

# Westminster Community Homes Annual Newsletter 2023



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE NEIL TRYNER

I am pleased to introduce our latest resident newsletter for all our Westminster Community Homes (WCH) Customers.

As your landlord we are committed to being a brilliant landlord. We have listened to customer feedback to shape what we would like to do, and this year we are focussing on four priorities. They are:

- 1. Be an outstanding landlord and do the basics brilliantly:** This means making sure that repairs and your home are in a good condition, that we make sure the parts of your home that require regular checking, such as boilers, take place and that we let empty homes quickly and collect your rent efficiently.
- 2. Regeneration:** We are supporting Westminster City Council in its work to regenerate the Ebury and Church Street estates by working with leaseholders to sell their homes and move to a new home.
- 3. Provide more homes and remain financially strong:** We will complete the final phase of building and letting 22 new homes at Victoria Wharf, and make progress to tender works at the old MOT yard on the Harrow Road to deliver 15 new homes.
- 4. Support Westminster Council as a Registered Provider:** We work closely with the city council, sharing services and teams to deliver services efficiently when our homes are in blocks alongside Westminster homes. As a separate Registered Provider we are able to work differently to a Local Authority and this allows us to offer different tenancy types such as Intermediate Rents and to also offer flexible services to meet urgent need. We will continue to work with the city council and develop ways to support the Council deliver its wider aspirations for housing.

The Board of WCH who oversee the performance of the team, and ensure we remain compliant with the standards set by the Housing Regulator. We have been busy looking for new board members during the summer and we will update you on the new appointments in the very near future.

*Neil Tryner, WCH Chief Executive*

# CONTENTS

## Meet the Team

### Current Projects/ Developments:

- Refresh Scheme
- MOT Yard
- Victoria Wharf
- Regeneration Update
- Horizon Scheme

### Community Projects

### What Residents Think of Us!

### Complete this year's Survey

### Repairs information

### Staying Warm this Winter

### Useful contacts

## MEET THE WESTMINSTER COMMUNITY HOMES TEAM

Meet our three new members of  
the team:



**Neil Tryner**  
*Chief Executive*



**Severine Masona**  
*Operations Officer*  
*(Sophie Sheekey Maternity Cover)*



**Kim Wright**  
*Administrator*



**Hannah Callender**  
*Operations Manager*



**Ian Sellens**  
*Church Street Regen,  
Leaseholder Negotiator*



**Anton Robinson**  
*Ebury Estate Regen,  
Leaseholder Negotiator*

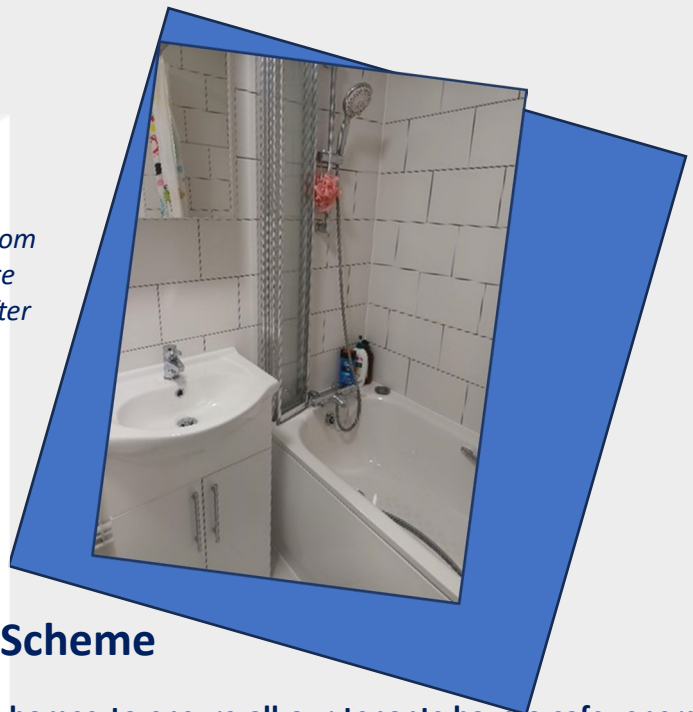


## WCH Housing Management Team

**Timothy Malaolu**  
*Housing Manager*  
**Eric Otoo**  
*Housing Officer*  
**Karimu Kusimo**  
*Housing Officer*  
**Diellza Uka**  
*Housing Officer*  
**Sabina Hafeez**  
*Housing Officer*



*Bathroom  
before  
and after*



## Refresh Scheme

Surveys are being undertaken by Chas Berger in our homes to ensure all our tenants have a safe, energy efficient and healthy home – free from damp and deterioration. To date 309 properties have been surveyed, with 165 identified as needing repairs and/or kitchen and bathroom replacement. If you are a WCH tenant and have not had a survey completed, please get in touch as soon as possible.

Annie and Sirajul are your Resident Liaison Officers (RLOs) and will be happy to help you with any questions you may have as you go through the process.



**Chas**  
Berger

Annie Brayne  
Resident Liaison Officer  
Tel: 07944 064893

[anniebrayne@chasberger.co.uk](mailto:anniebrayne@chasberger.co.uk)

RLOs advise and guide residents while the work is going on. Carry out follow up resident courtesy visits. Brief tenants on safety and security issues, ensuring residents receive comprehensive literature and are aware of all relevant Health & Safety requirements.



*Kitchen before and after  
renovation*



***Always ask to see an identity card before you let a stranger into your property. If you're still unsure, phone the company the person says they are from. Don't worry about keeping them waiting. If they are who they say they are, they will understand.***

## New Development - Coming Soon!



### MOT Yard W10

Keep an eye out for a new social housing development at 581-587 Harrow Road W10

We have tendered works to demolish the existing building and replace it with 15 new affordable homes let at social rents. Works will then be programmed in and we would hope to start works next year. Keep an eye on progress on the Developments page on our website. Once built these properties will be allocated via Westminster City Council's Housing Solutions Service.

### Victoria Wharf Phase II



Victoria Wharf sits in a lovely position alongside the Grand Union Canal by Ladbroke Grove Bridge.

Victoria Wharf (phase I) was an award-winning affordable housing scheme which completed in 2018. We have now extended the scheme providing 20 additional homes making a grand total of 42 homes for intermediate rent.

Following its completion WCH were able to acquire the adjoining land and successfully applied for planning permission for a further 20 homes for Intermediate Rent.

# REGENERATION UPDATES

## Ebury Bridge

*Ebury Bridge is now vacant and redevelopment in progress!*

Following the success of negotiating with several remaining leaseholders on the estate, we have assisted with the rehousing of those lessees. Whether it be away from the estate, or even within the remaining blocks on the estate, this was a huge contribution to achieving vacant possession to allow the scheme to move forward. Phase 1 of the new Ebury Bridge Estate is well underway, with both towers fully built. Now that vacant possession of phase 2 has been achieved (which consists of five buildings), these buildings can now be decommissioned, and demolition works can begin.

Out of a total 140 leaseholders originally on the estate, there are now only three remaining who are yet to come to an agreement to sell their property back to The City Council.

WCH continue to negotiate and provide assistance to those leaseholders where possible.



The Ebury Bridge Renewal Project will see a full redevelopment of the entire Ebury Bridge Estate and will look like this when finished.



## Church Street

We are working with Westminster City Council (WCC) in their plans for the development of the Church Street regeneration site. Our role has been to initiate contact, maintain good working relations and lead the negotiations with leaseholders inside the regeneration area, to acquire these properties and ultimately bring them into WCC's ownership in advance of the demolition.

Lessees are offered a bespoke service which includes developing a positive working relationship: negotiating and agreeing a sale price with the leaseholders and taking them through to successful conclusion of the transaction. I will also assess their re-housing requirements and work together towards the acquisition of a suitable alternative property.

The City Council plans for the site are advanced and a detailed planning application for site A (the first phase of the development) and an outline area application for the later phases B and C was approved in March 2023.

In site A, we have been instrumental in gaining ownership of almost all of the Leasehold interests. Only three (3) interests remain outstanding. We will continue to work with these leaseholders to reach an agreement and voluntarily acquire their properties. If leaseholders in sites B & C are interested in selling their property, we will purchase their property now. Any leaseholder owning properties within the regeneration are entitled to receive a package of compensation, plus the market value of their property. The details explaining the compensation can be found at this link below on the City Council's website: [Leaseholder policy for Housing Renewal Areas / Westminster Council](#)

If you are interested in what is happening at the Church St renewal area, please do contact me. My details are below. I will be happy to address any queries you have.

Ian Sellens

E: [isellens@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:isellens@westminster.gov.uk)

T: 07790 980127



## Horizon Scheme

*Our Intermediate Rent Scheme which helps you to take your first step on the Home Ownership ladder*

We offer high quality and newly refurbished accommodation at a discount against the average market rent in Westminster. This creates affordable London living, which can help assist your household budget and help save towards home ownership (incl. Shared Ownership).

Register your interest at [www.homeownershipwestminster.co.uk/register](http://www.homeownershipwestminster.co.uk/register)

The Horizon scheme provides up to £10,000 towards the cost of moving into Home Ownership through a contribution of a maximum £2,000 per completed year of Tenancy. This is subject to meeting our “Good Tenants” requirement and when you are moving into home ownership directly after your tenancy with us.

So far, we have assisted a number of our tenants with funds that they have used towards their move into Home Ownership and the number of cases is increasing.

Of these tenants, two have moved into our own Shared Ownership properties using funds that we have provided towards their deposit.

Case studies can be found on our website: [www.westminstercommunityhomes.org.uk](http://www.westminstercommunityhomes.org.uk)

\*See Full terms on [www.homesforwestminster.co.uk/eligibility](http://www.homesforwestminster.co.uk/eligibility)

*Is there an adult child in your household looking for a new home? Sign them up to our Horizon scheme! \**



# COMMUNITY PROJECTS

We continue our commitment to providing support to Westminster Social Value in the Westminster community, particularly in areas where we have properties. This year we are contributing £45,000 towards community projects, some of which are listed below.



**Westminster Wheels**  
A great project helping young people currently not in education or employment to train to gain a City and Guilds Level 2 Mechanic qualification. Click the link to find out more.  
[Welcome - WESTMINSTER WHEELS](#)

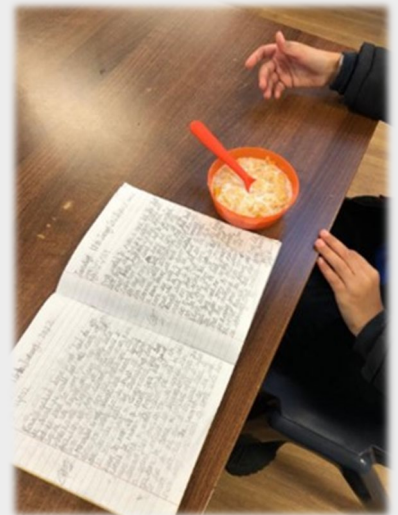
## Breakfast Clubs

Providing a safe place for your children to wait until school starts.

One of the Social Value team's key priorities is the provision of breakfasts for all school children in Westminster.

Our funding towards these projects will allow Westminster schools to provide free, nutritious school breakfasts for children of households in need.

We are also funding numerous schools to run **Homework Clubs**, where children can get additional help with their schoolwork.



## Coming soon....

### Greening projects in South Westminster

The Social Value team have been working in South Westminster with two charities and several schools developing an environmental and climate change awareness project, linked also with biodiversity themes, engaging with children and families around food growing and learning more about positive things young people and their families can do. Work is underway with three schools and will bring 100's of primary school aged young people onto Churchill Gardens, Lillington and Grosvenor estates to participate in hands on activities, as well as running sessions in schools. Look out for update on our website.



# WHAT OUR RESIDENTS THINK OF US!



Each year we write to our residents to request feedback in the form of tenant surveys. This is what you thought at the time of the last survey:

- 96% of residents are happy with services provided by Westminster Community Homes.
- 86% of residents feel their Housing Manager provides an efficient and effective service.
- 93% of residents feel the rent for their property represents good value for money.
- 98% of residents feel Westminster Community Homes is good at keeping them informed.
- 87% of residents are satisfied with the quality of their home.



## Tenant Survey

**For your chance to be included in the draw for a £50 high street shop voucher, please take a few moments to complete the survey by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023.**

We would really appreciate your feedback this year. To complete the 2023 survey for WCH tenants please click on the link [here](#).

*"We would like to thank all of our customers for all of the positive feedback we received last year, these results are one of our best yet, we appreciate the invaluable constructive advice in comments too."*

Operations Manager, Westminster Community Homes



We had a 33% response rate to last year's survey. Let's see if we can improve on that this year.  
**YOU TALK AND WE PROMISE WE WILL LISTEN!**

***\*If you would like to receive a paper copy of our survey, please email [westminstercommunityhomes@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:westminstercommunityhomes@westminster.gov.uk) and request this.***

# REPAIRS & SAFETY

## Repair Completion

As of the end of financial year (March 2023):

- ❑ **82% of repairs completed on time** (urgent and non-urgent combined)  
Target is 90%
- ❑ 99.80% of our properties completed a Gas Safety check on time.  
Our target is 100%
- ❑ 100% WCH owned blocks completed fire risk assessments, meeting our target.



## How to report a repair:

The details of how to report a repair and expected completion times will be set out in the tenant handbook given to you on the sign up of your tenancy. A reminder of these details is given below:

The repairs team can be reached during office hours 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday.

To report a repair telephone:

**0800 358 3783**

Option 2 for urgent repairs (line available 24/7)

Option 3 for routine repairs

Option 4 for ongoing repairs

Option 5 for Customer Services

| Category          |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|
| <b>Immediate</b>  | Issues which pose an immediate health and safety risk, e.g. fire, loss of electricity or water supply, make safe etc                | Attend within two hours and make safe within 24 hours |
| <b>Urgent</b>     | Plumbing works, blockages, and works  | Attend and complete work within three working days    |
| <b>Non-Urgent</b> | More substantial repairs, e.g. joinery, plastering, damp proof courses, major repairs; including structural work, roofing works etc | Attend and complete work within 28 working days       |



## STAYING WARM THIS WINTER

Here are some useful hints and tips for keeping your property warmer for less:

1. Take advantage of natural light open your curtains to your south-facing windows to soak up the sunlight during the day and let it naturally warm up your home. Just make sure to close them at night to stop any chill from the cold windows.
2. Strong & stable heating It might be tempting to put your heating on full blast when you're cold, but keeping your thermostat at the same low temperature rather than on-off-on-off can save you energy. This is because the boiler uses a lot of energy getting from cold to hot.
3. Keep furniture away from radiators as they will absorb the heat.
4. Get a rug; carpet is a natural insulator, and traps air in its fibres, which can provide additional warmth.
5. If it's safe to, keep the oven door open after cooking.
6. Get your cook on! Your cooker is one of the most energy-guzzling appliances in your house. Get ahead and try cooking multiple meals at once, it will save you the hassle later on in the week and save you energy.
7. Use programmed thermostats to not waste energy throughout the day or turn off heating whilst you are out. Our properties are all energy efficient enough and heat up quite quickly to allow you to do this.
8. Apply draught excluders to windows and doors [such as these insulation strips](#) .
9. Keep curtains/ blinds closed when you are not in the property to store heat.
10. Let our housing manager know if you have any issues with draughts, faulty windows, boiler performance, radiators. We are here to help.

# Contact us:

If you are enquiring about your property, please contact our housing management team at Westminster Council who manage all our properties.

If your enquiry is related to your tenancy or housing management please write to or visit: Housing, Westminster Council, 155 Westbourne Terrace, London, W2. Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Alternatively, you can contact the Housing enquiries line on 0800 358 3783 and ask to speak to a member of the team direct.

Westminster City Council Housing Officers dedicated to Westminster Community Homes are:

Timothy Malaolu (Housing Manager)

Eric Otoo (Housing Officer)

Diellza Uka (Housing Officer)

Karimu Kusimo (Housing Officer)

Sabina Hafeez (Housing Officer)

## **Anti-Social Behaviour**

To report Anti-Social behaviour, we ask that you contact Housing enquiries on 0800 358 3783.

## **Need to pay your rent?**

Rent can be paid by Direct Debit, standing order, over the phone or online for more information please see: [www.westminster.gov.uk/housing/tenants/rent-and-service-charges/ways-pay-your-rent](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/housing/tenants/rent-and-service-charges/ways-pay-your-rent).

If you have any troubles, please speak to you housing manager above.

## **General enquiries**

If you have a general enquiry regarding Westminster Community Homes please write to: Westminster Community Homes, Westminster City Hall, 12th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP, or email [westminstercommunityhomes@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:westminstercommunityhomes@westminster.gov.uk)

## **Keep in touch!**

Please keep us updated of any changes in your circumstances, this helps us to better understand your situation and provide a better service. You can help by completing the equality diversity and inclusion document for residents, provided by your housing manager, providing updates on changes to your mobility, household changes, or when you apply for Universal Credit etc.

## **Complaints Procedure**

If you want to make a complaint about the landlord please email Westminster Community homes at [Westminstercommunityhomes@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:Westminstercommunityhomes@westminster.gov.uk). If you would like to make a complaint about the service you've received from the council who manage your tenancy and home, you'll need to tell them what your complaint is about so that we can direct you to the right team. See [Complaints policy 2022](#). We aim to reply within 10 working days.

**On behalf of everyone at Westminster  
Community Homes, we would like to wish you  
all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and  
Prosperous New Year**

