

# HOUSING MATTERS

## Your homes, your news, your views

### Hello

Welcome to the latest edition of Housing Matters, a newsletter for tenants and leaseholders of Ashford Borough Council, helping to keep you informed about your Housing Service.



If you would prefer a larger text version of this newsletter, please contact Tenant Engagement via email: [tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk) or call 01233 330700 to request.

### News at your fingertips

For up-to-date housing news any time please visit our webpage:

**[www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-news](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-news)**

We regularly add articles to keep you informed about all things housing, from consultations you can take part in that help shape the service, to upcoming projects in your area. You can also sign up there for a version of this newsletter to be sent to your inbox every quarter, helping to save the environment, and save hassle by clicking directly through on featured weblinks.

### Competition time!

Our competition question in this edition is "how many young people volunteered for Uprising's Community Action Team last year". The correct answer can be found in this newsletter. Answers can be emailed along with your name, address and telephone number to [tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk).

They can also be sent by post, addressed to Tenant Engagement at Ashford Borough Council, International House, Dover Place, Ashford, TN23 1HU. The lucky tenant or leaseholder, drawn at random from the correct entries, will win a shopping voucher. The closing dates for entries is **Monday, 29 June 2026**.

Congratulations to our previous winner. Full competition terms and conditions can be viewed at [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-matters-comp](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-matters-comp)

# Tenant satisfaction survey results

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) are a set of metrics that were introduced by the Regulator for Social Housing in April 2023 to evaluate landlord services. They are designed to assess how well landlords are performing across 4 key areas: keeping properties in good repair, respectful and helpful engagement, effective handling of complaints and responsible neighbourhood management.

Last year we received 1,015 responses and we would like to say a big thank you to everyone who gave their time to provide feedback which will be used to help improve your housing service for all

tenants and leaseholders. We will be using your feedback to form part of our service improvement plan, focusing on making sure that our services meet the needs of our tenants and leaseholders. We will publish updates in our newsletters and on the webpage, [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-news](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-news), throughout the year, so you can keep track of the improvements implemented.

In the past few years, we have run this survey once per year, across the Summer and Autumn months. This year we will be running the survey quarterly, throughout the financial year with surveys due to start in May 2026 and continue until March 2027.



**62%** are satisfied with repairs



**60%** are satisfied that their homes are well maintained



**55%** are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair



**67%** are satisfied with how safe their home is



**43%** are satisfied that we listened and acted upon their views



**57%** are satisfied with how informed they are about the things that matter to them



**65%** feel treated fairly and with respect



**22%** are satisfied with our approach to handling complaints



**59%** are satisfied their communal areas are kept clean



**51%** are satisfied that we make a positive neighbourhood contribution



**48%** are satisfied with how we deal with antisocial behaviour

**56%** satisfied with the overall service provided by Ashford Borough Council

Find out how our results compare to last year by visiting our website at: [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-performance](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-performance)

## Improving our Housing Complaints Service

We're setting up a dedicated Housing and Resolution Team to improve consistency, clarity and follow-through when things go wrong. We would like to hear about your experience and your views on the proposed changes. You can do this by completing this short survey, by clicking on the link or scanning the QR code. If you are unable to complete online, then please call **01233 330700** to complete this over the phone.

Improving Our Housing Complaints Service form:  
<https://forms.office.com/e/BhBbT3XX1M>

We look forward to introducing the new team in the next newsletter.



## Tenant profiling survey update

### Progress and next steps

We launched the tenant profiling survey on 01/03/2026, aiming to gather key information about our tenants' needs and preferences. As of 14/04/2026, we have received responses from 320 tenants, representing approximately 45% of our total tenancies. The survey covers essential demographic details, household composition, accessibility requirements, and preferred communication methods.

The data collected will enable us to tailor our services more closely to tenant expectations, ensuring compliance with requirements set out by the Regulator of Social Housing. We are encouraging all tenants to participate, the survey is available to complete online using this link: [www.ashford.gov.uk/Tenant-Survey](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/Tenant-Survey). When visiting our website, you'll be able to respond to our survey and view our privacy notice.

If you are unable to complete the survey online you can call and request a paper copy using **01233 331111** or email [tenantsurvey@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenantsurvey@ashford.gov.uk)

The survey is being sent out to all tenants across several weeks. If when you complete the survey, you have confirmed that you have a vulnerability, long term medical condition or disability we will attempt to contact you to get further information about this and identify if it is necessary to apply any changes to our services to meet your needs.

Thank you to everyone who has completed the survey so far, and if you have any questions ahead of completing then please do contact us using the telephone number or email provided.



## Tenancy agreement consultation

Ashford Borough Council will shortly be launching a consultation with tenants regarding proposed changes to their tenancy agreement. This is an important opportunity for tenants to have their say and help shape the new tenancy agreement additions and changes. Over the next few weeks, tenants will receive further details about the consultation, including how to take part, via letter and/or email. We strongly encourage all tenants to review the information provided and share their views to ensure their voices are heard.

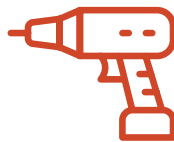
# How did we do?

## Our performance statistics

From January until March 2026, averaged



**100%** emergency repairs completed within timescale  
target is 95%



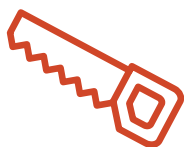
**71%** routine repairs completed within timescale  
target is 90%



**40.22 days**  
Average void turnaround  
target 21 days



**91%** Percentage of repairs calls answered  
target 90%



**323.38** Repairs completed per 1000 properties



**98%** repairs satisfaction  
target is 95%



**55.8%** tenant satisfaction



Gas Compliance (%):  
**99%**  
6 properties outstanding as of 27/04/2026



**65%** complaints handled within timescale



**16.88** complaints received per 1000 homes

## Number of complaints from January until March 2026 Reported as total figures

**200**

number of repairs complaints

**10**

number of housing options complaints

**20**

number of neighbourhood complaints

**17**

number of lettings complaints

If you need assistance or have any problems submitting a complaint in person, please contact us by calling **01233 330700**.

# Engagement updates

## EAT WELL, SPEND LESS & WELLBEING

The most recent event took place at Repton Community Centre on 11 March and was well attended by residents from across the borough who were able to benefit from the support services in attendance including the NHS health checks and free fresh fruit & veg, food and hygiene items.

We are expecting dates for the new financial year to be confirmed shortly. Keep an eye out on our website for the latest dates:

[www.ashford.gov.uk/ewslwr](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/ewslwr)



### Tenant scrutiny update

Our scrutiny group continues to meet monthly and in March, received training from tenant engagement experts, TPAS to help them with their scrutiny investigations. We will now be reviewing our terms of reference with the panel, electing a tenant chair of the group and will be beginning our first review shortly.

We want to say a huge thank you to the tenants volunteering their time to hold our service to account and making sure our housing service meets your needs.

We are still recruiting for tenant scrutineers. If you are interested in finding out more, please visit our website or contact us using the details below.

[www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-engagement](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-engagement)



You said

We did

### You said officers do not always treat you with respect

We have begun call auditing across our housing service to identify and remedy service issues as soon as possible. If you would like to take part in helping us audit the standard of our service later in the year, sign up to be an involved tenant by contacting us using the details below:

Email:

[tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk)

Call Kirsty on **01233 330700**

Complete our online form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/ak6hCucDLu>

### You said you wanted a tree planted, and clearer signage to improve your local neighbourhood

Our General Maintenance Operatives secured the signage and planted the tree in some green space owned by housing in Tenterden, in April 2026.

## Tenant Voice

Our tenant voice panel supports our housing service by responding to consultations and surveys from the comfort of their own homes, either by telephone, email or post. In the last six months, the tenant voice panel has worked to help us introduce; a mutual exchange policy, a managed move policy and review our allocations policy to make sure they reflect the needs of our tenants.

If you would like to find out more about these opportunities, visit our webpage at [www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-engagement](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-engagement), or you can call Kirsty on **01233 330700** or contact the tenant engagement team by email on [tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk)

## Get involved in our estate walkabouts

Our Neighbourhood Housing Officers and other members in housing conduct estate inspections every two weeks in our estates and areas where we have houses and flats to check, report and manage any issues we may find.

Tenants are welcome to get involved by meeting us at the designated meeting point at 9.30am or can request a door knock whilst we are on route. If you want to register your attendance, please complete our online form, email us at [tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk) or call us on **01233 330700**. Please let us know at least four days in advance.



### Tuesday, 26 May 2026

Covering Rural North East.

**Meeting outside Old Wives Lees Village hall at 9.30am.**



### Monday, 8 June 2026

Covering Rural North West.

**Meeting outside Hothfield Post Office at 9.30am.**



### Monday, 22 June 2026

Covering Rural South East.

**Meeting outside Walnut Tree Forge Hill, Roman Road, Aldington 9.30am.**



### Monday, 6 July 2026

Covering Rural South West.

**Meeting outside Swan and Dog Pub, Great Chart at 9.30am.**



### Monday, 20 July 2026

Covering Bybrook and Bockhanger.

**Meeting outside Dhanda Store, 2 Bockhanger Lane at 9.30am.**



### Monday, 3 August 2026

Covering Rothbrook and Spearpoint.

**Meeting outside Premier store, 1a Tile Kiln Road at 9.30am.**



### Monday, 17 August 2026

Covering Willesborough South and Willesborough.

**Meeting outside Co-Op store, 83 Hunter Avenue at 9.30am.**

SCAN HERE to book into any of these inspections:



# Policy updates

## Renters Rights Act

Do you have friends or family who rent privately?

From 1 May, the law is changing to give better protection to people who rent privately.

These changes do not affect council tenants, but you may know someone who rents privately and would benefit from this information.

The main changes are:

- No more “no fault evictions” (Section 21): Landlords will need a valid reason

to end a tenancy.

- No fixed term tenancies: Tenancies will continue unless a landlord has a legal reason to end them.
- Rent increases limited: Rent can only be increased once a year, and changes are easier to challenge.
- Fairer renting rules: Landlords will no longer be allowed to refuse tenants because they receive benefits or have children.
- Enforcement by the council: Ashford Borough Council can fine landlords who do not follow the new rules.



If you or someone you know would like to find out more, visit our webpage:

[www.ashford.gov.uk/housing/landlord-advice/renters-rights-act](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing/landlord-advice/renters-rights-act)

## Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) updates

### Wave 2

Works to install ground source heat pumps in Clearmount Drive, Charing are now completed with just some final landscaping and snagging works to be undertaken. This is the final phase of wave 2 of the social housing decarbonisation fund. We would like to say a big thank you to all the local residents for their patience and assistance during this period.

### Wave 3

The new financial year sees the works commence on the latest phase of replacing heating oil systems with clean, energy efficient schemes supported with solar panels. For more information, please check our website [www.ashford.gov.uk/wave3](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/wave3) and for any queries please email [shfwave3@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:shfwave3@ashford.gov.uk)

## Downsizing

As the demand for family-sized accommodation continues to rise, the council runs a scheme that rewards tenants who downsize their council home.

### Key Benefits of Downsizing:

- Financial Incentives: you could receive £1,000 for downsizing and releasing family accommodation and an additional £500 for those releasing four-bedroom accommodation and up to £500 towards your removal costs upon receipt of an invoice.
- Reduced Living Costs: Smaller properties generally lead to lower rent, council tax, and utility bills.
- Improved Quality of Life: Moving to a smaller, more modern property can improve quality of life and reduce maintenance burdens.

More information can be found on [www.ashford.gov.uk/downsizing](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/downsizing)

To get the process started contact your neighbourhood housing officer

[www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-officer](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-officer)



## Building safety compliance – keeping your home safe

Your home should always be a safe place to live. We take our responsibility as your landlord very seriously.

We carry out a wide range of safety checks, inspections and maintenance work to ensure the homes we manage are safe, secure and compliant with all legal requirements with the primary goal of protecting lives.

Building safety compliance means following national laws, regulations and best practice to reduce risks in your home and in communal areas. These checks are designed to prevent problems such as fires, gas leaks, and electrical faults helping to protect you, your family and your neighbours.

There are six key areas for safety standards that we are required to complete as part of the decent homes standards.

These are the checks we undertake:

### Fire safety checks

Fire safety is very important to us. In blocks of flats and buildings where people share spaces, we check areas like fire doors, corridors, stairs and entrance halls often to make sure they are safe, well-lit and not blocked. By law, we must check fire doors regularly and keep up-to-date fire risk assessments.

### Gas safety inspections

All homes with gas supply must legally have a Gas Safety Check every 12 months. These checks are carried out by SureServe, our contracted Gas Safe engineers, who run tests and inspections, to make sure the property is safe.

### Electrical safety

We shall inspect electrical systems at least every five years, this identifies hidden dangers like faulty wiring or overloaded circuits that could lead to fires.

### Asbestos management

Some older homes may contain asbestos materials. If undisturbed and undamaged, the home will be generally safe. We carry out regular inspections, especially after reports of damage or repairs. Always report any repairs needed in your home. Report a repair online by visiting [www.ashford.gov.uk/report-a-repair](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/report-a-repair) or calling 01233 330366.

### Water hygiene (Legionella)

We assess our properties' risk of legionella and identify those properties which may need testing or maintenance to tackle any identified risks. To keep the risk of legionella low run taps and showers for two minutes after long periods of non-use.

### Lift safety

Where lifts are provided, we arrange routine servicing, repairs and independent examinations at set periods according to the assessed level of risk. If a lift stops working while you are inside, stay calm, use the emergency alarm and wait for help, do not try and force the doors open.

## Why your cooperation matters

Many safety checks require access to your home. By allowing entry for inspections, reporting repairs promptly and keeping your home well maintained, you help us keep everyone safe. Allowing access for safety checks is one of the conditions of your tenancy agreement and we may take legal action if you do not let us in.

We are committed to meeting safety standards and investing in our homes.

If you ever have health and safety concerns about your home, contact us by using the useful contacts section at the back of this newsletter or check our website:

[www.ashford.gov.uk/living-safely-in-your-home](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/living-safely-in-your-home)

# Planned maintenance - updates

A programme has now been developed for windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms for 2026/27. Initial letters have been sent to properties included in phase 1 of each programme, and further communications will continue to go out by post throughout the year. The 2026/27 programme will be added to our website, and we will be sharing the link on our housing news webpage, and in our next edition (Issue 12) of the newsletter.



## Strengthening Family Relationships -

### Free workshops available across Kent and Medway.

Parenting can be rewarding, and stressful. When conflict becomes frequent, it can impact children's wellbeing.

KCC are offering free local workshops that offer practical support to help parents and carers manage stress, reduce conflict, and create a calmer home.

To register your interest, scan the QR code or visit the webpage below to complete the form:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub/mental-health-and-family-relationships/reducing-arguments-and-conflict-between-parents/strengthening-family-relationships>



## Uprising youth and community

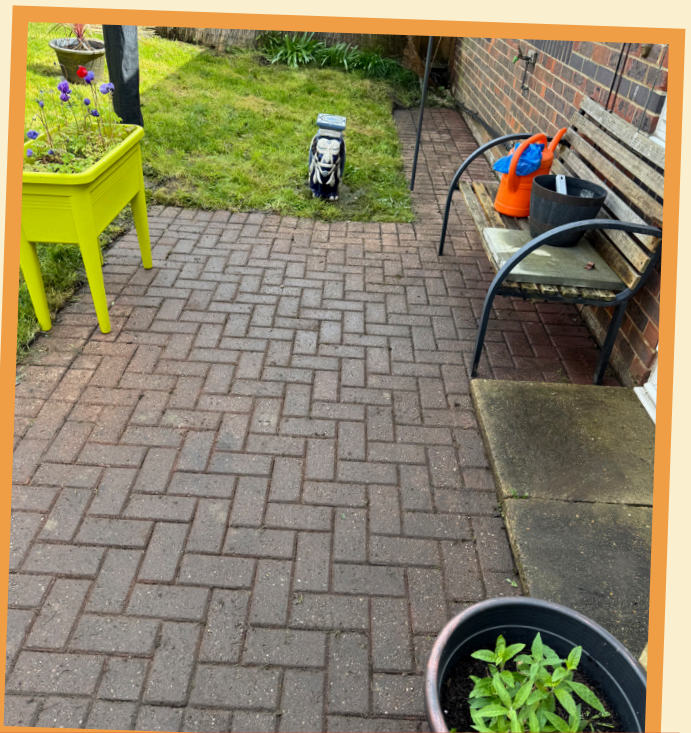
Uprising Youth & Community is a local Ashford charity supporting young people, families and communities. Their Community Action Team (CAT) works with the council to help maintain specific housing sites and sheltered schemes, while also giving young people valuable opportunities to meet residents and gain practical experience.

Over the past year, 50 young people took part in the project, completing 198 hours of work and 33 garden clearances. The team also supports young people who are homeless, with 6–8 young adults volunteering weekly to build skills, confidence and work experience.

The project has continued to grow, now offering qualifications and work placements. Links with Ashford College have also enabled refugee students to take part.

### April 2025 – March 2026 highlights:

- 242 young people volunteered
- 1,039 hours of work completed in communal areas and gardens
- 16 refugee young people gained work experience
- New support introduced to help young people stay in education
- Strong partnerships developed with local organisations
- 2 volunteers progressed into paid roles and achieved a Garden Design and Maintenance qualification



## Ashford in Bloom 2026

It's time to enter in this year's Ashford in Bloom 2026 Competition, open to all Dahlia schemes across the borough.

With categories for communal garden, individuals own baskets or containers, best indoor house plants and private gardens. If you would like to enter please let your Independent Living Officer know. The closing date for applications is 24 May 2026 with judging to provisionally take place on Tuesday 9 June 2026.



# What's on

## Hackfield Play Area Clean Up

Join the housing team at the Hackfield Play area on Friday 29 May 10:00am to 12:00pm as we clean, clear and discuss options to continue improvements to the site. You'll find

- Uprising Youth and Community Team
- Tenant Engagement Team
- Neighbourhood Housing Team
- Information on household recycling

We are looking forward to coming out to other areas too and will be setting dates throughout the spring and summer. If we're coming to an area near you, you'll receive a postcard from us to give you all the information you need to come along and join in. You will also find the dates advertised on our website. To keep up to date with the latest news, visit: [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-news](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-news)



## What's on in Ashford

### Park Yoga

Every Sunday from 9:30am until 10:30am in Victoria Park

This FREE weekly yoga class runs from 3rd May to 13th September from 9:30am to 10:30am.

There's no need to book, just bring a mat or towel to practice on and enjoy the wonderful benefits of yoga in a beautiful outdoor setting. The session will take place in the open space near the Community Hub and café – just look out for the Park Yoga flag.

## Create Offshoots – Stagecraft workshop with Sam Brothers

Thursday 28 May 2026 from 6:30am until 10pm. Do you want to learn the tricks that all the biggest artists use to make their shows special? Come and join Globe Hopping Singer-songwriter Sam Brothers at Coachworks, Ashford on 28th May for a FREE stagecraft workshop.

Sam will be sharing the knowledge he has learnt working with artists such as Van Morrison, Dave Gilmour and The Pretty Things to bring you an immersive workshop that will help you improve your own live show. We would love to see you there.

Book your free ticket at [www.loveashford.com](http://www.loveashford.com).

## Ashford Food and Drink Festival – Saturday 27th June 2026 10:00am – 7pm.

The event will take place in the town centre from the High Street through to Elwick Place and will feature a side selection of high-quality street food, live demonstrations, local market traders, live music, craft activities for children, street theatre and Jellycat Amuseables Trail. For the latest info check out [www.loveashford.com](http://www.loveashford.com).

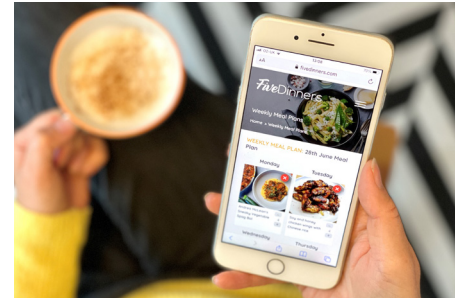
If you have a community event you'd like us to include in our next edition, let us know by emailing [tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk).



## Get FREE meal plans with *FiveDinners*

Fed up deciding what to cook every night? Then this is for you!

Ashford Borough Council has teamed up with award-winning meal planning platform FiveDinners, founded by TV chef and author Theo Michaels, to support local families by giving away FREE premium membership to the platform (usually £86 per year).



Offering much more than just an online recipe resource, signing up to FiveDinners today will give ALL residents across the borough fully personalised affordable meal plans including low-calorie, gluten-free, diabetic, menopause, and family-friendly plans as some of the personalised nutritious options available.

FiveDinners also provides a complete shopping list every week and 'cook-along with Theo' video tutorials to allow residents to save time, money and reduce food waste allowing users to never have to ask the question about what to cook for dinner again.

Can't wait to get started? Check out your exclusive sign-up link here:  
[www.fivedinners.com/mycommunity](http://www.fivedinners.com/mycommunity)

### A message from our Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator

If you, or a friend or relative, is suffering from domestic abuse, it's important to tell someone. Domestic abuse can include any of the below:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Harassment or threats
- Financial control
- Shouting at you (including in front of children)
- Stalking you
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour

The Housing Team takes all reports of domestic violence seriously. We are currently working to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation. We will update you on this in upcoming newsletters.

A reminder that we are consulting for a new domestic abuse policy. You can complete the survey by visiting [www.haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk)

The following local services offer advice and support:

Ashford Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop held every Tuesday. For more information:

☎ 07827 308231

✉ [Domestic.AbuseCoordinator@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:Domestic.AbuseCoordinator@ashford.gov.uk)

Victim Support: ☎ 0808 168 9276

✉ [kent.da@victimsupport.cjsm.net](mailto:kent.da@victimsupport.cjsm.net)

Rising Sun Domestic Violence & Abuse Service:

☎ 01227 452852 ✉ [referrals@risingsunkent.com](mailto:referrals@risingsunkent.com)

Clarion Domestic Abuse Support Line:

☎ 07376 637069 ✉ [centrakent@centragroup.org.uk](mailto:centrakent@centragroup.org.uk)

National Domestic Violence Helpline: ☎ 0808 200 0247

## Useful contacts

Report repairs or damp/mould: [www.ashford.gov.uk/report-a-repair](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/report-a-repair) or call 01233 330366

Raise a complaint: [www.ashford.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/complaints) or call 01233 331111

Your Neighbourhood Housing Officer: [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-officer](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-officer) or call 01233 330688

Housing help and advice: [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-help](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-help)

Welfare Intervention Team: [www.ashford.gov.uk/welfare-reform](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/welfare-reform) or call 01233 331111

Tenant Engagement Team: [www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-engagement](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-engagement) or call 01233 330700