

LOVE
WHERE YOU
LIVE

OPEN HOUSE

The newsletter for Croydon Council
tenants and leaseholders

AUTUMN 2024



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**CROYDON
HOUSING**

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www.croydon.gov.uk



FOREWORD

Susmita Sen
Corporate director of housing

Welcome to the latest edition of Open House which provides a comprehensive update on how we are working with you to improve the housing service.

In Spring of this year our Housing Strategy was launched after extensive consultation with residents and external partners. The strategy sets out the strategic vision for whole housing service and lays the foundations for everything we do over the next five years (see page 5). We will tell you more in future editions.

We have been listening to what is important to you and are continuing to use your feedback to help us shape services. So take a look at the renovated communal lounge at Sevenoaks (page 7), the new website feature which allows you find your caretaker or tenancy officer (page 9) and the community hub on Tamworth Estate (page 11). These improvements and changes are all in response to your feedback.

We have included the first quarter's survey results on our Tenant Satisfaction Measures which all social landlords are required to provide (pages 12 and 13).

Our resident engagement structures are changing and we want to be sure that we hear and involve as many residents as possible. We have had an overwhelming response to our campaign to recruit to the Customer Influence and Assurance Panel (CIAP), however there are many other ways to get involved such as our Neighbourhood Voice Scheme (page 8). So please do come forward and speak to our resident involvement officers who can tell you much more (see page 6).

We are committed to understanding your needs, so please use the channels we have provided to share your feedback with us. Also, let us know which housing services you want us to prioritise for 2025 by completing our survey below. The results will be shared with our housing management team, and we will continue to update you on the actions we are taking in our Open House newsletter.



YOUR HOUSING PRIORITY SURVEY 2025



www.getinvolved.croydon.gov.uk/hsp2025

Last year, you shared your top priorities with us, and now we are asking you again to tell us what you want us to prioritise for 2025.

Please tell us your priorities by completing the survey - scan the QR code. It will only take a couple of minutes.

Closing date: **Sunday, 15 December 2024 at 23:59.**

HOUSING PRIORITIES



Last year, in our housing priorities survey you told us that **'it's important to you that the communal areas and exterior of the buildings are well cleaned and maintained.'** We have been listening to your feedback and taking action to ensure that your priorities are reflected in our service delivery. Here are some of the actions we have taken to improve the maintenance service you receive.



NEW GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACTORS

We are undertaking a review of grounds maintenance services carried out on Housing land to improve the consistency and frequency of works from April next year.

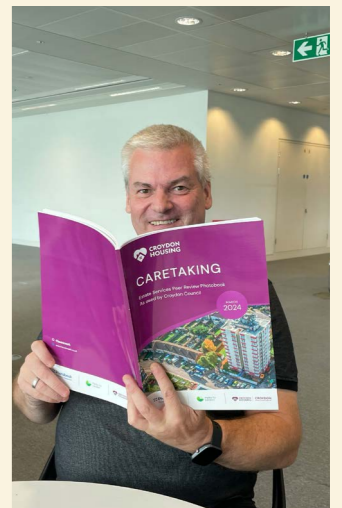
We have engaged with three external contractors to help deliver services in the meantime until a full service is implemented in 2025. We have also carried out intensive bulb planting on two of our estates to bring some springtime colour for the years to come.



PHOTOBOOK: EMPOWERING YOU TO MONITOR SERVICES

We have introduced Photobook, an inspection management tool designed to help manage and improve caretaking services across council properties. We are also rolling out the Photobook Mobile App for your Neighbourhood Voice representatives - these residents are helping to make sure caretaking standards are being met. With this app, they will be able to spot and report any issues they see on your estates.

If you wish to become a representative, please email: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk or call: **020 8726 6000 ext. 44524.**



ESTATE CLEAN-UP DAYS: ROLLING UP OUR SLEEVES TO HELP

We have started organising estate clean-up days whereby our housing officers visit estates to help tidy up the area. This is more than just a clean-up; it's an opportunity for us to show that we care about your estates and are committed to keeping them clean and tidy.

These clean-up days also give us a chance to engage with our residents and staff from different teams as we get to work together and spend our day in a different way from our regular working day (see page 4).



OUR HOUSING TEAM ROLL UP THEIR SLEEVES FOR ESTATE CLEAN-UP DAYS!



Our housing team and other council officers have been stepping out of their offices and into action for estate clean-up days across some of our estates.



The team visited Shrublands and Longheath Gardens armed with buckets, brooms, and a can-do attitude, to give the estates a quick refresh. They washed the street signs, cleared parking areas, cut back overgrown hedges and removed stubborn weeds. These efforts made an immediate difference, refreshing the look and feel of the estate.



But it wasn't just about cleaning; it was also about connecting with the community and getting to know more about our the estates.



This initiative is a great opportunity for our team to demonstrate our commitment to the community, working together to make quick improvements.

We look forward to visiting other estates.

HOUSING STRATEGY



Croydon Council has developed a five-year Housing Strategy for 2023-2029, outlining how we plan to address the challenges of ensuring that housing stock in both the private and social housing sectors is well-managed and safe.

The strategy also details how the council and the voluntary agencies it partners with will support those in genuine housing need. Additionally, it provides a pathway for addressing housing supply issues in an environment of ever-increasing demand.

The strategy has five key priorities:



Listening to residents: we recognise the importance of working closely with tenants and leaseholders. The newly developed Residents' Charter will guide improvements, ensuring services are responsive to residents' needs. The council is committed to better customer service and clearer communications.



Ensuring safe and secure homes: we aim to improve the quality of homes in both social and private sectors. This includes meeting new fire safety regulations and ensuring all properties are energy-efficient, warm, and dry. Croydon will enforce housing standards and support landlords in maintaining safe rental properties.



Preventing homelessness: the strategy emphasises early intervention to prevent homelessness. By working with local organisations and providing targeted support, the council aims to reduce the number of residents needing emergency housing.



Increasing affordable housing: the council will work with housing associations and developers to build more affordable homes and regenerate existing housing estates. The goal is to make homeownership and rental more accessible to a wider range of people, including young families and the elderly.



Collaboration with partners: the council will strengthen partnerships with voluntary organisations, landlords, and community groups to maximise resources and deliver better housing services for residents.



This strategy demonstrates our commitment to creating sustainable services which support residents and provide the decent housing which our residents deserve. To read the full report, scan the QR code or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/housing-strategy>.





MEET YOUR RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT OFFICER


Get involved with your local involvement officer!


Did you know that your community now has its very own designated resident involvement officer? Whether you want to get involved in decision-making processes, give your feedback on our services, share your ideas on how to improve your estate or even discuss organising estate events or celebrations – they are your go-to contact!




	<p>Chima Wabara</p> <p>07887635330 020 8726 6000 ext: 26358 chima.wabara@croydon.gov.uk</p>	<p>Crystal Palace & Upper Norwood Norbury & Pollards Hill Selhurst West Thornton Woodside</p>
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	<p>Gary Fantie</p> <p>077424 05158 020 8726 6000 ext: 26246 gary.fantie@croydon.gov.uk</p>	<p>Addiscombe East Bensham Manor Norbury Park Shirley North Shirley South Thornton Heath</p>
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	<p>Gemma Smith</p> <p>07436 034400 020 8726 6000 ext: 26144 gemma.smith@croydon.gov.uk</p>	<p>Coulsdon Town Kenley New Addington South Old Coulsdon Purley & Woodcote Sanderstead Selsdon & Addington Village Selsdon Vale & Forestdale</p>
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	<p>Jacquie Duffus</p> <p>07776993108 020 8726 6000 ext: 26146 jacqueline.duffus@croydon.gov.uk</p>	<p>Bell Court Residents Forum Kuala Gardens Residents Association Regina Road Redevelopment Project South Norwood</p>
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	<p>James Watt</p> <p>07356128496 020 8726 6000 ext: 20099 james.watt@croydon.gov.uk</p>	<p>Addiscombe West Broad Green Fairfield Park Hill & Whitgift Purley Oaks & Riddlesdown South Croydon Waddon</p>
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New Addington North This area is covered by all the resident involvement officers

RENOVATED COMMUNAL LOUNGE AT SEVENOAKS

Following a consultation with residents, the communal lounge at Sevenoaks estate has been beautifully renovated in partnership with one of our repairs contractors, Wates.

As part of their contract with the council, the repairs contractors pledged to deliver social value, which means giving back to the community by undertaking projects that enhance residents' quality of life.

Wates honoured this commitment by installing new flooring, modern blinds and comfortable furniture, all designed to make the space more inviting for residents. The residents are thrilled with the outcome.

If you have any suggestions of how we can improve your estate as part of our social value initiatives, kindly email: socialvalue@croydon.gov.uk.



ARE YOU FACING FINANCIAL CHALLENGES? HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND IS AVAILABLE



Croydon Council has relaunched its Household Support Fund (HSF) for residents who are in need of financial support.

The council has received funding from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to support low-income households with the cost of food, gas and electricity.

To apply, residents need to complete the online application on the council's website. If you have applied to the fund before, you can submit a new application as long as it has been three months since your previous application.

For more information and to apply, please scan the QR code or visit: www.croydon.gov.uk/hsf



OUR NEW CUSTOMER INFLUENCE & ASSURANCE PANEL (CIAP)

We have been recruiting for our new Customer Influence & Assurance Panel (CIAP) - a resident-led panel designed to put your voice at the heart of our services. This panel will play a crucial role in shaping the future of housing in our borough, based on user-experiences and holding us accountable to customer standards.

We have received an impressive number of applications and would like to thank everyone who took the time to apply. We look forward to selecting ten dedicated residents—eight tenants and two leaseholders—who will represent the voices of our service users.

By providing direct feedback to senior decision-makers, the CIAP will give residents the power to influence key housing decisions and service improvements. We will keep you updated on the panel's activities and achievements—watch this space!



“ Making the housing services better for you and your family ”



“ Helping us improve the housing services for our vulnerable residents ”



“ Because positive change happens when you get involved ”

NEW WEBSITE FEATURE: TENANCY LOOK UP

We have launched a new feature on our housing website which allows you to find your tenancy officer, income officer and caretaker by just searching your postcode.

The dates for our estate walkabouts will soon be included for all areas as we continue to add more information. Scan the QR code below and try it out! Don't forget to share your feedback with us by emailing: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk or call us on 020 8726 6000 ext. 44524.

Scan QR code or visit: www.croydon.gov.uk/tenancy-lookup



Find your tenancy and income officers

Search
Find your tenancy and income officers
Enter a Croydon postcode
Search

Malcolm Wicks House 1-90

Tenancy officer	Danielle Paul
Tenancy operational manager	Karen Reid
Caretaker	Vicky Booth

If you wish to contact your tenancy officer or caretaker please [use our online form](#).

Income officer	Adessa Chance
Income operational manager	Lolita Shirto

If you wish to contact your income officer, you can:
Email: councilents@croydon.gov.uk
[Create an online account to book an appointment](#)
Telephone: 020 8726 6100

Location
Malcolm Wicks House 1-90
Fell Road
Croydon CR0 1LQ
United Kingdom

ESTATE WALKABOUTS



Report issues



Ask questions



Get involved!

Have you ever joined an estate walkabout on your estate?

An estate walkabout allows you to work alongside housing officers, caretakers and maintenance team to identify issues on your estate. It gives you the opportunity to raise your concerns, suggest improvements and give direct feedback to the team.

After the session, our officers make an action plan outlining what needs to happen next and in what time period it will be completed. We also ask residents to complete a monitoring form to help us make sure the process is working. Estate walkabouts will be advertised on the notice board in advance so do get involved if one is happening where you live.

If you would like to speak to us about a walkabout in your area, contact: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk or call us on 020 8726 6000 ext. 44524.



JOIN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD VOICE SCHEME



Do you want to share your opinion about the cleaning and grounds maintenance service on your estate? Why not join our Neighbourhood Voice Scheme?

As a Neighbourhood Voice, your role is simple but impactful. You will carry out short monthly inspections of your estate, completing a form that rates the service quality and reports any issues. You will receive a Photobook outlining the council's cleaning standards. The form can be submitted online via our Photobook App or by post (we will provide a prepaid envelope). It only takes about 30 minutes to an hour each month.

Neighbourhood Voices are the eyes and ears of our estates, and we believe residents like you are best placed to keep us informed. Become one of our Neighbourhood Voices!

Email: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk | Call: 020 8726 6000 ext. 44524



AUTUMN FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

As the colder Autumn months arrive and we spend more time indoors, it's crucial to remain mindful of fire safety. Here are some essential tips to help protect your home and loved ones.

Check smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors: test smoke alarms monthly and replace batteries if needed. Ensure carbon monoxide detectors are working, especially if you use gas.

Never smoke indoors: even in bad weather, always smoke outdoors. Use proper ashtrays and ensure cigarettes are fully extinguished to prevent accidental fires.

Be careful with electrical appliances: don't overload extension leads, especially with seasonal lighting or heating devices. Check electric blankets for damage before use.

Stay alert in the kitchen: always be vigilant when cooking and never leave your cooking unattended.

Use candles safely: while cosy, candles can be dangerous. Keep them away from flammable materials and never leave them unattended.

Heating appliances: as the weather gets colder, the chance of a fire caused by heating increases. Replace electric blankets that have scorch marks or a buzzing sound when switched on. Also keep portable heaters 1m away from you when it is on. Never leave electric blankets or heaters on overnight



ESSENTIAL SAFETY TIPS FOR BONFIRES AND FIREWORKS

- If you're having your own fireworks display, plan it carefully to ensure it's safe, and make sure it finishes before 11 p.m.
- Only buy fireworks that carry the CE or UKCA mark. Carefully follow the instructions on each firework before use.
- Light fireworks at arm's length with a taper and stand well back. Always direct rocket fireworks away from spectators.
- Keep naked flames, including cigarettes, away from fireworks.
- Build your bonfire away from buildings, sheds, fences, and hedges. Never use paraffin or petrol on a bonfire.
- Don't leave bonfires unattended. If it has to be left, damp it down with water.
- Always keep a bucket of water or a hosepipe nearby in case of emergency.



For more tips, visit:
www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/fireworks/



RESIDENT OUTREACH PROJECT



The housing income recovery team has partnered with Croydon United Domino Sports and Social Club, to launch a resident outreach project.

This initiative provides another avenue for residents to speak face-to-face with our officers about their concerns. No appointment is needed—just drop in and chat with the team.

Services available:

- Debt advice
- Benefit advice
- Rent arrears advice
- Tenancy advice
- Household support fund

This particularly important service for residents who are not online or prefer to speak to officers face-to-face. Just drop by and have a chat!

Every Thursday, 10:30am-2:30pm

South Norwood Community Hub
44b Portland Road
London
SE25 4PQ

TAMWORTH ESTATE OPENS A COMMUNITY HUB!

The Tamworth Estate officially opened its community hub on 13 September 2024! A huge congratulations to the Tamworth resident association.

The hub will serve as a meeting point for the community. There will be housing surgeries and other informative events that give residents direct access to support and guidance. Doors are open:

**Monday to Friday
10 am to 1 pm.**

The hub team plans to offer warm meals over the winter months, so if you would like to support, please call: **020 8726 6000 ext. 44524.**



TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES (TSM)

Each quarter, we ask 250 tenants what they think of the housing services they receive from Croydon Housing. The surveys are carried out on our behalf by an independent company, Acuity.

Our recent survey was carried out in June 2024 and here are the results which show how satisfied you were in quarter one (Q1) 204024/25.

		Q1 2024/25	Average 2023/24
	Overall satisfaction with the service provided by Croydon Housing	54%	53%
	Overall satisfaction with the repairs service in the last 12 months	53%	64%
	Satisfaction with the time taken to complete your most recent repair after you reported it	51%	55%
	General satisfaction with repairs and maintenance service	51%	52%
	Your home is well maintained	56%	55%
	Your home is safe	62%	61%
	Communal areas are clean & well-maintained	44%	51%
	Croydon Housing makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood	50%	49%
	Satisfaction with how we tackle anti-social behaviour	53%	49%
	Croydon Housing is easy to deal with	51%	46%
	Croydon Housing listens to tenant's views and acts on them	41%	43%
	Croydon Housing keeps you informed about things that matter	58%	58%
	Croydon Housing treats you fairly and with respect	60%	58%
	Satisfaction with how we handle complaints	24%	26%

Keeping properties in good repair and maintaining building safety

- Repairs service
- Well-maintained home
- Safe home

We are disappointed that satisfaction has reduced in quarter one and are working with our contractors to identify areas for improvements.

While, there's still work to be done, we are happy to see a milestone in our contact centre performance. The average wait time has dropped from over seven minutes in January to under a minute in August. The caller satisfaction has also risen from 37.5% to 85.1% - thanks to the hard work of our team.

Responsible neighbourhood management

- Communal areas are clean and well-maintained
- Makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood
- Handling anti-social behaviour

We know that the consistency of the grounds maintenance service across our estates has not been to the level we would have liked in some areas. We are currently undertaking a resident-led review of our housing grounds maintenance service to ensure a full service is provided starting from April 2025.

We have also made progress in tackling anti-social behaviour and increased satisfaction by 4%. In September, we held a Scrutiny Boot Camp with residents and will use their feedback to improve how we approach and tackle anti-social behaviour across our estates.

Respectful and helpful engagement

- Easy to deal with
- Listens to views and acts upon them
- Keeps you informed about things that matter
- Treats me fairly and with respect

It has been one of our priorities to put our tenants at the centre of what we do and ensure that services are improved. Satisfaction with how easy we are to deal with rose by 8% between March and June 2024, and by 5% overall for the year.

Over the summer, our housing officers attended 'Customer First' training to help ensure that our service delivery is customer-focused across all our housing departments. We are hopeful that there will be a continuous improvement in this area.

Effective handling of complaints

- Complaint handling

Improving performance in this area remains a top priority. While we have seen a slight dip in satisfaction, we are launching a review to enhance how we manage complaints and ensure we learn from your feedback. We will be holding four sessions with residents to gather input on areas for improvement. We will keep you updated on the changes made based on the insights.

We want to say a huge thank you to the residents for taking the time to talk to Acuity. We encourage all of you to take advantage of the opportunities available to give us feedback so we can improve and give you the best service we can.

NOMINATE YOUR HOUSING HERO!

We want to recognise the residents who have dedicated so much time and effort to improving services and enhancing life for everyone around them. Their hard work has not gone unnoticed and we are excited to honour them and celebrate their commitment!

All nominations will be considered by a panel of judges, who will choose the winners. The winning nominees will be awarded at the annual Resident Involvement Christmas Buffet in December 2024.

Please nominate those who have made a significant impact in your community by scanning the QR code and completing the form. You can also email: **residentinvolvement@croйдon.gov.uk** or call us on: **020 8726 6000 ext. 44524**.

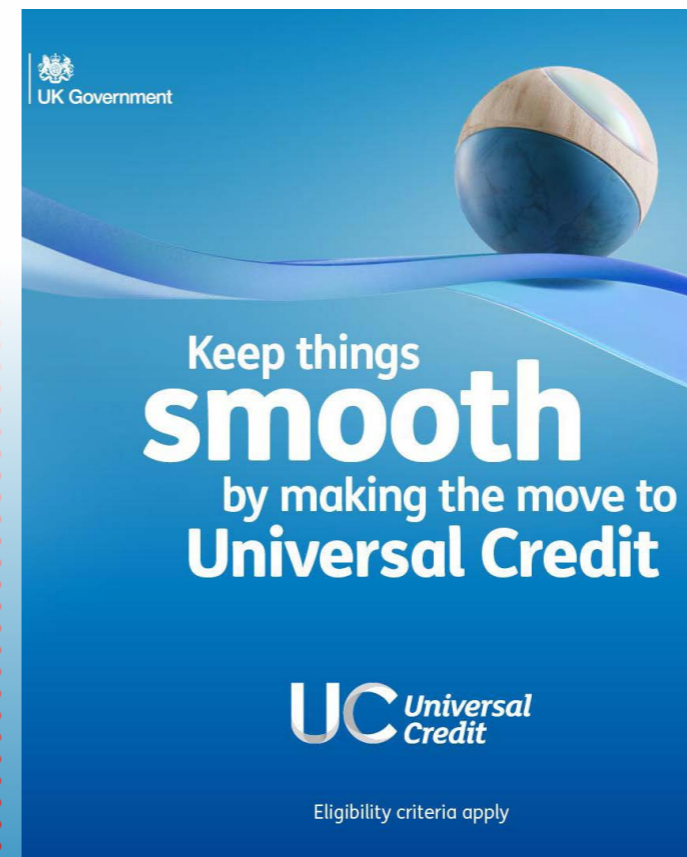
Closing date: Sunday, 24 November 2024



Scan the QR code
<https://shorturl.at/df5iO>



UNIVERSAL CREDIT: MANAGED MIGRATION



Universal Credit is simplifying the benefits system by combining the following benefits and tax credits into one single monthly payment.

- Housing benefit
- Income support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Working Tax Credits or Child Tax Credits

Since April 2024, the Department for Work and Pensions has been writing to some people who receive these benefits to let them know that they need to claim Universal Credit instead, to ensure they continue receiving financial support. This letter is called a 'Migration Notice'. You do not need to take any action until you receive your Migration Notice letter, however when you do, it's important you check the date that you will need to claim by as you won't be moved automatically.

Please don't ignore your letter as it explains what you need to do next and who to contact. If you need help understanding what the letter says, email our welfare team: **counciltenantswba@croйдon.gov.uk**.

STOCK CONDITION SURVEYS: BOOK YOUR APPOINTMENT



We have already surveyed 60% of our properties, but there's more to do. If you receive a letter or card from JRP saying they missed you, please get in touch to book an appointment. The easiest way is to scan the QR code included in the letter with your smartphone. You will be directed to the JRP website where you can choose your surveyor and schedule a time.

Prefer to speak to someone?
You can call: **074 6449 0748** or email: **jrpscsurveyappointments@jrp.co.uk** to arrange your stock survey appointment.

By booking your appointment, you are helping us plan future investments and keep your home in good condition.

Scan the QR code
<https://shorturl.at/HbqnJ>



We have teamed up with John Rowan and Partners (JRP) to carry out stock condition surveys across all our homes and blocks. These surveys assess key components such as windows, roofs, kitchens and bathrooms, helping us plan when repairs or replacements are needed. This allows us to effectively plan future upgrades, ensuring your home remains safe, functional, and well-maintained.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Did you know that you may be eligible for disability benefits if you have a disability or care for someone who does? There are benefits available to help you manage the extra costs if you fall into this category. These benefits are not dependent on your income or savings. The main benefits available include:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA): for people with a child under 16 years.
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP): for people who are 16 years and above.
- Attendance Allowance: for people who have reached State Pension age and above.



All claims must be accompanied by medical evidence from a registered medical practitioner. If you would like to learn more about what benefits you may be eligible for, please contact our welfare rights advisers at: **counciltenantswba@croйдon.gov.uk**. Alternatively, you call: **020 8726 6000, ext: 44524** to speak to an officer who will forward your details on to our welfare rights team.

KEY CONTACT INFORMATION AND LINKS

REPORT A REPAIR

020 8726 6101
www.croydon.gov.uk/repairs



CONTACT A TENANCY OFFICER

020 8726 6000,
Option 2
tenancy.service@croydon.gov.uk

CONTACT AN INCOME OFFICER

020 8726 6100,
Option 2
councilrents@croydon.gov.uk

HOUSING PORTAL

<https://housingonline.croydon.gov.uk>



FINDING YOUR OFFICERS ONLINE

www.croydon.gov.uk/tenancy-lookup



GET INVOLVED

residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk
020 8726 6000
www.croydon.gov.uk/residentinvolvement



HEATING REPAIRS ADVICE

<https://shorturl.at/6iNuU>



RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/croydonresidentinvolvement



DOWNLOAD YOUR BIN COLLECTION CALENDAR

You can visit our website (scan the QR code) to check when your bin will be collected. We provide a breakdown of what kind of bin will be collected and when. We will also tell you if there are delays with your bin collection and you can report any issues.

If you do not have communal bins, visit our website and download your personalised bin collection calendar for 2023/2024.



Scan the QR code or visit:
<https://service.croydon.gov.uk/>

KEEPING CROYDON CLEAN

The Love Clean Streets smartphone app is the fastest way to report fly-tipping, graffiti, abandoned cars and many other issues on Croydon's streets.

Download the free 'Love Clean Streets' app on your smartphone and select Croydon as your home local authority. To report an issue:

- Select your location
- Add a photo
- Choose a category and add a short description
- Hit send – and you're done!



Scan the QR code or visit:
www.croydon.gov.uk/lovecleanstreets



KEEP IN TOUCH!

We'd love to hear from you! Share the latest community activities happening on your estate with us. If you have an event to share or would like to invite us, please call us at: **020 8726 6000, ext: 44524** or email: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk and ask for the resident involvement team.

If you would like to receive Open House and other housing information in large print, please call: 020 8726 6000 ext. 44524.