



Welcome to the spring edition of our Local Space newsletter.

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INVESTING IN YOUR HOMES

New homes in Newham ▶

Since our last newsletter, we've taken on two new housing schemes in Newham.

Newham Council have purchased properties in two brand-new apartment blocks and have leased them to Local Space. That's 60 additional homes we can now offer to homeless families.

Development House and Abbey Quay contain a collection of high-quality one, two and three-bedroom homes, which come fitted with white goods such as fridges and washing machines as well as window blinds.

All our homes in Development House are now occupied by Local Space customers, and we've already let around 50% of homes in Abbey Quay.



◀ New homes in Rainham

We recently purchased nine newly built two-bedroom apartments in Rainham, Essex. These homes are being offered to homeless families currently being supported by Hackney Council.

These apartments have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of B which means they're energy efficient and could save customers money on their bills. All apartments have a high-quality finish, are fitted with white goods such as fridges and washing machines and come with their own parking spaces.



CCTV cameras fitted in homes we own

We've recently completed the installation of new cloud-based CCTV systems in four of our blocks to help monitor ASB issues.

The blocks currently piloting CCTV systems are 283-287 Barking Road, 112-120 Tower hamlets Road, 16-18 Norwich Road and 24 Norwich Road.

This system will help us provide extra safety for our residents and allow us to access historic events in the cloud to enable us

to work with the local police and councils where issues do occur. The safety benefits include dealing with ASB issues, preventing break-ins and assisting with fly-tipping problems.

If you would like us to consider your building, please get in touch with us by emailing info@localspace.co.uk. Please bear in mind that we can only install CCTV cameras in buildings we own.



SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Making a complaint

Everyone deserves a home that is safe, secure and well maintained. We take pride in providing great customer service, however, occasionally, things can go wrong.

We're currently reviewing our Complaints Policy to align with new requirements set out by the Housing Ombudsman's Code of Conduct. We'll keep you updated once our policy has been reviewed. In the meantime, our current Complaints Policy can be found on our website here: www.localspace.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback

The government have launched an awareness campaign called 'Make things right' to remind

you that if you live in social housing and have an issue with your home or landlord, there are ways to make things right. Just follow three simple steps:

1. Report it to your landlord
2. Complain to your landlord
3. Escalate it to the Housing Ombudsman

You can take these steps for various issues including (but not limited to); Mould and damp, poor insulation, broken doors and windows, leaking pipes and ASB.

For more information, please visit socialhousingcomplaints.campaign.gov.uk



You said, we did!

In this section we'll update you on how we've listened to your feedback and used it to improve our services.

Contacting us by phone

You reported having problems getting in touch with us, often experiencing lengthy wait times to speak to an advisor. We've listened to your feedback and have now rolled out a new telephone system which allows us to see calls waiting and allocate the appropriate agents to help reduce waiting times. We're hoping that this new system will provide a more seamless experience for you and make it easier to get in touch with us.

Improving home safety

In our monthly Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey we ask a random selection of 28 customers to give us feedback about a range of topics. Some of you let us know that you were dissatisfied with home safety issues such as ASB or repair work. We called those customers to get more information and used this to make improvements such as chasing up outstanding repair work and working with the local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to help keep communities safe.

This feedback will also be used to help shape our next 12-month service improvement plan. Watch this space as we'll keep you updated about our plans throughout the year in our newsletter.

Actioning anti-social behaviour

In February we held some focus groups where you raised some concerns around anti-social behaviour (ASB) in properties managed by one of our Local Authority partners. To support you we've worked with local police to arrange inspections of these property's communal areas to help prevent ASB.

We're continuing to work with customers to make sure they feel safe in their homes using our ASB action plan. Our plan includes continuing to report incidents to and receive updates from the police as well as collaborating with multiple local agencies to help improve your safety.

If you're experiencing ASB in your building, please report this to us by emailing info@localspace.co.uk, talking to your Housing Officer, or phoning us on **0208 221 4000**.

MONEY MATTERS

Struggling with debt? StepChange can help you

Are you struggling with debt and don't know where to turn? We've partnered up with StepChange, a specialist debt charity, that can provide help when you need it most.

They offer free and confidential advice to anyone who needs it, no matter how big or small the problem.

Whether you're dealing with credit card debt, loans, or overdrafts, their team of experts can provide guidance and support to help you get back on track.

In 2023 StepChange helped 17,456 clients become debt free. Here are some of the main benefits of using their services:

- **Free debt advice:** StepChange offers free and impartial debt advice to anyone who needs it. You can get advice online or over the phone at a time that suits you.
- **Tailored solutions:** They will work with you to create a personalised debt management plan that fits your specific needs.
- **Creditor communication:** StepChange will communicate with your creditors on your behalf to negotiate repayment terms and reduce interest rates.

- **Debt tools:** They offer a variety of debt tools and resources, such as a budget planner and debt test, to help you manage your finances more effectively.
- **Confidentiality:** StepChange understands that debt can be a sensitive issue, so they maintain strict confidentiality throughout the process.
- **Non-judgmental approach:** Their team of trained advisors is there to help, not judge, so you can feel comfortable discussing your situation with them.

How to get in touch

- Visit their website at www.stepchange.org
- Call them on **0800 138 1111** Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 8am-4pm

If you're facing debt or rent arrears, please contact us as soon as possible – the earlier you speak to us, the more we can do to help.

Take the 60-second debt test here www.stepchange.org/debt-test.aspx



The graphic features a bright orange background. On the left, there are two overlapping speech bubbles: a larger orange one containing the text "Find it hard to talk about debt?" and a smaller purple one containing "WE HEAR YOU!". To the right of the speech bubbles is the StepChange Debt Charity logo, which consists of the word "Step" in a bold, dark blue font and ".change" in a lighter blue font, with "Debt Charity" in a smaller, dark blue font underneath. Below the logo, the text "FREE, PERSONALISED ADVICE. DAY OR NIGHT, ONLINE 24/7." is written in a bold, dark blue font. Underneath this, the website address "www.stepchange.org/online" is displayed in a dark blue font. At the bottom of the graphic, there is a small line of text: "©2020 Foundation for Credit Counselling Ltd, StepChange Debt Charity, Scotland and StepChange Debt Charity. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Registered charity no. 5019320 and 90049263."

HEALTH & SAFETY

Gas safety checks

As your landlord, we have a legal responsibility to carry out a full gas safety check at your property every twelve months. Local Space and K&T Heating will contact you at least two months before it's due.

To help us carry out these important safety checks please allow us access to your home but don't forget to ask for identification first. This important safety work ensures your boiler is running efficiently and helps to:

- Cut down the amount of energy you use – reducing your energy bills.
- Reduce the need for boiler repairs – protecting it from breaking down when you need it the most.
- Makes sure that all the vital parts are in safe working order – keeping you and your family safe from harm.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns about gas safety, please contact our contractor K&T Heating on **0208 269 4508** and press option two. If you can smell gas or suspect there's a gas leak, call the National Gas Emergency number on **0800 111 999**.

Electricity safety testing checks

Did you know half of the house fires are caused by electricity? That's why every five years we check your electrics and wiring for free to make sure they're safe.

If you've received a letter asking you to make an appointment for your five- yearly electrical testing, please make sure you do. While we're at your home we'll complete any remedial works needed and replace smoke and heat detectors if they're within two years of their expiry date.

If you're unsure about your test date or have any questions, please call K&T heating on **0208 305 3577** or email at EICR@ktheating.co.uk



GET INVOLVED

Let's welcome our new Customer Engagement team

We'd like to introduce to you our newly formed Customer Engagement team.

Berenika Zembski joined Local Space as our Customer Engagement Officer in November, and Claire Naylor joined in December as Head of Service Improvement and Customer Voice.

The team is responsible for service improvement, policy and business intelligence. They'll also be leading on customer engagement and offer a variety of opportunities for you to get involved to make sure that your voice is heard throughout our organisation. Safiah Khan works closely with the team to review customer dissatisfaction and work with internal departments to make service improvements.

Working with Tpas

The team has recently registered with Tpas, tenant engagement specialists, to make sure we follow best practice guidance and to support our involved customers in sharing views, feedback and holding us to account.

It's important for us to work with Tpas to receive accreditation and demonstrate that we're responsive to your needs and to make sure everyone throughout our organisation is committed to involvement, engagement and empowerment of our customers and communities.

How to get involved in shaping our services

Your feedback is valuable to us, and we use it to make improvements to our services.

Our customers are involved at every level of our organisation, from our Tenants' Panel supporting our strategic direction, through to local groups looking at day to day service delivery.

Why should you get involved?

We can work together to make sure we're delivering the best services for you and your community. We have a range of opportunities for you to help shape our services and hold us to account. Opportunities include policy and procedure reviews and development, service design workshops, focus groups, scrutiny panels and becoming an Estate Champion.

Help us to improve our services by registering your interest with our Customer Engagement team by contacting customerengagement@localspace.co.uk

Join our Facebook Group



To join you can either:

- Scan the QR Code using your phone (you'll then be redirected straight to the page)
- Visit this webpage: www.facebook.com/localspacetenants

You'll be asked a couple of quick sign-up questions so that we can verify that you're a Local Space tenant, and then you're in!

Please note that you'll need a Facebook account to be able to join the group.





Join our Tenants' Panel

Our Tenants' Panel is set up to create stronger collaboration between the Board, tenants, and Local Space staff. Panel members are empowered to direct and influence service delivery and identify improvements that address the needs of all tenants. Our panel meets online monthly. Below are our 2024 panel meeting dates:

- Tuesday 26 March
- Tuesday 30 April
- Tuesday 28 May
- Tuesday 25 June
- Tuesday 30 July
- Tuesday 27 August
- Tuesday 24 September
- Tuesday 29 October
- Tuesday 26 November

If you're interested in joining the panel, please contact the Customer Engagement team by emailing customerengagement@localspace.co.uk

To find out more about our panel please visit our website on www.localspace.co.uk/tenants-membership-panel/



Become an Estate Champion

Estate Champions are customers who work with us to help make our estates and local communities a safer, cleaner, and more attractive place to live. You'll get the chance to make a real difference to the area you live in, joining us on estate visits and inspections alongside our Housing Services Team and other community partners.

You'll be a valued part of our team, helping us build relationships with the local community, and being a voice for our customers, so we can find out what we're doing right and what we need to do to improve our estates.

Our first Estate Champion Joanna recently joined our Housing Officer, Kenny and Customer Engagement Officer, Berenika, in her first inspection.

Joanna from East Ham shared her insights with us about the area she lives in. She mentioned very good transport links and shops close by, but also highlighted the issues with parking locally. We provided Joanna and her neighbours with advice about how to apply for parking permits through the Local Authority website.

During the inspection Joanna pointed out issues such as broken fire equipment boxes so that we were able to fix these quickly. Joanna expressed: "I'm very glad I can help shape services offered by Local Space and I'm proud of the area I live in" and revealed a few ideas for neighbourhood improvements, events and future projects.

If you'd like to become an Estate Champion for your area, please get in touch with our Customer Engagement Officer, Berenika, on 07361 646 629 or email at customerengagement@localspace.co.uk

KEY NEWS

Top rating awarded from the Regulator of Social Housing

Our customers are always at the heart of everything we do so we're excited to share some good news with you.

We recently got the results of our assessment from the Regulator of Social Housing, and we've been awarded a V1 viability grade and a G1 governance grade. This means we're financially stable and well governed and can continue to invest in our homes.

Read more on our website

www.localspace.co.uk/local-space-awarded-top-rating/

Easter opening hours

Local Space will be running an out-of-hours service over Easter from **5pm Thursday 28th March** and will reopen at **9am on Tuesday 2nd April 2024**.

During this time, you can use the following contacts to report emergency repairs, gas leaks or gas boiler breakdowns.

- To report an emergency repair please call Axis Europe on **0203 597 2093**
- If you have a gas leak, please call National Grid on **0800 111 999**. Lines are open 24/7
- For gas boiler breakdown repairs, please call K&T Heating on **0208 269 4508**
- You can also raise non-urgent repairs via your My Account online portal on our website www.localspace.co.uk.

If your tenancy is managed by Newham Council, please call **0800 952 5555**.



UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

We're sending you this printed newsletter because our digital email newsletter hasn't reached you. Please email info@localspace.co.uk with your name, address and email address so that we can make sure we have the most up-to-date contact details for you. Thank you.

At home with

LOCAL SPACE



Local Space, 58 Romford Road, London, E15 4BZ
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