



# 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 a copy to be sent.

### 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 'Where will you be able to find a housing officer to speak to face to face on Monday 1 April 2026?'. 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 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 shopping voucher. **Closing date for entries is Monday, 30 March 2026.**

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

# Important news and notices

## Tenant scrutiny goes hybrid!

Our tenant scrutiny panel is going hybrid. Let us know if you'd like to attend either in person or online by contacting us using the contact details below.

01233 330700 [tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk)

## Allocations Policy

Our allocations policy consultation has closed. Thank you so much to those who got involved and gave us your views.

Your input was greatly appreciated and has influenced the policy approved. Find out more on pages 9 and 10.



## Age friendly community survey

Get involved in shaping an age friendly community in Ashford by completing our survey on our consultation webpage provided at the bottom of this section. We ask that feedback is received by Friday 13 March 2026.

## Domestic Abuse Policy Consultation

We are reviewing our Domestic Abuse Policy and are asking for your feedback to make sure the policy reflects the needs of our tenants, and wider community. If you would like to contribute, head over to our consultation website included below. We ask that feedback is received by Friday 6 March 2026.

Stay up to date with consultations by visiting [haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk](https://haveyoursay.ashford.gov.uk)

## Tenant Satisfaction Survey

### Year 3 (2025 - 2026)

Last year, we appointed TLF Research to contact our tenants to conduct our survey by online weblink, telephone and post. Thank you so much to the 1015 of you who responded and provided your opinion and insight into our housing performance.

The results will be published in our next newsletter and on our website alongside an update about what we're doing with your feedback.

### Year 4 (2026 - 2027)

In previous years, we have conducted our survey within three months. Our next survey, Year 4, will be run throughout the year focusing on telephone surveys. You may be given the opportunity to be involved from April 2026.



## Awaab's Law Update

In the last edition of our newsletter, we told you about Awaab's Law that came into effect on 27 October 2025 and the legal requirements placed on social landlords in how damp and mould is reported and fixed.

Remember that you can report damp and mould using the new online reporting form which can be found on our damp and mould advice page, scan the QR code to find out more. Using this form helps us gather the right information from the very start. Alternatively you can still call our repairs team on 01233 330366 who will be happy to assist you further.



# Engagement updates

## EAT WELL, SPEND LESS & WELLBEING ROADSHOW

Thank you to all those who chatted to us at the Eat Well Spend Less roadshows in Ashford Cinema in December and at the Swan Centre in January. We hope you appreciated the opportunity to speak to a member of the housing team in person and also meet all the community services and projects who attended providing practical support and advice on a large range of topics.

♥ The next roadshow will be on Wednesday 11 March at Repton Connect Community Centre, Repton Avenue, Ashford, TN23 3RX



### Meet with a Housing Officer face-to-face

You can also meet a member of the neighbourhood housing surgery by dropping in to one of our monthly Housing Surgeries:

International House, Dover Place  
Ashford - on the first Wednesday  
of every month 9:30 to 11:30.

Danemore, Beachy Path,  
Tenterden TN30 6RT -  
on the third Wednesday  
of every month  
10.00 to 12.00



You said

We will

**"I'd like to know more about what's going on in the community"**

We have included a feature and link to Love Ashford on the back page of this newsletter

**"I'd like to attend scrutiny meetings online"**

Scrutiny meetings are now held online, so tenants can join in person or via Teams.

**You told us what mattered to you when we formed our new allocations policy**

Your comments influenced the policy and we addressed some of your concerns, find out more on Page 5.

### Tenant Voice

We currently have over 300 tenants who have indicated that they are happy to provide regular feedback to us on new policies and specific topics usually in the form of an on-line survey. The most recent surveys have been on the Asset Management Strategy and a housing decarbonisation questionnaire to help us understand how energy is being used by our tenants.

### Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Our first Tenant Scrutiny Panel was held back in August 2025 and numbers are slowly increasing. Meetings are being held monthly and training has been organised for March. Actions so far include working on a funding bid to develop an online dedicated engagement platform for tenants and providing feedback on how we could improve our website.

If you would like to find out more about these opportunities you can call on **01233 330700** or email [tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk)

# Leaseholder updates

## Easier ways to access your services

We've launched a brand new Leaseholders Handbook and completely refreshed the Leasehold Services section on our Ashford Borough Council website: ([www.ashford.gov.uk/leasehold-services](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/leasehold-services)).

The updated webpage now features easy-to-navigate tiles, FAQs, and handy 'call to action' buttons so you can report communal repairs, update your contact details, or access the tenant portal with just a click.

You can find the Leaseholder Handbook under any of the tiles on the new webpage.

We are inviting all Leaseholders to check out the new look and let us know what you think!

Your feedback will help us keep improving and we welcome any comments via e-mail to [leaseholdandrtb@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:leaseholdandrtb@ashford.gov.uk) or by calling **01233 330 415** or **01233 330 681**.

## Keep your contact details up to date

In December, we sent out a Contact Information Form to all leaseholders.

If you haven't returned yours yet, please do so as soon as possible, either via post, in person at International House, or by taking a photograph and e-mailing it to [leaseholdandrtb@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:leaseholdandrtb@ashford.gov.uk).

Keeping your details current ensures we can reach you quickly about important updates, repairs, and legal notices.

Prefer to do it online? It's easy! Simply visit [ashford.gov.uk/leasehold-services](http://ashford.gov.uk/leasehold-services) and select 'Update your Contact Details' from the top of the webpage.

Thank you for helping us keep our records accurate and up to date.

## Need extra storage or somewhere to park?

We have garages available to rent throughout the borough.

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

Apply via our website: [www.ashford.gov.uk/garages](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/garages)



# Policy Updates

We are currently reviewing and updating many of our housing strategies and policies. Current policies can all found on our website at [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-policies](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-policies) and includes the new Management Move, Mutual Exchange and Decant Policies

## Housing Allocations Policy

A new Housing Allocations Policy has been approved and will come into effect in April 2026 replacing the previous Lettings Policy.

The new scheme was heavily influenced by our residents who provided excellent feedback about the first document. Here is a table of changes made:

You Said	We Did
<p>The policy was hard to understand, and it was hard to find the information people needed.</p>	<p>Changes were made to all of the wording, the layout and the order to make it more accessible for everyone to read. It now follows a step by step process of how applications are considered for easier use.</p> <p>We will be developing an easy to read guide with residents to make this even more accessible.</p>
<p>People in lower bands with 'less severe' housing needs are left for long periods of time in these circumstances and may never be offered a home.</p> <p>The policy didn't work for everyone. Waiting time should be taken into account when deciding who gets a home, but so should needs. The balance wasn't right.</p>	<p>Previously, people who were in band A would always be considered first, then people in band B and then those in band C and so on, even if they had been waiting less time.</p> <p>We have changed the policy to allow us to advertise homes to each band rather than all bands. This means that although people in lower bands will have less properties advertised to them, they are only ever bidding against people in the same band with similar circumstances. So, people in band C or B will no longer be competing with people in higher bands and waiting time will be the deciding factor in being allocated a home</p>
<p>People who cause anti-social behaviour shouldn't always be offered a home.</p>	<p>We changed the criteria to make sure people who cause antisocial behaviour will not be allowed onto the housing register.</p>
<p>More family homes should be made available.</p>	<p>We have made sure that people who want to downsize go into band A, so that these larger homes can be let back to the people who need them as quickly as possible.</p>
<p>People who don't have a local connection to Ashford shouldn't be allocated a home.</p>	<p>We have extended the length of time someone needs to be in Ashford to be allowed onto the housing register to make sure that local homes can be given to local people.</p>

The feedback received has informed the new policy and approach which is designed to be clearer, fairer and more responsive to local housing needs.

Here is a summary of what has changed;

- ✓ A new Banding Structure - Simpler and more focused
- ✓ Stronger and Clearer Local Connection Rules
- ✓ New Effective Date Rules - Fairer Waiting Times
- ✓ Means Testing
- ✓ Updated Bedroom Allocation Rules
- ✓ Bidding, Shortlisting & Direct Lets - More Consistent Rules
- ✓ Stronger More Transparent Approach to Reviews
- ✓ The new policy is available on the website [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-policies](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-policies)

If you would like to help us develop the easy to read guide then do contact us on [tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk) or call **01233 330700**

## Asset Management Strategy Update

In our last edition we provided information on the new housing asset management strategy that was being developed. We received a total of 44 responses to the consultation. Here is a summary of what you told us.

Key Insights	Analysis of comments
<p>We asked residents to rank the suggested priorities. You ranked them as follows:</p> <p>Safe, well managed homes dominate Priority 1 (27 responses), confirming it as the top concern.</p> <p>Quality and comfort is most often ranked as Priority 2 (17 responses).</p> <p>Growth and provision of additional homes is spread across priorities, with notable counts in Priority 1 and Priority 3.</p> <p>Sustainability and climate resilience is rarely a top priority but is heavily ranked as Priority 5 and 6, suggesting it's seen as important but less urgent.</p> <p>Resident voice and community impact tends to cluster in mid-to-lower priorities (4-6).</p> <p>Value for money is rarely Priority 1 but appears consistently in mid-range priorities.</p>	<p>Repairs &amp; Maintenance: Frequent mentions of fixing problems, improving maintenance, and ensuring quality work.</p> <p>Energy Efficiency: Strong emphasis on insulation, double glazing, heating systems, and addressing damp/cold issues.</p> <p>Safety &amp; Accessibility: Requests for safer homes, clear pathways, and wheelchair accessibility.</p> <p>Affordability &amp; Housing Supply: Calls for more affordable housing, family homes, and fewer flats.</p> <p>Communication &amp; Engagement: Desire for better communication, consultation, and transparency in decisions.</p> <p>Community &amp; Environment: Suggestions for local contractor use, community involvement, and environmental improvements.</p>

We will provide you with an update in our next newsletter. If you would like to be involved in developing and shaping this work then do sign up to be an engaged tenant by emailing [tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.contact@ashford.gov.uk).



## Get involved in estate walkabouts

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 are welcome to 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. 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** and please let us know four days in advance.

This is because occasionally, we may need to notify you of a change at short notice (e.g. if there is a weather warning, the inspection will be re-arranged). If this happens, we will use the details in this form to contact you and let you know.



### Monday, 16 March 2026

Covering area Brookfield B and C (Brookfield Road, Lewis Court, Flaxpond Road, Forstal Green, Tournay Close, Arlington, Boxley, Clockhouse, Jemmett Road, Langholme Road, Kither Road, Banks Road, Barn Platt, Bond Road, Musgrove, Noakes Meadow, Allen Field, Barnett Field, Oak Tree Road, Little Knoll, Harper Road, Old Pond Road).

**Meeting outside the Co-op on Brookfield Court at 9:30am.**



### Monday, 30 March 2026

Covering Newtown Green.

**Meeting outside the Post Office at 20 Newtown Green at 9:30am.**



### Monday, 13 April 2026

Covering Tenterden and St Michaels.

**Meeting outside Costa on Tenterden High Street at 9:30am.**



### Monday, 27 April 2026

Covering Godfrey Walk and Hampden.

**Meeting outside the United Church on Tenterden High Street at 9:30am.**



### Monday, 11 May 2026

Covering Charing and Charing Heath.

**Meeting outside Londis at 47 The High Street at 9:30am.**

Please note these dates are subject to change so do please contact us ahead of attending

**Book in to attend by visiting [www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-engagement](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-engagement)**



# Fly-Tipping

Tenants regularly share their concerns with us regarding fly tipping in their local area and communal blocks. Fly-tipping is legally defined under Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as the illegal deposit of any waste onto land that does not have a licence or permit to accept it.




Several key factors make leaving waste in a communal area fall under this definition:

**Location, Location, Location:** A communal area, whether an internal corridor, a bin store or an external shared garden, is not a licenced waste disposal facility. Dumping waste there without the explicit, formal permission of the landowner (and the relevant environmental permits, which are unlikely for a residential communal area) constitutes an illegal act.

**Nature and Scale of Waste:** Unlike minor littering (which usually involves small items like food wrappers), fly-tipping can range from a single black bag of household rubbish to large items such as furniture, mattresses, or white goods (fridges, washing machines). Leaving any of these items in a communal area, outside of a proper bin, is considered fly-tipping.

**Intention and Responsibility:** The person who generates the waste is responsible for its proper disposal costs (such as arranging a bulky waste collection with the local council).



Fly-tipping is items found outside and items left in hallways and blocking access in communal spaces. Items left in communal spaces can be a fire hazard and can cause access problems for your neighbours and contractors.

Following a serious fly tipping incident in Great Chart, a resident has been tracked down and handed a fixed penalty notice of £1000 which has been paid. If you hire a waste contractor check whether they are licenced by contacting the environment agency on **03708 506506** or by checking online at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/access-the-public-register-for-environmental-information](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/access-the-public-register-for-environmental-information)

**Any resident can report fly-tipping directly to the council via our website by clicking on the Report button on the front page**

If you're unsure of what action to take please contact your neighbourhood housing officer to see if we can help. To find out who your housing officer is, or how to contact them, visit our webpage at: [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-officer](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-officer)

## Bin Contamination

Neighbours not using the designated bin store correctly can quickly cause bigger issues if it carries on for some time as contaminated bins won't be collected resulting in the bin store quickly becoming overfull and unsanitary.

We do find a lot of contamination in communal recycling bins. Plastic bags are not suitable for putting recycling waste into. If you do want to recycle plastic bags many supermarkets have collection points.

Continue reading for tips as to how to recycle correctly and prevent bin contamination.

# Recycling Without Contamination: Leading the Way to a Cleaner Borough

One of the main obstacles to successful recycling is contamination, which happens when people put items that can't be recycled into recycling bins.

At Ashford Borough Council, we're committed to tackling this issue head-on. Our goal is simple: make recycling easy.

## What you can recycle:

- ✓ Paper & cardboard
- ✓ Plastic bottles and containers
- ✓ Glass bottles and jars
- ✓ Metal cans and tins

Please make sure these items are clean and free from food.

## What to do with food waste?

Unavoidable food waste is collected weekly, from your food waste caddy. Separating out your food waste helps reduce the cost of disposal and creates fertilisers that are used for growing our food.

## What We're Doing to Help

We've expanded our recycling collections, including food waste to nearly all properties in the borough, including flats and apartments. We work closely with our crews, who check bins for contamination before emptying them.

## Reducing Food Waste at Home with FiveDinners

To help support healthier habits across the borough, we're pleased to introduce FiveDinners – an award-winning meal-planning platform now available free to all Ashford residents.

Created by TV chef Theo Michaels, FiveDinners helps cut food waste by giving you personalised weekly meal plans and precise shopping lists, so you only buy the ingredients you'll actually use. With hundreds of quick, healthy and affordable recipes for every diet and lifestyle, it makes dinnertime simpler while supporting healthier, low-waste living across our community.

## Top Tips for Getting It Right

- ✓ Rinse containers before recycling
- ✓ Keep recyclables loose – empty plastic bags into the bin and then reuse the bag or put in the refuse.
- ✓ Check what goes in your bin at [www.ashford.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/recycling)

## Electrical Items and Batteries

Electrical items cannot be recycled through the normal bins. Please either take them back to the shop or to the tip. Batteries can cause fires, so it's important that these are taken to the battery recycling places in the borough for recycling. [www.ashford.gov.uk/recycling-waste-and-bins](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/recycling-waste-and-bins)

## Need more advice?

Visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/recycling) for a full guide and tips.

**Together, we can keep Ashford clean, green, and leading the way in sustainable living.**



# How did we do?

## Our performance statistics

From April 2025 until December 2025



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



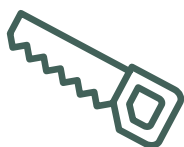
**61.4%** routine repairs completed within timescale  
target is 90%



**47.5 days**  
Average void turnaround  
target 21 days



**89.6%** Percentage of repairs calls answered  
target 90%



**340** Repairs completed per 1000 properties



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



**59.2%** tenant satisfaction



**14** complaints received per 1000 homes



**86%** complaints handled within timescale

**520**  
number of complaints

**335**  
number of repairs complaints

**40**  
number of housing options complaints

**99**  
number of neighbourhood complaints

**46**  
number of lettings complaints

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

# Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and Wave 3 update

Wave 3 of our Social Housing Decarbonisation Project is underway with Phase 1 works commencing in Little Chequers. The first homes (mainly bungalows) have had cavity wall insulation extracted along with large amounts of debris.

Scaffolding has now been erected to give safe working access to the roofs for assessment prior to the installation of solar panels. Installation of windows and doors has also begun.

Phase 2 consists of another 22 homes in Little Chequers and will follow shortly.

Phase 3 will commence in mid-April and includes the last homes included in this program in Little Chequers, Abbots Walk and Churchfield Way.

All properties are required to have a check for asbestos before any works can commence. If you have not yet had a call or visit from Riverside Environmental to assess your home then please get in touch with us by emailing us using the address at the bottom of this page. All the planned works in phase 1 and 2 need to be completed before April to meet funding criteria which means we must carry out asbestos checks as soon as possible otherwise these works may not be completed within this project.

The flats in Little Chequers are different and although they are not due any energy efficiency measures now, the council is looking at how energy efficiency measures can be delivered at a later date.

With the new financial year starting in April, looking ahead we will see delivery of at least 44 homes currently heated by oil come off fossil oil as their heat source, being powered by clean energy supported with solar panels. A further 44 homes on the gas grid are planned for the latter half of the year. The next year's programme of works will be published on the council's new Wave 3 webpage [www.ashford.gov.uk/wave3](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/wave3)



If you have questions or concerns about upcoming works, contact us by emailing [shfwave3@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:shfwave3@ashford.gov.uk)

## Tenants Contents Insurance Scheme

All tenants should have contents insurance to protect belongings against theft, fire, vandalism, burst pipes, and other household risks. We have partnered with a company called Thistle Tenant Risks who offer insurance specifically for social housing tenants called the Crystal Insurance Scheme.

They offer flexible payment options, do not perform credit checks and do not ask a baffling array of questions.

They can be contacted on 0345 450 7296 or on their website [www.crystalinsurance.co.uk](http://www.crystalinsurance.co.uk)

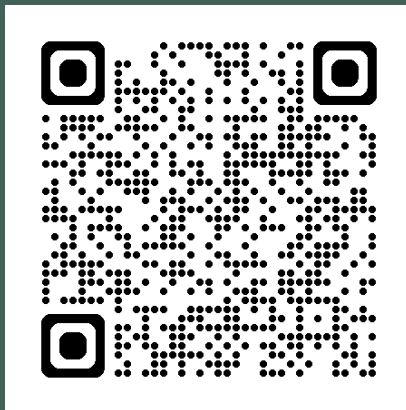
The cost from 2026 for £10,000 standard cover will cost £7.96 per month.



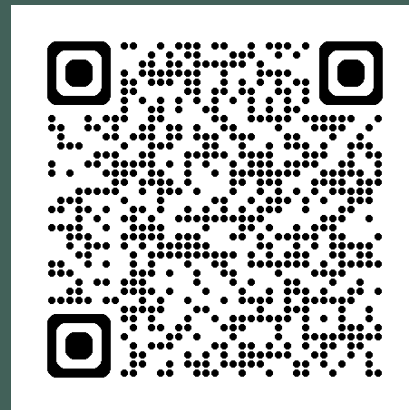
## Fire Safety in your home

Following a number of recent home fires in the borough we wanted to offer you some tips on how to stay fire safe in your flat or home.

These short films are available on Ashford Borough Council's YouTube channel. You can access them directly by scanning the QR code.



Let's Stay Fire Safe in communal areas



Let's Stay Fire Safe in our homes

## Kent Fire and Rescue Service

You may be eligible for a free home safety check from one of KFRS firefighters or Safe and Well Officers especially if you have a longterm health condition, dementia, a young family, are an older person, or a smoker.

You can complete a referral form online at [www.kent.fire-uk.org/hfsv](http://www.kent.fire-uk.org/hfsv) or by calling 0800 923 7000

## 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

# Meet the Team - General Maintenance Operatives

Our incredible team of operatives provide an invaluable service to the neighbourhood housing team carrying out small maintenance tasks and clearance works on our estates, properties and independent living schemes under the instruction of neighbourhood housing officers and independent living officers. Typical tasks include cutting back overgrown shrubs and weeds in shared landscapes and pathways and removing items that have been left in communal blocks. For those that have benefited from their service we are sure you will have been impressed by their cheery nature and willingness to go over and above to help our tenants.



## Independent Living Schemes - Baxendale Court Christmas Giving Appeal

The initiative began in November, when a resident made a suggestion to give back to the community during the festive season. From this, the Baxendale Court Christmas Giving Appeal was born. Bright City Church was chosen in memory of a late resident who volunteered there for over 15 years.

Throughout November and into early December, residents and visitors of Baxendale generously donated a wide range of items. Contributions included cupboard essentials, Christmas treats and snacks, hygiene essentials, as well as toys and gifts for children, all to support individuals and families during the festive season & beyond.

The appeal quickly grew beyond Baxendale itself. Other schemes, including Gerlach House, Danemore, Money Penny, and Luckley House, also joined in and contributed to this appeal. In total, nine large crates of essential items were collected and delivered to Bright City Church on Monday 15 December.

As a scheme, we were extremely pleased with the response and the generosity shown by everyone involved. Due to the success of the appeal, we will be looking to run another Christmas Giving Appeal again in 2026



## Oakleigh House

Work has started on creating 59 high-quality homes for older people and adults with learning disabilities on the site of a former sheltered housing scheme in South Ashford.

The old Oakleigh House in Watercress Lane was demolished in 2023 with the site cleared ready for work to start on building a new scheme along the lines of the successful independent living developments at nearby Farrow Court and Danemore in Tenterden.

This independent living scheme for older people will comprise 54 flats with a communal lounge area, a covered terrace with views onto the courtyard, a hair salon, a meeting room, mobility scooter parking and an office.

The housing for adults with learning disabilities consists of five apartments.

The developments will be arranged around two open courtyards with the main entrances located near the junction of Watercress Lane, Cross Stile and on Beaver Lane.



ABC Leader Cllr Noel Ovenden and ward members Kate Leavey and Lyn Suddards with Jenner Director Dean Elvidge (right) at the groundbreaking ceremony at the Oakleigh House site



## Connect to Work

### What is Connect to Work?

Connect to Work is a voluntary employment support programme launched as part of the UK Government's Get Britain Working strategy. It's designed to help individuals who face barriers to employment such as long-term health conditions, disabilities, or extended periods of unemployment find and stay in meaningful work.

The programme is co-ordinated by Kent County Council and delivered by The Education People and offers up to 12 months of personalised, one-to-one support, tailored to each person's needs.

### Why It Matters?

The Ashford borough has above average rates of people who are economically inactive, that's residents aged 16-64 who aren't working for various reasons such as long-term sickness or caring responsibilities.

### How do I take part?

Visit [www.kent.gov.uk/connecttowork](http://www.kent.gov.uk/connecttowork)

Email [ses@theeducationpeople.org](mailto:ses@theeducationpeople.org)

Telephone 03301 651 135



# Stay Active in Ashford - Supported by Your Council

At Ashford Borough Council, we're dedicated to helping residents live healthier, happier lives. Being active isn't just about fitness — it's about wellbeing, community and enjoying the fantastic facilities right across our borough.

## Your Places to Get Moving

Ashford is home to award-winning leisure centres, beautiful green spaces and community hubs designed to help everyone stay active in a way that suits them. Whether you're after a quick gym session, a family swim or a scenic walk, there's something for everyone.

### The Stour Centre

Right in the heart of Ashford, the Stour Centre offers a modern gym, a great range of group exercise classes and a bright, welcoming swimming pool for all ages and abilities.

### Julie Rose Stadium & Conningbrook Lakes

Perfect for runners and athletics fans, the stadium offers top-class track and field facilities, a gym and regular community events. Just next door, Conningbrook Lakes provides scenic walking routes with stunning views.

### Tenterden Leisure Centre

Currently undergoing a major refurbishment, the centre will soon offer improved swimming, fitness and family activity spaces — making it even easier to stay active in Tenterden.



### Victoria Park

Our Green Flag award-winning park is the ideal place for walking, cycling, playing or simply enjoying open space in the centre of Ashford.

These spaces aren't just places to work out — they're part of our long-term commitment to supporting health, wellbeing and community life across the borough.

### Discounts for Low-Income Households

If you're on a low income, you may be eligible for discounted access at our leisure centres. Find out more on the Freedom Leisure website - [www.freedom-leisure.co.uk](http://www.freedom-leisure.co.uk)

### Cycle Ashford – Explore on Two Wheels

Cycle Ashford encourages residents to get out and discover local routes, enjoy the outdoors and choose greener ways to travel. Whether you're cycling to work, going for a leisurely ride or exploring with the family, it's

a fun and healthy way to move more.

The campaign also includes an interactive route planner, offering personalised options such as fastest, quietest, balanced, e-bike and walking routes. Find out more here - [www.cycleashford.org.uk](http://www.cycleashford.org.uk)

### Why Moving Matters

Being active boosts mood, improves long-term health and increases energy — and it doesn't have to mean big changes. A walk to the shops, a family swim or cycling to work all add up.

Let's make Ashford a place where everyone can thrive — one step, pedal or swim at a time.



## Social Value news - The Window Company

When The Window Company (Contracts) was awarded Ashford Borough Council's window and door replacement contract in 2024, the specialist commercial installer committed to supporting our social value programme – and it is being true to its word.

Two brothers have been recruited to work on the contract via a Back to Work programme run in the Stanhope area, and both are receiving training and mentoring to help them establish successful careers in construction. Josh Twyman, now aged 18, was the first to be offered a trainee role and he impressed the team so much with his hard work and eagerness to learn that they were only too willing to offer a similar opportunity to his younger brother Zach. The Window Company (Contracts)' five-year agreement with ABC includes window and door replacement in many of the properties owned and managed by us.



In the first year, nearly 500 properties have had new windows and doors fitted. More info at [www.thewinco.co.uk](http://www.thewinco.co.uk)

## What's On in Ashford

One of the best platforms for keeping informed on activities is the Love Ashford Website [www.loveashford.com](http://www.loveashford.com) In addition to events and news the website also provides details on shopping, food and drink, days out and local business.

You can also find out what great events are happening at Victoria Park in Ashford by visiting the webpage: [www.victoriaparkashford.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.victoriaparkashford.co.uk/whats-on)

## Never Miss A Thing

**Housing Surgery:** Meet your housing officer face-to-face. Drop in from 9:30 until 11:30am on Wednesday, 4 March 2026 at our offices in International House, Dover Place, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1HU

**Eat Well Spend Less, Wellbeing Roadshow:** Drop in from 10am until 4pm on Wednesday, 11 March 2026 at the Repton Connect Community Centre, Repton Avenue, Ashford, TN23 3RX

**Housing Surgery:** Meet your housing officer face-to-face. Drop in from 10am until 12pm on Wednesday, 18 March 2026 at our Independent Living Scheme, Danemore, Beachy Path, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6RT

**Housing Surgery:** Meet your housing officer face-to-face. Drop in from 9:30 until 11:30am on Wednesday, 1 April 2026 at our offices in International House, Dover Place, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1HU

**Housing Surgery:** Meet your housing officer face-to-face. Drop in from 10am until 12pm on Wednesday, 15 April 2026 at our Independent Living Scheme, Danemore, Beachy Path, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6RT

## 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 330573