

# Open Door, Spring 2025

## For the Tenants & Leaseholders of Cambridge City Council



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## Editorial

Welcome to this Spring edition of *Open Door*.

Our annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey is currently running, and will close on March 29th. Your answers will tell us specific things that we can improve for you across 2025. So please do respond before it closes. There are also three £100 shopping vouchers to be won.

In this edition there are examples from the Action Plan that we drew from last year's Survey, to get specific, dead-lined improvements made for you based on your feedback. So the Survey really does matter for life on your estates. An interview with one of your elected resident representatives shows how your reps help to oversee these cycles of improvement.

As part of our series helping you to make the most of our services, this edition shows the environmental services on your estates - who provides them, how to contact them, and the standards you can expect. We also show you examples of complaints received across our housing services, and how we use them to improve things for you.

The safety of your homes and estates is of central importance to us. This edition reminds you how to recognise and report anti-social behaviour. There is important advice from our new Fire Safety Policy, including on the dangers to avoid when recharging batteries. And we show how to ensure water safety in your home, avoiding the risk of Legionella disease.

Our other top priority is maintaining your homes well for the future. An article below will explain which repairs are your responsibility, as opposed to those the Council is responsible for. In this edition we also show you our planned maintenance programme for the year ahead. And we are proud to introduce our newly refurbished sheltered scheme at Wulfstan Way.

For your own tenancy, this edition shows how you could potentially exchange your home with another social housing tenant, either in Cambridge or around the country. And we check to ensure you've told us who is your chosen Next of Kin - important information for ensuring that a tenant's wishes are respected if they are incapacitated, and at the end of their life.

On a brighter note, the article below from our Community Development teams show you free activities for the under 5's, to support their development and wellbeing. And they offer to help you organise street play events or celebrations in your neighbourhood this summer.

Please do continue to email us your feedback or suggestions for articles at [opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk)

With best wishes,

Samantha Shimmon, Assistant Director for Housing & Homelessness

### **Why not receive Open Door by email instead of on paper?**

It's easy to read on any device with wifi, saving on paper and carbon. To receive it by email instead of post, visit <https://camcit.co/opendooremail>

A Residents' Open Door Editorial Panel helps to edit the content of every edition. They ensure that Open Door continues to reflect residents' needs and interests. To get involved, please email [opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk)

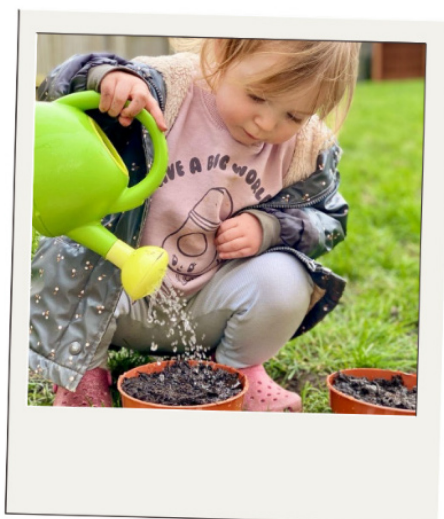
### **Free activities for Cambridge under-5's**

Fifty Things To Do Before You're 5 is an app that gives families free or low-cost, fun ideas for local play and learning with your child in Cambridge. It's a daily inspiration for simple, educational activities that are loved by children from birth to age 5.

Done at home, in the park or at local places and events, these activities are designed to help your child meet important learning goals, based on medical and educational research. These are proven ways to give your child a great start in life.

Enjoying the right activities in the first five years has been shown to lay the foundation for learning, health and wellbeing in adult life. It is proven to increase a child's life chances and reduce inequalities. Plus, these are fun, easy things that keep your child occupied!

For information visit [www.50thingstodo.org](http://www.50thingstodo.org)



## Street Play

Want to host a celebration or opportunity to play on your street this year? The Council's Community Development team can support you to bring your neighbours together in a safe and playful way!

We can help you get permission to close a road if needed, lend you road closure signs, and supply chalk for the street art! Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/play-streets](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/play-streets)

Many of us have fond memories of playing outside when we were young. Sadly, this is the exception, not the norm, for children today.

Only one in four now play outside regularly. Traffic, '*No ball games*' signs, fear of being told off by neighbours - these all restrict children's ability to play freely on their doorsteps. But play is intrinsic to children's development and mental health, so the trend needs to change.

Want to host some play or a celebration on your street? If you're new to this, the Council's Community Development team can support you with the practicalities.

For more information, visit [cambridge.gov.uk/play-streets](http://cambridge.gov.uk/play-streets)

## The city's first Youth Assembly

As part of the City Council's new Youth Strategy, the city's first Youth Assembly took place in November. Primary and sixth-form students first spent six months gathering feedback from their peers. Then they came together in a Youth Assembly to tell the Council their concerns, and how we can help address them. Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/youth-assembly](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/youth-assembly) to see a short film of their findings and views.

The youngsters described four main needs:

- safe spaces and activities

- green spaces
- work experience and part-time work
- better local bus services

A board of local Councils, businesses and charities are supporting them to get action on these requests. For more information, email [CommunityDevelopment@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:CommunityDevelopment@cambridge.gov.uk)

### **Survey closing March 29th**

Since late January, an independent company, Acuity, has been doing a satisfaction survey with all the City Council's tenants. It will finish on March 29th. So don't be left out - make sure to give your feedback before the closing date. Plus, there are three £100 vouchers to be won!

This is your chance to let us know what you think of the landlord services you have received over the past year. And what exactly you want to see improved in the year ahead... An article below shows you the 'You Said It, We Did It' Improvement Plan that is being implemented each year based on your survey feedback.

You are asked to do the survey either:

- online - via an email link to the survey
- or by post - you'll receive the survey with a covering letter from the Council, and a reply-paid envelope for sending it back
- or by phone: an interviewer from the survey company, Acuity, may phone you to do the survey in 10 minutes over the phone

Your response to the survey is strictly confidential, and can be totally anonymous if you wish.

The national Social Housing Regulator requires social landlords to do this survey annually, with specific questions called the 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures'.

Landlords must now publish the results to their tenants, and must also report them back to the Regulator, for ongoing monitoring of the landlord's performance.

The summer edition of Open Door will bring you the results, and the start of the Improvement Action Plan that will be derived from them. You'll also be able to read a detailed report on the survey results at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement)

If you have any queries about the survey, please phone the Council at 01223-457000 and ask for Housing Management; or phone Heather Metivier of survey company Acuity at 01273-287114. They'll be happy to help.

### **Getting to know you better**

Your feedback in satisfaction surveys regularly tells us that you want to see a better cycle of two-way communication between you and the Council.

On one side, you want a better quality of communication coming out from the the Council to you about the things that matter most to you, such as the safety of your home, and your home's repairs and maintenance...

On the other side, you also want the Council to listen more closely to who you are, and what you are telling us that you need. And you want to see us act on what you have told us. In our annual 'You Said It, We Did It' Action Plan (details in one of the articles below), you will see that happening.

But importantly, a third of our council tenants don't yet consider that the Council treats all tenants 'fairly and with respect'. This is especially important around 'protected characteristics', such as age, race, gender and disability, which are legally protected from discrimination.



We have a duty to better understand the diverse needs of our tenants, including those arising from 'protected characteristics', language barriers, and any additional support needs that a tenant may have.

The law enshrines nine of these protected characteristics, to ensure that residents cannot be discriminated against because of them. Along with those just listed, they include further characteristics such as religion, marital status, and maternity.

So the Council will now take action to measurably increase, year on year, our understanding of:

- exactly who our tenants are (your age, gender, ethnicity, any disabilities you may have, etc.)
- any vulnerabilities or needs you have as an individual
- the diversity of our tenant population: any 'protected characteristics' you have as an individual, which could leave you prone to discrimination
- how you would prefer us to communicate with you

This richer understanding of your needs will enable us to better tailor our services for you, and to signpost you towards services and supports that you may need or be eligible for, that you are not yet receiving.

This more personal approach will hopefully enable all our tenants to feel that, as outlined in the Housing Regulator's consumer standards, we treat you 'fairly and with respect'.

### **Resident reps oversee the communication loop**

Cambridge City Council tenants and leaseholders are represented at the heart of the Council by four tenant representatives and one leaseholder representative.

They are tenants Justyna Ulman-Jaworska, Diana Minns, Harmony Birch, Mandy Powell-Hardy and leaseholder Diane Best.

Every four years, you elect these resident roles to sit on the Council's Housing Scrutiny Committee. On the Committee, they debate and vote on the big decisions about your housing, alongside City Councillors.

Your elected resident reps also play an important role in helping to maintain and improve standards in your housing service. They help ensure that the interests of the wider resident population on council estates are kept at the heart of decision-making.

Importantly, they also monitor and oversee detailed performance information about services, like the ratings shown in this edition. From the estates, they receive feedback from Resident Inspectors who monitor the quality of work done out there on homes and estates. And internally, at the management level, they scrutinise performance information on every service area that affects your housing and estate across the year.

This also includes overseeing both your annual tenant satisfaction surveys, and the resulting 'You Said It, We Did It' improvement plans that are described here on these pages.

To contact your resident representatives at any time, please email [hsc.residents@gmail.com](mailto:hsc.residents@gmail.com) or phone 01223-458323 to leave them a message. Or have a look online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-scrutiny-committee-elected-tenant-and-leaseholder-representatives](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-scrutiny-committee-elected-tenant-and-leaseholder-representatives)

And see the interview in an article below with Harmony, who lives at one of our sheltered schemes. She describes her journey from first moving into her sheltered flat to now voting alongside City Councillors on the high-level decisions about the city's council housing.

## **Improvement Plan: You Said It, We Did It**

Each year, the Council derives a 'You Said It, We Did It' Action Plan from your satisfaction survey feedback, to improve the services that you were less satisfied with. In last year's survey you told us that your top priorities were:

- a well maintained home
- that the Council be easy to deal with
- a home that is safe
- repairs on your home
- that the Council listens to and acts on your concerns

Through the Action Plan, service managers made specific, dead-lined improvements to the services you wanted improved. Across the year they use Open Door to bring you information on specific areas that they are improving.

Repairs: For instance, last year 71% of you were satisfied with the time it took to complete your most recent repair.

To boost that further, the Council is creating a new Repairs & Planned Maintenance Policy to ensure consistency across all contractors, and to intervene quickly if repairs are delayed beyond expected timescales.

Maintenance: Only 64% of you were satisfied that your home is being well maintained. So this edition brings you an overview of our planned maintenance programme for the year ahead. We are also doing a review of all appointments we have missed for repairs and planned maintenance, to spot any trends and prevent it happening again.

Safety: 67% of you were satisfied that your home is safe. But to reassure you further, Open Door is now running an ongoing series about the safety inspections and safety

works being done on tenants' homes. This edition continues our series on aspects of our upgraded Fire Safety Policy. The Council is also sending new fire safety information to all residents in its flat blocks. We also bring you important guidance for keeping the water supply in your home safe from contamination.

Anti-social behaviour: In last year's survey, only 48% of respondents were satisfied with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour. So this edition starts a series of articles explaining:

- how the Council tackles anti-social behaviour on estates
- how you can make best use of this service
- improvements that we have been making to it
- the limits of what the Council can do about anti-social behaviour

Grounds maintenance: In last year's survey, 60% of residents were satisfied that the landlord keeps estates' communal areas clean and well maintained. This edition brings you a feature on our grounds maintenance service: who provides it, how to contact them, and the standards of service you can expect.

Respect: 66% felt that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect. But we want to drive that figure up significantly. As required by the Social Housing Regulator, we will improve the quality of information that we have about our tenants' needs and diversity, and how you want us to communicate with you. Details are in the 'Getting to know you better' article further below.

### **The inside story on some performance ratings**

Re-lets (meeting their 45 day target): A change in the procedure for reletting vacated sheltered homes has reduced the time spent on short-listing applicants. Managers are now incorporating this improvement into an overall review of re-letting homes.

Estate services (85.5% were satisfied): This includes grounds maintenance and cleaning of communal areas. For the previous six months, residents' satisfaction was well above the 90% target. But recent loss of staff and a machine breakdown led to lower standards, with resident satisfaction dropping 4.5% below the target. It is expected that resident satisfaction will be back up above the 90% target in the next few months.

Planned maintenance (96.1% were satisfied): This figure is the average across three contractors who do cycles of planned maintenance work on the Council's homes. These are long-term rolling programmes that replace aspects of a home such as boilers, doors, roofing and windows.

### **An easy Complaints Process**

If you are ever unhappy with a service or response from your council landlord, please try first to resolve it with the staff involved. But if you are still unhappy with our service, please use our simple Complaints Process, so we can put things right for you. It's quick and easy to make an official complaint, either on our website at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions) or by phoning us at 01223-457000 and asking for Complaints.

You'll just need to tell us...

- your name, contact details and the details of your complaint
- what you would like us to do to put things right
- whether you have raised this issue with us before and if so, who was dealing with it

We will tell you who is dealing with your complaint, and we will aim to give you a response within 10 working days. If we need longer, we will say why.

If you are ever unhappy with the final outcome of a formal complaint to us, you could then take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. They are an independent, impartial service aiming to improve residents' lives and landlords' services by investigating unresolved complaints. For support in using them, please visit <https://socialhousingcomplaints.campaign.gov.uk>

### **The inside story on recent complaints**

In the three months from October to December 2024, your housing service received 197 complaints from customers in all. The service areas receiving the most complaints were Repairs (63), Housing Officers' teams (25), and Planned Maintenance Works (24).

But be aware that these are also the service areas that have by far the highest number of in-depth interactions with residents, making thousands of interventions on, or in relation to, residents' homes during that period.

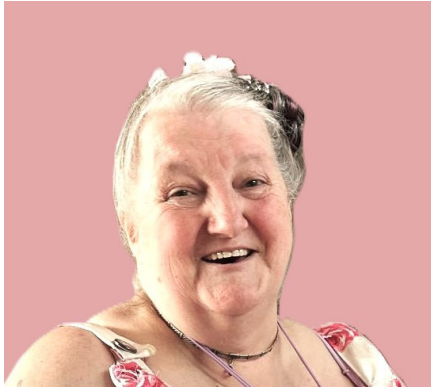
Of the 197 complaints received in the last three months of the year, 107 had been fully resolved by the end of December. Twenty-eight complaints were 'upheld', meaning that the Council discovered and recognised that, in that case, the complainant had indeed received a poor or inadequate service or response.

In terms of the time it took the Council to resolve the 107 complaints, 86.8% were resolved within the intended time of 10 working days. This was a significant improvement, compared to the 62.1% that were being resolved within the target time back in Spring 2024.

If unhappy with the Council's response to a complaint, customers can escalate it to 'Stage 2'. Escalated cases tend to be more complex, and can require more time to resolve. In the three months up to December 2024, only 57.1% of these Stage 2 complaints were resolved within the target time of 10 working days.

## Resident rep interview

“Hi, my name is Harmony and I am a tenant rep on the Council's Housing Scrutiny Committee.



When I first got the opportunity to move into sheltered housing I thought it would be a good idea, especially as some of my health conditions are progressive.

I firmly believe in 'Being the Change' that you want to see, and in giving back to my community. I had worked as a book-keeper and could handle financial records. So I stepped up and got involved in organising activities at my scheme. With others, we arrange craft mornings, film evenings, a makeover of the neglected back garden, and other social activities.

At first I was a little intimidated at the idea of being a tenant rep on the Housing Scrutiny Committee. But I felt that as a disabled person in sheltered housing, I could bring a viewpoint that is often overlooked. For decision-making, these roles give the Council unique access to the voices of those actually living in council housing. Resident reps see things that Councillors and others may overlook.

For instance, I knew that there was a great deal of confusion among our sheltered tenants about fire safety. But by dialoguing, this confusion has now been cleared up. And tenants have been issued with new fire information to put on the inside of their front doors.

My role has also given me much better insight into how decisions are made, and how democracy works at city level. That enables me to explain things more clearly to other tenants, and to signpost them effectively when they have issues.

So I am glad I came forward for the role. I do feel more empowered and involved. But I think it is important that more tenants get involved in their housing service and the Council. Cambridge City Council provides a real variety of convenient ways to do so, from tenant satisfaction surveys to being a Resident Inspector or an 'Armchair Reviewer'...

To have your say, why not contact the resident involvement team at email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-458323? Or talk to me or any of the other tenant reps and we will happily point you in the right direction."

### **Influencing 40 services**

Over the past year, residents on the city's council estates have measurably influenced decisions in over 40 council service areas that affect their housing. At the high, strategic level, services that were influenced in this way by your resident representatives included:

- planning the annual budget of the Housing Service
- the city's Housing Strategy
- getting social housing and affordable homes included in new housing developments
- the Council's own programme for building new council homes in the city
- redevelopment of existing council estates, to bring them up to modern standards
- programmes to boost biodiversity on council estates and land



Meanwhile, day to day out on your council estates, residents also actively influenced services like:

- monitoring the quality of repairs, maintenance, and work done on vacated homes
- estate services like communal cleaning, window-cleaning and grass-cutting
- local projects that improved facilities and environments on estates
- selecting and overseeing contractors who do programmes of maintenance work on council homes

Whether a service is delivered by the Council or by its contractors, resident representatives monitor how well each service is performing. They also review complaints about services, to see how the Council has responded with improvements.

### **Have your say**

Are you interested in helping to monitor the quality of a particular service area, or work done on your own estate?

To have your say in a way that suits you and your lifestyle, please email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-458323.

### **Your repair responsibilities**

As explained in your Tenancy Agreement, the home repairs listed below are your own responsibility. It is important not to call the Council for them. So please check this list carefully before requesting a repair. If you are responsible for it but call the Council out, you could be charged a callout fee.

Tenant's responsibilities:

- √ repairing any fixture or fitting put in by you or a previous tenant
- √ internal doors and associated fixtures and fittings
- √ decoration of the inside of your home
- √ replacing fuses and light bulbs
- √ changing tap washers
- √ shelves (unless part of the structure)
- √ replacing broken toilet seats
- √ replacing plugs and chains on sinks and baths
- √ replacing shower curtains
- √ clearing blockages to baths, basins and toilets
- √ internal plaster work, including repairing cracks
- √ getting rid of infestations such as ants, wasps, bees, rats, mice, etc.
- √ gaining entry to your property if you are locked out
- √ replacement locks if your keys are lost or stolen
- √ replacing gate fittings (unless it's a communal gate)
- √ repairing or replacing washing lines (unless they are communal)
- √ repairing back garden paths
- √ clearing drains and gullies

√ side gates, and fencing that is not on the boundary of the property

√ TV aerials

√ chimney sweeping (if you use solid fuel)

For more information, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-home-repairs](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-home-repairs)

For help with damp or mould in your home, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/reducing-damp-in-your-home](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/reducing-damp-in-your-home) or phone 01223-457000 and ask for Repairs.

**Don't be silent - request your repair:**

- log on to your Housing Account at <https://housing.cambridge.gov.uk/housing/www/dashboard>
- or phone 01223-457000 and ask for Repairs
- outside office hours, phone the Out-of-Hours emergency line at 0300-303-8389

We're here to help. We want you to have a safe, comfortable home. If a repair is needed, please do report it as soon as possible. Otherwise things can worsen and even affect those living around you.



## Repair appointment times

A survey in a recent edition of Open Door sought your views on our repairs appointment times. Fifty-five tenants and leaseholders responded, which is a small proportion. But they consistently rated our current appointments service with an average score of 4.18 out of 5.

Respondents also strongly requested more flexibility and predictability in repair appointments. The key results of the survey were:

- Current appointment times: 27% found current appointment times unsuitable, mainly due to conflicts with employment and school runs.
- Saturday appointments (not currently offered): 64% expressed a strong preference for Saturday appointments, citing work and childcare as their main reasons.
- Extending repair appointments to 6pm on weekdays (currently offered only until 4pm): 65% of respondents felt this would be helpful, again citing work and childcare as their reasons, as well as preferring to have more choice.
- Time slot preferences: 100% had a strong preference for more specific appointment times (e.g. 2-hour windows) instead of the current broad 'Morning' or 'Afternoon' slots.

We thank the respondents for their time, and will review their feedback in more detail to improve our services. Any changes to our repairs service or appointment times will be communicated to residents through Open Door and our other usual channels.

Meanwhile, in this survey four lucky respondents won LoveToShop Vouchers, which we delivered to them just in time for Christmas. The lucky winners, picked at random by Executive Councillor for Housing Gerri Bird, were:

1st: £200 - Amy from Trumpington

2nd: £100 - Beata from Chesterton

3rd: £50 - Madiha from Kings Hedges

4th: £50 - Kiri from Fen Ditton

### **Caring for your estates**

Our estates services look after the communal parts of estates' buildings, equipment and environment. They:

- provide caretaking services
- clean buildings' communal areas, including windows
- maintain communal electrics, lighting and door-entry systems
- maintain lifts, fire-safety equipment and communal TV aerial systems
- keep grounds tidy, including cutting grass and maintaining plant beds
- clean streets within the estate

These services are provided by both the Council and external contractors. Standards are monitored by the Council and by volunteer residents. Our Caretaking and Cleaning Standards are set by the national agency Housemark.

We also do 'Walkabouts' with residents and Councillors to spot improvements needed. The Council's Estate Champion manages estate caretakers, coordinates feedback to contractors, and implements projects to improve estates.

## **Building cleaning**

We clean buildings' communal areas weekly. Communal windows are cleaned every April, August and December, on estates that pay a service charge for this service. To report any problems:

- with building cleaning, email [cs@goshenmultiservices.com](mailto:cs@goshenmultiservices.com) or phone 07542-826553
- with window cleaning, email [helpdesk@hispecservices.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@hispecservices.co.uk)

## **Grounds maintenance**

We usually cut grass from April to September, but we do so later or earlier as needed. We tidy and replant plant beds in February, March, October and November. We trim hedges if needed in early Spring and late Summer, but avoid April to August to protect nesting birds.

We clear fallen leaves from November to December. We clean estates' car parks and forecourts twice a year, and drains in November. We spread or provide grit when needed to keep estates' roads and paths safe. We maintain the trees on our estates along with those around the city.

To quickly report online an overgrown area or a fallen branch on your estate, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-housing-estate-management](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-housing-estate-management)

To report other problems with grounds maintenance or street cleaning, email [streets&openspacesoperations@ cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:streets&openspacesoperations@cambridge.gov.uk)

## **Neighbourhood Clean-up Events**

We hold regular neighbourhood clean-up events at our estates, with skips provided for residents to clear out their homes and gardens. The Council will deliver a leaflet to your door with details before the event comes to your neighbourhood.

For more information, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/neighbourhood-clean-up-events](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/neighbourhood-clean-up-events), email [housing.officer@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:housing.officer@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-457000.

## **Residents monitor work on estates**

Why not become a local Resident Inspector for your own estate or neighbourhood? We'll show you how to easily submit our online Estate Benchmarking Form to give us feedback about the standards of our grounds maintenance on your estate, and get them improved if needed. To get started, just email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-458323.

## **Council invests in maintaining your home**

The City Council currently has a contract with Foster Property Management Ltd for doing the cycles of planned maintenance work that are needed on our council homes and estates. That contract will come to an end in September 2025.

The Council is now doing a tendering process to select a contractor for the ensuing five years. Tenders will be evaluated and awarded in 2025 so that the work of the new contract can start on 1st April 2026.

Informing and involving residents: Your tenant and leaseholder representatives are being involved in this process. Your elected resident representatives on the Housing Scrutiny Committee will debate and vote on the appointing of the new contract.

And volunteer resident representatives on the Council's Residents' & Officers' Asset Management Group will also be involved as fully as possible when we are reviewing the specifications for the contract.

Resident representatives will also be invited to be involved in the process of selecting among applicants, to award the contract.

A formal consultation process will take place with leaseholders. And both tenants and leaseholders will be informed about the new contract in a future edition of Open Door. The programme of works that the new contractor will implement will be similar to the current programme. It will include, where needed, work on:

- replacement doors and windows
- external and internal insulation works
- external and internal structural works
- external and internal painting and repairs
- re-roofing works, including roof structure works
- rainwater goods, fascias and soffits, and chimney works
- internal and external finishes
- fencing
- external hard and soft landscaping works, including paving and resurfacing
- improvements to garages
- removal of asbestos

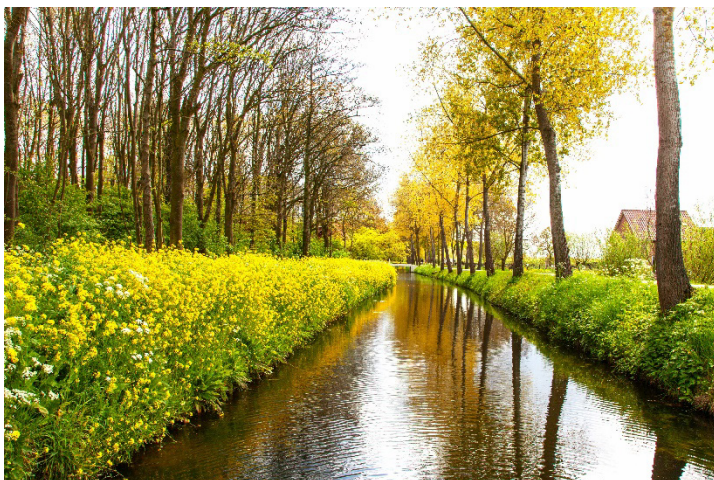
Improvement works to internal and external communal areas will include:



- balconies, walkways, handrails
- lighting
- electrical works
- works issuing from safety inspections
- installation and maintenance of renewable energy installations
- small new building extensions
- refurbishment projects
- structural works

This is part of our series of articles helping you to understand and make the best use of your repairs and maintenance service.

The next edition of Open Door will bring you a feature explaining the difference between our 'responsive' repairs service that you can request whenever needed - and those repairs that are part of the larger maintenance programme above that rolls through whole estates on a pre-planned schedule.



## Recognise and report anti-social behaviour

When surveyed, over 50% of people say 'More needs to be done' to tackle anti-social behaviour. Yet 57% of people who either experience or witness anti-social behaviour don't report it!

To protect us all - both as individuals and communities - this needs to change. Enduring anti-social behaviour is bad for our health and bad for the community. So please have a look at the six kinds of anti-social behaviour listed here:

Being aggressive or using threatening language

Intimidation or harassment

Graffiti

Noise from neighbours, including music or shouting, that causes a disturbance

Vandalism and damage to property or environment

Misuse of an area

Do you recognise any of them as happening on your estate? The Council doesn't tolerate any of these forms of anti-social behaviour on our estates. So please do contact the Council to report any that you see, hear or experience.

To report anti-social behaviour on your estate, phone the City Council at 01223-457950 or email [asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk)

But if a crime is being committed or someone is in immediate danger, always call the police at:

- 101 for non-emergencies
- 999 for emergencies

- email [www.cambs.police.uk](mailto:www.cambs.police.uk)

## **Is your home's water supply always safe?**

The City Council is fully committed to the health and safety of our tenants. We take all necessary action against the risk of harm in the home. As your landlord, we have a legal duty to prevent or control the risk of water-borne diseases, which can be very serious.

Unfortunately, both the hot and cold water systems in any home can provide an environment where Legionella bacteria can grow. Legionnaires' Disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia.

It can be caused by inhaling small droplets of contaminated water. But it is easily preventable. Follow the guidelines below to minimise risk in your home.

**Flowing at correct temperatures:** Above all, hot water in the system must be kept hot enough, and cold water cold enough. And water must be kept circulating, not left standing in the system for long periods of time.

You must tell the Council if your boiler or hot water tank are not working properly, particularly if water isn't flowing hot enough. It should flow at 50°C after running for a minute. Never interfere with settings on your boiler or hot water system. Hot water should be set at 60°C.

Also tell us if the cold water runs warm after you run off any water accumulated in the pipes. It should not be above 20°C. And tell us if there is debris or discolouration in the water.

**Keeping rarely used outlets safe:** If a shower is only used occasionally, run it for at least 2 minutes weekly on the hottest setting. Do this on each different spray setting. Preferably, remove the showerhead from the hose to avoid aerosol droplets. Otherwise, cover the showerhead with a towel or plastic bag and put it down in the

shower tray or bath while flushing it. Stay back from any spray released. Descale and disinfect all shower heads at least every 3 months.

Periodically run water through all outlets that are used infrequently. If a secondary toilet or bathroom is not used very often, run water through both hand basin taps, the toilet and shower periodically - and certainly before anyone might be using them.

Returning from holidays or absence: On returning, turn on taps in all basins, baths and showers, and flush all toilets. Run water from both hot and cold taps for five minutes. If you have a single mixer tap, run water at its hottest setting for five minutes. Then turn the setting to cold only, and run for a further five minutes.

The water should be run slowly to avoid spray for the first minute, and can then be run faster for four minutes more. When flushing showerheads, cover them in the way described earlier, to avoid inhaling spray.

Hot water should always be set above 45°C to prevent bacteria breeding in your tank. Each time water is heated, it should prevent Legionella bacteria breeding. Raising the temperature of your hot water system to 60°C for an hour and then flushing your hot water taps will ensure any bacteria will be killed off.

Extra warning: Be aware of scalding risk during flushing of any hot water outlet. Never leave it unattended.

For more information, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-safety-compliance](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-safety-compliance) If you have any concerns phone the Council at 01223-457000 and ask for Repairs, or email [compliance@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:compliance@cambridge.gov.uk) or [housing.officer@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:housing.officer@cambridge.gov.uk)

### **New fire safety policy**

The Council has a strict zero-tolerance policy against items left in communal areas on estates. Belongings or rubbish must never be left in communal areas, however

briefly. They can increase the risk of fire, block people trying to evacuate, and obstruct access for the emergency services trying to get in.

Items posing a fire risk will be removed immediately by the Council. The Council will charge offenders £95 costs, and can get fines of up to £400 imposed.

Leaseholders who sublet their property are responsible for ensuring that their tenants are fully aware of and compliant with the Council's Fire Safety Policy.

All communal areas must be kept free of any obstructions, trip hazards and fire hazards. This includes, but is not limited to, pushchairs, bicycles, e-bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters, plants, doormats, bin-bags, furniture and other household items. Bicycles, e-bikes or e-scooters must not be stored in communal areas.

Mobility scooters should be kept inside your home, unless a dedicated store is provided by the Council. Contact the Council for advice if this is a problem, as a risk assessment will need to be done.

Individual wheelie bins must not be left in communal areas or under staircases. Where provided, wheelie bins should be stored in areas away from the building.

Bin store doors must be kept closed. Large dumped items like furniture must never be left in the bin store. Residents must arrange for them to be taken away.

Cupboards for storage and electrical metres must never be used to store personal belongings. Their doors should be kept shut.

You can read the Fire Safety Policy at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-services-policies](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-services-policies)

To report items left in indoor communal areas, email [Jamie.Lambert@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Jamie.Lambert@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-457000.

To report items left or flytipping in estates' outdoor communal areas, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/reportflytipping](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/reportflytipping) or phone 01223-457000.

## **What you can do for fire safety at home**

- Make and rehearse an evacuation plan: how would everyone in your home escape? Ensure they can all easily find keys for all doors and windows.
- Test fire detectors and alarms monthly.
- Keep escape routes clear of obstruction and inflammable items. Close all doors at night. Do not block vehicular access to your building.
- Take extra care when cooking. Avoid deep fat fryers.
- Ensure all electric appliances, chargers and batteries meet current safety standards. Switch them off at night, and if possible when you go out.
- Use only the fixed heating system in your home, or a convector heater in your hallway. Do not use gas, paraffin, or electric bar heaters.
- Have no more than one plug in each socket - never overload sockets.
- Dispose properly of cigarette stubs. Don't smoke in bed or anywhere that you could doze off.
- Supervise lit candles carefully.
- Ensure all rubbish is placed inside the bins provided, and any bin-room doors are closed.
- Give the Council access to do all necessary safety inspections on your boiler, gas and electricity systems.

## **What we do for fire safety in flats**

The City Council does routine checks on our buildings that contain flats, to ensure their fire safety. We:

- do Fire Risk Assessments in every building
- test smoke detection equipment and emergency lighting
- do annual gas safety checks on tenants' flats
- inspect fixed electrical wiring in tenants' homes to ensure it is safe
- ensure that communal doors are in full working order
- respond to reports of items that could potentially block a fire escape route (including bulky rubbish and flytipping)

If you have any concerns about fire safety, please phone 01223-457000 and ask for Repairs. Further fire safety guidance is at [www.cambsfire.gov.uk/firesafety](http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/firesafety) and [www.gov.uk/firekills](http://www.gov.uk/firekills)

Note that leaseholders are responsible for complying with regulatory gas and electrical safety standards within their own property.



## **Swapping your council home**

Would you like to swap your council tenant home for another social housing home, either in Cambridge or the wider UK? This is called a mutual exchange, and must be approved in writing by the City Council. If you use it to move to a smaller home, you can apply for a grant to help cover the cost of moving.

To swap homes within Cambridge, you can apply through Home-Link at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/applying-for-council-housing](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/applying-for-council-housing) To leave Cambridge, use Homefinder UK at <https://homefinderuk.org>

An easy way to start the process is to join HomeSwapper, a council-approved website where social housing tenants describe the home they want - and the one they are offering in exchange. They tell you their home's location, size, rent, facilities, etc. It's easy to register, and free for Cambridge City Council tenants.



The website's 'Home You've Got' section lets you tell others about your home, to see if it interests them. And you can browse over 200,000 social homes that others are offering for exchange. You can ask a potential swapper questions about their area, request more photos of their home, etc. You visit each other's homes at agreed times. And you examine their home and area carefully before committing. (Note that once you take on the tenancy, you become responsible for any repairs that should have been done by the previous tenant.)

To go ahead, you must both inform your landlords, getting their written approval. Then you arrange to move. Our application form for swapping your home is at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/swap-or-downsizeyour-council-home](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/swap-or-downsizeyour-council-home)

To keep social housing fair, there are rules on mutual exchanges. For instance, you won't be allowed to move to a social housing property that the Council considers too large for your needs, or to exchange homes while you have rent arrears.

For more information on swapping, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/swap-your-council-home](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/swap-your-council-home) and [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk). You can email HomeSwapper at [Tenants@HomeSwapper.co.uk](mailto:Tenants@HomeSwapper.co.uk) or connect with them on Facebook at [@HomeSwapperOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/HomeSwapperOfficial)

## **Tenants' Next of Kin**

As a tenant, have you told the Council the name of the person you would want to have act as your Next of Kin, if you became incapacitated or passed away?

Your Next of Kin is often one of your closest relatives, but it doesn't have to be a relative. It could be a named friend or neighbour who has agreed to act as Next of Kin for you.

For instance, the Council often deals with tenants who have to spend a long time in hospital or in a care home. It is very important that we be able to contact the person

who is looking after their property and their affairs in the meantime, so long as they remain a tenant with us.

Equally, when a council tenant dies, it is extremely important that they have named a person of their choice with whom the landlord can liaise about the deceased person's tenancy, home and possessions. This will help ensure that your affairs are handled in the respectful, orderly way that you would want.

The Next of Kin's tasks for winding up a deceased tenant's affairs can include:

- promptly notifying the Council of their death
- telling the landlord whether the tenant left a will, and who the will's Executor is
- providing information and documents for their tenancy to be ended, so that rent can stop being paid
- supplying a death certificate to the landlord
- getting the home's utilities switched off if necessary
- emptying the contents of the tenant's house or flat within a timeframe agreed with the Council

If you don't have anyone you feel you can name as Next of Kin, don't worry. Just tell the Council and we can agree how to manage this together.

Having a named Next of Kin is a minimum requirement. But it is much better if you also have a legally valid will.

This will ensure that your money, possessions and home contents are inherited the way you wish. A will has a named Executor, who could also carry out the tasks above in place of a Next of Kin.

For guidance on making a simple, legally valid will for free, see the government's guidance at [www.gov.uk/make-will](http://www.gov.uk/make-will)

## **Leasehold repairs and maintenance**

Your lease states which repairs you are responsible for, and which are the Council's responsibility. In general, we repair structural and shared parts of your building. You have to pay your share of the cost of works that the Council does on your block.

The Council will usually repair:

- structural faults to the walls, foundations, chimney stack, roof or gutters
- shared areas such as stairways and corridors
- shared drains, gutters and pipework
- paintwork in shared areas
- shared outside sheds and stores
- shared services such as lifts, door-entry systems, rotary driers, play areas, lighting and shared laundry equipment

You can request repairs like these online, or phone us at 01223-457000 and ask for Repairs. For out-of-hours emergencies, phone 0300-303-8389.

We encourage you to report the need for such repairs as soon as you spot them. This prevents the cost for leaseholders increasing through leaving the problem to get worse.

You yourself are usually responsible for maintaining the following:

- all services – including water, gas, electricity and telephone – from where they enter your property
- all window glazing
- all electric and heating circuits, systems, fittings and meters
- all plumbing pipework
- all fittings and sanitary ware inside the flat (other than shared pipes and drains)
- your front door, including the letterbox and handle
- any boundary hedges or fences indicated in your lease

### **Planned maintenance for leaseholders**

As well as doing appropriate repairs when you request them, we also aim to check the condition of all our leasehold properties every seven years.

At this time the Council will check for repairs needed on things like:

- the outside of the property, including the roof, gutters, pipework, brickwork, and shared doors and windows
- redecoration of external walls and interior shared areas
- repairs to environmental features including fencing

## Major works for leaseholders

We will always consult you before we do any work that will cost you as an individual more than £250. We call this 'major work', and we will notify you in writing in advance if we think it's needed on the building you live in.

Planned works for 2025/26 include:

- continuing our works for fire prevention and fire safety, resulting from fire safety inspections of communal areas
- works on stairwells as required by regulatory safety ratings
- our repair and paint contract that recurs every seven years
- work on communal flooring and entrances, replacing entry doors and glazing as needed
- upgrading communal lighting
- structural works
- upgrades to the electrical supply
- works on wall structure
- roof replacements
- upgrades of communal areas

For more information about major work, please email [leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-457835.

## **Your online account for leaseholders**

Are you signed up to view your leaseholder's service charge account online on the Council's website? We encourage you to sign up: on there, you can view your account and see all invoices added and payments made.

Your online account will also be helpful if you rent out your property. Cambridge City Council has 1,163 leasehold properties, and of these, 533 are let out to subtenants.

If you are letting out your leasehold property and require an account statement each year when completing your tax return, you can now get this quickly and conveniently online.

So please do sign up to your online portal at  
<https://housing.cambridge.gov.uk/housing/www/dashboard>

There, you can view and print out the records of your service charge account.

When signing up to access your account online, you may find that we don't have all your personal information. If so, this will be because some leaseholders did not complete our Leasehold Information Form when they first bought their properties.

In that case, please use the email address that you use to sign up, to send us an email at [leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk)

We will need your full name, date of birth and the address of your leasehold property. Our system requires multiple pieces of information to securely verify your identity.

## **Subletting**

As explained above, almost half of the Council's leaseholders now let out their property to subtenants. To avoid breaking the terms of your lease, subletting must be

declared to the City Council. Registering your sublet will cost £75 in administration fees. You can download the form at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders)

Subletting causes problems in flat blocks if the leaseholder doesn't fully brief their subtenant on all the block's rules, and oversee that the subtenant respects these rules.

Many leaseholders employ agencies to manage their subletting. But it is still your legal responsibility as the leaseholder to ensure that your subtenant, and everyone occupying or visiting your leasehold property while it is let, observes all the rules.

Otherwise, you are breaking the terms of your Leasehold Agreement, which can have very serious legal consequences for your property.

Rules commonly broken by uninformed or unsupervised subtenants include those around:

- dogs and other pets
- use of bins and recycling
- breaking the fire safety rules by leaving items in communal areas
- inconsiderate parking
- noise disturbance to neighbours (from loud music, shouting, parties, animals, revving vehicles, etc.)
- other forms of anti-social behaviour

Your Leasehold Agreement also states that you can only sublet your flat to one person or family, not to a group of individuals flat-sharing, and not as a holiday let.

For more information, please visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders), [emailleasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:emailleasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone the Council at 012 23-457835.



### **New sheltered scheme at Wulfstan Way**

The City Council is pleased and proud to open a new, refurbished sheltered housing scheme. We now provide 14 such schemes around the city. They offer comfortable, convenient accommodation to rent for over-60s who:

- have lived or worked in Cambridge, or have relatives here
- want some support and security to live independently
- or need assistance with managing their care and support

The new scheme is at Wulfstan Way, and is called Long Drift Place. Long Drift was the old name for Cherry Hinton Road, so the name helps root the scheme into the history of its neighbourhood.

Long Drift Place is made up of eight one-bedroom flats arranged over three floors, with lift access to all floors. The building has been refurbished. Each flat now includes:

- a double bedroom
- a level-access bathroom with shower
- a kitchen and living area



There are also newly decorated communal facilities for residents to use to socialise and run group activities. The building's shared facilities include:

- a communal lounge and kitchen
- a shower room with disabled toilet
- a garden with a patio area
- a mobility scooter store

Some car parking is available for tenants and visitors, including a dedicated disabled parking space. Other improvements include a new boiler system, and greater fire safety with an upgraded fire alarm system. There is also a new warden-call system to ensure that residents can access help in an emergency at any time of the day, night or week.

The new Long Drift Place scheme is close to a GP surgery and pharmacy. There are local shops and takeaways nearby, as well as a local pub. It is also on a good bus route to both Addenbrooke's Hospital and the city centre.

For an overview of all our sheltered schemes, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/sheltered-housing](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sheltered-housing) For more information, you can email [independent.living@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:independent.living@cambridge.gov.uk), phone 01223-457199, or visit Cambridge Older People's Housing on Facebook.

You can apply for sheltered housing on the Home-Link website at [www.home-link.org.uk](http://www.home-link.org.uk) For support and information about applying online, phone 01223-457000 and ask for Home-Link.

As part of your application, we would meet with you to discuss and assess the support, care and housing requirements that you have. Housing benefit can contribute towards the rent, so we can also offer you a financial assessment that will ensure you'll receive any benefits or support that you are entitled to.

## Being active despite a health condition

Are you struggling to find (or keep) a job due to health problems, either physical or mental? Try WorkWell. It's a free service, funded by government, giving one to one support for people who:

- have a health challenge preventing them from working, or
- are at risk of losing their work due to a health challenge

There are so many reasons, beyond just the financial, why it is so important to be able to stay in work. Being employed helps give us a sense of purpose. It boosts our confidence and self-esteem, and develops our skills and knowledge. Going out to mix and collaborate with others in the workplace is good for our wellbeing.

At Workwell, we understand the barriers that health problems - either mental or physical - can cause. And we offer free support to help you overcome them. Trained Work & Health Coaches will study your needs, creating a personalised plan to support you. They can connect you up with help and supports such as:

- help for your finances and for any debts
- job advice and support
- training and skill development
- health and wellbeing services
- support for carers
- help with any housing problems, or adaptations you may need to your home
- help with addictions or substance misuse
- support for relationship problems or domestic abuse

The WorkWell programme is completely voluntary. It has no impact on benefits, and you can stop it at any time. You can apply if you are over 16, live in Cambridge or are registered with a GP here, and are eligible to work in the UK. (You don't have to be on benefits.)

You can apply online at [www.growthworkswithskills.com/employer-hub/workwell](http://www.growthworkswithskills.com/employer-hub/workwell) Just fill in the short form and a Work & Health Coach will contact you. Or to speak directly with your local Work & Health Team about applying, please phone 0300-303-4363.

### **Exercise Referral Service**

This service helps you manage a long term medical condition or disability through a 'prescription' of tailored activities. It can help with conditions like depression, arthritis, musculo-skeletal problems, cancer, chronic pain, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure or obesity.

Specialist exercise professionals will support you for 3 months or more. Your programme may include low-cost gym exercise, or free online courses that you do at home.

For more information and the form to apply, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/fitness-for-adults-with-long-term-medical-conditions](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/fitness-for-adults-with-long-term-medical-conditions) Just ask your health professional to fill in the form to refer you. Or phone the Council at 07525-800996.

Alternatively, anyone can visit [www.youtube.com/@getmovingcambridge](http://www.youtube.com/@getmovingcambridge) where the Council's Sports Team give free 6-week online fitness courses to do at home, adapted to different needs and fitness levels.

### **Missing out on Pension Credit?**

Are you over State Pension age and on a low income? You could be eligible for Pension Credit if your weekly income is below £218.15 or, if you have a partner who

lives with you, £332.95. Pension Credit could give you around £3,900 a year to help with living costs.

Pension Credit is separate from your State Pension. You may be eligible for Pension Credit even if you own your home or have savings. And thanks to the Pension Credit backdating rules, it is possible to apply for Pension Credit and have your claim backdated by up to three months - so long as you had entitlement during that time.

It is estimated that up to 880,000 households are missing out on Pension Credit. As well as its typical payments of £3,900 per year, it can also provide a whole range of additional benefits. Those receiving Pension Credit may also be able to receive:

- the Winter Fuel Payment
- other help with heating costs through the Warm Home Discount Scheme and the Cold Weather Payment
- Housing Benefit if you rent the property you live in
- Council Tax benefit
- a free TV Licence for those aged 75 or over
- help with the cost of NHS services, such as NHS dental treatment, glasses and transport costs for hospital appointments

You might also get extra help if you're a carer, severely disabled, or responsible for a child or young person. So don't miss out. You can check your eligibility at [www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator)

To apply online, visit [gov.uk/pension-credit](http://gov.uk/pension-credit) Alternatively, you can phone the Pension Credit claim line at 0800-99-1234. Have the following information ready:

- your National Insurance number

- information about any income, savings or investments you have
- your bank details, to receive payments

After applying, you just wait to hear from the Department of Work and Pensions. You will be notified by post when your claim has been assessed.

### **Re-apply for a Ukrainian visa**

The war in Ukraine has lasted over three years. Ukrainians in the UK on Homes for Ukraine visas are starting to see their initial 3-year visa expire.

They must apply to the Ukraine Permission Extension scheme 28 days before their visa expires. Otherwise, they can no longer live, work or claim benefits in the UK.

If you are a Ukrainian City Council tenant needing to re-apply in this way, please do so urgently. If not, you will be at risk of losing your home. You will not be able to work or claim benefits to pay rent. You could be in financial hardship, as well as being evicted.

Once you apply, you must not leave the UK, as that invalidates your application. You will usually receive a decision on your new visa within 8 weeks. Your right to live and work in the UK continues until you receive the decision. For information, visit [www.gov.uk/guidance/applying-to-the-ukraine-permission-extension-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/applying-to-the-ukraine-permission-extension-scheme) Or you can email [Ukraine@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Ukraine@cambridge.gov.uk) or [CECFenquiries@cecf.co.uk](mailto:CECFenquiries@cecf.co.uk)

### **Payment for hosting a Ukrainian**

The Homes for Ukraine scheme is still ongoing. Anyone with a spare room can apply to host either a Ukrainian applying to come to the UK (for whom you would be a Sponsor), or one already living in the UK. You must:

- offer a spare room or home for at least 6 months
- be over 18, without a criminal record

You receive £350 a month 'Thank You Payment' while they stay with you under the Homes for Ukraine visa. To sponsor a Ukrainian applying for a visa, you must be a British or Irish citizen, or have 'indefinite leave to remain' in the UK. Ukrainians can stay in the UK for:

- up to 36 months, if they applied before 3pm on 19-2-2024
- up to 18 months, if applying since then

For more information, visit [www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine](http://www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine)

### **Do you need a new eVisa?**

Note that people of any nationality who still hold a paper visa for staying in the UK must now go online and get the electronic 'eVisa' version of it. All paper versions expired in December 2024. It's free and simple to get your new eVisa at [www.gov.uk/evisa](http://www.gov.uk/evisa)

### **Residents' Garden Competition**

Why not enter the Council's friendly Tenants' & Leaseholders' Garden Competition? Total prizes are worth £500. Whether you have a big garden, a veg plot or just a few pots, there's a category for everyone. Communal gardens are welcome too. It's not the type or size of your gardening efforts that matters - just that they be nature-friendly, avoiding the use of pesticides and herbicides.



Gardens like these on council estates are actually vital. Together, they form a crucial 'patchwork' of havens where bees, hedgehogs, birds and other wildlife can find refuge - which they can't in gardens that use pesticides and herbicides. Gardeners are now realising that these chemicals kill not only slugs but birds and hedgehogs, who eat the poisoned slugs and are in turn killed themselves too! We are sure that's not what you want.

The deadline to apply is the end of June. Friendly judges will arrange a time with you to visit your garden in July, while the prize-giving event will be in September.

Download your entry form at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/tenant-and-leaseholder-garden-competition](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/tenant-and-leaseholder-garden-competition) or request one by emailing [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or phoning 01223-458323.

The catastrophic decline in insect numbers is now well documented. Fewer insects means fewer birds. And a major factor in the loss of our insects is the use of pesticides and herbicides. But we can all do something about this.

To reverse the dramatic decline in insect and bird numbers, we must stop using pesticides and other harmful chemicals like herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodent killers.

There is overwhelming evidence now that these chemicals are very damaging to wildlife, the soil, the water table and to ourselves. Cambridge City Council has

started showing the way last year by going herbicide-free. Why not join us from today onwards?

Pesticide-Free Cambridge is an organisation that offers simple, free guidance for easily managing your own environment without pesticides or herbicides. For their free guide visit [www.pesticidefreecambridge.org/pesticide-free-guide](http://www.pesticidefreecambridge.org/pesticide-free-guide)

So please do feed the birds in your garden, and put up nestboxes. But for this to work, you must also go pesticide-free in your home and garden.



### **Free Nature Events for All**

Don't miss the free Nature Events at Logan's Meadow Nature Reserve in Chesterton, a wildlife haven run by local residents. All are welcome, but children must be accompanied and supervised.

If you see this article in time, try their Amphibian Evening, lasting an hour on Friday 14th March, 6-7pm. Meet at Equiano Bridge noticeboard, with a torch and sensible footwear.

Last year over 40 people joined their Dawn Chorus Walk. And their Moth Count spotted over 260 species! From warblers to water voles, otters to ospreys, black poplars to buff ermines... Logan's Meadow reveals the amazing wildlife that's there to see in our city, once you are shown where to look.



Sign up for event details at <https://logansmeadow.wordpress.com>, or email [friendsoflogansmeadow@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoflogansmeadow@gmail.com) or visit [www.facebook.com/groups/folmcambridge](http://www.facebook.com/groups/folmcambridge)

### **Who to contact for services**

Register for your personal Housing Services account at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/online-accounts](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/online-accounts)

Domestic Abuse 24-hour Helpline

Tel: Freephone 0808-2000-247

Visit [www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk)

Make council payments by phone

Tel: 01223-457000, with bank card

Homelessness & temporary accommodation, outside office hours

Tel: 03300-538-109 (same cost as a normal landline)

Rents, tenancies, lettings, renting a council garage

Tel: 01223-457000

Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-tenants](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-tenants)

## Repairs

Tel: 01223-457000; or 0300-303-8389 for out of hours emergency repairs

## Contact Council in Sign Language

Register at <https://signlive.co.uk>, then dial 01223-457000 for a live interpreter

## Council Tax

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

Tel: 01223-457000

## Leasehold services

Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders)

E: [leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk)

Tel: 01223-457835

## Housing for Older People and Visiting Support Service

E: [independent.living@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:independent.living@cambridge.gov.uk)

Tel: 01223-457000

Home-Link lettings

Visit [www.home-link.org.uk](http://www.home-link.org.uk)

Tel: 01223-457000

Housing & Council Tax Benefits

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

Tel: 01223-457000

Bins, recycling, street-cleaning

Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-rubbish](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-rubbish)

Tel: 01223-457000

Bulky waste collection

Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/arrange-a-bulky-waste-collection](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/arrange-a-bulky-waste-collection)

Tel: 01223-457000

Report anti-social behaviour

E: [asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk)

Tel: 01223-457000

Report tenancy fraud

E: [fightfraud@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:fightfraud@cambridge.gov.uk)

Noise complaints

E: [env.health@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@cambridge.gov.uk)

Tel: 01223-457000

Council emergencies out of hours

Tel: 0300-303-8389

To complain about council services

Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions)

Council's contractors on estates

TSG Services

E: [enquiries@tsgplc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@tsgplc.co.uk)

Tel: 01223-828777

For gas or hot water, tel 0800-111-4044

Foster Property Maintenance

E: [info@fpm-ltd.co.uk](mailto:info@fpm-ltd.co.uk)

Tel: 01945-586999

Goshen communal cleaning

E: [cs@goshenmultiservices.com](mailto:cs@goshenmultiservices.com)

Tel: 0754-2826553

Hi-Spec window cleaning

E: [helpdesk@hispecservices.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@hispecservices.co.uk)

Suicide Awareness

If you or someone else feels suicidal, dial 111, then option 2, for help from NHS mental health professionals.

And [www.stayingsafe.net](http://www.stayingsafe.net) is a free website offering practical help for people with suicidal thoughts, and for those caring for them.