

# Open Door

Spring 2022



**For the Tenants & Leaseholders of Cambridge City Council**



# Contents

## Council services online 3

- Your housing account online 3
- Covid-19 vaccination and help 3

## Repairs & maintenance 4

- Two kinds of maintenance 4
- Obligatory safety checks 4
- Acting on your feedback 5

## Your housing staff 6

- The Customer Service Centre 6
- Your housing services 6
- Who to contact 7
- Standards you can expect 7

## Homes & estates 8

- Clearing communal areas 8
- Actions for zero tolerance 8
- Report anti-social behaviour 9
- Noise and smoke complaints 9

## Help for communities 10

- Easy ways to get fitter 10
- Connected and well informed 10
- Tackling domestic abuse 11
- Grants for residents in need 11

## Residents' involvement 12

- What residents have achieved 12
- 47 services they influenced 12
- Enter the *Garden Competition* 13
- Free offers for residents 13

## Actions for our climate 14

- Recycle electrical items 14
- Save money on water bills 14

## Leaseholders 15

- Legalities of subletting 15
- Services for leaseholders 15

## You need to know 16

- Sources of financial help 16
- How to contact services 16



**David Greening**  
Head of Housing Services

Welcome to this edition of *Open Door*.

With Spring ahead and the Covid-19 crisis hopefully winding down, this edition brings you lots of resources and support that will help you make the most of the finer months ahead.

The *Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey* in 2020 showed us that you wanted better, easier communication with the City Council and its services. We have been working on those improvements.

More and more of our services are now available 24/7 online, and the next edition of *Open Door* will introduce you to the new telephony system that we are about to launch, to make it even easier for you to contact us.

Meanwhile, a double spread on pages 4 and 5 of this edition gives you a clear overview of your repairs and maintenance service - exactly what they do, how to get the most from their services, the response times you can expect from them, and the improvements they have made in response to your survey feedback. Pages 6 and 7 go on to introduce the staff teams that help with every other aspect of your tenancy. You will see the different services they provide, how best to contact them, and the service guarantees that they offer you.

Page 9 highlights services which can help you deal with anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisances, such as noise or bonfire smoke. Page 15 provides clarity about the Council's services for leaseholders. And on page 8 you will see the progress made on the Council's commitment to keep all communal areas on estates totally clear, to ensure fire safety for all.

The rest of this edition is about you. It is full of free services and offers that will help residents to bounce back post-Covid. Page 10 promotes ways to get active and fitter. A feature on your local library shows all the free ways the library can keep you connected, informed, and warmly supported by your community. Page 11 highlights funds and grants for those aged 16-30, to help with training or new jobs, while page 13 brings free loans of computer tablets, and a free grass-cutting service for those who need it.

Finally, page 12 provides an overview of the amazing amount that has been achieved through tenants' and leaseholders' involvement in the past year: they have actively shaped and influenced no fewer than 47 different council services, from the design of new housing developments to the choice of communal cleaning contractor on your estates. We look forward to your ongoing collaboration and feedback as our services continue to evolve.

With best wishes,  
David Greening



### Receive *Open Door* electronically

Why not receive *Open Door* by email instead of on paper? It's easy to read on any device with wifi, at the same time saving on paper and carbon footprint. To receive it by email instead of post, visit <https://camcit.co/opendooremail>

One copy of *Open Door* is sent to each council home. If you'd like to request another copy for a joint tenant, please email [opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk)

An editorial panel of council tenants and leaseholders help to select and edit the content of every edition of *Open Door*, to ensure it continues to reflect residents' needs and interests. To get involved, email [opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk)

*All information was correct when going to print, but could change quickly due to Covid-19*

*All main photos are by Emily Downey*

*Cover photo shows a wildflower meadow on Parker's Piece*

# Your own housing account online



Have you started using your online *MyCambridge* portal yet? Lots of residents have registered now to use it to access the Council's services, at the top right-hand corner of the Council's website at [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk)

## Your housing account online

As a council tenant or leaseholder, it means you can then also register to have 24/7 access to your own private housing account online. It's a confidential space dedicated to your personal housing information.

Once logged in to your account, you can use it to book your own repairs and appointments, check and print out the current status of your rent account, or view your past rent payments and any rent or arrears that are due. You can update your personal information,

order a new rent payment card, and much more. If you need any help with getting started at using your online housing account or other online services, just book an appointment at Mandela House by phoning 01223-457070.

## Other services on your *MyCambridge* portal

Over 8,000 Cambridge residents are already using their *MyCambridge* portal to manage the council services that they use, or want to request. On there, as well as your housing account, you can also manage your Council Tax account, claim benefits, notify about a change of circumstances or request a new bin.

You can use the portal to quickly and easily report issues you see while you're out and about - from litter to fly-tipping, fallen branches to graffiti. You can even show the exact location: your report goes straight to council staff out in the community, ready to deal with it.

Or why not use the portal to claim a free tree to commemorate your new baby's birth? Or to request a tree protection order on a special tree in the city? New services are constantly being added in to the portal. Soon you will be able to use it to report things like damage

to benches or bus shelters, play areas or public toilets. And you will be able to track the response online, seeing when the action you requested will be completed.

## Accessing your council services

To deliver council services in the most efficient way possible, face to face meetings with council staff are by appointment only. If you are thinking of contacting them, please check first whether you can get the service or information you need more quickly and easily online. But if you have an essential need to meet staff in person, phone 01223-457000.

You can make payments to the Council online or by phone, or at locations like the Post Office. For more information, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk)

Those without internet access can still contact the Council by phoning 01223-457000. For service updates relating to Covid-19, visit [www.https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-changes-to-our-services](https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-changes-to-our-services)

To be notified of updates to the Council's website, register at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/subscribe-for-emailalerts](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/subscribe-for-emailalerts)

# Covid-19 vaccinations and support

It's never too late to get vaccinated against Covid-19.

## Walk-in any day, 8.30am-4pm:

- at the Grafton Centre, CB1 1PS

## Later walk-in, 4pm-7.30pm on Wednesdays:

- at the Grafton Centre, CB1 1PS

## Pre-booked vaccinations:

- At *Boots*, Newmarket Road, *Welfare Pharmacy*, Trumpington or *Chesterton Indoor Bowls Club*, Chesterton

To find a vaccination centre near you, visit [www.thevaccinators.co.uk](http://www.thevaccinators.co.uk) or phone the NHS booking line at 119.

To book a specific time-slot for a vaccination or a Covid-19 test, visit the NHS website at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)

Pop-up vaccination events are also taking place regularly: for their additional dates and venues, check [www.thevaccinators.co.uk](http://www.thevaccinators.co.uk)

## Free transport to your vaccination - the *Vaxi Taxi Scheme*

If you would struggle to get to and from a vaccine appointment, the County Council can provide free transport to vaccinations for those who need it.

For phone numbers of local participating taxi-firms, visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/covid](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/covid) (If you don't have access to the internet, 01223-971611 and 01223-715715 are among the Cambridge city taxi-numbers participating.)

First, ensure you have booked your appointment, or if it is at a walk-in clinic, check when your nearest centre is open before booking the time of your taxi.

Phone the taxi-firm to book your transport. They will ask you to confirm details of the appointment when you book your journey.

They can also pick you up to take you home, so long as your journey home starts no more than an hour after your appointment.

## Test and Trace Support Payments

At the time of going to print, the final *Test & Trace Support Payments* were being awarded by the City Council to eligible people who suffered loss of income due to being told by the NHS to self-isolate with Covid-19. You must have been told to self-isolate on or before 23-2-2022. And you must apply within 42 days of the first date of your self-isolation.

You must have tested positive after a PCR test or an assisted rapid lateral flow test. A positive lateral flow test done at home by yourself isn't enough. You must also have taken a PCR test to confirm you were positive, and show a reference number confirming you uploaded your details to the NHS *Test and Trace* website at <https://covid19.nhs.uk> To see eligibility and applications, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/test-and-trace-support-payment](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/test-and-trace-support-payment)

If you have difficulty accessing food while ill with Covid-19, visit <https://cambridgesustainablefood.org/updates-and-info-covid-19> \*

\* All the information in this article was correct at time of going to print, but may change rapidly.



Twitter:  
[@camcitco](https://twitter.com/camcitco)



[youtube.com/cambridgecitycouncil](https://youtube.com/cambridgecitycouncil)



[cambridge.gov.uk/opendoor](http://cambridge.gov.uk/opendoor)



# Your repairs and maintenance service

## Two kinds of maintenance

### What is planned maintenance?

The Council's planned, preventive maintenance is done on a cyclical basis. It helps keep your property in good condition and prevents problems. It is a proactive approach to maintenance, designed to avoid failures, breakages, unexpected maintenance costs and unplanned repairs.

It is usually carried out at the same time on properties in one geographical area, and is usually non-urgent. To ensure value for money, it can be done as part of a large programme. Residents can be kept fully informed, including on the extent of the works and their timescales.

Examples of planned maintenance include programmes to replace building components such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows and roofs, according to the average life span of these components as dictated by the government's *Decent Homes Standard*.

The *Decent Homes Standard* says kitchens should be replaced after 25 years; bathrooms after 40 years; windows after 40 years; and roof

structure and covering after 50 years. Repair and painting of previously painted surfaces (like external masonry, wooden doors, windows, soffit and fascias) are currently done on a 7-year cycle. The Council is also investing in energy efficiency improvements in some trial locations, including loft, cavity and external wall insulation, photovoltaic panel arrays and renewable technologies.

### What is a responsive repair?

By contrast, responsive repairs are minor repairs or routine maintenance that the Council does in response to a tenant's request. If non-urgent, this work may be 'batched' so jobs can be done together. It includes repairs to vacated properties before they are re-let.

The Council's in-house team deliver this service, doing about 16,000 repairs per year, as well as repairs to about 340 vacated properties before re-letting.

There are 3 categories of responsive repairs, with different target times for completion which you can see at the bottom of the page opposite. For contact details to request a repair, see page 7.

## Safety checks on your home

### Fines for not keeping gas check appointments

'Compliance servicing' and testing are required to ensure the Council complies with all the laws surrounding buildings and premises. It includes gas servicing, electrical inspections, fire risk assessments, inspection of smoke alarms, etc. It ensures that gas and electrical installations in your home are safe and working properly. It is usually carried out at fixed intervals that are set out in law.

Your *Tenancy Agreement* states that you must allow access to your home so that council gas appliances or central heating can receive an annual service and inspection. This is for the safety of your own household and your neighbours.

Even if you don't have gas appliances or mains, you must still allow the Council's contractor, Mears, access to your home to verify it is safe. Gas appliances not owned by the Council are not serviced - we strongly advise that you get them serviced annually to ensure safety.

### Win £100

Keeping your first gas service appointment enters you into a monthly draw to win £100. If the appointment isn't suitable, please phone Freephone 0333-207-0766 to rearrange.

### Or pay £100 penalty...

But if you fail to be at home and allow entry for a third inspection appointment booked with you, the Council has legal powers to gain entry to your home to carry out these safety checks that are required by law.

You will be charged for this. Costs are currently £50 if we arrive on the day of the service and you are at home to let us in. (The Council will have already incurred this cost by bringing a locksmith to the appointment.) But if you are not at home and the locksmith has to intervene to gain entry to the property, you will be charged £100.

For more information, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-tenants](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-tenants) or phone 01223-457070.

## Acting on your feedback

Your feedback on repairs and maintenance in the 2020 *Tenants' and Leaseholders' Satisfaction Survey* was mostly positive. Nonetheless, the service has taken specific actions to improve on any areas of low satisfaction. Below is your 2020 feedback, along with the specific actions the service has taken since then, to improve these customer satisfaction rates.

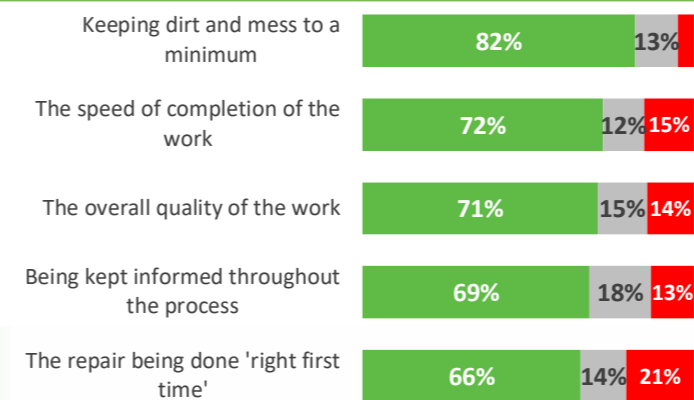
### Happy with your repair?



#### The Council is improving on this by:

- doing follow-up satisfaction surveys, to see why 16% are dissatisfied, and what could improve their satisfaction
- piloting a new 'MOT' type service for repairs

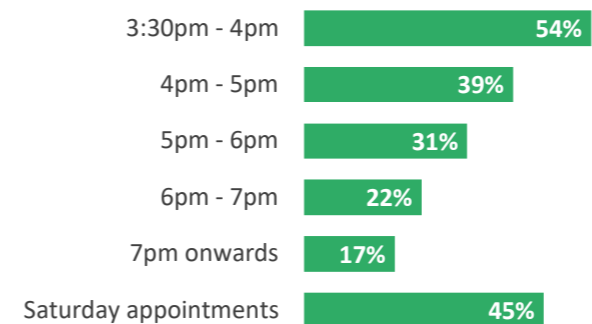
### Happy with aspects of your repair job?



#### The Council is improving this by:

- keeping tenants informed with a text message before their appointment
- letting tenants see online the status of their repair job, and letting them book future appointments
- monitoring why certain repairs aren't completed first time, to reduce these numbers
- examining specific causes of dissatisfaction with speed or quality, and giving staff training and equipment to remedy it

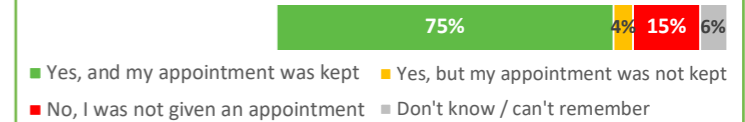
### Happy with appointment times?



#### The Council is improving these by:

- trialling adding appointments for after 5pm and on Saturdays, later this year

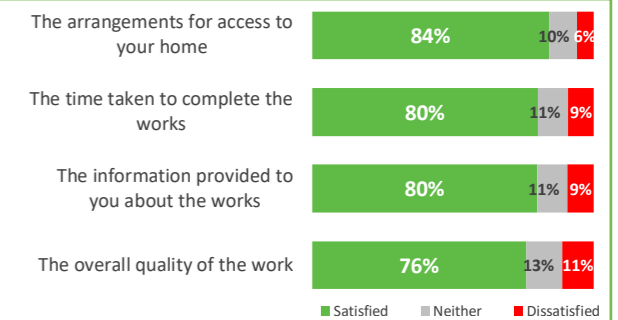
### Were you given an appointment?



#### The Council is improving this by:

- giving all future repairs, apart from emergencies, an appointment
- letting tenants now book their own appointments online, with a choice of date and time

### Happy with any planned works?



#### The Council is improving this by:

- surveying the satisfaction of everyone who receives planned maintenance work
- following up on every report of low satisfaction, to remedy them promptly

### Turnaround times you can expect

#### Emergency repairs - within 24 hours

- 31 Oct-1 May: no central heating; or no hot water for bathing
- Uncontrollable leaks in pipes, tank or cistern
- Broken windows; or insecure external doors or windows
- Loss of electrical power; or smoke alarms sounding
- Toilet not flushing, if the only toilet in the home

#### Urgent repairs - within 3 days

- 1 May-31 Oct: no central heating (temporary heaters will be delivered); or no hot water for bathing
- Repairs to lighting, switches and electrical sockets
- Sink and bath waste blockages
- Leaking pipework (if in heating pipes, phone Mears at 03332-070-766)
- Temporary roofing repairs
- Repairs to toilet pan or cistern

#### Routine repairs - within 28 days

- Kitchen units and extractor fans
- External doors and windows, and internal joinery
- Roofs and guttering
- Plastering and wall tiling
- Fencing and external paving
- Communal gates and fencing



# Your housing staff - what you can expect

## Speak to the Customer Service Centre first



Recently, a minority of tenants have been misusing the Council's Customer Service Centre. They insist on being put through to a Housing Officer, even though staff answering their call are qualified to deal with their issue.

This wastes staff time, reducing other tenants' access to staff they need. You must first discuss your issue with the Customer Service Centre: if you refuse, they will not be able to progress your call.

Customer Service Centre staff are fully trained on all the housing issues listed in the article below. They are only allowed to pass your call on to Housing Officers' teams if they are unable to deal with it themselves. They cannot just transfer it at your request. By accepting this, you help staff provide a quicker, more efficient service for all.

These two pages give a reminder of:

- the housing-related services you can now access at any time online
- the issues the Customer Service

Centre can get resolved for you when you phone 01223-457070 for housing services, or 01223-457060 for repairs

### Your Housing services online

Remember that you can now access many of our housing services through self-service online, using the *MyCambridge* customer portal on the City Council's website at <https://my.cambridge.gov.uk>

There, you can request, report or check many housing issues without needing to speak to staff. You can check your rent account, print a statement, update your personal information, and much more. You'll also find links to our online forms and systems on the relevant webpages.

So register now, and sign in at any time to check on your service requests. Some of them can send you progress reports by email.

And if you can't find what you want on the Council's website, there are contact details on each webpage so you can email or phone the relevant staff.

### Improving customer services for you

In the *Satisfaction Survey* of Cambridge City Council tenants and leaseholders in 2020, the Council as a landlord was considered easy to deal with by:

- 73% of general council tenants
- 82% of tenants in sheltered accommodation
- 55% of council leaseholders

The Council is about to launch a new, improved telephony system that should now make it much easier for you to contact the staff members you need. This new telephony system aims to improve all the customer satisfaction rates above.

The next edition of *Open Door* will introduce you to the new contact system. And it will explain the other service improvements that are also being made by your housing staff in direct response to your feedback from last year's survey.

## Who to contact

### To pay your rent

You can pay your rent:

- online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/pay-your-housing-rent](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/pay-your-housing-rent)
- over the phone at 01223-457779
- at any Post Office, or anywhere that displays the *PayPoint* sign

### To request a repair

To request a repair for your home:

- log on to your Housing Account on the Council's website at <https://housing.cambridge.gov.uk/housing/www/dashboard>
- or phone 01223-457060
- outside office hours, phone the Out-of-Hours emergency line at 0300-303-8389

See page 5 of this edition for the response times that you can expect for emergency, urgent and routine repairs, respectively.

### To report anti-social behaviour

To report anti-social behaviour or a dispute with neighbours, see the contact details for the Council's *Anti-Social Behaviour Team* overleaf on page 9 of this edition. That information shows you which issues to report to:

- the City Council's *Anti-Social Behaviour Team*
- the Council's *Environmental Health Team*
- the police

Remember that criminal offences like the following must be reported directly to the police, as explained on page 9:

- assaults or threats of violence
- drug dealing or smells of drugs
- threats on social media

But please note that the following issues cannot be addressed by council staff or police, and need to be resolved between neighbours as part of day to day living:

- sounds of babies crying
- sounds of children playing, closing doors, running up and down stairs, etc.
- disputes between children

### To exchange your council home

To exchange homes with another council tenant, start by visiting [www.exchangelocata.org.uk](http://www.exchangelocata.org.uk) or [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk) Your *Tenancy Management* team (article on page opposite, below) will process your application if you decide to proceed.

## Services provided by your housing teams

Any matters not listed here in this article should be reported to the relevant council department, not to your housing service.

### Income Management

- Rent payment and rent arrears
- budgeting advice and support
- assistance applying for benefits or grants, where necessary
- issuing vouchers

### Tenancy Management

- applications for new tenancies
- queries about your *Tenancy Agreement*
- adding someone to your tenancy
- deaths, succession, survivorship or name change requests for your tenancy
- advice on exchanging your home for another council home
- abandoned, under-occupied, over-occupied or sub-let tenancies
- renting of garages and parking spaces
- pursuing former tenants' arrears
- tenancy audits (from later this year)

### Neighbour problems

- Enforcing tenancy rules
- neighbour disputes
- animal-related nuisance
- misuse of communal areas

- misuse of parking
- overgrown gardens
- evictions

### Caring for homes

- Authorising alterations to your home
- inspections of homes
- forced entry for gas safety checks
- handling vacated properties (except on redevelopment sites)

### Caring for vulnerable tenants

- Safeguarding concerns
- supporting victims of domestic abuse
- hoarding
- liaising with other agencies, from police to social care

*Tenancy Management* staff cover geographical 'patches', handling complex aspects of the issues above that have been referred on to them by the Customer Service Centre.

These *Tenancy Management* staff may occasionally visit homes unannounced, and will always carry identity badges. But if you are ever unsure whether such a visitor is genuine, always phone the Council at 01223-457070 to confirm.

### Services on estates

Grass-cutting and maintenance of shrub beds is done by the Council's *Streets and Open Spaces Team*. The Council also provides caretaking services to some of its estates.

Communal building cleaning is done weekly by a contractor. (Future editions will give contact details for the new contract starting on April 1st.)

Residents who pay for communal window cleaning receive it from contractor *Hi-Spec* three times a year in April, August and December.

All these estate services are delivered to the *Caretaking and Cleaning Standards* of independent quality agency *Housemark*. They are monitored by housing staff, and by trained resident representatives known as *Green Inspectors*.

Estate Management staff also oversee the *Estate Improvement Scheme*, a £5 million project to improve your estates.

## Our commitments to you

Our *Tenancy Management Service Standards* have been developed with the involvement of your resident representatives. When you request a service from your housing staff, we aim wherever possible to:

- phone you back within 24 hours for emergencies
- phone you back within 5 working days for non-emergencies
- if a disclosure of Domestic Abuse has been made, phone you back within 24 hours, arranging a meeting within 5 working days
- reply to letters and emails within 7 working days
- if you request a visit, phone you back within 5 working days to arrange one
- investigate all reports of tenancy abandonment and non-occupation within 10 working days
- if you apply to exchange your home for another, give a decision within 42 days

If you wish to make a complaint about services, please visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions)

### Your Tenancy Agreement

This clarifies what the tenant remains responsible for, which includes:

- keeping communal areas clear, to ensure fire safety for all
- keeping your home in good repair, fixing any damage caused by you
- keeping your garden tidy, and pruning its trees and bushes
- quietening and cleaning up after your pets
- allowing access to your property for necessary repairs and inspections, after verifying visitors' identity
- parking considerately so you don't block access to neighbours' vehicles or property, or damage grass verges
- being responsible for the behaviour of everyone (including children) who lives in or visits your home, inside or outside
- getting council permission before making alterations to your home
- arranging home contents insurance, as the Council isn't liable for theft of or damage to your possessions

See your *Tenancy Agreement* for more details on your responsibilities and rights.





# Help for homes and estates

## Keep communal areas safe

For fire safety, residents are not allowed to leave or store anything in communal areas. Your Housing Service now has a **Zero Tolerance Policy** on this, with powers to remove items, charge offenders for costs, and get fines imposed.

Jamie Lambert is the Council's new *Engagement, Education & Enforcement Officer*, working with residents to achieve zero items in communal areas.

Through visits and responding to complaints, Jamie has already inspected over 80% of estates' communal areas. In places, he found blocked doors and entrances, or motor vehicles stored in communal areas! These are real dangers to all, both as fire hazards and as obstacles that can block emergency services from accessing residents' homes when needed.

Areas that must be kept completely clear of private possessions and dumped items include communal walkways, staircases, balconies, storage areas, access paths, gardens and drying areas.

Examples of left items found there have been bikes, pushchairs, prams, buggies, shopping trolleys, cabinets, rubbish bags and wheeled bins. Some communal areas were also obstructed with toys, carpets, plant-pots, post and newspapers.

Larger items awaiting disposal, like washing machines, fridges or mattresses, must never be left in communal areas. And fire doors to escape routes must never be wedged open.

Bicycles, mopeds or motorbikes are not allowed to be serviced or stored in communal areas, unless in designated stores provided by the Council. And mobility scooters must always be stored either inside the resident's home or away from communal areas.

As well as investing in creating a new post to ensure this, the Council is also collaborating closely with residents to achieve clear communal areas for all.

See below the list of actions the Council is taking - and the list of things you can do yourself to be part of the solution.

## Report anti-social behaviour and crime

Cambridge City Council works in partnership with the police and other agencies to help tackle and resolve anti-social behaviour and crime.

They share information as appropriate under data protection law.

Listed on the right are the type of complaints that you can report to the City Council. Crime, however, must always be reported to the police.

Most residents report anti-social behaviour to the Council online, though it is also possible to report it by phone.

If you do not have internet access yourself, you can use the internet for free at your local library or community centre.

Whatever method you choose for reporting it, please remember that **any information you provide about anti-social behaviour is given in confidence, and you also have the option of reporting it anonymously.**

### To report anti-social behaviour, eg:

- rowdy or inconsiderate behaviour
  - nuisance neighbours
  - any activity causing harassment, alarm or distress
- Phone 01223-457950  
Email [asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk)  
Report online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk) by typing 'report asb' in the search box

### To report noise nuisance, eg:

- noise from within a property, including loud music or shouting, that causes a disturbance to others
  - inconsiderate busking
  - misfiring alarms
- Phone 01223-457900  
Email [env.health@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@cambridge.gov.uk)  
Further information at [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk) by typing 'report noise' or 'pollution noise' in the search box

### To report needle finds and drug paraphernalia:

Phone 01223-458282  
Search or report at [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk) by typing 'needles' in the search box

### To report racial harassment:

Phone 01223-457967 or 07973-883-261  
Email [community.safety@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@cambridge.gov.uk)  
Further information at [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk); type 'racial' in the search box

### To report environmental issues, eg:

- graffiti
  - fly tipping or littering
  - abandoned shopping trolleys, bicycles, or vehicles
  - illegal advertising
- Phone 01223-458282  
Search at [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk) by typing 'street park maintenance' in the search box

For lost or stray dogs, and dog fouling, phone 01223-457900

### To report crime and criminal activities:

Phone the police at 101  
Or report online at [www.cambs.police.uk](http://www.cambs.police.uk)  
In an emergency, always phone 999

## Actions for zero tolerance

### How is the Council tackling this?

The Council has the following procedure for removing items left in communal areas:

- Items are tagged with a deadline for the resident to remove them.
- Otherwise, the Council will remove them, charging the resident (or all the block's residents) for the cost of this.
- Complaints are investigated to identify who is littering or fly-tipping: fines for offenders are up to £400.

The Council is closing off some under-stairs areas to prevent fly-tipping. It provides a *Bulky Waste Collection* service that disposes of large items for £30, plus £5 per additional item. And the Council's *Neighbourhood Clean-Up Events* enable residents to dispose of items for free: see [www.cambridge.gov.uk/neighbourhood-clean-up-events](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/neighbourhood-clean-up-events) for dates near you.

Where the Council has installed bike racks on estates, please do use them rather than locking your bike to railings and having it removed by the Council.

New types of bike stores are also being trialled on the estates, to find out which work best.

### What you can do...

**Report** left items or flytipping in internal communal areas: email [Jamie.Lambert@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Jamie.Lambert@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-457070.

**For flytipping** in external communal areas of estates, report online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/report-flytipping](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/report-flytipping) or phone 01223-458282.

**To complain** about communal building cleaning: email [helppoint@churchillservices.com](mailto:helppoint@churchillservices.com)  
The Council will also see those complaints.

**Arrange a Bulky Waste Collection** at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/arrange-a-bulky-waste-collection](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/arrange-a-bulky-waste-collection) or by phoning 01223-458282.

**Become a Resident Inspector**, reporting estate problems to the City Council: to sign up, email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-458323.

**See the Council's Zero Tolerance Policy** at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/9821/storage-in-communal-areas-zero-tolerance-policy.pdf](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/9821/storage-in-communal-areas-zero-tolerance-policy.pdf)

## Complaints of neighbour noise or smoke

We all have to be aware of our impact on others. If you can hear your music or TV in another room, your neighbours are probably hearing it too. If you are disturbed by neighbour noise, try asking them to reduce it, if you feel able. They may not be aware it is a problem. If this doesn't work, try the *Neighbourhood Resolution Panel Scheme* (email [community.safety@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-457950).

If this is unsuccessful, contact the City Council's *Environmental Health Team* (email [env.health@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@cambridge.gov.uk), phone 01223-457900). There are some types of noise they can't act on, but they will help if they can. They may ask you to keep a diary of the noise, or to record it on their Noise App. They can contact the offender, which often resolves the issue. In persistent cases, they can visit to assess the noise or install recording equipment. And they can serve a statutory notice on offenders.

If noise persists, enforcement action may be taken, for instance with prosecution and seizure of stereo equipment.

For more information, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/report-a-noise-issue](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/report-a-noise-issue)

### Bonfires and smoke

Bonfires are not environmentally friendly. Their smoke and smuts can prevent neighbours from enjoying their gardens, opening windows or hanging out washing. They can reduce visibility in the neighbourhood and on local roads. Allotment-holders can also cause problems if persistently burning waste near homes. Instead, use compost bins that also save money on soil improvers. Garden cuttings from lawns, hedges and flower beds can be recycled in your green bin or brown sack.

Household waste should not be burned on a bonfire. Much of it can go in your recycling bin. Large items like beds or sofas should be taken to Milton Household Waste Recycling Centre for free disposal. Or they can be collected for a small fee by phoning 01223-458282.

Information on the rules around bonfires is available at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/bonfires](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/bonfires). If, however, you are experiencing smoke or smells from illegal drug-use, you can phone the police at 101.

### Open fires and wood-burning stoves

These have risen in popularity in recent years. But smoke from neighbour's chimneys is the cause of many complaints to local authorities.

This smoke can be reduced by using better quality fuel, and by burning it more efficiently. This protects both health and the environment. For useful tips on burning efficiently, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/smoke-pollution](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/smoke-pollution)

Note that Cambridge city has three *Smoke Control Areas*. If you live in one of these, you can only burn smokeless fuel. Or if you want to burn coal or wood in these areas, you must install an exempt heating appliance that burns off its own smoke.

Even if you don't live in a *Smoke Control Area*, please do minimise your emissions by burning smokeless fuel or installing an exempt heating appliance. For further information, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/smoke-pollution](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/smoke-pollution)



# Help for communities this Spring

## Free, easy ways to feel better

**Join the Movement** is a free public service providing online tips and resources for keeping active in and around your own home. Have a look at their free activities at [www.sportengland.org/jointhemovement](http://www.sportengland.org/jointhemovement)

**NHS online workouts**  
The *NHS Fitness Studio* website has 10-minute workouts that fit easily into your daily schedule at home. Visit [www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio)

**Return To Fitness online**  
To get more active with a choice of different exercise classes, sign up for the City Council's *Return To Fitness* programme, online with Cambridge-based fitness instructors.

When you register, you'll receive access to 8 different video workouts and healthy lifestyle tips, that you can work through at your own pace.

Start any time, taking part when and where it suits you, at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/online-fitness-activities](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/online-fitness-activities)

**Walk Before You Run**  
This very successful online course supports you to improve your walking fitness over four weeks, before later starting a beginners' running programme if you wish.

Each week it guides you through 3 walking sessions and a 15-minute strength workout. You do the sessions at a time, place and pace that suit you. Visit <https://getmovingcam.thinkific.com/courses/walk-before-you-run>

**Relax & Unwind Workout @ Home**  
Six sessions of yoga, meditation, self-massage and calm breathing. Follow them at your own pace, in your own time. They are at <https://getmovingcam.thinkific.com/courses/relax-and-unwind>

**Wellbeing Yoga Workout @ Home**  
This four-session programme helps keep you flexible. No previous yoga experience needed. You can either do the sessions in order, or in any order you choose. Visit <https://getmovingcam.thinkific.com/courses/wellbeing-yoga>

### Wellbeing Walks

These short, friendly community walks help you stay more active and connected. Led by trained volunteers, they are free to join and everybody is welcome. Connect with others and with nature, for physical and mental wellbeing.

#### Friendly walks - just turn up!

- At 10am on the fourth Thursday of the month at Nightingale Community Garden, Nightingale Avenue, CB1 8SQ. Join Walk Leader David for a friendly, inclusive, gently-paced walk in Nightingale Park. Meet at the seating area in the Community Garden inside the park. David will support you to walk at a pace suitable for you, with rest stops as needed.
- Or join a walk at 2pm every Wednesday outside Abbey Leisure Complex, Whitehill Road, CB5 8NT.

For more information, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/wellbeing-walks](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/wellbeing-walks)

## Tackling domestic abuse

Up to one in four women and one in six men will experience domestic abuse in the course of their lifetime. The City Council is accredited for excellence in dealing with domestic abuse. Your housing staff are trained to tackle the problem and support victims appropriately. So for support and action, tell your housing officer about it in confidence by phoning 01223-457070.

Or for more information:

- visit [www.cambsdasv.org.uk](http://www.cambsdasv.org.uk)
- phone *Cambridge Women's Aid* at 01223-361214
- phone the *National Domestic Abuse Helpline* at 0808-2000-247

*Free Spirit Cambs* is another local support community for victims of domestic abuse. They support all regardless of age, gender or sexuality. Providing tools for healing and recovery, they also spread awareness about the lasting effects of domestic abuse.

For more information about them and their services, visit [www.freespiritcambs.co.uk](http://www.freespiritcambs.co.uk)

### Specialist support

Unfortunately, deaf women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse. *Cambridgeshire Deaf Association* supports deaf victims of any gender. Their staff are fluent in Sign Language, both British and international. And they have dedicated over £21,000 to funding an advocate supporting deaf victims of domestic abuse, including through Sign Language.

Deaf victims contact them through email, text messaging, online video calls and face to face meetings. So their support is reaching out into the local deaf community. For more information, visit [www.cambsdeaf.org](http://www.cambsdeaf.org)

- *Men's Advice Line* - Supports males experiencing domestic abuse, tel. 0808-801-0327
- *GALOP* supports LGBTQ people experiencing domestic abuse, tel. 0800-999-5428
- *RESPECT* supports perpetrators of domestic abuse who want to stop and change, tel. 0808-802-4040

## Staying connected and informed

Cambridge has a wide network of local libraries across the city - there is always one near you. They are warm, welcoming spaces where you can join for free, to benefit from a lifetime of free services and community links. Visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/libraries/visit-a-library](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/libraries/visit-a-library)

As well as borrowing books, films or music, you can use their public computers for free. They offer free wifi for your own devices too.

Many provide a *Digital Buddies* service, where trained volunteers can give you one to one support for using computers and the internet. Their *Learn My Way* programme lets you learn from scratch to use computers and the internet, at your own pace. Just ask about these resources at your local library.

**Library services from home**  
There is also a wide range of library services that you can access from home. Once you have joined, you can borrow a huge variety of eBooks, eAudio books, eComics and eMagazines from home, as well as accessing their business resources and online events.

In your online library account, you can see what you have on loan, renew items, and search the catalogue to reserve specific titles. You can then pick up what you've reserved at the local library of your choice.

**Libraries for health and wellbeing**  
Your local library is an inclusive, welcoming place where everyone can feel at home. By joining, you can meet likeminded people, feel more a part of your community, and get involved in networks and events, to boost wellbeing and help you live a flourishing life.

Increasingly, libraries are kept running by community volunteers, as much as by professional staff. For instance, you could become a *Digital Buddy* or a *Library Events Supporter*. You could be one of the *Read A Little Aloud* team, or deliver reading materials to someone who is housebound.

Or you could just spend a few hours helping to keep your library spick and span, engaging with customers and keeping shelves stocked. For more information, ask at your local library or email [volunteers@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:volunteers@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### Trades scams online

Beware - scammers are using legitimate trade finder websites to defraud the public in Cambridge. Legitimate apps allow trades-people to advertise services like plumbing, electrics, building work, etc.

But unsuspecting members of the public are contacting these apps - and then being asked to pay in advance for work requested. Unfortunately, after they pay up, they never receive the services they paid for.

So don't pay in advance until requested work has been completed, and you are satisfied with it. Genuine trades people will give you a quote, then send you an invoice once the job is complete. They will not ask for money up front. A site you can trust is *Safe Local Trades*, at [www.safelocaltrades.com](http://www.safelocaltrades.com)

If you are scammed by rogue traders, report it to the police, either online at [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or by phoning 0300-1232-040 or 101. For more information, visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/against-scams](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/against-scams)

## Grants for residents

### Help for households

Are you struggling to pay for food or bills? Until March 31st, the *Household Support Fund* can provide short-term funds to help pay for food, heating or utilities.

To be eligible, you must be receiving benefits or earning under £17,940 per year. Visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/household-support-fund](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/household-support-fund) where you can fill in the application form online. For information, phone 0345-045-5219.

### Help with heating

Are you struggling to afford to heat your home? *Stay Well Heating Grants* can offer help, with grants of up to £400 for vulnerable households in extreme or urgent crisis. (The grant can be paid once every 6 months at most.)

Your application has to be done by an official organisation. So if you are a City Council tenant, email [incometeam@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:incometeam@cambridge.gov.uk) Or if you are a City Council leaseholder, phone the Council at 01223-457000. The Council can then apply for this help for you.

### Help for young people

The *Prince's Trust Development Awards* can give £175-£250 towards course fees or equipment, so younger people can achieve their goals. Grants are paid to an organisation, or you receive a voucher.

Eligible people are aged 16 to 30, unemployed or working less than 16 hours a week, or studying less than 14 hours a week. The *Awards* can support:

- accredited course fees up to Level 3 (A-level equivalent)
- tools, equipment, uniforms or job-licence fees for a job or qualification
- transport to a new job until your first wages

They can't be used to pay for things like:

- living expenses, eg. rent or bills
- business start-up costs
- items already paid for
- gap-year or overseas projects
- Level 4 course fees or higher

A friendly volunteer can help you complete the application form. For more information, visit [www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/get-funding-train-learn](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/get-funding-train-learn)





# What residents' involvement achieved in the past year

## What residents achieved

Despite Covid-19, the involvement of tenants and leaseholders in shaping council services had an amazing positive impact on services over the past year. They influenced no less than 47 different service areas, as you can see below.

Residents get involved in influencing services at the level that suits them. This might be giving feedback online from their own home, or doing 'Walkabouts' on their estate inspecting the quality of work done by the Council or its contractors. Or it might go all the way up to being elected onto the Council's *Housing Scrutiny Committee*, which makes all the biggest decisions on the city's council housing.

A diverse network of resident scrutiny feeds through to this *Committee* via channels like:

- estate *Walkabouts* critiquing the local environment
- trained *Resident Inspectors* formally inspecting the quality of work done on council homes and estates
- performance monitoring data formally shared with resident representatives

In this way, residents help to shape council services at every stage, from deciding which projects should be funded or not, to designing the service before it begins, to monitoring its performance.

There are different groups and routes for influencing different services, depending on a resident's own interests. They can include for instance:

- communities in new housing developments
- sheltered tenants
- leaseholders
- residents' groups on estates
- residents concerned about estate services
- resident gardeners
- residents interested in digital inclusion and computers
- residents interested in environment and climate change

To learn more or to get involved in a way that suits your lifestyle, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement), email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-458323.

## Overviewing residents' involvement

The way the Council involves residents in services is updated as the needs of residents and services change. The government's *2020 Charter for Social Housing Residents* sets the standards for this work. And your local resident representatives here in Cambridge are fully involved too.

Last year they helped to draw up the City Council's *Resident Involvement Strategy 2021-2024*, which guarantees the range and quality of involvement that elected tenants and leaseholders can expect from the Housing Service. You can view the full *Resident Involvement Strategy 2021-2024* on the Council's website at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement-strategies-updates-and-reports](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/resident-involvement-strategies-updates-and-reports)

Part of the work of the Resident Involvement Service is to produce *Open Door* magazine for residents three times per year. As a window onto both the Housing Service and the dozens of free supports and services around town, it keeps all the Council's tenants and leaseholders well informed about their rights and opportunities.

There is a *Residents' Editorial Panel for Open Door*. These council tenants and leaseholders are closely involved in the choice of information, tone and focus for each edition, to ensure that it continues to meet residents' needs across each year.

They do the same for the *Resident Involvement E-Newsletter* that also goes out to council residents three times per year. To sign up to receive this pithy, informative 2-page news bulletin by email, email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk)

### Estate Improvement Schemes

Meanwhile, out on the estates, the Council has set aside £1 million per year for hands-on improvement projects suggested or approved by local residents. From bike sheds to new gates, lighting or seating, this year's *Estate Improvement Schemes* were all closely shaped by detailed consultation with residents on the estates receiving them.

To suggest such an improvement for your estate, email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk)

### Your 6 elected resident reps

They champion your interests on the Council's *Housing Scrutiny Committee*. Decisions they debated or voted on at their January meeting included:

- the budget for the Housing Service for 2022-23
- the delivery of newly built council homes in the city
- a report on Hanover and Princess Courts and Kingsway Flats
- selecting contractors for energy-efficiency improvements to reduce carbon emissions from the city's council housing
- approving the budget for the 'Streets to Home' service, and grants for agencies preventing homelessness
- a licensing policy for Cambridge City Caravan Site
- council services' compliance with government regulations

To contact your elected resident reps at any time, email [hsc.residents@gmail.com](mailto:hsc.residents@gmail.com) or phone 01223-458323 to leave them a message.

## 47 service areas influenced

The 47 housing-related council services influenced by residents' input this year included, for example:

- the overall budget for the Housing Service
- the city's Housing Strategy, and plans for building new council homes and affordable housing
- plans to boost biodiversity on council estates and land
- strategies for reducing carbon emissions across the Housing Service

In terms of the day to day running of council estates, residents advised and influenced on things like:

- improvements to the Council's Customer Service Centre
- tenancy management, including the basic 3 R's of council housing - rents, repairs and re-lets
- managing residents' car parking
- estate services like communal cleaning, window-cleaning and grass-cutting
- the *Estate Improvements Scheme* that funds projects to improve estate environments

Residents were also involved in updating the Council's policies for running estates, like the Lettings Policy and the Empty

Homes Policy, and how the Council deals with under-occupation of homes.

Sheltered tenants inputted to their services at the Independent Living Service, and leaseholders influenced the Council's Leasehold Services.

When specific services are outsourced to be delivered by a contractor, residents are closely involved in the selection and hiring of that contractor, as they were this year for:

- a maintenance contractor for estates
- a communal cleaning contractor for estates
- a catering contractor for Ditchburn Place sheltered accommodation

Whether delivered by the Council or by its contractors, residents monitor the flow of data that measures how well each service is performing. They also review complaints about services, to see whether the Council has responded with improvements.

Interested in a particular service area? To have your say in a way that suits you, email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-458323.

## Free offers and prizes for residents

### Free Loans of Tablet Computers

The City Council is continuing to offer free loans of wifi-enabled tablets to council tenants and leaseholders who are receiving Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

To be eligible, residents must also be without any access to computers or wifi at home, other than smart phones.

The loaned tablet computer comes with preloaded free data, and the loan is for six months.

This scheme is helping residents on benefits to improve their economic situation. For instance, using the internet can give you much better access to employment and training opportunities. You can also manage your budget through online banking, or compare the prices of utility providers and easily switch to better deals.

To apply for this offer of a tablet computer loan, email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-458323.

### Residents' Garden Competition

The gardens of the Council's tenants and leaseholders are becoming an ever-expanding haven for wildlife and biodiversity. All council tenants and leaseholders are welcome to enter the Council's annual *Residents' Garden Competition*, where natural gardens avoiding herbicides and pesticides are especially appreciated.

Whether you have a big garden, a veg patch or just a few hanging baskets, all are welcome: groups, kids, balcony-gardeners, first-time gardeners... The prizes, sponsored by local organisations like Scotsdales, the Botanic Gardens and Lubbe Bulbs, are worth hundreds of pounds in gardening supplies.

Application forms must be submitted by Thursday 2nd June. A letter will let you know when the friendly judges will visit your garden, most likely in mid-June. And prize-giving is usually in October. For an application form or information, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/tenant-and-leaseholder-garden-competition](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/tenant-and-leaseholder-garden-competition) Or email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-458323.

### Free Grass-Cutting

An overgrown lawn can have a negative impact on your home, neighbours and locality.

The Council provides a free service for eligible council tenants over 18 who cannot cut their own grass. They can receive a free cut every month from April to October. Eligible tenants must:

- have a disability for which you receive some benefits
- live alone, or with other people who are also eligible
- have no family living within a 10-mile radius who could do your grass-cutting, and are willing to do it

To apply, phone 01223-458323 or email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk)

*Above: one resident's tidy garden in the north of the city*





# Actions for our climate

## Recycling and saving on electrical items

At recycling points around the city, such as at Fawcett Road, Glebe Farm Drive, Hawkey Road or Osprey Drive, you can now recycle small electrical items that have a plug or battery. To find recycling points, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/find-a-recycling-point](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/find-a-recycling-point)

From mobile phones to toasters, Cambridge was dumping 320 tonnes of electrical items each year. But they leak hazardous substances into our land and water. Now a specialist company is sorting each one for re-use, repair or recycling. Many screens and power units, for instance, can simply be re-used.

But the best place to start saving money and recycling is actually before you buy. Do you really need that new gadget or upgraded smartphone? Could you just keep your existing one for another year, saving yourself hundreds of pounds?

You don't have to go without. Instead of buying a gadget new, could you use or repair something you already have? Perhaps you could borrow one, or buy it second-hand, or even find one for free on websites like [www.gumtree.org](http://www.gumtree.org)

And why not really look after the equipment you have, cleaning and servicing it so it lasts much longer? For instance, vacuum cleaners dropped off at Recycling Centres often only need their bag emptying, which could have saved the owner hundreds!

If a device works but you no longer want it, it's so easy now to sell or donate it online. Websites like Facebook Marketplace or Gumtree let you quickly sell or donate to locals. Mobile phone providers offer take-back schemes, and charity shops often accept small clean electrical appliances.

Even if an item isn't working, it can often be repaired. First check *YouTube* videos: it might just need a new fuse! Or take it to a repair shop or one of Cambridge's free Repair Cafes: find them at [www.circularcambridge.org](http://www.circularcambridge.org)

If it really is beyond repair or re-use, drop it off at a recycling point or take bulky items like fridges to the Household Recycling Centre in Milton. See all the city's recycling points at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/find-a-recycling-point](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/find-a-recycling-point)

### Free of chemical weedkillers?

In 2019, Cambridge City Council declared a *Biodiversity Emergency*. Actions included reducing chemical herbicides on its footpaths and verges. A first trial stopped using them on council estates in the Abbey area, to protect both wildlife and humans in the outdoor environment.

The Council's *Biodiversity Strategy* covers City Council-owned land. But there is an opportunity now to collaborate with the County Council to stop herbicides on all the city's public ground in the year ahead. There is a proposal to start with a trial of two wards in the city.

These trials can offer residents, their children and pets, as well as wildlife, protection from herbicide chemicals. Local signage and social media postings will explain the trials. But residents' feedback will be crucial too. Would you like your street to be free of herbicides? To get involved, email [sosvolunteers@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:sosvolunteers@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-458084.

## Ways to save water, money and your bike!

Unfortunately, here in the South East we use more water per head than anywhere else in the UK. This water is taken from our local environment, including our precious chalk streams. So *Affinity Water* has launched the campaign *Save Our Streams*. Here are 10 super-easy tips to start saving water and money.

1. Get a water meter. Those with one use on average 129 litres per person per day, compared to 171 for those without.

2. Fix leaky loos or taps, saving up to 5,500 litres a year off your water bills! Book a free home water-efficiency check at [www.saveourstreams.co.uk](http://www.saveourstreams.co.uk)

3. Instead of a hose, use watering cans for your garden and a bucket and sponge for your car. One hour on a hose uses as much water as a family of four use in a day and a half.

4. Cut your shower by two minutes to save £135 a year. Sing along to a 4-minute song while in the shower: it's the ideal length for a shower that saves both water and money.

5. Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, to save a further 6,500 litres a year off your water bill!

6. Sign up at [www.saveourstreams.co.uk](http://www.saveourstreams.co.uk) to receive free gadgets that help you reduce the amount of water you waste.

7. Air your clothes to get another wear from them before washing.

8. Always fully load your washing machine and dishwasher - half-empty, they use just as much water.

9. Fit an eco shower-head. It can save a whopping 7,000 litres of water a year. And shower rather than bathing whenever possible.

10. If washing up by hand, use a bowl or the stoppered sink. This saves 22 litres each time, compared to washing up under a running tap.

So how much water do you use, and how much can you save? Take the quick survey at [www.saveourstreams.co.uk](http://www.saveourstreams.co.uk) to find out. And watch your bills to see just how much these ten tiny changes will save you in money and water every year.

At [www.saveourstreams.co.uk](http://www.saveourstreams.co.uk), claim your free water-saving devices. And their website enables you to monitor your own water-saving progress as you go along.

### Save Our Cycles campaign

A rise in cycle crime has brought the City Council, police and other agencies together in a *Save Our Cycles* campaign. The campaign reminds you to:

- record your bike's frame number and description
- register it on [www.bikeregister.com](http://www.bikeregister.com), helping the police to return stolen bikes
- always lock it securely to a fixed object, even if just for a few minutes

The city's cycle stands have been audited to improve security and safety. And the police are using CCTV and data on theft trends to tackle bike-theft hot spots.

So always report bike crime, either online at [www.cambs.police.uk/report/Report-Shared/Report-a-crime](http://www.cambs.police.uk/report/Report-Shared/Report-a-crime) or by phoning 101. For more information on the *Save Our Cycles* campaign and other resources supporting cycling in Cambridge, visit [www.camcycle.org.uk/resources/cycletheft](http://www.camcycle.org.uk/resources/cycletheft)

# For leaseholders

## Legalities of subletting

Your *Lease Agreement* explains the legal agreement between you and the City Council. As a leaseholder you have the option to sublet your flat. But there are a number of requirements involved.

If you choose to sublet, the Council recommends you first get a solicitor to check your lease. Ask them to make sure that your proposed tenants and your *Tenancy Agreement* with them comply with your lease.

Your *Leashold Agreement* stipulates that you must 'use and occupy the flat solely and exclusively as a self-contained flat in one family occupation only'. This means that you can only sublet the flat to one person or one family - not to a group of individuals who are flat-sharing, and not as a holiday let.

If you breach the conditions of your lease, the consequences can be very serious. The City Council has in the past taken legal action against leaseholders who ignored this clause in their lease.

The Council can apply to the courts to end your lease and repossess your

property. There is no compensation for you if this happens, and you would lose all rights to the property.

If you decide to go ahead, any sublet must be formally registered with the City Council's Leasehold Team, on the form provided. (This is separate from any other contact you may have about your leasehold with other council departments, eg. about Council Tax.) Registering a sublet incurs a £75 administration fee, and you can download the necessary form at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders)

Note that you are responsible for ensuring your tenants always comply with the responsibilities of living in a council leasehold property. Even if renting via an agency, your tenants must be fully briefed on all the rules on issues like number of occupants, noise, visitors, keeping communal areas clear, parking, bins, recycling and so on.

For more information, visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders), email [leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone the Council at 01223-457835.

## Your leasehold services

A small team of staff at the City Council manage the Council's Leasehold Services for you. Their services include:

- producing *Welcome Packs* for new leaseholders
- maintaining database information on properties and their leaseholders
- leasehold name changes
- lease extensions
- solicitors' enquiries for sales and extensions
- quarterly invoicing for service charges
- pursuing service charge arrears
- gas safety certificates
- administration of subletting
- leaseholders' alterations to properties
- breaches of leases
- issuing Section 20 Notices about future planned works by the Council
- maintaining information for leaseholders at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholders)
- liaising with leaseholders' elected representative
- running the meetings of the *Leaseholders' Forum*

Email [leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:leasehold.services@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-457835.

### Have your say

The next meeting of the *Leaseholders' Forum* will be on Tuesday 24th May, 12.30-2pm, online via Microsoft Teams as usual.

Leaseholders find these lively meetings informative and productive. To request the link to attend, email [resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:resident-involvement@cambridge.gov.uk) or phone 01223-458323. If you want to see what they're like first, recordings of previous meetings are available at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholder-consultation-meetings](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/leaseholder-consultation-meetings)

As well as answering questions from leaseholders, these meetings give updates and briefings from a range of council staff, on issues relevant to leaseholders. These can range from future planned works to building cleaning, from subletting to the Council's 'Zero Tolerance Policy' on items left in communal areas. Your elected leaseholder representative, Diane Best, is also present to answer questions and update you on leasehold issues.

*Pictured, right: Spring planting at East Road council homes*





# Where to get financial help

## *Struggling to afford food?*

To see how to get a voucher so you can visit one of Cambridge's Food Banks, visit <https://cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk> or phone 07772-538628.

## *Can't pay your rent?*

Phone 01223-457070 today to request a payment plan, spreading the cost over months, to avoid losing your home.

## *If you need to claim Universal Credit...*

Apply online at [www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit)

## *If you can't pay your Council Tax...*

See if you are entitled to claim Council Tax Reduction. Apply online at [www.gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction](http://www.gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction)

## *If struggling with mobile phone or internet bills...*

See online at [www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/2020/04/keeping-everyone-connected](http://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/2020/04/keeping-everyone-connected) to find companies supporting customers who are having difficulty in paying.

## *Can't pay your water bills?*

Cambridge Water may be able to help at tel. 0800-587-7701 or online at [www.cambridge-water.co.uk/household/extra-help/help-with-paying](http://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/household/extra-help/help-with-paying)

*Cambridge Citizen's Advice* can also help with all the issues just listed. Contact them at tel. 0344-848-7979.

## *Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme*

can provide help in the form of supermarket vouchers, energy vouchers, used cookers, white goods, furniture and clothes. Freephone 0808-278-7807, Mon-Friday, 9.30am-3.30pm.

To be eligible, you must:

- have no savings
- if working, have a total household income of less than about £16,000 per year
- if on benefits, receive Pension Credit, Universal Credit, Income Support, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance or Income-related Employment & Support Allowance

To apply, phone Cambridge Citizens' Advice Bureau at 0344-848-7979 or 01223-222660, or email them at [caba@cambridgecab.org.uk](mailto:caba@cambridgecab.org.uk)

## *If you don't have access to the internet...*

or you want to learn to use the internet, *Cambridge Online* may be able to help you for free, if you phone them at 01223-300407.

## **£500 for local groups**

The Cambridge *Good Life Fund* is giving grants of up to £500 to local residents who create or run a group encouraging people to connect up and learn new skills.

Examples might be a book club, walking group, craft class, gardening group or any other activity that reduces isolation and supports wellbeing.

They hope to approve as many applications for small grants as possible. So do apply if:

- your activity promotes wellbeing
- at least four people are involved
- they are volunteering their time and energy
- your group is open to all, without discrimination

See the information video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3HrFZfT6I0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3HrFZfT6I0)  
Apply online at [www.cpslmind.org.uk/how-we-help/good-life-service/good-life-fund](http://www.cpslmind.org.uk/how-we-help/good-life-service/good-life-fund), or email [goodlifefund@cpslmind.org.uk](mailto:goodlifefund@cpslmind.org.uk) or phone 0300-303-4363.

# Who to contact for services



**Your My Cambridge account + your Housing Services account**  
online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk)  
(top right-hand corner)

## **Cambridge Virtual Community Centre**

For support during Covid-19  
visit [www.facebook.com/cambridgevcc](http://www.facebook.com/cambridgevcc)

## **Domestic Abuse 24-hour Helpline**

Tel: 0808-2000-247 (Freephone, no cost)  
Visit [www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk)

## **Council Payments by phone**

Tel: 01223-457779, with bank card

## **Rents, tenancies, lettings, renting a council garage**

Tel: 01223-457070  
Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-tenants](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/council-tenants)

## **Contact Council in Sign Language**

Register at <https://signlive.co.uk>, then dial 01223-457000: a live Sign Language interpreter will interpret during your call

## **Repairs**

Tel: 01223-457060; or 0300-303-8389  
for out of hours emergency repairs

## **Council Tax**

Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223-457790

## **Housing for Older People, Visiting Support Service, Community Alarms**

E: [independent.living@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:independent.living@cambridge.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223-457199

## **Home-Link lettings**

Visit [www.home-link.org.uk](http://www.home-link.org.uk)  
Tel: 01223-457918

## **Homelessness & temporary accommodation, outside office hours**

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

## **Housing & Council Tax Benefits**

Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223-457775

## **Bins, recycling, street-cleaning**

Visit <http://bins.cambridge.gov.uk>  
Tel: 01223-458282

## **Bulky waste collection**

Visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/arrange-a-bulky-waste-collection](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/arrange-a-bulky-waste-collection)  
Tel: 01223-458282

## **Report anti-social behaviour**

E: [asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223-457950

## **Noise complaints** (reduced service)

E: [env.health@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:env.health@cambridge.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223-457900  
Out of hours: 0300-303-8389

## **Report tenancy fraud**

E: [fightfraud@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:fightfraud@cambridge.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0800-328-0572 (confidential Freephone)

## **Council emergencies out of hours**

Tel: 0300-3038389

## **Complaints on council services**

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

## **Council's partners for housing Mears gas servicing**

Freephone 03332-070-766, including out of hours; (for leaseholders' gas emergencies, tel. 0800-111-999)

## **TSG Services**

E: [enquiries@tsgplc.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@tsgplc.co.uk)  
Tel: 01223-828777

## **Suicide Awareness**

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

StayingSafe.net is a free website offering practical help for people with suicidal thoughts, and for those caring for them.