

# Tenant and Leaseholder Panel

## Open House

# OpenHouse

The newsletter for Croydon Council tenants and leaseholders



## Croydon finishes retrofitting fire sprinklers into its first of 26 blocks

**Croydon Council has completed work to retrospectively fit sprinklers in the first of 26 of its tower blocks, with support from London Fire Brigade.**

A week after the Grenfell Tower tragedy last June, Croydon was the first council to announce it would retrofit sprinklers in its high-rise blocks. A £10m programme in its 25 tallest blocks of 10 to 12 storeys, plus an eight-storey sheltered block, was approved.

In College Green, Upper Norwood, the first building's sprinkler system became operational in mid-February. Council contractors have begun work on a neighbouring council block, with work on another three high-rises starting in the coming weeks.

The council decided to invest in sprinklers without waiting for help from Government, which pledged, in a letter to councils on 31 July, that it would help fund essential works on advice from local fire brigades.

Councillor Alison Butler, deputy leader and cabinet member for homes, regeneration and planning, said: "We invested in our sprinkler programme

because we feel it's essential to our residents' safety in response to the Grenfell tragedy, so it's a real boost to have finished the first of 26 Croydon Council blocks."

Kevin McKenzie, London Fire Brigade borough commander for Croydon, visited the first College Green block during testing, and praised the council's 26-block sprinkler programme.

He said: "Sprinklers play a significant role as part of an appropriate package of fire safety measures in reducing the impact of fire on people, property and the environment, so we welcome this because it gives residents reassurance."

"London Fire Brigade has long been campaigning about the benefits of sprinklers, which save lives and property, and also improve firefighter safety."

"Croydon Council proves it's possible to retrofit sprinklers, and more boroughs and housing owners should follow its lead to protect their most vulnerable residents, including those with mobility issues."

Each flat getting the upgrade has around six sprinklers hidden high on walls, near ceilings, behind a flat white disc. These pop off when the room temperature hits 57 degrees Celsius, then, at 67 degrees, they spray a fine water mist at a wide angle.

The sprinkler will be triggered only in the room affected by fire. This kind of targeted sprinkler reduces the risk

Resident Teresa Cox (centre) with Councillor Alison Butler and Kevin McKenzie, fire brigade borough commander.



of false alarms and water damage, coupled with fire breaks in place that limit spread between neighbouring flats and floors.

Teresa Cox, a College Green resident who lives in one of the first flats to be retrofitted with sprinklers, said: "Anything that saves people's lives has got to be worth the hassle. They were very quick, efficient and polite people, and they did it really well."

As with the first and second blocks, residents in the next blocks due to get sprinklers are being sent update letters and an invitation to coffee mornings so they can view sprinklers already installed and talk with the project team.

Residents wanting to know more about the project can view a frequently-asked-questions page on the council website, and a time-lapse video of the sprinklers being installed – both are available at [www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/fire-safety](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/housing/fire-safety).



Communications checked  
see page 2



Clearing the communal spaces  
see page 4



Exploding the myths  
see page 7



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Contact the editor  
I hope you enjoy reading OpenHouse. If you have any comments to make please email [communications@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:communications@croydon.gov.uk)



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# OPEN HOUSE

The newsletter for Croydon Council tenants and leaseholders

## Welcome to Open House!

You'll notice that we've made a few changes to the look and feel of Open House, part of our campaign to get more of you actively involved in helping us to improve your homes, neighbourhoods and housing services.

We'd like Open House to reach more of Croydon Council's tenants and leaseholders. Over the coming months, we will be sending 'at a glance' paper versions of Open House to all Croydon Council tenants and leaseholders and encouraging residents with access to the internet to sign up to receive the full online version of Open House by email. We're committed to keeping in touch with all our residents, and will continue to provide printed copies of Open House to those who request it and to those without access to the internet.

If you want to start using the internet and develop your digital skills, but you're not sure where to start, turn to page four where there's information about all the support that's available in Croydon.

To receive an online version of Open House, or if you've got ideas for future editions, call 020 8726 6100 ext. 47350 or drop us an email at [residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk)

## 2018 – a big year for housing

**A multi-million-pound investment in affordable homes and better contracts for council tenants are among Croydon's housing highlights of 2018.**

In October, Croydon Council was awarded £61 million to build 888 affordable homes in the borough through the Mayor of London's new council homebuilding programme that aims for 11,000 new homes across the capital.

Croydon is already building council homes in the borough. Council-established developers Brick by Brick (BxB) currently have planning consent on around 40 sites, which will provide 1,036 new homes, of which 498 (48%), will be affordable. The first homes will be completed early in 2019.

Also in October, the council announced it was removing fixed-term contracts for new council tenants. Another improvement for council tenants in 2018 is the borough's post-Grenfell programme to install fire sprinklers in 26 of its tallest housing blocks, which is almost complete. For more on the sprinklers programme and improved council tenancies, see inside on page 2.

Croydon is also working on two schemes to increase housing supply specifically for people who might otherwise need council-run temporary accommodation. The first is a project to give 10 local long-term rough sleepers their own flat and specialist wraparound support for their needs. Made available through a successful council bid for a £500,000 Government grant towards tackling homelessness in the borough, these first 10 flats will be in place by March, with help for a further 10 rough sleepers in 2019/2020.

The other scheme to increase housing supply is Croydon Affordable Homes, a council-created charity set up to get Croydon families out of temporary accommodation and into genuinely affordable places to live. To date, the council has bought over 165 mainly two- and three-bed flats and houses costing tenants a maximum 65% of the average market rent.



Work nears completion on fire sprinkler installation in council tower blocks. Page 2



Get involved and get your voice heard. Page 3



How to stay warm this winter. Page 7



'Like' the resident involvement in Croydon Facebook page to keep up to date with the latest news and views.

Visit [www.facebook.com/croydonresidentinvolvement](http://www.facebook.com/croydonresidentinvolvement)

**If you would like to contribute to Open House, contact:**

**residentinvolvement@[croydon.gov.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk)**

**Contact the editor**

We hope you enjoy this edition of Open House. If you have any feedback please email: [residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@croydon.gov.uk)

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special edition

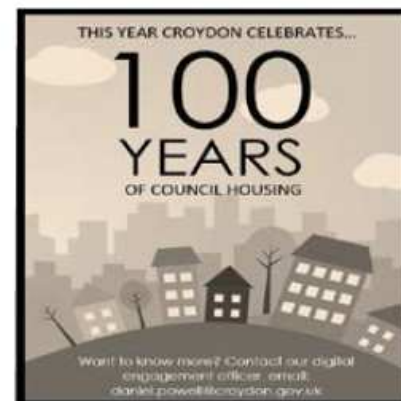
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### COLOUR ADVERTISING FEATURE



### THE FUTURE IS NOW WITH OUR NEW ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Sign up now to our online newsletter and you will re-  
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# CENTENARY STORIES

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Barry Bloggs**

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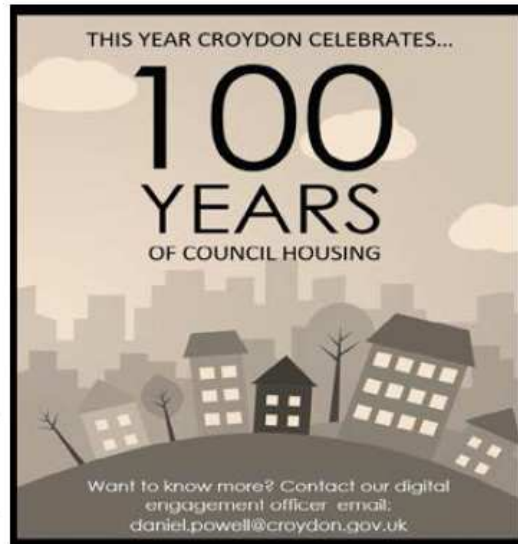


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### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Open House magazine is recruit-  
ing volunteers to join its new  
facebook editorial team. We need  
writers, reporters and editors who  
are interested in reporting on  
events in their neighbourhoods.  
All ages welcome and support and  
training will be given.



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## 4 OPEN HOUSE

### NEW ONLINE DIY REPAIR VIDEOS



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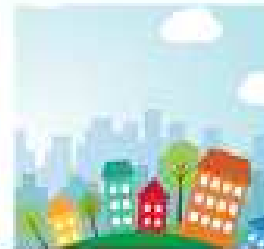
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