

# Kingston Council - Housing Services end of year performance report

1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021

## Welcome and introduction from Cllr Emily Davey, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Welcome to our first online report to Housing Residents. This review sets out our performance over the last year, managing homes and delivering services during the pandemic and during a time when residents and contractors were coping with lockdown and living and working at home for most of the year.

We know how tough it has been for residents and I am proud that we kept essential services going during this challenging time. We are looking forward to this year and resuming services face to face, taking the best of what we learnt working digitally during COVID-19.

We know there is more to do to improve services, we, and the senior management team are committed to working with residents to bring about change and improvement.

Best regards  
Councillor Emily Davey.

## Welcome and introduction from David Miller Chair of KRISP (Kingston Residents Independent Scrutiny Panel)

Over the last year KRiSP panel members, who are volunteers, looked at the experience of leaseholders in applying to buy their home and the work of the Leaseholder Forum.

A report was presented to the Housing Board and the recommendations accepted for implementation. The group is looking for new volunteers to join the group and take part in the review of services. Interested? Please contact [involvedinhousing@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:involvedinhousing@kingston.gov.uk) or [visit the webpages](#) to find out more about the work we do.

Best regards  
David Miller Chair of KRISP

## Rent collection

Arrears balance as a percentage of the rent charged

End of year result 2.7%

Target 3.2%

Arrears all activities £778,140 (£27.5 million charged). The income team has worked with residents over this year to maintain rent payments and agree terms, when customers have fallen into debt due to furlough, losing a job or change of circumstances. The council offers help with rent and Benefits through the Financial Inclusion Team & Welfare Reform Team.

During the year the FIT team gained £120,000 in additional benefits for residents and £241,000 help towards rent. A fantastic result. If you are struggling with rent or other essential bills contact FIT on 020 8547 5591 or email [financialinclusion@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:financialinclusion@kingston.gov.uk).

## Business Assurance and Compliance

RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences) notifiable accident: 0.

Properties with a valid gas certificate: 98.8%.

Properties with a valid fire risk assessment: 100%.

This year we know that some residents have been reluctant to let us in to carry out essential checks on the heating system or electrics in their home, due to COVID-19.

Our engineers always work safely, maintaining social distancing and taking care when working in your home. Please let us in when you are contacted about a safety check. Thank you.

## Customer satisfaction with responsive repairs

Customers satisfied with repairs: 84%

Target: 87%

Kingston Council received 95 formal complaints about the housing service in the last year.

Complaints responded to in target time: 46%

The council had two complaints taken to the Independent Housing Ombudsman and we were found to have administered the complaint poorly.

Overall, the formal complaints received were about the following service areas:

Repairs and servicing of your home: 37

Block, estate or communal repairs: 16

Staff attitude, conduct or behaviour: 10

Wish to move home: 1

Managing Anti-Social Behaviour: 9

General service issues or complex complaints: 22

The volume of complaints received about repairs remains small compared to the number of repairs ordered.

From 1st July 2021 Axis have now taken on the reporting of repairs. This will help improve your experience so that when you call to report a repair the request will be scheduled, and you will be offered the next available appointment for the repair to be started.

If you are interested in working with us to monitor the performance of the repairs contract with Axis and be part of the Residents Repairs Panel contact us on [involvedinhousing@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:involvedinhousing@kingston.gov.uk).

## Empty homes and lettings

The average number of days it has taken to re-let general needs homes: 46 days. Target: 23 days.  
The average number of days it has taken to re-let homes for older people: 140 days. Target: 28 days.

We know that some of our housing for older people is hard to let. We have commissioned an independent review of retirement housing in 2021 focussing on housing schemes where there are bedsit flats and shared bathing facilities which is harder to let.

Properties empty for more than 100 days include 125 voids in total, including those on the Cambridge Road Estate.

Completing lettings safely during the pandemic was a challenge - to keep socially distanced and undertake a viewing or sign up of the tenancy.

Generally, the council had fewer homes available to let undertaking just 65 sign-ups for general needs homes.

Sadly, this means there are long waiting times for a move to suitable alternative accommodation.

In future years the council is building new homes for local people in the Borough. The first start on site will be in Chessington, using spare housing land to build new homes for rent.

If you are interested in moving home please think about a mutual exchange as another way to find your ideal property.

## Losing your home (Evictions)

Number of evictions 0.

Number of Right to Buy completions 7.

## Resident Engagement

Francis Moseley Awards were given to leaders in their local community, particularly those people helping with the response to the Coronavirus. Congratulations to Mary Parmar, for her work on the Alpha Road Estate in Surbiton.

Remarkable ambassadors for the Borough are Des Kay & Tariq Shabbeer for their work on the Save the World deliveries of excess supermarket food to donate to people in need, during lockdown.

Residents involved in contract monitoring and procurement include tenants and leaseholders who became involved in the dialogue with suppliers for grounds maintenance services earlier this year.

KRISP review of leasehold services identified many positives in the homeownership service and made recommendations to strengthen our way of including leaseholders in the delivery of services.

## Where every £1 is spent

Contributions to future major stock repairs and maintenance: 30p

Housing staff: 16p

Repairs and maintenance: 16

Debt charges: 15p

Corporate services: 11p

Bad debts: 2p

Premises: 3p

Office costs, banking, telephones, IT: 1p

Legal and professional fees: 1p

Grounds maintenance: 2p

Miscellaneous, eg - transport/insurance: 3p

## Our people - who's who in Housing Services

Resident Services Officers are the main point of contact about your tenancy. We have a team of eight staff that manage over 4500 properties in Kingston.

Claudia Cain [Cludia.cain@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Cludia.cain@kingston.gov.uk)

Richard Grainge [Richard.Grainge@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.Grainge@kingston.gov.uk)

Margaret Reynolds [Margaret.Reynolds@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Margaret.Reynolds@kingston.gov.uk)

Anthonia Shodiya [Anthonia.Shodiya@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Anthonia.Shodiya@kingston.gov.uk)

Margaret Hazel [Margaret.Hazel@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Margaret.Hazel@kingston.gov.uk)

Kate Bowers [kate.bowers@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:kate.bowers@kingston.gov.uk)

Sadie Cowen [sadie.cowen@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:sadie.cowen@kingston.gov.uk)

Adeola Dinah [Adeola.Dinah@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Adeola.Dinah@kingston.gov.uk)

Scheme Managers are the main point of contact for residents living in Sheltered Housing. We have a team of five staff that manage over 770 properties in Kingston.

Team Email: [bandypersonshousing@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:bandypersonshousing@kingston.gov.uk)

Chris Egan - Charles Lesser, Coxwold Path, Reynolds Avenue, Bidmead Court, School Lane.

Sarah O'Reilly - Charles Sumner, Percy Court, Mayford.

Jayne Barnes - Edinburgh court, Edith Gardens, Alfriston, Vine Close, Hugh Herland.

Rebecca Johnston - Sobraon House, Dowler Court, Delft House, Lovekyn Close, Ayliffe Court.

Neuza Castro - Fountain Court, Gooding Close, Gilpin House, Merryweather Court, Rowan Close.

## Home Ownership Team

Dennis Sullivan - Right To Buy Applications

Danny Massingham - Lease extensions, permissions

Sam Bennett - Consultation for major works and contracts

## Financial Inclusion Team

If you are struggling with rent or other essential bills:

Lavinia Osbourne - Financial Inclusion Lead.

Team email: [financialinclusion@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:financialinclusion@kingston.gov.uk).

#### Income and Collection Team

Main point of contact for enquiries regarding your rent account.

Michael Keen - Rent Arrears Recovery Lead

Richard Quirk - Rent Arrears Recovery Lead

Craig Venes - Rent Arrears Recovery Lead

Debbie St Pierre - Rent Arrears Recovery Lead (Temporary Accommodation)

Team email: [incomerecovery\\_managers@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:incomerecovery_managers@kingston.gov.uk).

Thanks for reading!