



# the Community Edit

Winter 2026

## for WHBC tenants and leaseholders

**It's been a busy start to 2026. With help from the Residents Panel, we've been looking at how we can improve the way we respond to complaints.**

There's important information on our tenancy audits on page 2. Read about the Residents Panel's highlights of 2025 on page 3 and find out about our successful Nicer Neighbourhoods projects.

In our Tenant Satisfaction survey, a quarter of you have said you'd like to know how to get involved in activities, so see the back page for info about our successful free training programmes.

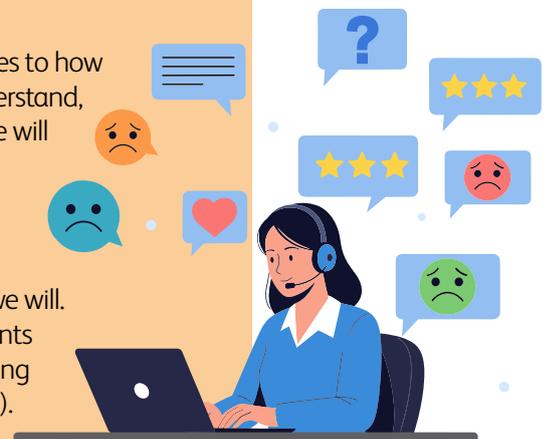
## You said, we're doing...

### Complaints

We've listened to feedback from the Residents Panel and are making changes to how we reply to complaints. These changes will make sure they are easier to understand, take the resident's circumstances into account and are clearer about how we will put things right.

We have agreed actions for the recommendations made by the Residents Panel. These can be found on the council website.

We're also working hard to make sure we reply to complaints when we say we will. Between October and December, we responded to 92% of stage 1 complaints and 90.4% of stage 2 complaints within the timescales set out by the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code ([www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)).



### Improving Communal Areas

If you live in a flat or maisonette that shares a communal area with other homes, keep a look out for information and a survey about our Housing Estates Service Standard Policy and the introduction of a new communal cleaning contract.

Examples of communal areas include, walkways, under stairwells, drying areas and other shared outside grounds.

The Housing Estates Service Standard Policy is a set of guidelines explaining how we will manage our estates and covers things like cleaning and grounds

maintenance. It's designed to help make sure where you live is clean, green and welcoming.

Our 2024/25 Tenant Satisfaction Survey showed only 54% of tenants living in our blocks were satisfied with the communal areas, so we're keen to hear your views. If you receive a survey, please fill it in – your feedback helps us to improve our services.



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# Tenancy Audits

We're carrying out surveys, called **tenancy audits**, to make sure we have the correct contact details and information about you and your household.

A Neighbourhood Officer will visit your home to complete a questionnaire with you. This helps us provide the right support and services for our tenants. It's also an opportunity for you to discuss any concerns you may have.

During the visit, your Neighbourhood Officer will look round the property to make sure everything is in good condition and meets the terms of your tenancy agreement.

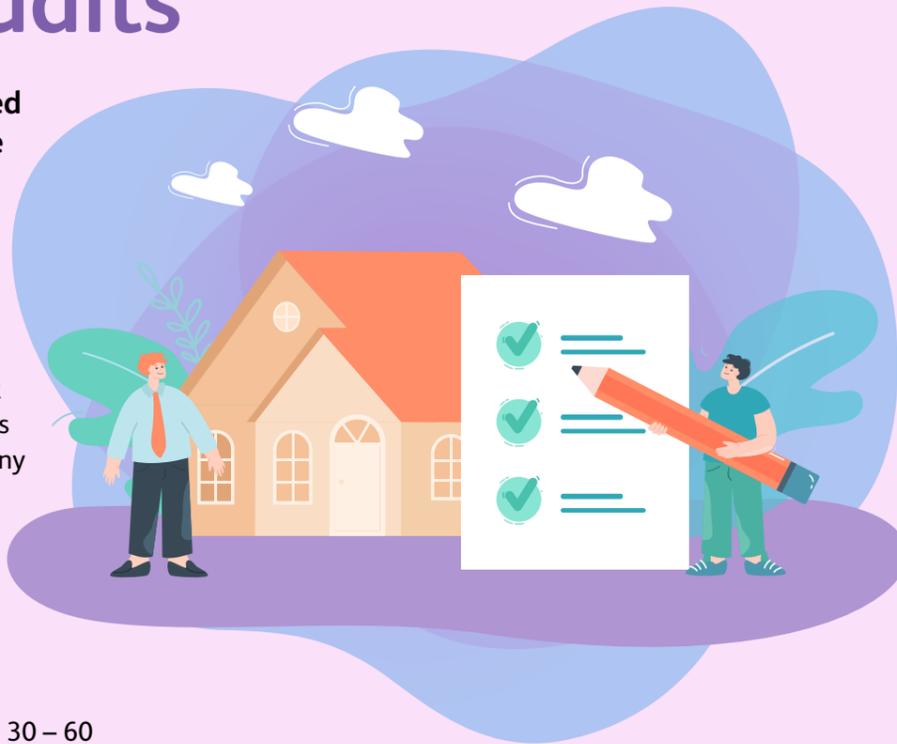
The tenancy audit should take between 30 – 60 minutes and we will ask you to show photo ID such as a passport or driver's licence.

If you have a joint tenancy, both joint tenants will need to be present.

We're required to carry out these tenancy audits so if you receive a letter from us notifying you of an appointment, it is important you try to keep it.

If you can't make the appointment, then please contact Neighbourhoods on 01707 357 796 to arrange a more convenient time.

When visiting your home, your Neighbourhood Officer will show their council ID to confirm who they are.



## Local Government Reorganisation

Councils in Hertfordshire are discussing possible changes to the way they work. This is called **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**. No decisions on any changes have been made yet. We want to make sure you, our tenants and leaseholders, are aware of LGR and understand what it might mean for you.

### What you need to know

- Your tenancy or lease will remain in place – your rights and responsibilities are protected.
- Rents and service charges will continue to be set through the normal annual process – LGR does not change how this works.
- WHBC is still committed to improving its housing and leaseholder services.

You may have a new landlord in the future. We will keep you updated as more information becomes available.

### Government Consultation for Hertfordshire

The government has asked councils to explore different ways of organising local services for residents. Three options have been suggested for Hertfordshire. The government is holding a consultation on these so residents can share their views.

The consultation closes on 26 March, and a link to it can be found on our homepage [www.welhat.gov.uk](http://www.welhat.gov.uk).

To find out more about LGR

- Visit our website [www.welhat.gov.uk/council/](http://www.welhat.gov.uk/council/)
- Or visit Hertfordshire's LGR website [www.hertfordshire-lgr.co.uk](http://www.hertfordshire-lgr.co.uk)

# Residents Panel update

It's a year since I took over as Chair of the Residents Panel and we have been busy helping to make sure the voice of tenants and leaseholders is heard.

Highlights for me so far have been

- Welcoming some new members to the Panel - we are always looking for more people to join!
- The first tenants receiving the new Information Pack for Tenants when they sign their tenancies. For the first time this information pack is also available digitally on the council website.
- Being invited to have a stand at the Welwyn Garden City Christmas lights switch on. Congratulations to Tristan, aged 7, who won some Campus West vouchers in our competition - 'Bah Humbug' guess the number of humbugs in a jar.

We have completed a scrutiny on the council's complaints communication and have made some recommendations that the council are now looking at. We will let you know the outcome on our Facebook page. This is also where you can join our Facebook group and be involved in some of our projects planned for this year.

The Panel's monthly meetings are attended by senior leadership from the council, according to the subjects we are discussing. For example, the Chief

Executive came along to discuss the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation with us.

Our next project will be around Awaab's Law, which should be interesting as this piece of legislation covers a large section of council housing services. We look forward to inviting tenants and leaseholders to get involved and have their say.

We will also be at events across the year, check out our Facebook page for information. Community Catch-up events will be starting again in the spring, just have to hope for dry days for these!

In February we will be at the Community Awards which celebrate local heroes and acknowledge their outstanding contributions to the borough. These awards happen annually and are fully sponsored by local businesses. I look forward to seeing the winners when I attend the ceremony.

To get involved either scan the QR code for our Facebook page or email [residentinvolvement@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@welhat.gov.uk)



## Nicer Neighbourhoods

We've successfully completed our first **Nicer Neighbourhoods projects – at Briars Wood in Hatfield and Heronswood Road/Haynes Close in WGC.**

These projects are an opportunity for residents to work with the council to improve the local environment and help us to continue making a positive contribution to our neighbourhoods.

Residents at both sites were asked for ideas on what they'd like in their shared spaces.

At Briars Wood, the communal garden has been enhanced to create a more welcoming, family-friendly space. Traditional washing lines have been replaced with modern rotary dryers, opening up room for children to play.

New benches and herb-filled planters have been installed for residents' use. Bike stands have also been added to support greener travel choices.

One Briars Wood resident said they were very satisfied with the work, adding: "Thank you for all the improvements."



At Heronswood Road/Haynes Close, the larger site has benefited from new rotary dryers, benches, and herb planters. Footpaths have been laid at the back of the block of flats, making it easier for residents to walk safely between buildings.

Noticeboards have also been installed to help keep residents updated about council services and events.

The work was carried out with the help of our contractors, Novus Property Solutions as part of their social value programme.

# Training Success in 2025



## We provided free training to 87 tenants and leaseholders in 2025, through a variety of courses and workshops.

Sessions included, Paediatric First Aid, Introduction to working in Health and Social Care as well as Digital Photography, Boost your Confidence and Developing Numeracy Skills.

"I can put into practice what I've learnt by continuing to improve my photography hobby and pursue any opportunities that may bring," said one participant on the five-week digital photography course.

One of the attendees on 'Developing Numeracy Skills' said: "It helped me not be afraid and understand basic maths. The course criteria was excellent and the tutor exceptional in her delivery, making the work fun and relatable."

We will be continuing to partner with adult education organisation Step2Skills, as well as council contractors Morgan Sindall Property Services and Equans, to arrange courses at venues in the borough throughout 2026.

If you do not currently receive information about our training and would like to, please email [residentinvolvement@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@welhat.gov.uk)

## Free Online Courses

New year, new you? – Take up a hobby or learn a skill with **FREE** online courses and classes from our repairs and maintenance provider Morgan Sindall Property Services.

**MORGAN  
SINDALL**  
PROPERTY SERVICES

From computer skills to decorating cakes to taking the perfect selfie, there's lots of courses to support employment, wellbeing or simply try something new.

For a full list of courses available please visit the Staff Skills Training website:

<https://staffskillstraining.co.uk/course-list/>

To sign up for a course email

[Chloe.Sykes@morgansindall.com](mailto:Chloe.Sykes@morgansindall.com), including your name and postcode.

## The Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman can investigate complaints from tenants and leaseholders about landlord services. This includes things like property condition, repairs, estate management, charges and anti-social behaviour.

We hope we can sort out your problem, but if you have followed our complaints process and are still not happy, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman and ask them to look into it.

Social housing landlords must be members of the Housing Ombudsman scheme and cannot evict tenants for complaining about issues.

Complaints can help landlords put things right and improve services for all residents.

You can make a complaint to the Ombudsman using their online form or by phone. The Ombudsman is no longer accepting new case enquiries by email.

- **Online:** [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- **Phone:** 0300 111 3000
- **Write:** The Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

## Contact us

**In an emergency**  
T: 0800 111 4484

**To report a repair**  
T: 0800 111 4484  
E: [housingmaintenance@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:housingmaintenance@welhat.gov.uk)

**Neighbourhood Team**  
T: 01707 357796  
E: [neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk)

**Income Management Team**  
T: 01707 357088  
E: [housingincome@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:housingincome@welhat.gov.uk)

**ASB & Tenancy Enforcement Team**  
Telephone: 01707 357000  
Email: [asb@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:asb@welhat.gov.uk)



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