when warm air collides with cold surfaces, or when there's too much humidity in your home. When this moisture-packed warm air comes into contact with a chilly surface, it cools down quickly and releases water, which turns into liquid droplets on the surface.

As the weather turns colder, condensation and mould can form easily. Extreme problems with excess moist air can lead to staining and mould on walls, window frames, furniture and clothing, and infestation of silverfish. We receive a significant number of reports of mould from October to March and very little in the warmer months.

## What can I do to prevent condensation, damp and mould?

- Ensure that any washing machines or tumble dryers are correctly vented.
- Dry washing outside when possible and do not dry clothes over radiators
- Do not block vents

- Open windows/use extractor fans in kitchen/bathroom (and close the doors to these rooms) when cooking/bathing to let steam outside and not in to the rest of your home
- Open a window or trickle vent just enough to allow air flow
- Move furniture away from external walls to allow air circulation and stop moist air being trapped and mould forming
- Do not overfill wardrobes or cupboards, allow air circulation and stop moist air being trapped and mould forming
- Keep your heating on low throughout the day in cold weather
- If you do not have heating in every room, you could keep the doors of unheated rooms open to allow some heat into them
- Cook with pan lids on
- Wipe surfaces where moisture settles to prevent mould forming

If you have tried all of the above advice and are still experiencing a problem with damp that is not caused by condensation please contact Mears on 0800 023 4320.

If you have large arrears on your gas or electricity bills British Gas Energy Trust offer grants to help pay off these debts and you don't have to be a customer. Find out more by visiting [britishgasenergytrust.org.uk](https://www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk)

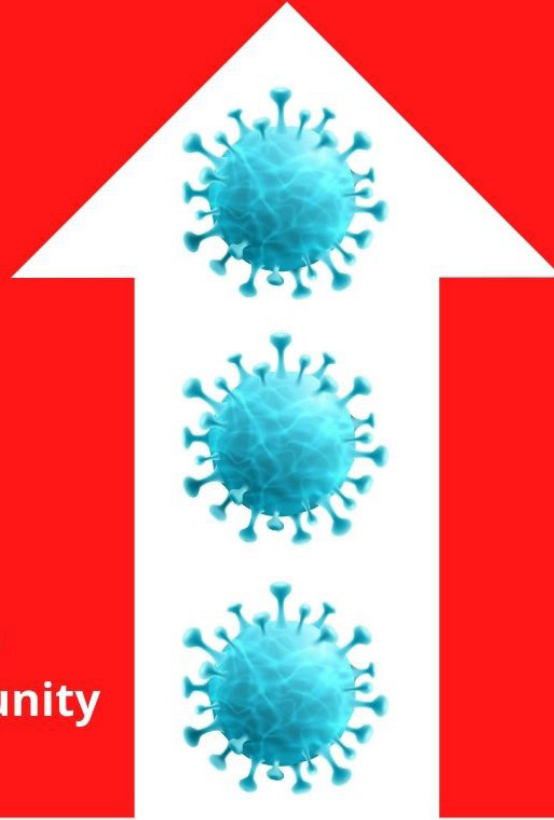
# COVID - 19

The Tenant and Leaseholder Services team and contractors are working hard during the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to deliver your housing service. If you see our officers or our contractors in your area please remember to keep your social distance and allow them to carry out their duties.

## Cases are high in Thanet

Play your part

- Protect your family
- Protect your friends
- Protect your community



## Protect Thanet

