

Prevention and Wellbeing Factsheet: Housing

Key messages

- Having a suitable home is important for your health and wellbeing – look after it and it'll look after you.
- DON'T let issues build up, delay seeking advice, or think that you have no control over the situation.
- There is plenty of local support on hand to deal with issues including rent/mortgage arrears and improving housing conditions.

Why is it important?

- Affordable and safe housing is important for people's physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- In the UK:
 - Cold houses cause over 8,000 deaths each winter. In addition, around 56,000 people are admitted to hospital because they live in cold housing.
 - Falls at home cause around 3,500 deaths and 300,000 hospital treatments each year.
- Housing can be improved in lots of ways once the right people know about the risks.

The picture in Barnet

- There is a long-term shift towards renting, away from owner occupancy reflecting a sustained reduction in affordable housing and an imbalance between demand & supply.
- Housing affordability is the second highest concern for residents according to the 2015 Residents' Perception Survey. Only the condition of roads and pavements is a higher concern.
- Private sector rents have increased faster in Barnet than in many other parts of London and they are the 4th highest out of 16 Outer London Boroughs.

Other important messages to consider

- Damp houses have more mould spores in them, which can cause or worsen existing respiratory diseases, including asthma.
- Hoarding is an important issue to be aware of. Hoarding is when a person acquires an excessive amount of items and stores them in a chaotic manner. The resulting clutter may interfere with the person's everyday life (e.g. prevent them from accessing rooms), cause significant distress or negatively affect the person's quality of life or their family's. People who hoard may not see it as a problem or realise the impact it is having on their life or the lives of others; or they may be reluctant to seek help due to embarrassment or guilt.
- Other possible issues to look out for in homes include overcrowding, fire hazards, overheating, very old or broken boilers, noise and inadequate lighting.

Signposting to local services and online support

St Mungo's Broadway

Offers advice on housing issues, such as housing options, landlord and tenant disputes, homelessness, and rent/mortgage arrears. Clients are seen in drop - in sessions without prior appointments.

Supports those who live, work or study in Barnet.

Offers a rent deposit guarantee scheme to help non-priority homeless people on benefits or low income find accommodation with private landlords. Once you find accommodation they will pay the first 4 weeks' rent and guarantee your deposit.

Provide assistance to those with alcohol, drug or mental health problems via the Foundation Project.

- 36B Woodhouse Road, North Finchley London, N12 0RG
- Tel: 020 8446 2504
- Drop in: Monday and Thursday 10am-1pm
- Telephone advice: Monday - Friday 10am-1pm and 2-4pm

Homeless Action Barnet

Works with homeless people to help them gain access to housing, health and other services: Day centre services – cover practical needs as well as advice and advocacy on a number of issues (Mon-Fri 9am-3pm except Bank holidays).

Tenancy support services – the Floating Support Service by Outreach Barnet; and a partnership with the Foundation Project to provide temporary accommodation while trying to secure tenancy in the private sector.

Health services – access to a doctor, nurse, chiropodist and alcohol worker provided by the CCG for those who can't access community-based services (Mon-Weds).

- 36B Woodhouse Road, North Finchley London, N12 0RG
- hab@habcentre.org
- Tel: 020 8446 8400

Council Housing advice

- <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/housing-and-community.html>

The Barnet Group

Provide advice on rent arrears, financial support and benefits, rent increases, tenancy deposit issues, disrepair and right to stay in your home.

- <http://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/applying-for-housing/housing-advice/>

Citizens Advice Barnet

- <https://barnetcab.org.uk/advice/housing-advice/>

Council tax and housing benefit advice

- <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/council-tax-and-benefits/council-tax-support.html>
- <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/council-tax-and-benefits/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-support/what-is-housing-benefit-and-council-tax-support/housing-benefit-how-to-claim.html>

Private Sector Housing Conditions Advice and Grants

Assistance and advice for landlords: <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/housing-and-community/private-housing/landlords.html>

Assistance and advice for private tenants: <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/housing-and-community/private-housing/tenants.html>

Assistance for owner occupiers: <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/housing-and-community/private-housing/owner-occupier.html>

Assistance and advice for owners of empty properties :<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/housing-and-community/private-housing/landlords/empty-properties.html>

Pest Control: <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/housing-and-community/private-housing/owner-occupier/rodents-insects.html>

Drains and water related problems: <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/environmental-health/water.html>

Email: environmentalhealth@barnet.gov.uk

Tel: 0208 359 7995

Welfare reform task force

Households who are affected are advised to contact the Welfare Reform Task Force on 0208 359 2442 or email welfarereformtaskforce@barnet.gov.uk for jobs, housing and financial support.

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/news/Welfare-Reform-Task-Force-invites-people-to-get-in-touch.html>

Warm and Healthy Homes Grants

The Warm and Healthy Homes Grant is one of the forms of energy and heating related assistance grants available to Barnet Residents from the council.

- <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/council-tax-and-benefits/grants-and-funding/decent-homes-grants.html>

Some people with a high level of need require support from a **health or social care professional**. They can be directed to their GP or Social Care Direct (020 8359 5000; socialcaredirect@barnet.gov.uk; 07506 693707 for text messages; 020 8359 2000 for urgent out of hours queries) as appropriate.

For anyone with **caring responsibilities** who lives or works in the borough, Barnet Carers Centre can offer advice, information, emotional and practical support. They can be contacted on the following numbers: 020 8343 9698 (Adult Carers Outreach & Support Service and Carers Hospital Discharge Coordinator); 020 8432 2092 (Barnet Young Carers and Siblings); 020 8432 2091 (Community Home & Support Services) or via email admin@barnetcarers.org.