

Season's greetings from WFHA

Our staff team and Board send festive greetings and best wishes for the New Year to all our tenants.



WFHA gains gold

See page 3 for full story



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Come and see us in person

We recently held several drop-in sessions at our Head Office and at some of your schemes.

Visiting us in person gives you the chance to share your ideas or concerns, and to discuss anything you need help with.

We will be holding more sessions in the future and will write to you with dates.

We will also write to you about activities taking place locally and include information on your noticeboards.

Help us inspect your estate

We inspect your estates once a month to look for things to improve and to ensure your safety in the shared areas at your scheme.

To join us, call 020 8524 6987 and select option 2, or email info@wfha.org.uk

Your WFHA tenant portal

Our secure online tenant portal is available 24/7 and offers an easy and convenient way to manage your tenancy.

Using the portal, you can:

- report a non-emergency repair
- check your rent account
- print a rent statement
- make a compliment or make a complaint, or
- update your own information

To set up an account, you will need an email address.

For more details email us at info@wfha.org.uk, or phone Linda Wright, Head of Governance, on 020 8524 6987, and select option 4.

Give Shahron a call!



Our Chief Executive Shahron Shah will be available to talk to tenants on the phone on:

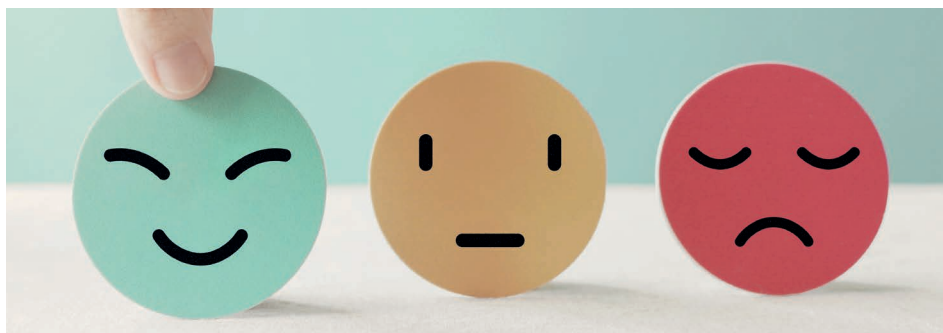
- Wednesday 24 January 2024, 10am to 12 noon
- Tuesday 27 February 2024, 5pm to 7pm

Call 020 8524 6987 and select option 2. We will put you straight through, or arrange a call back if

Shahron is already talking to someone else.

Shahron is taking these calls because we really value your views and ideas.

Don't forget, you are also welcome to phone the office with your views and queries at any time.



Tenant satisfaction survey

A huge thank you to the 194 tenants who completed our recent tenant satisfaction survey. We will soon be reporting the results.

This is the first of our annual surveys to use the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures introduced by the Regulator for Social Housing. Most of the questions asked are now set by the regulator, so that the results can be directly compared with other housing providers.

Our report will show where we are doing well and where we need to improve. We will draw up an

improvement plan to guide our work over the coming years, acting on the feedback you gave us.

We want tenants to have a say and influence our future services, so if you are interested in getting involved, please let us know. Contact Linda Wright, Head of Governance, at info@wfha.org.uk, or call 020 8524 6987 and select option 4.

Holiday closure dates

Our offices will be closed for the holidays from 12.30pm on Friday 22 December 2023.

We will reopen as normal at 9am on Tuesday 2 January 2024.



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®

We invest in people Gold

WFHA's latest achievement is being awarded Investors in People Gold for our best practice approach to managing and developing our staff.

Investors in People (IIP) is an international organisation that encourages businesses to value their people. It offers accreditation so organisations can show they are actively making their workplaces better for their employees.

Over the last 30 years, IIP has accredited more than 50,000 organisations in 66 countries, which makes it the global benchmark for people management. Twenty-six per cent of those who apply achieve gold standard, which puts us in good company.

This is not just box-ticking for WFHA. We know how vital our people are when it comes to delivering results, especially during difficult times like these.

The award speaks not only to the way we invest in our staff, but also to the centrality of our REACH



values: Respect, Empower, Ambition, Care and Honesty.

The IIP report says: "WFHA is a small organisation that has a big impact on its tenants and people love working for the association because of its inclusive and caring culture... People are strongly

motivated to reflect WFHA's values, because they are very much aligned to their personal values."

WFHA is a great place to work and we are very happy to have this recognised publicly. Our staff team are committed to our tenants and to continuous improvement.

Equality and diversity: at the heart of all our work

WFHA recommits to combatting racism in our communities

We recently reconfirmed our commitment to SHARP – the Social Housing Anti-Racism Pledge.

SHARP was launched last year by the BME London Landlords group, together with BME National and the Housing Diversity Network.



SHARP gives social landlords a best-practice framework for taking action to combat racism in our workplaces and communities.

And commits to equal treatment for LGBTQ+ residents

We have recently signed up to HouseProud. This scheme for social landlords allows us to show our commitment to promoting equality, and providing support for, our LGBTQ+ residents.

In the New Year, we will provide more information on this to our tenants and stakeholders.



Celebrating WFHA's



Pictured above: Lara Oyedele, President of the Chartered Institute of Housing 2022.

Bottom left: WFHA Chair, Dale Walker welcomes guests. Dale is also pictured with our Chief Executive, Shahron Shah (top right, p5).

Pictured elsewhere on these pages: the staff team (p5, centre right); staff and Board members, together with Lara Oyedele (p5, bottom left); and some of the many enjoyable conversations between our tenants, staff, Board members and guests, which were an important feature of the day.

In August, we were extremely proud to hold a special event to celebrate 60 years of providing good quality, low-cost homes to tenants across the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

Our event took place at the Vestry House Museum in Walthamstow and was attended by tenants, Board members and stakeholders.

Lara Oyedele, President of the Chartered Institute of Housing 2022, was our guest of honour. We also received messages of support, including from Kate Henderson, who is the Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation.

She wrote: "This milestone is a testament to the hard work of everyone at Waltham Forest and your proud history of delivering

good quality homes in the local community. At the NHF, we're proud to work on behalf of organisations like yours, which reflect the very best values of our sector.

"Although small in size, I know that Waltham Forest has an outsized impact on the residents and community it serves."

With such a great legacy, we will continue to uphold our values and provide the best possible service and homes for our tenants. Here's to the next 60 years!



60th anniversary



Cost-of-living update

There is still support available, if you are on a low income.

Help with energy costs

If you are struggling to pay, contact your energy provider to agree a plan you can afford and find out about any grants.

Pensioners will again get an extra £300 on top of their Winter Fuel Payment. This will be paid in November or December 2023.

Cost-of-living payments

People who get means-tested benefits will get two more payments of around £300. One this autumn and one next spring.

Charitable grants

To help pay basic household bills, search for charitable grants at www.turn2us.org.uk

Rent support from WFHA

If you are experiencing financial difficulties and worrying about paying your rent, please call us on 020 8524 6987, option 2, or email us at info@wfha.org.uk

We can also help you to complete funding application forms.

Support and advice from LBWF

The Council has put together a list of the resources available locally at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/benefits-and-money-advice/your-crisis-our-action

There is information about where you can get help with money, food, energy bills, health and wellbeing, skills and employment, and getting digitally connected. There are also links to help families.

The money section includes grants

available from the Council. They include how to apply for:

- Local Welfare Assistance/ Household Support Fund – to help pay for essentials, and
- Discretionary Housing Payments – if you are behind with your rent.

Free school meals in London

Since September, primary school children in state-funded schools in London have been getting free school meals. This will continue until the end of the school year.

Your child will be getting their free school meals automatically and you may also be entitled to other benefits like food vouchers during the school holidays.

If your children qualified for free school meals under the scheme provided by the Government, you

should continue to apply for free school meals, so that you don't miss out on any extra support available to your family.



Food banks in Waltham Forest

Eat or Heat have four foodbanks in Waltham Forest:

- in E17 (open Monday, Wednesday, Friday)
- in E4 (open Tuesday am), and
- in E11 (open Thursday am).

We can refer you for four weeks' support.

The **Rukhsana Khan Foundation** gives out three-day parcels on Saturdays from 11am to 12 noon at the William Morris Community Centre, 6-8 Greenleaf Road, E17 6QQ. You do not need a referral.



Highams Park Food Aid ("The Hub") provides food and household essentials for people in E4. Open Tuesday and Thursday from 11am-1pm at All Saints, Highams Park. On Wednesdays, from 11am to 2pm, they run a free café.

The foodbank run by the **pl84u al-suffa** interfaith support group is open Monday and Wednesday, 12-2pm, at the Epicenter, 41 West Street, Leytonstone E11 4LJ.

They also provide hot meals and support to the most vulnerable.

Ways to save energy and reduce your bills

Keep track of your bills

- Save money with paperless bills and by paying by direct debit.
- Send regular meter readings (unless your smart meter does this automatically).
- Question direct debit increases that seem too high.

Make the best use of your appliances

Fridge/freezers Close doors quickly and keep shelves three-quarters full – less full or overfull makes appliances work harder. Defrost fridge/freezers regularly and vacuum the coils at the back.

Washing machines Wash full loads, at low temperatures, on eco settings. You can save 46% of the cost of running a load if you run washes at 30 degrees not 40.

Dryers Avoid tumble drying, if you can dry clothes naturally outside, or in a room with the window open. Never dry clothes on radiators (it causes condensation).

Kettles and pans Boil only the water you need and keep lids on pans. Filling a thermos can give you cups of tea later in the day.

Cooking Defrost frozen food before cooking. Batch cook when you use the oven. Air fryers, slow cookers and microwaves all cost less to run than a conventional oven.



Stay warm for less

- Turn the thermostat down by one degree and lower any thermostatic radiator valves.
- Turn off the heating an hour before you go out and set it to come on half an hour before you get home.
- Reflectors (or tin foil) on the wall behind a radiator can boost the heat back into the room.
- Draw curtains as it gets dark.
- Cling film across draughty windows and draught excluders can help you feel warmer. (But keep your home well aired, if you suffer from condensation.)
- Stay warm with an extra jumper, slippers or thick socks, a rug over your knees and a hot drink. But also stay active if you can.

Light your home for less

- Invest in LED light bulbs to cut energy usage by 90%.

Energy efficiency support from the Council

Waltham Forest Council have launched a brand-new energy support checker, alongside their winter support schemes, to help people find schemes to stay warm and lower their bills.

You can check what you are eligible for by completing the form at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/get-involved/climate-change/funding-and-support

There is energy-saving advice for everyone. For people on low incomes, there are also free home improvements that could save you anything from £100 to £1,800 a year.

You can also get access to these schemes by dropping into your local library, Family Hub, Community Living Room, or via Citizens Advice.

- Turn lights off when leaving a room.

Shower for less

Take shorter showers at lower temperatures.

Save wastage on standby

- Don't leave items on standby – this uses up to 85% of energy of running them switched on fully.
- Switch off sockets not in use.

ADVICE LEAFLET



Tackling damp, mould and condensation

Damp and condensation can cause black mould to grow in your home. It's a common problem in British homes, but we can work together to manage it.

In this leaflet, we:
• describe the steps we can take in your landlord and
• we offer advice on how you can improve things to make your home a better place to live.
We assured that we take all cases of damp and mould seriously. A home with mould can be bad for your health.
You are always welcome to phone Wfha for further advice.



What's causing your mould?
Mould grows in damp homes. So, it's important to start by working out what is causing your home to be damp.
Your damp problem could be caused by:
• A leak with the building that needs to be repaired, or
• Poorly maintained roof or gutters causing condensation.

A problem with the building
A leak with the building, or a problem with the plumbing, can allow water to get into your home. In older buildings, some dampness is often due to the way the building was built. If you can see a problem like this, report it to your landlord or you can, so that we can take action.

Mould, damp and condensation

We take mould, damp and condensation very seriously, because they can be bad for people's health.

We aim to help you solve these problems by:

- fixing problems with the building
- keeping your home well maintained
- providing you with efficient heating
- providing fans in kitchens and bathrooms

- giving you advice on how to prevent damp and mould caused by condensation, and
- arranging a home visit if needed.

Download our advice leaflet at: wfha.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/WFHA-Damp-mould-WEB-EMAILv2.pdf

No drop-ins: please make an appointment

Our offices are closed to the public – unless you have an appointment.

Our staff now work in multiple locations, including from home, so they are not always available at Head Office.

We are 'appointment only' to prevent wasted journeys – and



because we want to limit visitor numbers to keep everyone safe.

To discuss something in person, please phone 020 8524 6987 or email info@wfha.org.uk, to make your appointment.

Leave us a voice message

Sometimes when you phone us, your calls may go through to an answerphone.

If this happens, please leave us a message. Tell us your name, a bit about why you are calling and the phone number to call you back on.

Emergency repairs when our office is closed

Our out-of-hours make safe service is for genuine emergencies only.

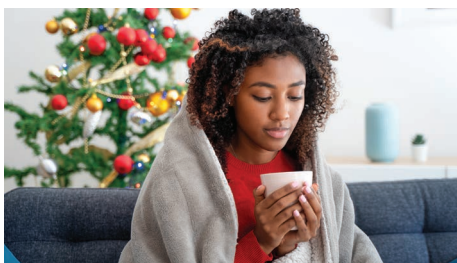
Please do not phone these numbers out of hours if your repair is not an emergency. Call us on a normal working day instead.

What counts as an emergency?

An emergency affects your immediate health and safety, or the structure of the building.

Gas emergencies

If you smell gas or fumes, call Cadent immediately on 0800 111 999.



If your gas heating system fails in severe weather and you have no alternative, call Swale Heating on 01795 503 365.

Non-gas emergencies

For a non-gas emergency, outside office hours, call 020 8524 2822.

Our contractors will visit to make the situation safe. They may need to return on another day to complete the repair.

Non-gas emergencies include:

- electrical fittings getting wet
- sewage overflowing indoors
- burst storage tanks, cylinders or pipes
- a leak you cannot contain
- failure of all lights or all power (but first check the fuse board for tripped circuits and that you have credit on your meter), or
- failure of your electrical heating system in severe weather, where you have no alternative heating.



Waltham Forest Housing Association

Our address is:

The Energy Centre
31 Church Hill
Walthamstow
London E17 3RU

Email us at:


- info@wfha.org.uk (general queries)
- repairs@wfha.org.uk, or
- complaints@wfha.org.uk

During office hours (weekdays, 9am to 5pm), call us on 020 8524 6987, then select:

- Option 1 for repairs
- Option 2 for housing management (to pay your rent, talk about benefits or other housing issues)
- Option 4 for governance (to ask about tenant engagement and tenant surveys).

For a non-gas emergency outside office hours, call our emergency contractors on 020 8524 2822.

Out of hours, if your gas heating system fails in severe weather and you have no alternative, call Swale Heating on 01795 503 365.

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