

January 2023

Tenant & Leaseholder

Our repairs service
— — — — —
A day in the life of a
Maintenance Inspector
— — — — —
Our Annual Report
is published
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Our journey to Net Zero

News

thanet.gov.uk/myhome



Meet our
Repairs Team
on pages 6-7

Calling all tenants!

Have you updated your information?

It's really important that we understand our tenants to make sure we provide services and communicate with you in the best way.

You must let us know if there are any changes within your household and the best way to contact you.

We are sending emails or text messages to tenants with a link to an online 'Tenant Information Form'. We will write to those of you who are not online. Please complete the form by the closing date and we will enter you into a prize draw with a chance to win £100.

Completing the form will not affect or change your tenancy.

The winner of the January prize draw was Mrs Dewsnap winning the £100 Love2shop voucher!



Are you struggling with money and the cost of living?



The Kent Money Advice Hub launched recently, to support people who are struggling financially or need help to manage the increasing cost of living.

The service is available for anyone who is worried about money. You can find advice on their website kentmoneyadvicehub.com/ or by calling their free helpline which is open seven days a week, from **8am to 8pm** on **0800 808 5622**.

The council has also launched a Cost of Living webpage thanet.gov.uk/cost-of-living/ which brings together information and support from a range of organisations in one place.



Electrical safety check

We must carry out an electrical safety check in your home every five years. This is needed for your safety and prevents the following:

- Electric shocks from faulty wiring
- Risk of fire due to poor or faulty electrical wiring



You will be contacted with an appointment when your check is due. If the appointment date is not convenient, you can contact Mears to rearrange it.

All tenants who have an inspection and any necessary work carried out without missing an appointment, will be automatically entered into our prize draw with a chance to **win fuel vouchers worth £100**.

Keeping your communal areas safe

If you live in a block of flats, you must not leave your belongings or rubbish in communal areas. We have zero tolerance for the storage of personal items in communal areas. This means if you leave items such as toys, shoes, bikes, buggies, furniture etc. in communal areas, including in stairwells, they will be removed and disposed of.

We need to keep our residents safe from the risk of fire, and trip hazards that may affect a person's ability to escape if there is a fire.

From **1 February 2023** if items are left in a communal area we will:

1. Attach a legal notice called a TORT on them. The notice will give residents **14 days** to remove them.
2. After 14 days, we will remove and dispose of the items.



Our journey to Net Zero

Net Zero - what does this mean and why is it important?

The term 'Net Zero' is often in the news.

The council has a Net Zero Strategy to reduce carbon emissions.

In June 2019, the UK government declared a climate emergency and passed laws that commit the country to net zero emissions by 2050. This means we have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 100%, when we put into the atmosphere no more than what is taken away. We have to do this by 2050.

This affects all of us and we can help by looking at the way we live in our homes and find different ways to save on the energy we use. The other benefit of this is that we reduce our energy bills!

What evidence is there for climate change?

We see evidence of climate change every day. The evidence includes the extreme weather that we have seen over the past few years; the very hot weather we experienced last summer, the wildfires and flooding in parts of the UK.

There is scientific evidence that greenhouse gas emissions, caused by human activities, are causing our climate to change. Climate change has been sped up by the greenhouse gases that we produce.

What are greenhouse gas emissions?

Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas that is produced when fossil fuels are burnt. Fossil fuels include the petrol or diesel used when driving a car, or the gas used by boilers to heat our homes.



What is the council doing about this?

The council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and is looking at ways to reduce carbon emissions that we have direct control over. This includes looking at different ways to make our vehicles greener, and ways to heat council buildings so they use clean energy.

We are making our tenanted homes more energy efficient, for example by replacing windows and doors where they are old and draughty and increasing loft insulation. Over the coming years, we will be looking at different ways that we can make your home more energy efficient and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to ensure we meet the government's targets.

What can we all do about this?

There are many things we can do to start to reduce the amount of energy we use right now. You can:

- Switch off appliances that are on standby
- Use your washing machine at 30 degrees
- Use your kettle to only boil as much water as you need
- Cut down your shower time to no more than four minutes
- Avoid using a tumble dryer
- Use a draught excluder to cut out draughts

The Energy Saving Trust has estimated that an average three bedroom household can save up to £564 per year by making these changes.

For more information visit energy saving

trust.org.uk/hub/quick-tips-to-save-energy/

It's important you continue to heat and ventilate your home to stop damp and mould. You can find more information and advice on how to manage damp and mould on our website **www.thanet.gov.uk**

If you have tried to manage damp and mould and still have a problem, please contact **Mears on 0800 023 4320**.

Our Repairs Team

This team looks after the day to day repairs service and works in close partnership with Mears and Gas Call. In the team there is:

- **Senior Maintenance Surveyor**
- **Maintenance Inspectors**
- **Repairs Coordinator**

The team deals with emergencies, day to day repairs, chasing up outstanding work and answering residents' general enquiries. On average, more than 30 new repairs are reported every day.

Meet Brenden

We met up with Brenden, one of our Maintenance Inspectors, who told us about his role.

"I oversee day to day maintenance, which ranges from emergency water leaks, damp and mould surveys to repairs to communal areas. When required, I arrange appointments with residents to inspect the repair and work out what is needed. I take photos for our records, and discuss with residents what work needs to be done. When I visit I make sure that the right information is passed to our contractors who then make an appointment to complete the repair. I make sure the repair is finished on time and to a good standard. I meet with Mears every week to check on works that are carried out, and to talk about any problems."

"I enjoy seeing the end results of the hard work that has been done and when residents tell me they are pleased with the difference it has made."



What can affect the repairs service?

An emergency such as a water leak will take priority and will be attended to within 24 hours. This sometimes means that other repairs may need to be re-booked at short notice. When you report a repair to Mears it will be prioritised depending on the type of repair and they will tell you when they expect it to be fixed.

Our biggest challenge

Access to some residents' homes can be a challenge. Even when they have reported a repair, they sometimes miss the appointment or do not let us in. Not all repairs are our responsibility, but are your responsibility instead. Some residents do not look after their homes, cause damage or don't report repairs to us. This makes it harder when we have to put things right.

We are here to help

It is very important to us that our residents live in safe, well maintained homes. Please let us and our contractors in to complete repairs. If you are not sure if the repair is our responsibility or yours, please get in touch. By engaging with us we can help.



How can you help us

If you are unable to keep your appointment and need to change it, please contact the contractor to rearrange. If you miss an appointment and receive a card through your door then please get in touch.

Our Repairs Standard

The Repairs Standard sets out the level of service we expect to give you when you report a repair.

Reporting a repair

You should report repairs to our contractors. General household or communal repairs should be reported to Mears and any gas, hot water and heating repairs reported to Gas Call. You can find their contact details on the back page of this newsletter.

Some repairs are your responsibility. You can find out which repairs you are responsible for in your Tenancy Conditions and on our website thanet.gov.uk/report-a-repair.

When you call them, our contractors' staff will be polite and courteous, take full details of the repair and book your appointments.

Emergency repairs can be reported 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Repair timescale

Repairs that are reported to our contractors will be prioritised depending on the type of repair needed:

- **Emergency repairs within 24 hours** - a repair that adversely affects your immediate health, safety or security or that affects the building structure.
- **Urgent repairs within 7 working days** - a repair that is not an emergency but is identified as urgent by our contractors' call centre staff.
- **Routine repairs within 28 working days** - all other repairs.

Appointments

Where possible our contractors will agree an appointment time with you:

- Morning appointments - between 8am and 1pm
- Afternoon appointments - between 1pm and 5pm

If follow up works are needed to complete the repair, our contractor will make an appointment with you before they leave your home.

Missed appointments

- If our contractor is running late or unable to keep your appointment, they will keep you updated or rearrange the appointment with you.
- If you miss the appointment, our contractor will leave a card to let you know they called and ask you to re-book the appointment.
- If you miss your appointment or do not allow the contractor access to your home we cannot guarantee the repair will be completed within the repair timescale.



Did you Know?

Our contractors will leave a card if you miss your appointment. If you miss three appointments and don't contact the contractor, the repair may be cancelled. If you are concerned about allowing our contractor access to your home, please contact us.

Contractors in your home

When our contractors and their subcontractors are working in your home they will:

- wear a uniform, carry and show you their identification card.
- treat you and your home with respect.
- explain what they are doing in your home.
- leave your home clean, tidy, safe and secure.

Tell us what you think of our repair service

When you have had a repair carried out, please give us your feedback by replying to the text message that our contractors send you. Your feedback helps us to monitor the service and find ways that it can be improved.

You can read the full standard on our website

thanet.gov.uk/policies-and-reports/

**Thank you to the Thanet Tenant and Leaseholder Group
for your help in developing this standard.**

Our Annual Report 2021/2022

Our first Annual Report 2021/22 provides a summary of the work carried out by the Tenant and Leaseholder Services team over the last financial year, as well as a review of our performance.

The full report includes case studies that show how our services help our residents and the changes we have made over the last year to improve the way we work.

You can read the full report by visiting thanet.gov.uk/policies-and-reports

Here are some of the headlines from the report.



Annual report 2021/22

Our homes

The number of homes that we own and manage:

- General needs homes - 3054
- Leasehold properties - 386
- Shared ownership properties - 11

We re-let a total of 151 properties in 2021/22. Over 70% of the properties that were returned to us in 2021/22 required major works or had damage caused by tenants. Many of these properties needed a full refurbishment which cost £293,581.32 in total.

Repairs

Our contractors Mears and Gas Call carried out 12,637 repairs and spent a total of **£1,992,802.74** on day-to-day repairs:

- £1,246,697.82 on repairs to residents' homes
- £746,104.92 on communal repairs
- Tenants' overall satisfaction with the service provided by Mears was 93.3%.
- Tenants' overall satisfaction with the service provided by Gas Call was 72.2%.



Investing in homes

In 2021/22 we delivered a planned maintenance programme and invested £4,651,969.47 in homes and communal areas which included:

- Fire alarms installed in four high rise blocks
- Exterior decoration completed on 209 properties
- 56 major adaptations
- 82 kitchens replaced
- Seven passenger lifts refurbished
- 72 properties had windows replaced
- 335 electrical upgrades
- 190 new boilers were installed
- £575,344.70 spent on fire safety upgrades

Providing safe homes

This is our highest priority and we do this by making sure we follow landlord health and safety legislation and regulations.

Our performance during 2021/2022:

- Gas safety - 100%
- Fire risk assessments - 100%
- Asbestos surveys - 100%
- Water risk assessments - 100%
- Electrical testing in communal areas - 99.38%
- Electrical testing domestic units - 90.21%
- Passenger lifts - 100%



We've **increased our team of Housing Response Officers** who carry out vital work on our blocks, maintaining health and safety, and condition.

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

We took part in mediation with residents who caused ASB; gave out acceptable behaviour contracts and verbal and written warnings. As well as this, we carried out:

- Four evictions for serious ASB
- 18 Community Protection Warnings of which nine progressed to a Community Protection Notice.

Community Protection Warnings and Notices are legal processes. They help to deal with ASB by encouraging the person responsible to change their behaviour.

Resident Involvement

At the beginning of 2021, residents told us what was most important to them, and we worked together to improve services. During 2021/2022 we:

- worked with 596 residents on 22 projects
- held 25 residents' meetings
- published 24 newsletters
- held eight community events and neighbourhood inspections

Resident Claire said "It's great to see vital safety and maintenance works being done to homes and communal areas. It gives residents a sense of safety and that we are cared about".

Contacting us

During 2021/22 we received 8,023 calls with an average call waiting time of 1 minute 18 seconds.

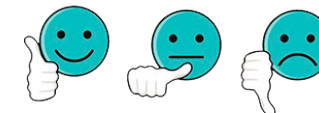
We received 108 stage one complaints.

We used those complaints to help improve our services. So far we have found ways to improve our policies and services and some extra training for officers.

How to make a complaint or send a compliment

We aim to provide the best service we can to our residents and we are committed to providing high quality services. We will not always get it right though and we need you to tell us when things go wrong, so that we can improve.

If we have got it right, tell us about that too!



You can give us your complaints and compliments at **thanet.gov.uk/services/complaints-compliments/**

You can make a complaint by phone, email or in writing. The details are included in the 'Contact us' section on the back page.

Get Involved!

Help us shape and improve the housing services

We are looking for residents to help us with the following projects:

Communications Focus Group - reviewing our standard letters

We are holding a number of resident focus groups to review our standard letters. We want to make sure they are easy to read and understand, do not discriminate, and contain all the information residents need.

We want residents to review these letters with us. Each of our teams has a number of standard letters that go out regularly and we will be reviewing all of these, asking the focus group to give us feedback and make recommendations to improve them.

If you are interested in taking part, you can choose which reviews you'd like to help with.



Building Safety Group - for residents of our high rise buildings

We want to work with residents on building safety projects in our high rise blocks. The group will help to make sure residents are involved and informed about decisions relating to the safety of our high rise buildings.

There are also lots of other ways for you to help shape your housing services. If you would like more information on how to get involved visit: [thanet.gov.uk/get-involved](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/get-involved)

Tell us what you think about our newsletters!

We use our newsletters to update you on important information, the services we provide and ways you can get involved.

We would like to know what you think of the newsletters. Please complete this short online survey by 24 February 2023. www.thanet.gov.uk/newslettersurvey or by scanning this QR code



If you would like a paper copy of the survey, please contact us at residentinvolvement@thanet.gov.uk or by calling **01843 577090**.

TELL US
WHAT
YOU
THINK



How to contact the Tenant and Leaseholder Services team

General housing enquiries

Call: 01843 577 262

Email: myhome@thanet.gov.uk

For household and communal repairs, contact Mears

Call: 0800 023 4320

Text: thanetrepairs' then your message to 63277

Email: thanet.repairs@mearsgroup.co.uk

For gas, hot water and heating, contact Gas Call

Call: 0800 012 9958

Email: TDCcustomerservices@gascall.co.uk

If you smell gas please call the National Gas Emergency number on
FREEPHONE 0800 111 999

Visit **thanet.gov.uk/myhome** for more information.

Complaints and compliments

You can tell us about the service you received from us.

Online: thanet.gov.uk/services/complaints-compliments

Email: customer.feedback@thanet.gov.uk

Call: 01843 577000

Post: Customer Feedback, Thanet District Council, PO Box 9, Cecil Street,
Margate, Kent CT9 1XZ.

For all other Thanet District Council services

Call: 01843 577 000

Visit: thanet.gov.uk

