

BETRA News

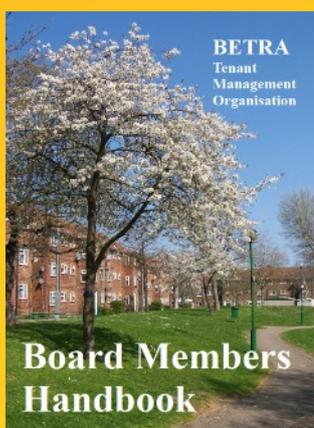
Issue 29 October 2022

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Three new booklets from BETRA

You can download all three from our website.



Residents need to be wary of unexpected callers. Remember, all officials carry and display ID

Just so that you are aware, we have had recent incidents of strange people knocking on doors claiming to work for Havering Council or one of their contractors. Not all of these people are who they say they are.

If you are ever in doubt, all council workers have and should display a name badge whether you ask to see it or not. If you aren't expecting works to be completed on your property, then always be cautious. If in doubt, explain that without an appointment pre-booked you are entitled to turn them away.

If you are unsure, please do not hesitate to contact us at the office - we will always come over to identify an engineer or confirm if there has been works booked out on your block or property. Never just let someone into your home unannounced

Home Swap

As always, we are keeping an eye out for our residents should a mutual exchange opportunity come up.

We currently have a few people looking to move to a property with more bedrooms.

Currently on offer:

- 1 Bedroom property - looking for a 2-bed property
- 2 bed - looking for a 3-bed property

If you know of anyone on the estate who might also be looking to move to the area, please do let us know as we are able to propose exchanges around other areas of Havering or even in other boroughs.



If you are interested in a possible home swap, there are several ways in which you can research the possibility. You can contact people on specially dedicated Facebook groups, and there is also the website www.homeswapper.co.uk You can log all your details onto this website and search for your ideal swap before waiting to see if your offer attracts interest.

It must be remembered there are no guarantees that you will find your ideal swap, or that it will be agreed by both sides.

Estate Manager Lloyd Edwards



Lloyd's viewpoint

With winter setting in the energy crisis shows no signs of letting up - so elsewhere in this edition I have put together some helpful notes and information that will hopefully help residents understand what help is out there for them this winter.

Thinking about winter however, as the nights draw in and the days get colder, the maintenance guys already complete checks around the estate to make sure on our park lights are working properly. They check the lobby lights, but sometimes they may work when we turn them on but stop working in the evening, so if you do notice any lights that aren't working either in the parks or the stairwells, please do let us know.

With temperatures dropping and the energy worries that we all have, keeping homes both warm and ventilated is going to be a challenge. This winter could see a spike in condensation or mould growth within your home. We will as always try our best as a TMO to combat that for all our residents, but there are a few things you can do in the home to prevent condensation build up and consequently mould growth.

Before the colder temperatures kick in, please check all the fans and vents you have in your home. If you have an electrical fan in your home that isn't working or a vent that is blocked or not achieving its purpose, please let us know and we will have someone attend to repair as soon as possible.

When cooking, showering or bathing - anything that produces steam - keep the doors closed to that room. This will

prevent the steam escaping out to other areas of your property.

Where possible, move furniture away from walls by an inch or so to allow as much airflow behind it as possible, avoid clutter where you can within your home, and ensure any devices such as washing machines, tumble driers etc have space behind them for airflow where possible too.

The more air you can get flowing round your property the less chance you have of condensation building up in areas resulting in mould growth. If you notice a build-up of condensation regularly, likely around windows and window reveals, try to wipe dry regularly too.

While we appreciate all of this may not be possible in your homes by doing what we can you may find mould growth is a little less this winter.

Our Queen



We will remember the state funeral of Her Majesty the Queen for the rest of our lives.

It is said over six billion people watched it. That's around 60 percent of the entire world's population. Proof of the very high esteem in which she - and this dear old country of ours - was held.

Thrust into the limelight from an early age, and one of the youngest monarchs of our country, Queen Elizabeth carried the weight of the country through some difficult times and with great aplomb.

She is the only monarch that most of our community will have known, and the length of her reign is testament to the service she has given to our country.

Now resting in peace alongside her late husband, we must hope that her son, King Charles, can do her, and us, proud.

Regards, Lloyd

STAY
ALERT

CONTROL
THE VIRUS

SAVE
LIVES

Covid latest

The government has removed remaining domestic restrictions in England. There are still steps you can take to reduce the risk of catching and spreading COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated
- Let fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meet outside
- Consider wearing a face covering in crowded, enclosed spaces

For further advice and information on Coronavirus, visit the government's website at www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Flu jab

Remember also to get your free flu vaccine. The best time to get vaccinated is in the autumn, before the cold temperatures start. Find out more or speak to your local pharmacy or GP. School-aged children will be offered the vaccine at school.

The flu spreads from person to person - even amongst those not showing symptoms. The vaccine is the best protection for you and those around you.

Scared of your partner or ex?

Talk to us any time, day or night.

Freephone 24 hour National
Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 2000 247

Confidential
non-judgmental support

Or reach us online:
www.nationalDAHeline.org.uk

Refuge

For women and children.
Against domestic violence.



Tackling the cost of living crisis

Roadshow

The Havering Community Engagement Team will be visiting our estate to provide cost of living advice to residents on all aspects of family and household expenses.

The team will be with us on Monday 7th November, between 10am and 12 noon, in the boardroom, at the BETRA office. No appointment needed - just pop along.

Affordable energy

The energy crisis shows no sign of letting up. The recently announced price caps are welcome, but the cost of living crisis affects many aspects of the typical household's daily expenditure, notably rents and mortgages, fuel, food, and so on.

While BETRA cannot control the cost of living unfortunately, will help where we can.

If anyone is worried about what the winter or indeed the future brings financially, then please come in and talk to us.

We can help by doing budgeting with you, all the way through to helping you apply for financial help where it is available out there for you.

Available help

With so many schemes now in operation it's a bit of a maze, but worth exploring to see what support you are entitled to.

Energy Bill Discount (Winter 2022/23)

Way back in May, every household in council tax bands A-D received £150 for help with energy bills. There is a second sum of money being handed out this winter.

It's different this time. Every household across the country should be receiving this regardless of your council tax bracket. It will not be paid directly to you or put onto your council tax bill like last time. This time each household will have £66 put onto their energy account at the beginning of each month between October 2022 - March 2023.

If you pay monthly via direct debit for your energy bills, your direct debit amount will be reduced in each of these months. For example, if you pay £100 direct debit every month what should be debited from your bank account to the energy company should be £34. And this will still put £100 of credit onto your account.

I understand that if you have a key/card meter in your property and pay on standing order/regular debit credit set up for the meter, then the amount will be automatically credited onto your account similar to a direct debit payment.

If any residents have top-up devices (Card or Key) meters



(pay as you go), then the discount should be available on the first week of every month. It should automatically happen, either by way of having the money credited to your account when you go to top-up as normal, or you may receive vouchers from your energy supplier direct to allow you to pay for the top-up rather than the cash or card payment that you would normally make.

We believe these payments will be made via your energy companies and onto your electricity accounts only.

If you haven't received the discount by the middle of the month, get in touch with your electricity supplier as soon as possible.

Regardless of how the payment gets to you, please be aware that if your account is in debt then the debt will be taken off of the discount available and the rest attributed to your account.

Cost of living payments

Households on means-tested benefits (benefits which you have had to provide regular evidence for) ie job seekers, ESA, income supports, tax credits, etc. This should have been made in two lump sums. The second payment should be

approximately £300 and should arrive into the same account you receive your benefits in and should have been paid to you by October.

Disability cost of living payment

This payment is primarily aimed at those who get Disability Living Allowance (for either adults and children), PiP or War, or armed forces pensions. You must have been claiming one of the above benefits prior to 25th May 2022 to qualify.

By the time this publication comes out you should have already received up to £150 extra around the 20th September up to the beginning of October. If you haven't received this payment but qualify as above, then you can report this on the Havering or Government websites under the title, 'Disability cost of living payment missed'.

Winter fuel payments

Winter fuel payments aren't changing this year as far as we can tell. The criteria for winter fuel payments are if you receive a state pension usually or have extenuating circumstances. So if you usually receive annual winter fuel payments this year should be no different.

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Events

Continued from P3

However, if you are entering pensions age this year it may be worth checking with your supplier that you are going to receive it - they may not be aware that you have reached state pension age.

If you have not received confirmation by letter or the funds by 13th January 2023, then you must get in touch with the winter fuel payment centre immediately on 0800 7310160

Pensioner cost of living payment

If you are entitled to a winter fuel payment you should also receive a 'pensioner cost of living payment' of up to £300 included with your winter fuel payments. This should also be paid around November this year. This should be automatically applied if you were born between 1942 and 25th Sept 1956.

Again, if you haven't received your winter fuel payment or the extra pensioner cost of living payment by the start of December, contact your energy supplier, or ask us for assistance, or call the winter fuel payment centre number listed above.

Cold Weather payments

Should the temperatures this winter drop below 0 degrees for a period of 7 days or more every resident will be eligible for extra top up money approximately £25.

Warm Home discount

This discount isn't a government scheme, more

an energy supplier scheme. Primarily for those on a low income or pension credits, you can apply to your energy supplier for an additional credit on your energy bills. Best way to see if you are entitled to this would be to look on your energy suppliers' websites. While some may receive this automatically some may have to apply through their suppliers individually. Not all suppliers offer this scheme, but it's worth checking. If yours does, it should not affect the other payments you receive.

Rent-free weeks

As you may already know, the council has four rent-free weeks per year. The latest one was at the end of August, to ease pressure around the back-to-school time when families are put under extra financial burden buying new uniform etc.

The next rent-free week will be Monday 26th December 2022. Christmas is another expensive time of the year, so this rent-free week will be welcome.

News in brief



Coming up to Christmas, a reminder that if you are going to be out and want to avoid having your delivery being left by the security door or, if they do get in the building, outside your front door, you

can always ask for parcels to be delivered to our office. Or, if you get a notification that a parcel has been delivered and you aren't at home, feel free to call us. With your permission we will go and pick the parcel up and hold on to it in our office until you are home and can collect it from us.

Insuring your home

Havering Council insures the structure of your home but the cover does not include what's inside it, such as your furniture and personal belongings.

Replacing the contents of your home could prove very expensive, which is why we recommend you take up Havering's offer of home and contents insurance.

With the online form it's easy to apply. Just go to the Havering website and search 'home and contents insurance'.

You will be able to see the breakdown of what it covers, and how much it costs per week. Unlike some insurance policies, there are no excesses so you will not have to pay anything in the event of a claim.

Havering Dementia Action Alliance

Do you know someone who lives with dementia? Learn more about dementia and how to support your loved ones with dedicated training in three one-hour monthly sessions beginning on 4th October.

The sessions run from 1pm to 2pm on the first Tuesday of each month and will be held at Harold Hill Community Hub, Harold Hill Library, 19A Farnham Road.

BETRA Board Meetings



The date of the next Board meeting, and the Annual General Meeting, are yet to be confirmed. See notice boards for details.

For Christmas arrangements, check notice boards and website nearer the time for details - office opening hours, bin collection days etc.

BETRA

Jill Horsham, Chair
Lloyd Edwards, Estate Manager
Jennie Goddard, Housing Officer
Mark Richardson, Senior Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer
Steven Richardson, Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer
Naomi Cooper, Bookkeeper

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