

Services for private tenants and owner-occupiers

This leaflet explains the services we offer and the standards of customer care you should expect to receive from us.

**Housing
Operations**
Civic Centre
44 York Street
Twickenham
TW1 3BZ



HOUSING

Residential team

The aim of our service

The residential team aims to make sure that the private housing in the borough meets the needs of our residents. We also aim to help people who own and live in their own home (owner-occupiers) to repair and improve their homes by providing information and grants.

We investigate complaints about the condition of privately rented properties and make sure that landlords improve their properties through information or grants, or by serving legal notices. Some help is also available to tenants of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

The team also responds to complaints of noise or other nuisance, and works towards sorting out the problem through advice, information and enforcement.

We offer a free pest control service to residents for rats and mice. We also offer advice about other pests.

Our service standards

At Richmond upon Thames Council we aim to provide a first class service for customers to show our commitment to Customer Service Excellence.

Our commitment to you:

We aim to resolve 80% of your general enquiries at the first point of contact.

- We will make it easy for you to get in touch by providing a range of ways to contact us.
- Our staff will be courteous, respectful and committed to resolving enquiries from customers as soon as possible. Where an enquiry does not relate to a service provided by the council, staff will ensure the enquiry is passed on quickly and effectively to one of our partner agencies.
- We will not discriminate against anyone because of race, sex, marital status, age, disability, sexuality or religion.
- We will ask for permission to collect and share your information within the Council, and keep information about you as accurate and up to date as possible - with your help
- We will reduce the amount of unnecessary contact customers have to make by redesigning services which will improve customer satisfaction and efficiency
- We will continue to be assessed against the Customer Service Excellence national standard and Customer Contact Accreditation to ensure that we continue to improve the level of service we give you.
- We will review and publish our service standards annually and be accountable for our performance.
- We will consult with you regularly, welcome your involvement and act on your feedback wherever possible.
- We will carry out independent mystery shopping exercises and act on the results.

When you telephone us:

- We aim to answer at least 80% of calls within 20 seconds.
- We will take a message and get back to you within one working day if we cannot resolve your enquiry straight away or the person you want is not available.
- If we pass your enquiry on to another department, we will pass on your details and the nature of your query so that you do not have to repeat it to another person.
- We will only transfer your call to a phone answered by voice mail with your prior agreement.

When you visit to us:

- We aim to attend to you within 10 minutes of your arrival, but if we don't, we will let you know when you can be seen and explain the reason for the delay.
- If you prefer not to wait, we will offer you an appointment at a time to suit you (where possible).
- If you have an appointment with us we aim to see you at the appointed time, if we are delayed we will let you know when you can be seen and explain the reason for the delay.
- We will provide a private area for confidential enquiries should you wish.
- We will ensure that our reception areas are clearly signposted, accessible and clean and welcoming at all times.
- We will provide loop hearing systems, and access to lip speakers and signers on request.
- We will provide interpreters, on request, for customers for whom English is their second language, and/or a telephone interpreting service.
- We will have a free internal phone and access to a Minicom or other appropriate means of communication in the main reception area.

When you write/email us:

- We will respond to you within 7 working days. If we need longer to give you a full reply, we will send you an acknowledgement and let you know why and how much time we will take.
- We will acknowledge and respond to your letter/email within 7 working days. If we need longer to give you a full reply, we will send you an acknowledgement and let you know why and how much time we will take.
- We will write to you in a way that is easy to understand and use languages other than English when appropriate. We will arrange for a reply in Braille, large print or audio when requested.

Online enquiries:

- We will have an accessible and useable website and make it easy for you to find what you want.
- We will enable you make payments, fill in forms and get information on all Council services.

Home visits:

- We will inform you when we are running late for an appointment or if an appointment has to be cancelled.
- We will advise of the actions resulting from the visit and timescales.
- We will provide a clear explanation of the nature of a visit made without a prior appointment.

Occasionally, a service may not be able to meet the targets set out above (for example where there is a seasonal peak for requests for information). We will tell you if this is the case.

How to contact the residential team

1 In person

We are based in the Civic Centre, York Street, Twickenham. You can visit us by calling in to the atrium of the Civic Centre and asking for us at the main reception. However, as we are often out of the office, you may want to phone us before you visit to arrange an appointment.

The Civic Centre is accessible for people who are in wheelchairs. If you cannot visit the Civic Centre but live near one of our area offices, you can ask the receptionist there to phone us and we will talk to you directly.

2 By phone

You can phone us on our direct lines or through the main switchboard on 0845 6122660.

A minicom system is available for people with hearing difficulties and you can contact us on 020 8891 7404.

Our team phone numbers are listed on the following pages.

3 By email

You can contact us by email at residentialeh@richmond.gov.uk (or our individual email addresses are listed on the following pages).

4 By post

Our address is:

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Residential Team, First Floor, Civic Centre, 44 York Street,
Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 3BZ.

When to contact us

The office is open from 9 am to 5.15 pm, Monday to Thursday, and from 9 am to 5 pm on Fridays.

The Service

Means-tested grants

Grants are available to owner-occupiers, tenants and landlords on a limited basis. The grants fall into the following categories.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

Grants are available for work that is needed to help a disabled person live more independently in their own home. DFGs are available to owners and tenants. You should contact a social services care manager or social worker who will arrange for an occupational therapist (OT) to assess what work is necessary and appropriate to meet your needs. Their contact details are listed below.

These grants depend on your financial circumstances. If you are a tenant, your landlord must give permission for the work.

You can get a separate leaflet about DFG grants from the OTs or grant officers. It is also available on our website at www.richmond.gov.uk/housing

Contact details

If you are applying for an adaptation for adults (over 18), you can contact the social services care managers who will pass your details on to the occupational therapists for your area.

Civic Centre, 44 York Street, Twickenham TW1 3BW

Phone: **020 8891 7971**

If you are applying for an adaptation for children (under 18), please contact:

The Croft Centre, 16 Windham Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2HP.

Phone: **020 8831 6048**

The main receptions are accessible for people in wheelchairs.

Home Improvement Agency

Our Home Improvement Agency (HIA) administers most DFG requests from the Occupational Therapists. Please refer to our leaflet about the service or contact the HIA on **020 8891 7436** or at:

H.ImprovementAgency@richmond.gov.uk

or by visiting the Civic Centre, 44 York Street, Twickenham TW1 3BZ

Home Repair Assistance Grants (HRAGs)

These grants are available for work up to £5000 in any five-year period. They are available for:

- repairs;
- energy-efficiency work including mini central heating systems (known as the ‘coldbuster’ scheme);
- security work; and
- minor or emergency facilities for disabled people.

The grants are discretionary. They are available to owner-occupiers and some tenants who receive benefits based on their financial circumstances (means-tested benefits). Grants are also available to people over 60 who do not receive a means-tested benefit, but we will assess their financial circumstances.

You can get a separate leaflet about HRAGs from the HIA (details above). It is also available on our website at www.richmond.gov.uk/housing

For details about energy efficiency grants, you can also contact Creative Environmental Networks, the organisation that runs the ‘coldbuster’ scheme on our behalf, on 0800 358 6668.

Grants for landlords

These grants are discretionary and we will offer them when a notice has been served on a landlord under the Housing Act 2004. They help landlords with the cost of providing facilities, fire protection work or work to repair the property. Grants are also available to bring empty properties back into use.

You can get a fact pack, with full details about landlord grants, from our Environmental Health Officers.

It is also available on our website at www.richmond.gov.uk/housing

Contact details

Environmental Health Officers	Phone number	Email address
Lola Adepoju	020 8891 7896	l.adepoju@richmond.gov.uk
Donna Hamilton (P/T)	020 8891 7893	donna.hamilton@richmond.gov.uk
Rebecca Wilson	020 8891 7894	r.wilson@richmond.gov.uk
Nick Hancock	020 8891 7857	n.hancock@richmond.gov.uk

Problems in tenanted properties

We investigate complaints about repairs and other problems in tenanted properties. Examples include:

- leaking roofs;
- dampness;
- disrepair;
- unsuitable kitchen facilities; and
- unsuitable bathroom facilities.

We also inspect Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), often known as 'bedsit' accommodation, for repairs, fire protection and suitable facilities and whether a licence is required.

The landlord must deal with disrepair or other problems. Formal action would include a schedule of works with a timescale for action. If we take formal action and the landlord refuses to meet our requirements, we can appoint contractors to carry out the works or prosecute the landlord (or both).

You can get full details about our service for private tenants from our Environmental Health Officers.

Details are also available on our website at:
www.richmond.gov.uk/housing

Contact details

Environmental Health Officers	Phone number	Email address
Lola Adepoju	020 8891 7896	l.adepoju@richmond.gov.uk
Donna Hamilton (P/T)	020 8891 7893	donna.hamilton@richmond.gov.uk
Rebecca Wilson	020 8891 7894	r.wilson@richmond.gov.uk
Nick Hancock	020 8891 7857	n.hancock@richmond.gov.uk

Other services

Nuisance

We also deal with complaints about:

- neighbour noise;
- neighbour nuisance;
- a build-up of rubbish at homes (but not issues relating to collecting rubbish);
- bonfires at homes; and
- faulty burglar alarms at homes.

The Neighbour Nuisance Officer (NNO) will give you advice on dealing with these problems and may ask you to keep diaries recording the problem. Investigations may be carried out until the NNO is satisfied that there is or is not a serious problem. Depending on the results of these investigations, the NNO may serve a legal notice, try to sort out the problem informally or suggest mediation in certain circumstances.

If there is a statutory nuisance and informal action is not appropriate or successful, we will serve a legal notice asking that the nuisance stops within a given time period. If the nuisance does not stop, prosecution proceedings may begin or we may carry out the work and charge the person responsible for this service.

You can get full details about our nuisance service from our Neighbour Nuisance Officer. They are also available on our website at www.richmond.gov.uk/housing

Contact details

Neighbour Nuisance Officer	Phone number	Email address
Jane Edmondson	020 8891 7737	j.edmondson@richmond.gov.uk

Drainage

Drainage that only serves one property is usually the responsibility of the owner of the property. If a drain was laid before 1937 and serves more than one property, it is normally the responsibility of Thames Water Authority to deal with the problem.

If a blockage affects more than one property that was built after 1937, the residential team may be able to serve notices on all households connected to the sewer. The notice would order the blockage to be cleared within 48 hours, and we will charge the owners of the houses served by the sewer for clearing the blockage and for any extra fees and costs.

You can get full details about our service for drainage problems from the Environmental Health Officers. They are also available on our website at www.richmond.gov.uk/housing

Contact details

Environmental Health Officers	Phone number	Email address
Lola Adepoju	020 8891 7896	l.adepoju@richmond.gov.uk
Donna Hamilton (P/T)	020 8891 7893	donna.hamilton@richmond.gov.uk
Rebecca Wilson	020 8891 7894	r.wilson@richmond.gov.uk
Nick Hancock	020 8891 7857	n.hancock@richmond.gov.uk

You can contact Thames Water Authority on 08459 200 800.

General advice

Pest control

We offer a free pest control service if you have a rat or mouse infestation in your home or garden. Our pest control contractor will phone you within 24 hours of your request for a service, to arrange a visit.

To contact pest control, please call 020 8891 7800. Details are also available on our website at www.richmond.gov.uk/housing

Pest advice and education

We can offer residents advice over the phone. We also have leaflets about a variety of pests and insects such as bed bugs.

Contact details

Pest control administration assistants	Phone number	Email address
Jayne Taylor	020 8891 7800	residentialeh@richmond.gov.uk

Advice about urban animals

The Neighbour Nuisance Officer can offer advice and help about a number of urban animals including foxes, squirrels, pigeons and cats. We can also provide useful phone numbers for animal welfare and other related organisations.

You can get details on our website at www.richmond.gov.uk/housing or from the following.

Contact details

Neighbour Nuisance Officer	Phone number	Email address
Jane Edmondson	020 8891 7737	j.edmondson@richmond.gov.uk

Stray dogs

We offer a service collecting stray dogs if they are kept at a property. We contact the appointed collection service to arrange transport to Battersea Dogs' Home. We will charge the owner for this service. With dangerous stray dogs, the person finding the dog should contact the police. We also keep a register of lost and found pets.

To tell us about a stray dog, please call us on 020 8891 7800 during office hours. If you require the service during the evening or weekends please call 0845 371 2522. Details are also available on our website at - www.richmond.gov.uk/housing

Battersea Dogs and Cats Home also keep details of lost and found pets at www.battersea.org.uk/help_advice/lost_dogs_cats/lost_dogs_cats_line/index.html
or at 09014778477

Energy-efficiency advice

We work with the South West London Energy Efficiency Advice Center to provide this service and their number is 0800 512 012

The managers

Ken Emerson is the Head of Housing Operations with overall responsibility for the service.

His phone number is 020 8831 6406.

His email address is k.emerson@richmond.gov.uk

Eleanor Dowling is the Private Sector Housing Manager with day-to-day responsibility for the service.

Her phone number is 020 8891 7892.

Her email address is e.dowling@richmond.gov.uk

How to complain

If you have a complaint about our service, you should first contact the officer dealing with your case. If you are still not satisfied, please contact the manager. If you still feel that your complaint has not been sorted out appropriately, you may then complain to the Head of Housing Operations. Details of both managers are set out above.

If you still feel that you want to take your complaint further, you should fill in an official complaint form. You can get this from area offices, libraries and the Civic Centre. It is also available on our website at www.richmond.gov.uk

If you have gone through our complaint procedure but still feel that we have not sorted out your complaint, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman at 21 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9BU.

Your comments

So that we can review and improve our service, we would be pleased to receive your comments.

1 Have you used our service before? Yes No

2 If you have not used our service before, is this because:

● you did not know about the services available? Yes No

● you never needed to contact us for help and advice? Yes No

3 Did you find the information in this booklet clear? Yes No

If you said that the information was not clear, please tell us why.

4 What do you think about our service standards? (page 2)

Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

If you thought our standards were unsatisfactory, please tell us why.

**Thank you for taking the time to fill in this form.
Please return it to Freepost SEA4735.**

**If you would like a copy of this leaflet
in Braille, in large print, on audio tape or
in a community language,
please contact us on 020 8891 7892.
(Minicom number 020 8891 7404).**

Translation advice

If you have difficulty understanding this booklet please visit Housing Services at the address below where we can arrange a telephone interpreting service.

Albanian

Nese keni veshtersi per te kuptuar kete botim, ju lutemi ejani ne receptionin ne adresen e shenuar me poshte ku ne mund te organizojme perkthime nepermjet telefonit.

Arabic

إذا كانت لديك صعوبة في فهم هذا المنشور، فنرجو زيارة الإستقبال في العنوان المعطى أدناه حيث بإمكاننا أن نرتب لخدمة ترجمة شفوية هاتفية.

Bengali

এই প্রকাশনার অর্থ বুঝতে পারায় যদি আপনার কোন সমস্যা হয়, নিচে দেওয়া ঠিকানায় রিসেপশন-এ চলে আসুন যেখানে আমরা আপনাকে টেলিফোনে দোভাষীর সেবা প্রদানের ব্যবস্থা করতে পারবো।

Farsi

اگر در فهمیدن این نشریه مشکل دارید، لطفاً به میز پذیرش در آدرس قید شده در زیر رجوع فرمایید تا سرویس ترجمه تلفنی برایتان فراهم آورده شود.

Gujarati

જો તમને આ પુસ્તિકાની વિગતો સમજવામાં મુશ્કેલી પડતી હોય તો, કૃપયા નીચે જણાવેલ સ્થળના હિસેબના પર આવો, જ્યાં અમે ટેલિફોન પર ગુજરાતીમાં ઇન્ટરપ્રિટીંગ સેવાની ગોઠવણ કરી આપીશું.

Punjabi

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਪਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਿਸੈਪਸ਼ਨ 'ਤੇ ਆਉ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਤੇ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇੰਟਰਪਿਟਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس اشاعت کو سمجھنے میں کوئی مشکل ہے تو، براہ کرم نیچے دیئے ہوئے ایڈریس کے استقبالیے پر جا کر ملیئے، جہاں ہم آپ کیلئے ٹیلیفون انٹرپریٹنگ سروس (ٹیلیفون پر ترجمانی کی سروس) کا انتظام کر سکتے ہیں۔

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