



IN THIS EDITION



CROYDON www.croydon.gov.uk

Housing hero awards Operating times Rent support

Winter fire safety

PAGE 6

PAGE 7

PAGE 3 Tenant Satisfaction Measures

PAGE 10 Housing allocation consultation PAGE 12

PAGE 14 Warm spaces







FOREWORD

Susmita Sen
Corporate director of housing

As 2024 draws to a close, I want to wish you all a safe, peaceful, and relaxing Christmas, and a happy and healthy 2025!

This has been an eventful year, with both challenges and success stories. Through it all, we are grateful for the support of our residents. With your feedback and help, we have been able to turn challenges into opportunities, and by listening to you, we are taking steps to improve our housing services.

A special shout-out to all the winners and nominees of the Housing Hero Awards! It was a delight to celebrate you all during the Residents' Christmas Buffet. It's inspiring to see the contributions residents are making in their communities. If you're interested in making an impact, our Resident Involvement team is here to support you. Email residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk or call 020 8726 6000, ext: 44524.

Please take note of the adjusted operating hours for council services as we approach the festive season (see page 6). For urgent matters, our emergency line will remain available to ensure support is always within reach.

As Christmas is one of the most expensive seasons, I want to remind you of the rent hardship fund, available to help tenants struggling with rent payments. If you were born before 23 September 1958 and receive welfare support, you may qualify for a £200–£300 Winter Fuel Payment to help with heating costs during winter 2024–2025. Payments are issued automatically in November or December, and you should receive a notification letter from the Winter Fuel Payment Centre.

During the cold months, Croydon Council also provides Warm Spaces across the borough to help residents stay warm. These are heated, safe, and friendly locations you can visit for free (see page 14). Please share this information with anyone who might benefit.

Finally, let's remember to look out for others during this festive season, especially our vulnerable neighbours. I hope this season brings you good health, peace, and joy. See you all in 2025!







RESIDENTS' CHRISTMAS BUFFET 2024



Every year, the Residents' Christmas Buffet serves as a special occasion to honour the dedicated individuals who volunteer their time to help improve our housing services by participating in meetings—both online and in person—and engaging in various initiatives.

This year's event was particularly special, featuring the introduction of awards to celebrate our Housing Heroes, who were nominated by tenants and leaseholders. In total, we had 22 nominations across four categories, showcasing the remarkable dedication within our community.

A huge congratulations to all the nominees for their inspiring work and meaningful contributions.



A special round of applause goes to our winners, whose exceptional efforts stood out:



Housing Improvement Champion: Les Parry

Les advocates for residents across the borough, taking part in panels, task and finish and focus groups, working with managers and officers to improve services for the benefit of all council tenants and leaseholders. Les regularly represents council tenants and leaseholder at a national level.

Community Champion: Janet Clegg

Janet has worked with the Council and residents to run the new community hub on Tollers estate in Old Coulsdon. She goes the extra mile to include children and young people.

'She works hard and she is selfless, the estate and our community would be significantly worse off without her dedication'.





Good Neighbour: Kim Wakely

Kim is known by her neighbours to be kind, respectful and helpful. She keeps her neighbours up to date about meetings and events that are happening on the estate so they can feel included.

'She is a friend to all on the estate'

Community Champion – Group: New Addington Pathfinders

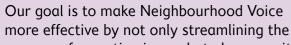
This hub is run for all residents in New Addington- providing support and signposting to essential services available to residents. They also fundraise for good causes and organise activities for local residents.



Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make this event a success. We hope to see you again next year! If you're a council tenant or leaseholder and you would like to get more involved, email us: **residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk** or call **020 8726 6000**, ext: **44524.**

NEIGHBOURHOOD \ VOICE SCHEME (い)

We hosted a successful session for residents interested in joining our Neighbourhood Voice scheme last November. During the session, we discussed the Photobook cleaning standards, with attendees receiving their personal hard copies. We also demonstrated how issues can be reported using the Photobook App, which will soon be rolled out to all Neighbourhood Voice representatives.



process of reporting issues but also, recruiting more volunteers to represent their estates.

The session was well-received with attendees expressing enthusiasm for next year. We are eager to welcome more participants to our training sessions. If you are interested in learning more or joining, please email: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk

It only takes 30 minutes to an hour each month to make a positive impact!





SHOUT OUT TO THE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION AT LAXTON COURT

A big shout out to the Laxton Court Residents' Association for their fun initiative to foster community spirit on their estate. The association has started hosting a Friday get-together for residents, where they can enjoy a warm, hearty meal for just £2 - £4 per person.

This weekly gathering is about more than just the food—it's an opportunity to bring residents together, helping them make new friends and strengthen existing connections. We are proud of the association for this initiative, as we believe it will make a real difference

in reducing loneliness, especially during the winter months.

To support this initiative, the council has provided a barbecue (BBQ) grill, a fridge freezer, and a deep fryer.





If you're a council tenant and you have fun ideas to bring residents together, form a residents' group on your estate, please contact the resident involvement team at: residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk or call: 020 8726 6000, ext: 44524.

Our resident involvement officers will be available to help set up the group and support you every step of the way.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE PANEL – SHOUT OUT

A huge shout out to the members of our Grounds Maintenance Panel! Since its launch in September, the panel has hit the ground running by reviewing the current state of our ground maintenance service. They identified key issues including inconsistent service delivery, flytipping, litter, communication gaps, and broader environmental concerns.

To effectively tackle these issues, the panel has proposed setting up an in-house grounds maintenance team to deliver reliable, estate-focused services. This proposal is now under review, after which all council tenants and leaseholders will have the chance to share their views through a wider consultation. We are proud to be working with

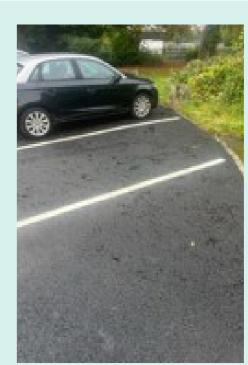


residents to shape a service that meets the needs of our communities. If you have thoughts or ideas about grounds maintenance, watch out for upcoming meetings and surveys.



The car park and driveway at Parson Pightle has undergone a makeover following feedback from residents. In October, our team resurfaced the area, delivering smoother and safer pathways for accessing the estate.

The project included a fresh layer of durable tarmac to tackle existing potholes and



help prevent new ones from forming. To make parking more efficient, the car park was line-marked, providing clear, individual spaces for residents. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with residents delighted by the improved accessibility and tidier layout. We remain committed to listening to your concerns and taking action to improve your estate.



5

COUNCIL SERVICES OVER CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

There will be a number of changes to council service opening times over the Christmas and New Year period, while making sure residents can continue to access vital help and support needed at this time. Most services will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, and also on Friday 27 December.

Access Croydon and the Contact Centre will be open on the following dates and times, offering their usual services:

Monday 23 December	Tuesday 24 December	Wednesday 25	
Open (8αm – 6pm)	Open (8am – 4pm)	December - Closed	
Thursday 26	Friday 27	Monday 30 December	
December - Closed	December - Closed	Open (8am – 6pm)	
Tuesday 31 December	Wednesday 1 January	Thursday 2 January	
Open (8am – 6pm)	Closed	Open (8am – 6pm)	

The emergency housing repairs service will continue as usual. Tenants and leaseholders can report an emergency repair on **020 8726 6101** where calls will be answered by our 24/7 service team.

The council's emergency protocols will be in place during office closures.

- Croydon Family Justice Service will continue to provide support for people experiencing
 domestic abuse. The service will be open on weekdays as usual from 9am to 5pm, apart
 from bank holidays. Contact the Family Justice Service on 020 8688 0100 for more
 information. Outside of these hours, the 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline can be
 reached on 0808 2000 247. If there is an emergency, dial 999.
- If you are concerned that a child or young person under the age of 18 is being harmed or needs urgent support, find information and advice on our webpage. If you are concerned that an adult is being harmed or needs urgent support, find information and advice here. In an emergency always call 999.
- There will be some changes to the bin collections over the festive period.
 You can check your bin collections times on our website: www.croydon.
 gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/bins/check-your-bin-collection-days



Scan QR code

REMINDER: RENT PAYMENT AND SUPPORT

The festive season is a time of celebration, but it can also stretch your budget to its limits. We want to remind you of the importance of paying your rent on time.

Your rent helps us to maintain your home, improve council estates and provide support when you need it most. To make this easier to stay on top of your payment, we advise that you set up a direct debit by calling: **020 8726 6100**, choose option 2.

If you're finding it hard to keep up with your rent payments, we want to remind that there's support available. The rent hardship fund is available to our council tenants facing financial difficulties. If you need support, please get in touch by emailing: councilrents@croydon.gov.uk or calling: 020 8726 6100 and asking for the income recovery team.



NEW VANS FOR OUR HANDY PERSONS TEAM

Our handy persons team have received two new electric vans, which will help them deliver better and efficient services to our residents. These large vehicles will enable the team to undertake a wide range of tasks, from block improvements to supporting environmental issues around the estates.





The team is excited to use these resources to collaborate with other council departments, reflecting the council's commitment to maintaining high standards. With their dedication and these new tools, the handy persons team is ready to deliver better services.

WINTER PREPAREDNESS PREVENTING DAMP AND MOULD

Damp and mould are common problems in homes across the UK, affecting tenants and homeowners alike. If unattended to, it can lead to unsightly damage, unpleasant odours and potential health risks. Among the various causes of damp and mould, condensation stands out as the most common issue.

Condensation occurs when moist air meets a colder surface, like a wall or window. This then forms water droplets which can soak into walls, wallpaper, or paintwork, and cause mould to grow. Here are some simple tips everyone can benefit from to reduce condensation and the risk of damp and mould in their home.

In the kitchen

- When cooking or boiling a kettle, keep the door closed to prevent steam from circulating around your home.
- If you have an extractor fan in the kitchen, make sure your extractor fan is switched on.
- When cooking, cover your pans with lids and leave your extractor fan on - you can also open your windows to clear the air of any excess moisture

In the bathroom

 When you take a hot shower or bath, have your extractor fan on to remove excess steam.

You can also open a window to help disperse the steam quickly



Around the home

- Where possible keep your windows and trickle vent open to encourage fresh air to circulate and to remove moisture.
- Avoid drying clothes inside or over radiators. You can dry airing rack in a room next to an open window and close the door. If the room has an extractor fan, keep it switched on whilst your clothes are drying.
- Keep your furniture away from walls to allow air to flow around it. You may want to keep soft furnishing away from external walls where moisture can collect.
- Leave your central heating on constant at a low setting for as long as possible to maintain a constant temperature in your home or set the timer to boost the heating in the morning and evening.
- Wipe away any condensation from windows and doors to prevent mould from growing.
- Avoid overfilling your wardrobes and cupboards, as warm damp air will collect and may cause mould spots to appear on your clothes.



If you have problems with condensation, damp or mould in your home, you should report it to us as soon as possible. You can report the issue online or call us on **0208 726 6101**

Scan the QR code or visit: www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/information-council-tenants/housing-maintenance-and-safety/repairs-council-homes-0



STAY SAFE THIS WINTER: ESSENTIAL FIRE SAFETY TIPS

As temperatures drop, we all turn to cozy comforts like heaters, candles, and festive lights to keep warm and brighten the season. But with these winter essentials come an increased risk of fire hazards. Stay safe and protect your home by following these practical fire safety tips.

Heating your home safely

- Keep portable heaters away from flammable materials like curtains, furniture, and laundry. Always turn them off before going to bed or leaving the house.
- If you use a fireplace, have your chimney cleaned and inspected annually to prevent blockages or buildup. Use a fire guard to contain sparks.
- Check for damages on your electric blankets before use and avoid folding them while they are switched on. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.



Electrical safety

 Inspect festive lights and decorations for worn wires or loose connections before use. Turn them off when unattended.



Avoid overloading sockets.
 Plugging too many devices into one socket can cause overheating. Use extension leads with built-in surge protection instead.

Smoke alarms

Ensure you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home. Test them regularly and replace batteries as needed.



Fireworks

- 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.



IS YOUR HOME SAFE?



London Fire Brigade has designed a helpful tool that allows you to carry out a thorough check of your home in only a few minutes. This will help you detect fire risks around the home and suggest changes to prevent unnecessary fires.

Scan the QR code or visit our website: www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/ home-fire-safety/home-fire-safetychecker-hfsc/



8

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 September. We are pleased to see a slight increase in satisfaction with the overall housing services provided by Croydon Council.

	Key areas	Q2 2024/25	Average 2023/24
	Overall satisfaction with the service provided by Croydon Housing	55%	53%
×	Overall satisfaction with the repairs service in the last 12 months	61%	64%
7	Satisfaction with the time taken to complete your most recent repair after you reported it	45%	55%
C	General satisfaction with repairs and maintenance	49%	52%
	Your home is well maintained	53%	55%
**	Your home is safe	62%	61%
A Maga	Communal areas are clean & well-maintained	50%	51%
	Croydon Housing makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood	48%	49%
9 #	Satisfaction with how we tackle anti-social behaviour	51%	49%
	Croydon Housing is easy to deal with	50%	46%
	Croydon Housing listens to tenant views and acts on them	46%	43%
i	Croydon Housing keeps you informed about things that matter	61%	58%
	Croydon Housing treats me fairly and with respect	64%	58%
Q	Satisfaction with how we handle complaints	26%	26%

Keeping properties in good repair and maintaining building safety

- Repairs service
- Well-maintained home
- Safe home

The percentage of tenants who are satisfied with the repairs they received in the last 12 months has increased by 8% since quarter 1 but is lower than the average for 2023/24. We meet weekly with our contractors to review and improve our repairs service and to help get repairs right first time.

We have a big focus on keeping our residents safe through gas safety checks, fire risk assessments, electrical checks and water checks where needed.

Responsible neighbourhood management

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

We are currently undertaking a review of our housing grounds maintenance service as the consistency has not been at the level we would have liked in some areas. The number of tenants satisfied with the cleaning and maintenance of their communal areas has increased by 6% since quarter 1 and we are working hard to keep upward improvement trend.

With regards to how we tackle anti-social behaviour, we see a slight increase in tenants' satisfaction. We have been working with residents to improve the way we manage anti-social behaviour and held a Service Improvement Boot Camp in September to get feedback on the areas for improvement. At the Boot Camp, we identified key areas to improve the resident experience in managing anti-social behaviour cases. Based on feedback, an action plan was developed to increase communication frequency, improve clarity, ensure better reporting systems, improve case management, provide timely responses and offer regular case updates. The action plan

aims to build trust with residents by keeping them informed and supported throughout the anti-social behaviour case process.

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 make sure that services are improved. We are pleased that this is reflected in an increase in satisfaction in all the questions we ask in this area. Our teams have been attending our Customer First customer service training to support providing a great service and are now putting their learning into action. One of the things we have focused on in the training is ensuring the staff are fair and honest with our residents. Almost two-thirds of tenants (64%) are satisfied the Council treats them fairly and with respect which is an increase of 6% since 2023/24.

Effective handling of complaints

Complaint handling

We are carrying out a review to improve how we manage complaints and that we listen and learn from concerns raised. In October, we had four sessions with residents to get their views on the areas that need to be improved. The residents involved had all experienced making a complaint and shared things that did not work well for them and some of the positives. We are developing an improvement plan, and we thank all the residents that attended for their valuable insight and areas to change.

We want to say a huge thank you to all the residents for taking the time to talk to Acuity on our behalf to help us understand how we are doing. We encourage all of you to take advantage of the opportunities we've made available to give us feedback so we can improve and give you the best service we can.

10 11

FIRE SAFETY OPEN DAY AT REGINA ROAD

In collaboration with the London Fire Brigade, we hosted a fire safety open day at Regina Road, giving our residents the chance to meet local firefighters, watch live demonstrations and learn practical tips about fire safety.

This event took place on Saturday, 30 November 2024, since it was a weekend, young families in the community were able to attend with their children. They watched as firefighters demonstrated how the fire truck ladder is used to rescue people from high-rise buildings. Some young people even had the chance to test the power of the fire hose.

This open day was part of our ongoing efforts to improve fire safety across Croydon. It followed a successful fire safety training session for council members earlier this month, also held at the vacant tower block. This building gave firefighters a valuable space to train, applying lessons from the Grenfell Tower fire to improve emergency responses across Croydon and beyond.





IS YOUR HOME SAFE FOR YOUR CHILDREN UNDER THE **AGE OF 5? WE CAN HELP YOU**



Each year, an average of 55 children under the age of five die from accidents in or around the home. Additionally, 370,000 children visit accident and emergency (A&E), and 40,000 are admitted to the hospital as emergencies.

We offer a free home safety service to help our council tenants with children under five. This means that a specially trained Home Safety officer will check all areas of your home and

give practical help and advice on ways to improve safety for you and your children. We also offer free safety items to help you.

These include:

- Up to 2 stair gates
- A fireguard
- Plug socket covers
- Kitchen cupboard door and drawer locks
- Door jammers
- Fridge and freezer locks
- Window restrictors

Council tenants can access this service by emailing: homesafetyservice@ croydon.gov.uk with their name, address and contact phone number of the parent(s). HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

ARE YOU COVERED?

Did you know that without contents insurance for your home, your belongings are not insured against damage or theft?

Croydon Council housing tenants are eligible to apply for a special council-run scheme. Premiums range from £1.78 to £6.22 per week, depending on the amount of cover you want - £10,000 (minimum) to £35,000 (maximum). The insurance covers the contents of your home, including items such as furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, electrical items, jewellery, pictures and ornaments.

The cost is cheaper than many other insurance companies and you can pay in weekly instalments instead of a large lump sum payment. To be eligible, payments on your rent account need to be up to date.

For more information about the application form and terms and conditions, scan the QR code or email housingrentaccounting@croydon.gov.uk, who will send a policy booklet to you.

Scan the QR code or visit our website: www.croydon.gov.uk/ housing/informationcouncil-tenants/home-contents-insurance





Careers advice and guidance



We are inviting all Croydon residents, housing associations, partner and voluntary organisations to share their views on the proposed changes to our housing allocation scheme.

With nearly an 18% increase in social housing applications over the past year, these updates aim to create a system that is fairer, clearer and more supportive for those in need. The proposed changes will help the Council process applications more efficiently and improve the overall experience for applicants.

We encourage everyone to take part in this important consultation. Your feedback will directly influence the final policy, shaping a fairer and more efficient housing allocation system.

Take part in the survey today by scanning the QR code or visiting: www.getinvolved.

croydon.gov.uk/housingallocations

Closing date: Monday 10 February 2025



WARM SPACES IN CROYDON

Croydon Council has a directory of Warm Spaces to help people keep warm during the cold months. These are heated, safe and friendly locations across the borough that you can visit for free. They also support residents by allowing them to meet and spend time with other members of the community.



Each Warm Space is slightly different; some locations may offer free hot food, drinks, Wi-Fi and device charging. If you would like to access a Warm Space, please use the link below to get started.

If you have an enquiry or any questions about our support on Warm Spaces, please contact: communityrelations@croydon.gov.uk

Find your nearest warm space here: www.croydon.gov.uk/ warm-spaces-directory

HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSING TEAM

On behalf of the entire housing team, we would like to wish you all Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Thank you for your continued involvement and support throughout the year.

We wish you and your loved ones good health, happiness, and success in the year ahead. May this festive season bring joy to your homes.











CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

You can recycle real Christmas trees for free through the council's annual collection service. Starting from 6 AM on 8 January 2024, place your undecorated tree outside your property. Collections will occur within two weeks. Ensure trees don't block pavements or roads.

Alternatively, recycle your tree earlier by taking it to a Household Reuse and Recycling Centre or include it in your garden waste collection if subscribed. For additional recycling tips or to explore reuse options for other holiday waste, visit the Croydon Council website for detailed guidance.

Scan the QR code or visit: www.croydon.gov. uk/rubbish-and-recycling/real-christmastree-collections





AIR FRYER – OAT COOKIES

Ingredients

85q unsalted butter

20g golden syrup

½ a lemon

140g self-raising flour

100g porridge oats

100g golden caster sugar

1 level teaspoon ground

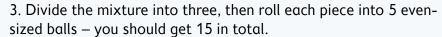
cinnamon

½ teaspoon bicarbonate of



Method

- **1.** Melt the butter and golden syrup in a pan over a low heat or in a microwave on high (800W).
- 2. Finely grate the lemon zest into a large bowl and add the remaining ingredients. Pour the melted butter mixture into the bowl and stir to combine until it comes together, then mix in 1 tablespoon of water.



- 4. Use the palm of your hand to squash the balls slightly (you can freeze them at this stage, ready to bake another day if you like). Transfer to the air-fryer, making sure there's a 1cm gap in between them – you might need to do this in batches. Cook at 175°C for 15 minutes, then carefully remove the air-fryer basket or shelf and leave to cool for 5 minutes.
- 5. Transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool, while you crack on with the second batch. All air fryers are different, so results may vary.

Recipe: www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/air-fryer/air-fryer-oat-cookies/

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. What kind of pictures do elves take?

Answer: Elfies

- 2. What do you get when you cross a bird with a turtle? **Answer:** A turtle dove.
- 3. What was Santa's favorite subject in school? **Answer:** Chemistree.
- 4. Santa was having problems with his leas and couldn't walk, so he went to the hospital to ask the doctor if he could recommend something for him. What did the doctor give Santa to help him walk?

Answer:

A candy cane.

- 5. What is red and white, red and white, and red and white again? **Answer:** Santa Claus falling down a hill.
- 6. Where do you find Santa's

Answer: It depends on where you left them.

7. What did the snowman do when he got upset?

Answer: He had a meltdown.



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.

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

