

SUMMER 2026

TENANT NEWS



PART OF THIS NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN WRITTEN BY THE TENANT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Making a difference this summer

This summer, we've loved seeing so much happening in our communities and being able to share it with you. From events and drop-ins to improvements that make a real difference day-to-day, it's been great to see positive things taking shape across our neighbourhoods.

As your Tenant Communications Group, we've been proud to help bring tenant news, views and opportunities together in a way that feels useful and relevant.

We would like to hear from you.

We can help you to improve the housing service or your community. If you have any ideas, you can either come along to one of our meetings or send them over by emailing tenantcommsgroup@canterbury.gov.uk

Thank you for being part of our community – we're looking forward to sharing even more with you in the months ahead.

John Shilling Chair of the Tenant Communications Group

Housing Hubs

If you would like to speak to your Neighbourhood Management Officer in person, you can by attending a Housing Hub drop-in near you.

Thanington Neighbourhood Resource Centre, CT1 3XE
10.30am to 12.30pm
First Monday of every month
(excluding bank holidays)

Housing Hubs will not take place on public holidays.

St Stephens Community Centre,
CT2 7BN 10.30am to 12.30pm
First Tuesday of every month

Whitstable Umbrella Centre,
CT5 1DD 10.30am to 12.30pm
First Tuesday of every month

Herne Bay Family Hub,
CT6 5RG 10.30am to 12.30pm
Second Tuesday of every month

Spring Lane Neighbourhood Centre, CT1 1RT
1pm to 2.30pm
Last Thursday of every month

Hersden Community Centre
CT3 4HL 10.30am to 12.30pm
Last Friday of every month

Tenant Voices

This is a new feature. It's your opportunity to speak directly to the communications group and have your message featured in the next newsletter.

Dear Tenant News

I'd like to thank those involved in your new drop-in sessions! It was great to be able to chat to a housing officer and get the answers I wanted so quickly and easily!

And I've decided to enter the garden competition as the organiser was also there and I had a chat with her!

From, A. Tenant (Whitstable)

If you'd like to send a message to the communications group, you can do so by emailing tenantcommsgroup@canterbury.gov.uk or sending a letter to **Communications Group, 14 Rose Lane, Canterbury, CT1 2UR.**

We look forward to hearing from you!



 **canterbury**
city council

What have your tenant representatives been up to?

Independent Living Forum

The Independent Living Forum works in a slightly different way to the other groups and panels. We're a forum of tenants from the 13 Independent Living Schemes across the district.

We meet every three months to hear directly from housing management on service improvements, we raise issues and give feedback regarding our individual schemes and review important policies relating to independent living, such as pet policy, mobility scooter policy and

adaptations policy, which looks at the changes tenants can request to make their home suitable for their needs. It's important we let the voices of tenants within the Independent Living schemes be heard and this is a great forum to do that.

If you're interested in representing your scheme, you can join by emailing getinvolved@canterbury.gov.uk

Liz Stewart, Chair of Independent Living Forum

Resident Engagement Panel

Over the last six months, we've been helping the council with making changes to the housing service after the regulator said it needed to improve.

We've had performance meetings with our heating repairs contractor Sureserve, made changes to the new standard for the council's empty homes, reviewed the tenant survey responses, started to help draft a new pet policy and reviewed a recharges policy which looks at how much the council can charge for repairs that are the tenant's responsibility.

All these things make a big difference to the lives of tenants. We work closely with the council to make sure their voice is heard throughout every decision-making process.

Sheila King, Chair of Resident Engagement Panel

Disability Forum

Since the Disability Forum was started in September 2023, we've made some big changes to the lives of disabled tenants.

These include drafting an adaptations policy which looks at the changes tenants can request to make their home suitable for their needs, reviewing the adaptations process and communication methods, starting a Disability Champions scheme among council staff, helping draft a mobility scooter policy and reviewing the tenant survey data specifically for disabled tenants.

We continue to keep the voice of disabled tenants at the heart of everything we do and will continue to push for improvements to be made.

Mike Francis,
Chair of the Disability Forum

Communications Group

The Communications Group has made some big changes recently by working very closely with the council.

We meet once a month and sometimes more if needed. It's important that we push the council to improve their communication with tenants – we know this from reading tenants' feedback from the annual tenant survey.

Over the last year, we've made significant changes to contractor letters, drafted satisfaction surveys, helped to write tenant newsletters, reviewed the performance of PartnershipOne – the company

the council employs to manage its customer services - and created Housing Hub drop-ins giving tenants the opportunity to meet their Neighbourhood Management Officer in person.

Every day, we're pushing for the council to improve its communication methods. If you have any feedback on the communication you've had, please do let us know.

You can contact us directly by emailing tenantcommsgroup@canterbury.gov.uk

John Shilling, Chair of the Communications Group

GARDEN COMPETITION

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to enter the garden competition. In July, we visited 19 gardens and it was amazing to see such beautiful outdoor spaces. In August, we held an award ceremony for the winners and highly commended gardens. This was a fantastic event attended by tenants, staff, contractors, councillors and the Lord Mayor. We want to say a special thank you to our sponsors Cardo, PF Electrical, Town & Country Cleaners, VPro Solutions, CPE Projects, Canenco and Grovewell Garden Centre (Herne Bay) for providing great prizes!

We look forward to hosting another garden competition in 2027 – keep your eyes peeled for entry details. If you have any questions or would like to contact the organisers, please email getinvolved@canterbury.gov.uk



Garden clean-up inspiration

We hope you have been enjoying your outdoor spaces this summer. One Canterbury resident has worked hard to clear her garden after struggling to keep on top of it during Covid.

Over time, rubbish built up and weeds became difficult to manage. After her Housing Officer made contact, the tenant got back in touch by text and began getting support from the council and other services.

With advice, encouragement, and help from friends and family, she cleared the garden bit by bit. It is now a safe, empty space for her children to play in.

Her Housing Officer said: "I'm very proud of how far the tenant has come. It took courage to speak to services and get the help she deserves. She's done a brilliant job clearing her garden."

If you're finding things difficult and need support, contact your Neighbourhood Management Officer on **01227 862 000** or email generaltenancyenquiries@canterbury.gov.uk

How to...

HERE IS HOW TO GET
IN TOUCH AND ALL
YOU NEED TO KNOW

...make a complaint, comment or compliment

We aim to provide a good service for you. However, we don't always get it right. On these occasions, we want to know about it so that we can prevent it from happening again. If you would like to make a complaint, please use our online form at canterbury.gov.uk/complaints.

We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days and send you a formal reply within 10 working days of this. If you do not agree with our reply you can make a stage 2 complaint following the instructions on your stage 1 letter.

You can view our full complaints procedure on our website canterbury.gov.uk/complaints

If you've received a good experience

with the housing service, you can make a comment or compliment by visiting canterbury.gov.uk/compliments

If you're not online or prefer to use the phone, you can raise a complaint, make a comment or compliment by calling **01227 862 000**.



...make an improvement to your home

To make a house a home, you might want to make a few improvements – we get it. Before you make any changes to your home, please email generaltenancyenquiries@canterbury.gov.uk or call **01227 862 000** to get permission.

You don't need permission for small jobs like painting walls or putting up pictures.

However, you do need permission for bigger changes such as turning a window into a door, putting up an external structure, or changing kitchen and bathroom units.

If you have any questions about getting permission, please contact us using the details above.

...report a repair

General household, water or electricity

For any general household or shared area repairs, water or electricity problems, you can report them directly to our contractor Cardo on **01227 202 321**, or use our online form at canterbury.gov.uk/repairs

Please make sure you tell us anything we need to know for when our repair staff visit - like that you have difficulty hearing or need extra time to answer the door. Anyone who carries out a repair at your home will have an ID card, so ask them for it if you're not sure who they are.

Gas or central heating repairs

For problems with your gas or central heating, you can call Sure Serve on **0800 987 4033**.

If the problem is in a communal boiler room, you can report it to Robert Heath Heating Limited using our repair form at canterbury.gov.uk/repairs or call them on **0203 7643 959**.



...pay your rent

We offer a range of simple and secure ways to pay your rent. Before making any payment, please have your **payment reference number** ready (you'll find this on our letters, emails and text messages).

Our quickest and easiest payment options:

- **Direct Debit (recommended)**
Set up a Direct Debit any time, day or night. You can choose to have your payments collected on the 1st or 15th of each month.
- **Pay by phone**
Call **01227 862 427** and follow the instructions to make a payment using your debit or credit card.
- **Pay online**
Visit **canterbury.gov.uk/housingrent** to make a secure payment online.

Other ways to pay:

Standing order or bank transfer

Use your payment reference number when making a payment using the details below.

Bank: Westminster Bank PLC
Account name: Canterbury City Council

Account number: 00000000
Sort code: 62-13-48

- **PayPoint:** You can pay at any **PayPoint** outlet using a rent payment card. Email **rents@canterbury.gov.uk** to request a payment card.

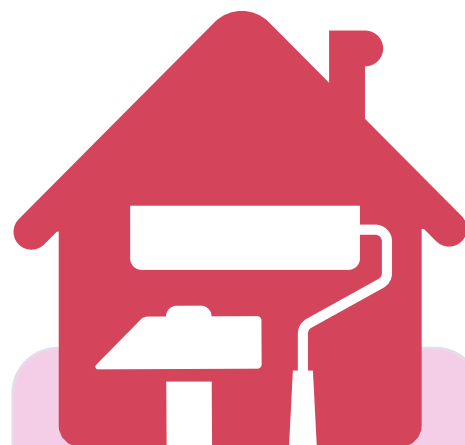
...request for help with your rent

If you're struggling to pay your rent, or other bills within your household please do let us know as soon as possible.

We have a friendly and helpful team there to support you when you need it.

They can offer great advice, support with benefit claims and be an ear to listen.

You can find out more about getting help with your rent in our tenant handbook at **canterbury.gov.uk/tenanthandbook** or you can contact the team directly by calling **01227 862 142** or email **bandm@canterbury.gov.uk**



...request an adaptation

If you need a change to your home to make it easier for you to live, this may be to support getting around, using the toilet, or to enter your home easier, you can request an adaptation.

You must first contact an occupational therapist to assess your medical needs.

You will then be referred to us to approve the adaptations or aids you need.

It's important you do this as soon as possible, so that a home visit can be arranged.

For minor adaptations like hand or grab rails, you should email **social.services@kent.gov.uk**.

For bigger adaptations like shower rooms or stair lifts, you need to call adult services on **03000 416 161**.

If the adaptations are for a child under 18, you need to call children's services on **03000 411 111**.

You can find more information about the process on our website **canterbury.gov.uk/adaptations**

Thinking of moving home?

What you need to do

Here's a quick guide to ending your tenancy and moving out.

1. Give notice

To end your tenancy, you must give at least four weeks' notice in writing and tell us your forwarding address. Returning your keys on its own does not end your tenancy and you will still be charged rent until your tenancy ends. All tenancies end on a Sunday.

Give notice online at canterbury.gov.uk/endtenancy or write to: **14 Rose Lane, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2UR**. Include your full name, address, and that you want to end your tenancy.

You may have different notice arrangements if you are:

- moving to another council home nominated by us: you'll complete a surrender form with your officer/manager and agree your last day. Your tenancy normally ends the Sunday after you return your keys. If you return keys by noon on the Monday your new tenancy starts, your old tenancy ends the day before.
- transferring to another council property: you do not need to give 28 days' notice.
- moving from a temporary council property while a homeless application is being processed: you do not need to give 28 days' notice.
- moving into residential care or sheltered housing that is not council-owned/managed: you must give 28 days' notice.

2. Pre-inspection visit

After you give notice, we'll arrange a visit to your home.

We use this visit to:

- spot any repairs or work needed
- explain what you need to do before you leave
- answer any questions about moving out

3. Before you move out

Please make sure you:

- remove all belongings and rubbish
- clean the property
- clear gardens, sheds and balconies
- return all keys, fobs and parking permits
- Check and make arrangements to pay your rent up until moving out day rents@canterbury.gov.uk

You may be charged if:

- you leave the home dirty or not empty and we have to clear it
- repairs you are responsible for are not done, or you have damaged the property
- you made changes without our permission
- someone is still living in the property after you leave and we have to take court action

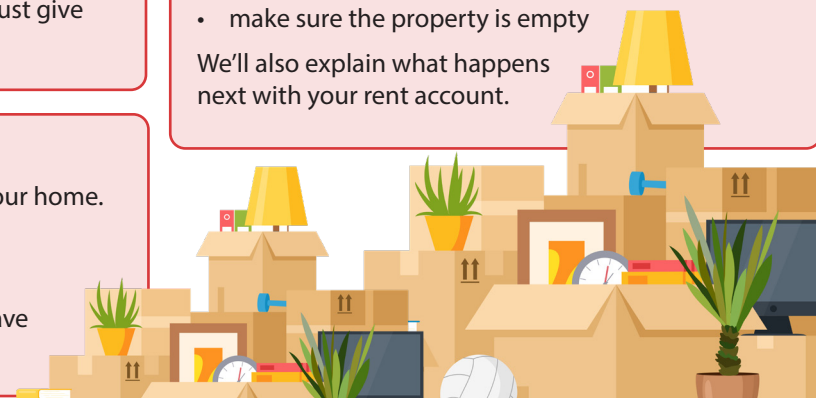
Leaving the home clean and in good condition helps avoid extra charges and helps us let it again much sooner.

4. Moving out day

On your tenancy end date, please:

- return your keys by noon on the Monday your tenancy ends.
- Make sure you have paid all outstanding rent.
- post the keys through the council letterbox at **14 Rose Lane, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2UR** in a clearly labelled envelope. If keys are late, you may be charged extra rent.
- tell your utility and service providers - gas, electric, water, phone, internet - that you are moving
- leave any gas/electric meter keys in the meter
- close all windows and doors and lock up
- make sure the property is empty

We'll also explain what happens next with your rent account.



NEED HELP?

If you have questions, contact the Voids and Lettings team:
voidsandlettings@canterbury.gov.uk

We're here to help.

Protect your home from fire risks



Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) is dedicated to helping to keep people safe. Part of its work includes visiting people in their homes, providing advice on fire safety and helping them stay safe.

Free home fire safety visits are available to anyone who:

- is aged 70 or over
- is living with dementia
- has a long-term health condition
- has young children or is pregnant
- is a smoker

To request a visit, you can complete a form on KFRS website using this link kent.fire-uk.org/hfsv

Keeping communal areas clear

We know this may be a bit of a boring message that you've heard many times before. But it's important for those of you who live in blocks.

Please do not store any personal items in communal areas.

Our Neighbourhood Management Officers often see items in hallways and stored under the stairs.

We ask you not to do this as it's a fire hazard, the cleaners can't do their job and it looks messy.

We all have that cupboard or drawer of doom – once you start chucking things in you can't stop, let's try not to do this with communal hallways.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Neighbourhood Management Team on generaltenancyenquiries@canterbury.gov.uk or call **01227 862 142**.



Spot the signs of a scam



Scams are getting more convincing.

Be wary of unexpected calls or messages from someone:

- claiming to be the police, your bank or the council
- anyone asking you to withdraw cash or hand over cards/valuables to a courier
- online friends who quickly ask for money
- ads for guaranteed investments, including ones using AI or celebrity-style endorsements.

If you're not sure, **stop, hang up and call 101** (or 999 if someone is at your door or you feel unsafe). Never share bank details or hand anything over. Report it to your bank on **159** and to Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040**.

If you're interested in finding out what's going on within your area, you can join Kent Police's My Community Voice by visiting kent.police.uk and searching for My Community Voice.

Spotlight: Spring Lane Neighbourhood Centre

If you're looking for a friendly place to pop in, meet people and get involved locally, Spring Lane Neighbourhood Centre is a great one to know about. It's run by Barbara Munns and her team, who do a brilliant job of bringing the community together and putting on activities for all ages and abilities.

As well as the sessions listed here, the centre has a garden that's cared for by volunteers and young people.

They also offer free out-of-school activities and often get involved in fun days, litter picks and fundraising events. Want to find out more?

You can contact Barbara on **01227 477 960** or email **barbara.munns@canterbury.gov.uk**

Spring Lane Neighbourhood Centre, Sussex Avenue, Canterbury, CT1 1RT

Tuesdays

Route 23 Community Cafe

9am to 3pm Open to everyone

Wednesdays

Craft and yoga alternative weeks

Open to all abilities 1pm to 2.30pm (contact the centre to find out which week)

Zen Den - for a group for young people age 7 to 18 years which promotes positive mental wellbeing 4pm to 5pm

Multi skills sports

for ages 7 to 18 years 5pm to 6pm

Thursdays

Kids Club - for ages 7 to 12 years including crafts, games, cooking and more 4pm to 6pm

Fridays

Rising Sun drop-in cafe 10am to 12pm

Saturday

First Saturday of every month
Armed Forces and Veterans Hub
10am to 12pm

Warm Homes project

We have started our Warm Homes Project to make 818 council homes warmer, more energy efficient and cheaper to heat. This is a three-year project to improve homes so they can reach Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C by 2030.

The project is partly funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

So far, we have carried out 827 home assessments to find the properties most in need of these improvements and check which homes are eligible.

The project is now underway in two phases. We have completed technical surveys, drawn up plans for each property and carried out air tests.

This helps us make sure each home gets the right improvements to make it warmer, healthier and better ventilated. Our contractor, Axis, has now started installing these measures.

These improvements may include:

- insulating walls, lofts and hot water cylinders
- installing double glazing or new doors
- upgrading heating controls
- improving ventilation installing energy-efficient lighting

If your home is included in the project, we will contact you. If you have any questions about the Warm Homes Project, you can email **retrofit@canterbury.gov.uk**

What are your views on this newsletter?

We're currently working with our Tenant Communications Group to refresh our newsletters. We'd love to know your opinion!

- Do you think they have helpful and handy information in?
- Do you enjoy reading them?
- Is there anything else we should include here?

You can send your comments to **getinvolved@canterbury.gov.uk**

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



Would you prefer to receive this newsletter via email? Sign up to our mailing list by emailing **getinvolved@canterbury.gov.uk**