



**TEST YOUR HEATING BEFORE WINTER - P4**  
Carry out some simple checks throughout the summer to avoid being caught in the cold



**FIRE SAFETY UPDATE - P2 & 3**  
Read the latest about fire safety and find out how you can help keep fellow residents safe by parking responsibly on your estate



**BEWARE OF BOGUS CALLERS - P4**  
Avoid falling prey to those who may trick or con their way into a home by following six simple steps

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Working for better homes

# ourhomes



## Free family fun day at Millfields



Millfields Park, E5

**T**HE event is a great opportunity to try out loads of fun games and activities, a chance for people to meet local neighbours and other residents across the borough.

So said Shaheed Miah, from charity Access to Sports, who has been working with the Council and a host of other partners to coordinate this year's Millfields Fun Day which takes place from 12pm on Saturday, 29 July.

Now in its fifth year and free to attend for all Hackney residents, the annual event will feature music, food, face painting, the 'smoothie bike', a football tournament and taster sessions in rugby, handball, cricket, badminton and more.

Information, advice and support about services will also be on offer, and residents will get the opportunity to say

what regular sports and social activities can be introduced locally to help bring the community together.

The event launches Access to Sports' 'Goals for Youth & Sports Project' which will offer extra activities for young people in the Millfields and Clapton areas of the borough throughout the year.

Working with the Council's Housing Service, housing associations, Young Hackney, local groups and Hackney councillors, the charity has been awarded funding to run the new project which will offer sports and physical activities in local venues for free, such as football, basketball, tennis, dance and netball.

Nicole Napier, Operations Manager for Access to Sports, said: "We are delighted to have secured three years of external funding. It will allow us to provide some

much needed new opportunities for young people to get involved and active in a whole host of new activities, and partnerships!"

Access to Sports is also one of the chosen charities of the Speaker of Hackney, Cllr Soraya Adejare, she said:

"This is a fantastic annual event which goes from strength to strength. Its focus remains community centred, helping residents feel connected and actively involved in their local area. I am so pleased that Access to Sports will be on hand, providing residents with opportunities to try out sporting activities and participate in planning for their exciting programme of activities. I am very much looking forward to attending and experiencing all that this wonderful day has to offer."

**For more information about the Goals for Youth & Sports Project, call: 020 7686 8812; or visit: [www.accesstosports.org.uk](http://www.accesstosports.org.uk)**

**The Fun Day is from 12pm to 5pm on 29 July at Millfields Park, Lea Bridge Road, E5 0AR.**

**“ This is a fantastic annual event which goes from strength to strength ”**

# Working for better homes



## Fire safety

**F**OLLOWING the Grenfell Tower tragedy, staff from across the Council have been busy carrying out a fire safety action plan, to provide reassurance for residents about the safety of their home.

Initial checks on cladding, carried out within 48 hours of the fire in Kensington, found no immediate risks and the Council was not required to send samples to the Government for testing. The Council then drafted an action plan, overseen by its independent fire safety consultant, former borough commander of Hackney's fire brigade, Graham Howgate.

The Council wrote to tenants and leaseholders to let them know about the enhanced fire safety checks it would be undertaking. Work completed to date includes thorough checks of cladding on high rise towers by independent experts, Cladtech Associates. This involved checking the cladding was installed correctly, is fire resistant and fit for purpose. None of the cladding has raised any issues of concern, however the inspection programme continues, with smaller blocks now being thoroughly examined.

A team of 20 members of staff have been out on estates in high vis jackets, completing additional fire safety checks, using a checklist developed by the Council's fire safety consultant. Following training, these fire safety checks will become part of Estate Inspectors' roles.

Over the coming weeks and months, the Council will be publishing online fire risk assessments (FRAs) for all of its social housing. FRAs identify potential fire hazards found at the time the assessment was carried out and the measures that should be taken to minimise or eliminate that risk. Some of the key things FRAs look at are access, the structural measures in place to stop or slow down the spread of a fire, and whether there is anything inside the building that could start, accelerate or spread a fire.

FRAs are similar to car MOTs, they provide a snapshot of what an assessor found on the day. They are useful documents, providing an overview of any potential fire safety issues in a building, but they by no means provide a complete picture as to whether a building is safe or not, so it is important that residents continue to report any concerns or potential fire risks in their blocks. FRAs will be published in batches, starting in the next couple of weeks. For more



Staff carrying out additional assessments

**“Our estates are the heart of Hackney and it’s my priority to ensure they remain safe places to live.”**

by Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cabinet Member for Housing Services

AS a Council resident, living on an estate in Hoxton, and as Hackney's Cabinet Member for Housing Services, I was left reeling by the news of June's devastating fire at Grenfell Tower. In the weeks following the fire, my thoughts remain with those who lost loved ones and I've been moved by how many Hackney residents have continued to help out, first by volunteering down at the rest centres, and more recently raising money to help those affected by this appalling tragedy.

The fire has focused the thoughts of everyone living in a housing block, and everyone in charge of housing across the country. As a Council we've been asking ourselves: are we doing everything we can to make sure that everyone living in Hackney's council housing is safe?

As you'll read over these pages, as well as in previous issues of Hackney Today and the two letters you should have received through the post, we took immediate action following the fire to first make sure that the cladding on our blocks is safe, and we continue to go above and beyond the safety measures usually expected, to provide as much reassurance to residents as possible.

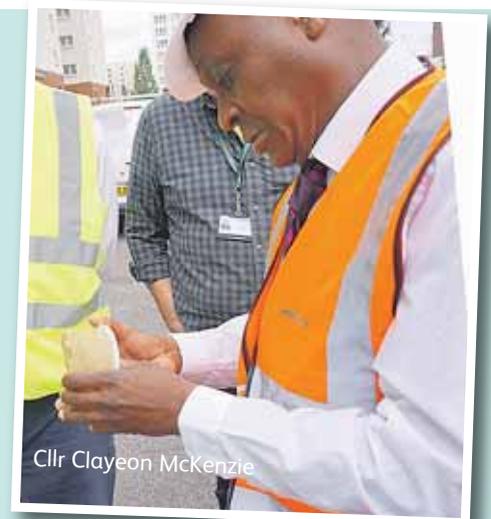
However, we mustn't become complacent. Additional fire safety measures will continue. You may have already seen Council staff either inspecting fire safety measures, like fire doors, or making repairs. As you can imagine, with over 300 estates across Hackney there continues to be huge amount of ongoing work as part of the review, and it's only right that we take

our time to ensure that all of this work is completed to a high standard. We're also planning to publish all of the Fire Risk Assessments for our council housing blocks to ensure you have access to as much up-to-date information about fire safety in your home as possible.

This is taking up a significant amount of staff time, and as a result, some non-essential work may take a bit longer than usual, so please bear with us.

Residents can play their part by reporting objects left in communal areas or corridors, or by parking responsibly on estates to help the fire service respond to 999 calls, which the London Fire Brigade has raised with us as a concern.

Our estates are the heart of Hackney, and it's my priority to ensure they remain safe places to live.



Cllr Clayeon McKenzie

If you have any specific concerns about fire safety, e-mail: [housinginfo@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:housinginfo@hackney.gov.uk); or call: **020 8356 4000**.

As ever, I'm keen to hear the views and voices of residents and if you have any more general views about fire safety – or anything to do with housing – please do not hesitate to e-mail me on: [clayeon.mckenzie@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:clayeon.mckenzie@hackney.gov.uk)

## Residents with questions about fire safety in their home can e-mail: [housinginfo@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:housinginfo@hackney.gov.uk); or call: 020 8356 3310



A London Fire Engine on a Hackney estate

information, visit: [www.hackney.gov.uk/fire-safety](http://www.hackney.gov.uk/fire-safety)

The Council will also be considering whether to install sprinklers in any more of its blocks. This decision will be based on the findings of the interim report into the Grenfell tragedy and advice from the London Fire Brigade.

Residents with questions about fire safety can e-mail: [housinginfo@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:housinginfo@hackney.gov.uk); or call: 020 8356 4000.

### When parking think fire safety

Residents are being urged to think about where they park on estates, to help firefighters respond to 999 calls.

The London Fire Brigade has expressed concerns about parking on some estates, which could potentially slow down or prevent a fire engine from entering an estate or getting close to an estate block, or home, in an emergency.

Hackney's London Fire Brigade Borough Commander, Steve Dudeney, said: "We have a problem in Hackney with parking. Frequently we can't get around a bend with a fire engine in estates. Sadly it's down to poor and irresponsible parking. I'd call on all motorists to park more considerately and be mindful of vehicles larger than cars that may need access in an emergency."

Before parking in an estate, residents are being encouraged to think 'fire safety' and follow these simple steps to park responsibly:

- Avoid parking close to estate fire gates, entrances and exits
- Leave enough space for larger vehicles to pass your vehicle
- Park within parking bay markings and in a straight line
- Park as close to the curb as possible
- Never park over a fire hydrant: look out for an 'H' with a yellow background
- Never park in front of a dry riser: look out for a red box next to an estate entrance which says 'Dry Riser'.

## Full clean ahead



As part of the integrated cleansing programme, adding to the work already happening to the outside of estate blocks, Council staff are now working across 257 estates to give the inside of 1,119 blocks a daily clean: that's some 4,968 floors! What's more, all estates will get an enhanced clean once every 20 days and a deep clean annually.

A new estate cleaning number and e-mail have also been launched. Residents can contact the cleaning service directly to report any cleaning-related issues. The contact number is answered outside of working hours (after 6pm) and weekends to deal with cleaning emergencies.

Residents will soon be able to find out the dates of when their block will be cleaned by typing in their postcode on the new estates cleaning webpage: [www.hackney.gov.uk/estate-cleaning](http://www.hackney.gov.uk/estate-cleaning)

Contact estates cleaning by e-mail: [cleaner.estates@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:cleaner.estates@hackney.gov.uk); or call: 020 8356 2121.

## Top tips to prevent doorstep crime

**BURGLARS** don't always break into a home, some pretend to be from a utility company or an official organisation, like the Council, to get into your home.

Known as 'bogus callers', they try to distract residents by taking them outside of their home while someone they are with sneaks in. They also make up fake problems, for example, offering to inspect your property because of a leak from a floor above and will charge for unnecessary work.

If you suspect a doorstep crime, call Hackney Council's Trading Standards service on: 020 8356 4929

Summer is the peak time for bogus callers so the Council and police are encouraging people to follow these simple steps:

- Think before opening the door:** use a chain, spy hole or look out of the window to see if you recognise the caller. If in doubt, or if you feel anxious, don't open the door. **Treat every stranger with caution and if you are still worried, call 999 (for an emergency) or 101 (for a non-emergency)**
- Ask for proof of identity:** companies will make an appointment and will not visit unannounced. Don't accept their proof of ID at face value, make your own check by contacting the company using their details from a telephone directory or the internet
- Service companies for gas, water and electricity offer a password identification system:** any caller from one of the companies should be able to provide a pre-arranged password as an added proof of identity. If the caller cannot provide a password, arrange an alternative visit with the utility provider
- If you are not convinced of the identity of the caller, don't let them in:** ask the caller to come back later and arrange for a friend, relative or nominated neighbour to be with you. You can also ask the caller to contact this person ahead of the visit. For more information on the Nominated Neighbour Scheme, contact Hackney Council's Trading Standards team on: 020 8356 4929
- Don't be distracted by callers:** sometimes bogus callers will claim they have seen something wrong in your back garden or somewhere else on the property to encourage you to leave your house. The caller may be working with an accomplice. Never leave your door open
- Keep an eye on your neighbours:** if you have a vulnerable neighbour and notice work being carried out unexpectedly, talk to your neighbour in private and ask them if things are ok

# Working for better homes



## Prevent faulty heaters this winter

**T**HE Council is encouraging people to think ahead and check their heating throughout the summer months to avoid being caught in the cold.

“We get a huge amount of calls requesting heating system repairs at the beginning of October when the temperatures drop,” said Donald Day who works for the Council’s gas and boiler team.

“During the summer residents don’t often have their heating on, which means faulty systems can go unnoticed. Although their boiler will be working fine for hot water, it’s not until tenants come to turn their heating on again that they realise there is a problem. This can lead to a backlog of emergency call-outs which means waiting times for repairs can be longer than usual.”

If you have your own heating system – rather than a communal heating system – you can ensure you are ready for winter by checking your heating once-a-month during July, August and September and report any problems immediately.

Donald added: “These simple and regular checks can help to identify heating problems well in advance, meaning we can sort them out before the cold nights draw in.”

If your heating does not come on after carrying out these checks, you can report the repair online at: [hackney.gov.uk/repairs](http://hackney.gov.uk/repairs); or alternatively call the Repairs Call Centre on: **020 8356 3691**.

### It’s quick and simple to test your heating, all you need to do is:

- Make sure you have both gas and electric credit on your meters
- Turn on your programmer to heating
- Turn on all radiator valves
- Turn the room thermostat to maximum
- Radiators should now get hot
- Run for 5 minutes and then turn off.

## Five steps to thrive this summer



**SUMMER is a great time to appreciate the sights and sounds of Hackney. It’s also a great time to start taking a few simple steps to help improve wellbeing and mental health.**

We are lucky to have our Five to Thrive campaign, which offers some straightforward tips that encourage people to help improve their own wellbeing.

Taking one of those five simple steps – Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give – can have a positive impact on how you feel.

Whether it’s learning mindfulness, joining a free exercise class, reconnecting with your neighbours, or finding out more about volunteering and mentoring, the

campaign is here to help you get the most out of what’s available locally.

Dr Gopal Mehta, a Hackney GP said: “We are keen to explore different ways we can help our patients. We are very fortunate to have some fantastic resources available. There are so many more treatment options other than just counselling and prescribing medications, befriending services, yoga, mindfulness and so much more.”

Visit the Five to Thrive website and start taking the steps this summer:  
[www.fivetothrive.net](http://www.fivetothrive.net)

Any object can be a plant paradise



## These shoes were made for planting

**FROM floral stilettos to runner beans in an old pair of trainers, residents on the Wilton Estate went head over heels for a Chelsea Fringe event which took place on their estate in June.**

KEENTOGREEN CIC, a Hackney based horticulture social enterprise, put the boot in to traditional planting and taught residents that you don’t need a big garden or lots of space to grow your own. Instead the group invited residents to bring old shoes along to the community event to learn how any object can be a plant paradise.

Seeds, shoots and soil were provided on the day for residents to create their own shoe planters. One boy saw his unloved pair of wellington boots turned into delightful flower pots, which will also provide nectar for passing insects.

Clair Battaglino, co-director at KEENTOGREEN, said: “We were lucky to have such a wonderful sunny day with most people moving their cars to create a temporary pedestrianised area for local children and adults to play and socialise. It was a fabulous atmosphere. We planted up lots of no longer serviceable footwear and it was great to see people making their way home clutching shoes and boots filled with greenery. We have already heard from one local resident that her plant is doing really well.”

As well as running community projects throughout the year, KEENTOGREEN CIC also run Rainbow Grow, a LGBTQI+ gardening club based at Cordwainers Grow on Mare Street.

To find out more search for Rainbow Grow on Facebook or e-mail: [rainbowgrowk2g@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowgrowk2g@gmail.com)