

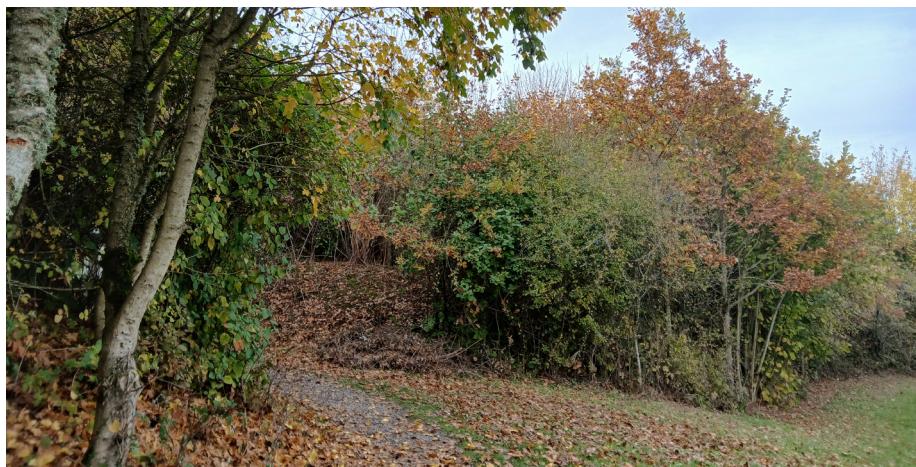


HOUSING MATTERS

Your home, 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 on tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk or call **01233 330700** to request a copy to be sent.

News at your finger tips

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

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 much water is released into the average home from boiling the kettle'. 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. They can also be posted to Tenant Engagement at Ashford Borough Council, TN23 1HU. The lucky tenant or leaseholder, drawn at random from the correct entries, will win a a shopping voucher. Closing date for entries is Monday, 26 January 2026.

Congratulations to our previous winner. Full competition terms and conditions:
www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-matters-comp

New starters to the housing team



Jo Fox
**Assistant Director
of Housing**

Jo Fox Assistant Director of Housing joined the council in the summer.

Jo is keen to take up the challenges that come with the role making sure that that tenants are at the heart of driving improvements.

"I am keen to understand what is important to tenants and what their priorities are for the service".

To share your priorities and ideas please email tenant.engagement@ashford.gov.uk



Kirsty Gaunt
**Tenant Engagement
Officer**

Kirsty Gaunt joined as Tenant Engagement officer in July bringing over 20 years of experience in community engagement and development.

She is keen to work with tenants to encourage and support them to get involved and making sure that tenants voices are heard and acted on. Kirsty has been out and about meeting tenants on estate walkabouts, resident service days and door knocking exercises. Contact Kirsty using the details below:

kirsty.gaunt@ashford.gov.uk
01233 330700

Find your Housing Officer

All tenants have a dedicated Neighbourhood Housing Officer whom you can talk to about matters related to your home, tenancy and neighbourhood.

We have recently welcomed two new neighbourhood officers to the team and as a result the geographical patches have been updated.

You can find out who your neighbourhood housing officer is and their contact details on our website: www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-officer

Alternatively, scan the QR code.



Knowing you: Important Update

The Grenfell Fire in June 2017 was a devastating incident in which 72 people lost their lives and has resulted in several significant reforms in relation to social housing. A legacy reform from this fire is the requirement for all social landlords to know who their tenants are and to ensure that services are adapted to meet any specific needs or vulnerabilities, therefore we have an important piece of work to carry out across the start of the new year, which will require your attention and input.

While we do hold a lot of data about our tenants and their household members some of it is historic and has not been updated at regular intervals or when changes have occurred. To ensure that we are confident that the information we hold about our tenants and your household members is correct and up to date we will be carrying out a whole tenant census. This will be conducted primarily via an online survey, but we will be working on additional methods for those who are unable to access the internet or who may require another way to respond to our requests for information.

There will be more details shared as the project plan and details are finalised but please be assured that we will confirm what data we need, how it will be stored and used and how often it will be updated. We will only ask for data that is required of us by the Regulator of Social Housing and that will help us to ensure that we can provide high quality housing services that meet your needs.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2025

Thank you to the 1043 tenants who completed this year's survey which was conducted on our behalf by TLF research.

The survey has now closed and the results are being analysed. Details of the results will be provided in the next edition.

Your voice matters to us and the results of the survey play a big part in shaping our priorities and activities.

Eat Well, Spend Less & Wellbeing Roadshow

Housing Services have been out and about supporting the Eat Well, Spend Less & Wellbeing Roadshows across the borough.

These roadshows provide residents with resources, support and information. This includes free NHS health checks, free fresh fruit & veg, food and hygiene items.

The most recent event was held at Singleton Village Hall on 23 October.



**The next roadshow will be at The Ashford Cinema, Elwick Place, Wednesday 10 December 2025
10am to 2pm**

Resident Service Days 2025

The Neighbourhood Housing Team has started to roll out a programme of Resident Service Days. These are an opportunity for tenants to speak to staff in person about any concerns, ideas or queries and for officers to update tenant information.

The first event was held in Victoria Park on Wednesday 30 July with staff available to talk to tenants about their properties, and any concerns with the local area. The repairs team were also present to record new requests and discuss any outstanding repairs with a team of operatives available to complete any straightforward repairs. Pairs of officers also door knocked at Somerset Heights and Stour Heights.

The next event was in Wye on 13 August based at Luckley House with officers door knocking and repairs staff available to record requests and conduct repairs where possible.

On 21 October we were in Tenterden with officers available at The Hub, Church Road, Tenterden, door knocking around St Michael's, Priory Way and Shrubcote and repairs staff based at Danemore.

Thank you to all those that engaged with us. Dates for 2026 are currently being set and will be shared in the next edition.

You said

We did

- ✓ In the summer, you told us you'd like more of our housing staff to be identifiable.

Our neighbourhood housing team now have jackets and fleeces with our logo on, come and say 'Hi!' if you see us on our estate walkabouts!

- ✓ Residents in the New Quarter told us they were concerned about Antisocial Behaviour

We have worked with many tenants in these blocks and have seen a large reduction in antisocial behaviour following a recent Antisocial Behaviour Survey.



Damp and Mould - Awaab's Law

Awaab's Law

Awaab's Law is a new law that came into effect on 27 October 2025 and is a lasting legacy to two year old Awaab Ishak, who tragically died after being exposed to mould at his Rochdale home in December 2020.

This legislation requires social landlords to fix reported damp, mould and emergency hazards within strict timeframes.

- ➡ Emergency hazards must be fixed within 24 hrs of reporting
- ➡ Significant hazards must be investigated within 10 working days of being notified and then properties made safe in five working days

➡ For both types of hazards a written report must be provided to tenants within three working days of inspection

➡ Landlords must consider the circumstances of tenants which could put them at risk including young children and those with disabilities or health conditions

➡ Alternative accommodation must be offered if homes cannot be made safe within the required timeframes.

The law will focus first on damp, mould and emergency hazards before covering further housing hazards from 2026.

What is damp and mould?

Damp occurs where there is too much moisture in a building. This can be caused by leaks from pipes or roofs, rising damp from the ground, or condensation from humid air hitting cold surfaces.

Mould is a type of fungus that thrives in these damp conditions and grows on damp surfaces. It reproduces by releasing tiny, often invisible spores into the air.

Health effects of exposure to damp and mould include:

- ➡ Respiratory issues
- ➡ Skin problems
- ➡ Other possible reactions such as headaches, eye and throat irritation and general fatigue
- ➡ Mental health such as anxiety and depression

Babies, children, the elderly, people with existing respiratory issues, skin problems like eczema, and those with weakened immune systems are more susceptible to severe health impacts.

Tackling damp and mould - putting you first

We're pleased to announce the launch of our new online Damp and Mould reporting form, now available on the Ashford Borough Council website under the Damp and Mould section. The new form links directly to our repairs system, helping us to respond to your concerns quickly and efficiently. This change is part of our ongoing commitment to improving the way we manage damp and mould cases and ensuring every resident receives the right support based on individual circumstances.

By completing the form, you'll be helping our teams gather the right information from the very start - allowing us to:

Triage each case accurately and prioritise works based on urgency

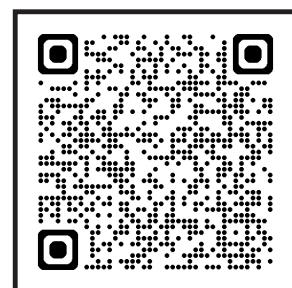
Identify emergency situations quickly, so the right people are sent at the right time

Deliver faster and more effective repairs, with your needs at the centre of every decision

Please scan the QR code to access further information on damp and mould including the reporting form. You can still call the Repairs Line where staff will complete the form for you if needed. This means there is no change to how you access our services - we've simply added another, more efficient way for us to

capture information and take action. The more details you can provide, the better we can tailor our response and ensure your home remains safe, healthy and comfortable.

Please scan the QR code to access further information on damp and mould including the reporting form.



Tips to help you deal with condensation and mould in your home this winter

Condensation happens when warm moist air hits a cold surface such as a window or outside wall and condenses, running down the surface as water droplets.

Moisture left on your walls can lead to black mould. Mould looks and smells bad, can cause serious health problems and damage clothes, furniture and books.

How do I know it's condensation?

If the surface is cold and wet, it's likely condensation is the cause. Areas likely to be affected by condensation:

- ➡ Rooms where a lot of steam is created such as kitchens and bathrooms
- ➡ Cold surfaces such as mirrors, windows and window frames
- ➡ Outside walls, walls in unheated rooms, corners of rooms, behind furniture
- ➡ In wardrobes and cupboards

Reduce condensation through HIVE

- H Heating**
- I Insulation**
- V Ventilation**
- E Excess Moisture (reduce)**

Top tips to reduce condensation

Open window trickle vents during the day or when you are going out, or open windows for at least 10 minutes every day.

Try to avoid putting furniture against any external walls and try to leave a gap between furniture and the wall to allow airflow.

When cooking, showering or bathing close internal doors, open the windows and use extractor fans if you have them. If possible, leave windows open and extractor fans to run for about 20 minutes after to clear any steam.

Wipe down windows mirrors, tiles, showerdoors with a cloth or squeegee to remove moisture.

When cooking, try to keep the lids on pans (this reduces how much energy you use too).

Only boil as much water as you need when boiling the kettle to reduce steam and save money.

Take shorter and cooler showers as this will produce less steam.

When running a bath put cold water in first as this results in less steam and condensation.

Don't dry wet clothes on radiators. This will make your boiler work harder and could cost as much as running a tumble dryer, while creating a lot of condensation.

If you dry clothes inside, use a drying rack in a room where the window can be opened slightly and keep the door closed. Consider using a dehumidifier. Did you know drying clothes indoors can add up to 10-15 litres of water into your home every week.

Do not use LPG/ bottled gas heaters as these release lots of moisture into the air. **These are not allowed in our properties,**

How condensation is released into your home during the day

An average family of four creates over 13 litres of moisture per day.

This table shows how much water is created by every day activities

Drying one load of washing indoors	4 litres	
Boiling the kettle	1 litre	
Cooking	2 litres	
Sleeping	500ml	
Bathing or showering	3 litres	

Cost of living advice and support

The winter months bring additional pressures on our finances as we turn on our heating and Christmas approaches. If you are struggling then do ask for help. These are some of the organisations that can provide support.

Citizens Advice North and West Kent Debt Advice Team

Provide free, confidential, independent, and impartial debt advice. Can help you deal with

- ➡ debts
- ➡ find ways to deal with your creditors
- ➡ draw up a budget
- ➡ find ways to save money
- ➡ access financial support available, like benefits and grants and more

To arrange an appointment:

Phone: **03300 533 667**

Email: **debt@nwkent.cab.org.uk**

When contacting, please provide your name and contact details for a call back

Citizens Advice North and West Kent Energy Advice Team

Specialist Energy Advisors give confidential, impartial, and independent advice on all energy matters.

Can help with:

- ➡ energy efficiency and reducing costs
- ➡ switching supplier/ tariff
- ➡ energy support schemes, grants and vouchers if eligible
- ➡ water advice and social tariffs
- ➡ income maximisation
- ➡ carbon monoxide safety awareness, and more

To contact the Energy Advice Team,

Phone: **0333 240 0429**,

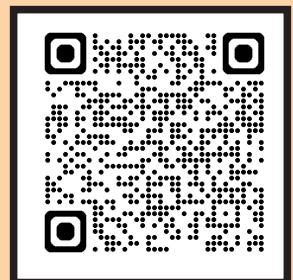
Email: **energy@nwkent.cab.org.uk**

National Energy Action

National Energy Action is the national charity to help you with your energy bills.

To access their support service call 0800 304 7159

or access their webpage www.nea.org.uk/get-help where you will also find lots of tips and advice



If you are struggling to pay your rent then do keep in contact with your rents officer. If you are unsure who your rents officer is then please contact your housing officer or our welfare intervention team.

To find out who your housing officer is and their contact details visit our website at:

www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-officer



If you would like help checking eligibility or applying for benefits contact our welfare intervention team at:

www.ashford.gov.uk/welfare-reform

Looking after your home and yourself this winter

Sign up to the priority services register if you need tailored or additional support. Each energy supplier and network operator maintains its own register. You will be eligible to register if you:

- ➡ Are a pensioner
- ➡ Are disabled
- ➡ Suffer from a long-term medical condition
- ➡ Have a hearing or visual impairment
- ➡ Have additional communication needs



Contact your gas/electricity supplier and distribution network operator if you would like to know more information or would like to register. If you're not sure who your network operator is, check online at www.energynetworks.org/customers/find-my-network-operator

Where to grab a bite to eat in a pinch!

Bright City Church - Lite Bites

The Bright City Church offers a free light lunch and friendly chat on Fridays from 11am until 1pm. Drop by using the back entrance at Centrepiece on Bank Street (TN23 1BA). Also provide a foodbank.



The Well Community Cafe

The Well Community Cafe is a pay-as-you-feel cafe offering hot drinks and cake. Join us at Willesborough Baptist Church, Hythe Road, Ashford and is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturday mornings from 9am until 12 noon.

Lilly's Singleton Café Ashford

A community cafe and registered warm space that provides food on a pay as you can afford basis. The cafe is based at Singleton Village Hall, Hoxton Close from Monday through to Thursday from 8am until 4pm

Warm, welcome spaces

Our warm welcome spaces are open again this winter. Tenants, and members of the public are invited to our four participating schemes, full details can be found below.



Danemore, Beachey Path in Tenterden

Open every Thursday from 12 noon until 3pm.

East Stour Court, Mabledon Avenue

Open every Thursday from 9:30am until 12noon.

Farrow Court, Stanhope Road

Open every Tuesday from 10am until 3pm.

Luckley House, Little Chequers in Wye

Open every other Tuesday from 10:30am until 3:30pm.

You can contact the office at Luckley house by phoning 01233 812665. For more information and details of further warm spaces visit the warm welcome website: www.warmwelcome.uk

Danemore Breakfast Morning

Once a month for tenants friends and family. Breakfasts must be pre-booked by calling 01580 763249.

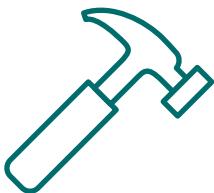
Foodbanks in the Ashford area

- ➡ Pneuma Church offer multiple options for food help accessed at: The Warehouse, Ashford Works, Cobbs Wood Industrial Estate, Brunswick open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 12pm.
- ➡ The Community Shop Repton Community Trust, Repton Connect Community Centre, Repton Avenue, Ashford. Mondays 1pm to 2pm, Tuesday- Friday 10am to 11am.
- ➡ ICM Ashford Pentecostal Church and Boxes of Hope at ICM Office, First Floor, 162 Godinton Road, Ashford. By Appointment only Tel 01233 340194.
- ➡ The Salvation Army, Ashford Corps 115 Cudworth Road, South Willesborough, Ashford. Fridays 10am- 12pm.

For more information check the "Cost of Living" pages on the council's website.



Repairs and Voids



Emergency Repairs completed within Timescale
Target is 95%
98%



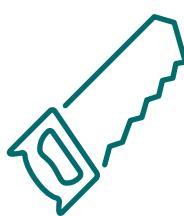
Routine Repairs completed within Timescale
61.4%



Average Void Turnaround
53 days



Percentage of Repairs Called Answered
Target is 90%
82.3%



Repairs completed per 1000 properties
256.4



69.5%
Repairs Satisfaction
Target is 95%

Complaints and Tenant Satisfaction



Tenant Satisfaction
59.2%



Complaints received per 1000 homes
11.4%



Complaints handled within timescale
85%

Number of complaints
332

Number of repairs complaints
203

Number of housing options complaints
24

Number of neighbourhood complaints
76

Number of lettings complaints
29

If you need assistance or have any problems submitting a complaint in person, please contact us by emailing tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk or by calling 01233 330573.

Housing Annual Report

Our annual report to tenants for the last financial year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 has just been completed and can be viewed on our website www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-annual-report

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

October 2025 update

Wave 2 Update

Ground Source Heat pumps

Works to install ground source heat pumps in Heathside, Appledore has progressed over the summer months with works almost complete allowing work to begin in Clearmount, Charing.

Residents are looking forward to having a warmer and more comfortable home this winter and hopefully saving some pennies.

Cllr Noel Ovenden, Council Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing at Ashford Borough Council, on commencement of works said:

"These measures will cut carbon emissions, help reduce energy demand and give residents more money in their pockets from cheaper energy bills. We're working closely with our tenants to ensure they understand how the GSHP systems work and to recognise the tremendous benefits they will enjoy because of these exciting improvements.

Embracing ground source heat pump technology is an exciting first for Ashford Borough Council and I'm confident it will transform tenants' lives by boosting energy security, saving money and providing a warmer and more comfortable home for them to enjoy.

In addition to these life-changing benefits for tenants, the upgrades to our most energy-inefficient rural homes will help the council with our ambition to become a carbon neutral borough by 2030."

To find ongoing updates about this project, visit www.ashford.gov.uk/shdf



If you have questions or concerns about upcoming social housing decarbonisation works, contact us by emailing SHDFTenantcontact@ashford.gov.uk or phone Sarah on 01233 330598

Wave 3 Update

Ashford Borough Council has secured £2m from the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund (SHF) Wave 3 scheme which began last month. The money will enable around 200 homes to receive thermal improvements.

Homes have been selected based on their Energy Performance Certificates (EPC). Those homes rated G, F, and E are given priority for works to improve this score to a C rating.

The average rating for properties in England and Wales is D with a core of 60. You can find your EPC at <https://www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate>

Low Carbon Exchange, who are now part of Sureserve, are making headway with appointing and carrying out the retrofit assessments - these assessments are crucial in ensuring the correct measures are applied to the property. We are focusing the first round of retrofit assessments to homes in Wye. 95 homes in Wye were sent letters inviting resident inclusion on the scheme, 28 homes either declined or failed to respond. We are pleased to have attained 70% buy in to the letters. If you have received a letter and would like to reconsider, or no letter received please let us know by calling 01233 330696 or emailing SHFWave3@ashford.gov.uk

Works have commenced in two of our empty homes where the council have adopted a whole house approach to the property. Significant works will be undertaken to thermally improve and internally modernise these family homes. They will benefit from low carbon technologies, resulting in decarbonised homes that no longer depend on fossil fuels for heat and hot water. There will be opportunity for residents to see the finished homes - if you are interested in visiting to see the transformation and how these technologies have been applied then please get in touch via the phone number or email address.

Residents in Little Chequers will soon be receiving their free upgrades funded by DESNZ. While homes outside of Wye that get earmarked for heating upgrades or external wall insulation should expect their works over the spring and summer months as part of our mid and long term plans. The scheme will be running until 2028, so as homes get assessed and the improvement measures finalised, an implementation plan will be developed and shared.

At Ashford Borough Council we accept the urgency, challenge and responsibility to act in order to play our part in tackling climate change. We have set targets to have net zero carbon emissions in our own estate and services by 2030 and borough wide by 2050, supporting the national agenda.

In order to deliver greener homes and reduce emissions it is important for us to understand what is important to our residents living in our 5,247 local authority homes.

We are devising a series of questionnaires so that we can learn how our residents feel about the net zero challenge, use of low carbon technologies and what matters to you. The results of the surveys will help us understand, prioritise our efforts and work with you to deliver what matters.



For your chance to have a say please complete this short four minutes survey. The results of which will be published in the next newsletter.

Scan the QR code to complete the Wave 3 questionnaire.

The dedicated email address for any questions or for more information for wave three is SHFWave3@ashford.gov.uk

Engaged Tenant

If you are keen to use your experiences and knowledge as a tenant of Ashford Borough Council to improve services for all tenants then do register your interest in being an engaged tenant.

Opportunities to be involved include:

❖ **Tenant Voice** ❖ **Tenant Scrutiny Panel** ❖ **Estate Walkabouts**

To register your interest and to discuss in more details please contact the tenant engagement team on tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk or call **01233 330700**

Estate Inspections

Our Neighbourhood Housing Officers and other members of our housing team go on estate walkabouts to neighbourhoods all over the borough in the areas with houses and flats we manage.

Every two weeks our officers walk a different route and go into communal areas to monitor, report, escalate or manage a wide range of issues we find. Tenants can get involved by meeting us at the designated meeting point at 9:30am, or can request that we knock on your door as we're on our route.

Meet us at the designated meeting point and join us for the walkabout, we will wait at the meeting point for ten minutes, until 9:40am. You can see what we do and how we address any issues we pick up along the way, giving you a chance to highlight anything that you've noticed or are worried about in your local area.

The walkabouts can take anywhere from 2.5 hours up to 4 hours, we highly recommend wearing comfortable shoes and bringing some water.

You are welcome to join for as much or as little of the walkabout as you would like.

Estate Walkabouts Until the end of 2025

- ❖ **Monday, 24 November 2025** Wye - meeting outside the Co-op on Churchfield Way at 9:30 am
- ❖ **Monday, 8 December** covering Repton Manor, Poets Corner and New Quarter - meeting outside Lidl (Ashford Town Centre) at 9:30 am
- ❖ **Monday, 22 December 2025** Woolreads - meeting outside the One Stop on Court Wurtin at 9:30am

If your area does not have a walkabout in the near future, but you're concerned about a problem, please don't wait, let us know by contacting your neighbourhood housing officer.

Door Knock

You can request a door knock to let us know about concerns you have about your street, neighbourhood or community. While we may not be able to resolve any in depth individual issues during this type of visit, we will be able to arrange an appointment for any concerns which may take a little longer to investigate or resolve.

To request a door knock please email tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

This panel provides tenants with the means to provide meaningful input into the development, amending and monitoring of our housing policies, procedures and practices.

We have now recruited a small number of keen tenants and are in the process of selecting specific topics to investigate and make recommendations, and are organising training dates.

We do need more recruits so if you are interested and would like to know more do contact the Tenant Engagement team.

Tenant Voice Group

Members of the Tenant Voice Group provide feedback on proposed updates or new policies and specific topics.

This is usually in the form of an on-line survey which can be completed in your own time. We anticipate there being approximately 6-14 surveys a year.

You are not required to respond to every survey however we will monitor how often members participate. You can leave the group at any time.

You can find more details and register your interest in the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and the Tenant Voice

Group on our website at www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-engagement

Alternatively, call our Tenant Engagement officers to register your interest:

Contact Kirsty on **01233 330700** or Sarah on **01233 330598**

Consultation and Policy Updates

Ashford Mutual Exchange Policy

Ashford Borough Council Housing Services recently consulted on its proposal for a Mutual Exchange Policy.

Mutual exchange is the process by which social housing tenants can swap their homes. It is a way for tenants to move to a property that better suits their needs - whether that's for more space, downsizing, relocating for work or family, or for personal reasons. It is a popular option because it can be quicker than waiting for a transfer or bidding through a housing register.

The policy sets out the the council's approach, who is able to apply, the relevant legislation and how final decisions are reached.

Members of the tenant voice group and tenants who have recently gone through the process were contacted and asked to complete a short questionnaire. Thank you to all those who participated. Your responses are now feeding into the final policy and will help inform our delivery.



Management Move Policy

A management move is where an urgent move is agreed on the basis that a council tenant is not safe to remain in their current home.

Thank you to all those who completed the survey. The results of the consultation are now feeding into the final draft.

Asset Management Strategy

Update on our stock condition survey

Over the past year and a half, we have been working with Ridge and Partners LLP to complete a detailed survey of our housing stock.

What was the survey about? The aim was to understand the current condition of our homes including things like kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, windows, and heating systems and to plan for future improvements.

How many homes were looked at? Over 4,000 homes (around 80% of the council's housing) were inspected between April 2024 and March 2025.

Why is this important? The survey helps the council plan ahead, making sure homes stay safe, comfortable, and meet the Decent Homes Standard. It also helps budget for repairs and upgrades over the next 30 years.

What did we learn?

- ➡ A lot of investment is needed in the first 10 years, especially for windows, kitchens, heating systems, and roofs.
- ➡ Around £64 million is expected to be spent in the next five years alone.
- ➡ Over 30 years, the total estimated cost is more than £220 million, which works out to about £1,500 per home per year.
- ➡ These costs are in line with what other councils are spending on similar housing.

The new Housing Asset Management Strategy will :

- ➡ commit us to a planned approach of investment into your home and local community for the next five years and beyond
- ➡ set out how we will manage, maintain and invest in our council homes
- ➡ help us to shape our investment priorities
- ➡ ensure that our homes are safe, secure and efficient

We want to provide every tenant with a safe, well maintained home that meets decent homes standards. The new Housing Asset Management Strategy will help our tenants see what we plan to do, when we plan to do it and be able to hold us to account.

The data from the stock condition survey has been used to inform and draft the Ashford Borough Council Housing Asset Management Strategy. The new strategy will focus around six themes:

1. Growth and provision of additional homes.	4. Resident voice and community impact.
2. Quality and comfort.	5. Sustainability and climate resilience.
3. Safe, well managed home.	6. Value for money.

We asked our tenant voice panel to comment on these themes and to identify their priorities. We received 44 responses in total which we are currently analysing. Thank you to all those who responded. A detailed update will be provided in the next newsletter.

Kent Housing Group success

Our Housing service has scooped a host of awards in the recent Kent Housing Group (KHG) Excellence Awards 2025.

These annual awards are the Oscars for our regional housing sector celebrating the very best projects, professionals and partnerships across housing in Kent and Medway.

Ashford Borough Council walked away with five awards in total including two wins and three highly commended.

Sam Bunting, a tenant of Farrow Court was awarded Unsung Community Hero/ Neighbour of the year. Sam has been actively fundraising for his local Age UK hub which has included climbing to Mount Everest basecamp, a lifelong ambition. He also fills the role of Father Christmas during the festive season and teaches Tai Chi and painting for Age UK all since being diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2022.

Dahlia and general maintenance officers George Taylor, Stephen Smith and Tommy James received a Highly Commended Award in the associate professional category.



Congratulations to you all

Fortis House

A pioneering scheme of 23 social housing units in Henwood Industrial Estate has transformed an underutilised car park in a flood zone.

The scheme continues to gather awards with a win at Kent Housing Group and most recently was awarded the prestigious MMC (Modern Methods of Construction) Project of the Year at Construction News Awards 2025.



New Mill View homes completed

Work has now completed on four new homes replacing properties destroyed by portable gas heater explosion in Mill View, Ashford.

The new homes consist of two 2-bedroom homes and two 3-bedroom homes on the site where 13, 15, 17 and 19 previously stood. Each house has two parking spaces and heating is via air source heat pumps with underfloor heating. There are also solar panels and electrical vehicle chargers fitted to each property. The high standard of insulation and energy efficiency measures means the four homes are rated EPC band B.

Cllr Noel Ovenden, Leader of Ashford Borough Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing, said: "I'm passionate about providing genuinely affordable quality housing for everyone, so I'm delighted that our Housing team has delivered a project to replace the homes that were destroyed by the explosion and subsequent fire."

"These new homes have been constructed to a high standard, with green features and future-proof designs that can adapt to a tenant's changing personal needs."



Hackfield Play Area

General maintenance officer Matt has been busy cleaning up, painting and repairing the play area in Hackfield. Look at the big difference this has made.

Before



After



Need extra storage or somewhere to park?

We have garages available to rent across the borough.



- ✓ From just £13.97 per week
- ✓ Flexible rolling tenancy
- ✓ Perfect for storage or housing a car
- ✓ Garages are currently only being offered to residents of the borough

Apply via our website: www.ashford.gov.uk/garages



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.

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

Victim Support: 📞 0808 168 9276

✉️ kent.da@victimsupport.cjsm.net

Rising Sun Domestic Violence & Abuse Service:
📞 01227 452852 ✉️ referrals@risingsunkent.com

Clarion Domestic Abuse Support Line:
📞 07376 637069 ✉️ centrakent@centragroup.org.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 📞 0808 200 0247



Christmas bin collections 25/26

Recycling and refuse collection days will change over the Christmas and New Year period.

You can check your collection date and type of collection over the Christmas and New Year period by using the collection look up tool on our website at www.ashford.gov.uk/bin-collection-calendar

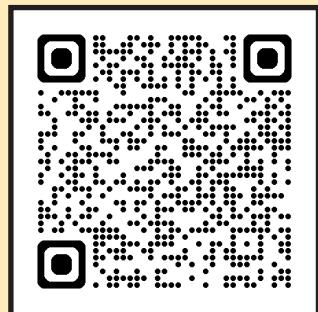
Local Government Re-organisation

Government wants councils like Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council to deliver your services differently. The proposal is to replace existing county, district and borough councils with a smaller number of new unitary councils. Kent's full proposals need to be with ministers by Friday 28 November 2025. The government will then take the decision about how many unitary councils there are and which areas they will cover.

How will this affect me as a tenant or leaseholder?

This is a long process and Ashford Borough Council will remain your landlord at least until the 1 April 2028. Rest assured, you will remain a council tenant or leaseholder after that date. The only differences will be the new unitary council will become your landlord. We will keep you updated every step of the way so you know what is happening and when.

You can find the latest information on councils here in Kent at www.kentcouncilleaders.org.uk or by scanning the QR code



£50 GIFT CARD

Prize draw

One lucky tenant or leaseholder, drawn at random from those who complete the newsletter feedback survey before the end of 2025, will win a £50 Love2shop voucher.

Closing date for entries is midnight on 31 December 2025.

Full competition terms and conditions:
www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-matters-comp



Scan the QR code to provide feedback about this newsletter

Useful contacts

Report repairs: www.ashford.gov.uk/report-a-repair or call 01233 330366

Report damp/mould: www.ashford.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant/repairs-and-maintenance/guidance-on-damp-and-mould/

Raise a complaint: www.ashford.gov.uk/complaints or call 01233 331111

Your Neighbourhood Housing Officer: www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-officer or call 01233 330688

Housing help and advice: www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-help

Welfare Intervention Team: www.ashford.gov.uk/welfare-reform or call 01233 331111

Tenant Engagement Team: www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-engagement or call 01233 330700