RINGING THE CHANGES
New tenancy & allocations policies

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS
Programme starting soon

HELP US KEEP YOU SAFE
Water tank cleaning programme
Welcome to The Link.

Coleman’s Column

Hopefully spring and some better weather is on its way. With the change in season comes a lot of changes to our housing service and the benefits system.

We want to help you and make sure you’re prepared for the changes ahead so please read the article opposite and act now if the changes will affect you – don’t bury your head in the sand!

There are also changes to the Council’s Tenancy and Allocations policies ahead. Read the pull-out section in the centre of this issue to get all your questions answered.

If you’re wondering if you could save money on your energy bills, now is the time to sign up to ‘Energy Deal’ – complete the coupon on page 5 or visit www.dartford.gov.uk/energydeal

Finally, look out for local events taking place around the Borough this spring and summer and keep up-to-date at www.dartford.gov.uk/events

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We need your help to keep your water supply clean and safe

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All your questions answered

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Opportunities from National Careers and Kent Training Programme

PLUS THE REGULARS:
How are we measuring up? (page 3); Contacts (page 8)

Refuse & recycling collections over Easter 2013

To minimise disruption to collections over Easter, we will be working on Saturday 30 March and Saturday 6 April.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal collection day</th>
<th>Revised collection day</th>
<th>ONE DAY LATER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 29 March</td>
<td>Saturday 30 March</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 1 April</td>
<td>Tuesday 2 April</td>
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<td>Friday 5 April</td>
<td>Saturday 6 April</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Collections return to normal on Monday 8 April. Please make sure your bins are available for collection from 7am on the right days.

Have you signed up for the garden waste collection service yet?

For more information contact us on 01322 343290 or visit www.dartford.gov.uk/recycling

“Enjoy your Easter weekend and please remember to put your refuse and recyclables out for collection one day later than usual in the coming week.”

Councillor Tony Martin, Deputy Leader of the Council

Pat Coleman
Member for Housing and Housing Services

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For any other use of this material, please write to the Housing Information Officer, Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford DA1 1DR. Or email information.officer.housing@dartford.gov.uk. If you require further copies of ‘The Link’ please call 01322 343682.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO CANNOT READ THIS BUT WOULD LIKE TO KNOW OF ITS CONTENT, WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO PROVIDE A COPY IN A SUITABLE FORMAT.
FOUND ONE OF THESE ON YOUR MAT?
IF SO, YOU HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING AFFECTED BY THE CHANGES TO HOUSING BENEFIT FROM APRIL 2013

If you have received one of our ‘Ostrich Postcards’ you must contact us urgently.

All tenants identified as being affected by the new housing benefit rules are being visited by a housing officer to offer advice and support, where needed, on how the shortfall will be covered from April 2013.

If you have received a card you must get in touch as soon as possible on 01322 343134 or email rents@dartford.gov.uk.

You can also attend one of our housing drop-in sessions where advice and support can be given about the changes in the benefits systems, to discuss your options and for general housing enquiries.

Come along, grab a cuppa and a bun, and find out what your options are.

• Wednesday 17 April, 10am to 11.30am
  Healthy Living Centre, St. Edmunds Church, Temple Hill
• Thursday 18 April, 10am to 11.30am
  Alamein Gardens Communal Lounge, Alamein Gardens, Stone
• Monday 22 April, 10am to 11.30am
  Swan Valley Library, Discovery Centre, Swanscombe
• Tuesday 23 April, 10am to 11.30am
  Summerhouse Drive Library, Summerhouse Drive, Bexley

HOW ARE WE MEASURING UP?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012/2013 Target</th>
<th>Quarter 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Average days for void turnaround</td>
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<td>20.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of rent collected due in the year (including arrears B/F)</td>
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<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of emergency repairs completed in time</td>
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<td>99.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of urgent repairs completed in time</td>
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<td>95.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of non-urgent repairs completed in time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of housing related ASB cases</td>
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</table>

CHANGES TO COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT - ALL WORKING AGE CLAIMANTS WILL HAVE TO PAY 8.5%
If you currently claim Council Tax Benefit, even if you pay nothing at the moment, you will pay at least 8.5% of your bill from 1 April 2013. This is because Council Tax Benefit is being replaced by ‘Council Tax Support’ and the amount you can claim will be reduced if you are of working age.

If you are liable to pay Council Tax, do not ignore your bill as doing so could result in legal action. If you think you will find making payments difficult please contact our Revenues Team on 01322 343434 to discuss payment options.

DARTFORD BOROUGH RESIDENTS’ FORUM PUBLIC GENERAL MEETING
The DBRF are holding their next public meeting on Tuesday 16 April 2013 at Temple Hill Community Centre, Temple Hill Square, Dartford.

Two guest presentations with representatives from:
• the Healthy Living Centre and Dartford Borough Council – talking about healthy living initiatives to keep us all fit and well
• the Police and the Community Safety Unit – speaking about the recent dispersal area on Temple Hill and the impact that it has made, as well as new measures being used to help engage with youths in the area.

Doors open at 6.30pm for light refreshments and a 6.45pm start. Come along and find out what’s been happening in your area. Tell us what you think via our short survey and win £25 High Street Vouchers to take away on the night!
DEBT PROBLEMS?
Not sure where to turn?
StepChange Debt Charity, formerly Consumer Credit Counselling Service, can offer a range of services to help you overcome financial issues that you may have. By telephone and online you can access information and help such as:
• Debt Advice
• Budgeting
• Your rights and what action your creditors can take
• Money Advice Tips
• Benefits Checker
• Utility Switching – e.g. gas and electricity supplier switching to get the best deals
• MoneyAware debt blog

Anyone who is finding it difficult to make ends meet should seek help as soon as possible. Debt advice and help with budgeting is available from StepChange Debt Charity on 0800 652 7068. They’re open Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 3pm and anytime online at www.stepchange.org. All the charity’s services are absolutely free of charge.

COMMUNITY GRANTS!
£250 UP FOR GRABS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS
In 2012/13 nearly £1,500 was awarded from the Community Grant for local groups who make a difference in their area.

Since April 2012 all of the awards were paid to groups operating within our supported housing schemes, although the grant is open to any local community group which satisfies the eligibility criteria. If you want to find out more about the Community Grant contact the Resident Involvement Officer on 01322 343682 or email rio@dartford.gov.uk

LET US IN OR RISK LEGIONELLA POISONING

Tenants who refuse to allow access for cleaning and chlorination works to the cold water storage tank are risking their safety, their tenancy and possible court action.

With recent events in the news the Council would like to highlight the importance of cleaning and chlorination checks.

Dartford Borough Council has around 800 communal tanks to visit each year to undertake either a clean and chlorination (where the communal tank which is situated in the loft space is disinfected) or to carry out a mains conversion (where the flats that are linked to that tank are converted to mains water). So far we have been able to convert nearly 300 tanks to mains water and have cleaned and chlorinated nearly 400 tanks.

By refusing the Council access to check the cold water storage tank, tenants and leaseholders could be putting themselves and their neighbours in danger for legionella poisoning. If you have been asked to arrange a clean and chlorination or water tank conversion appointment you should call 01322 343364 immediately to prevent further action.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS
Tenants’ and leaseholders’ views have been the focus for developing a £1 million programme for delivering community improvements to Council blocks of homes and communal areas. Feedback from the STAR Survey indicated that tenants wanted resources allocated to improving communal areas, as well as within their homes, after several years of Decent Homes improvements being priority.

Consultation took place last year by way of surveys and Talking Trailer events and has led to four main themes emerging as priorities for people in those areas.
• Security including security gates, door and entry systems
• Communal areas including redecorations, flooring, lighting and paving
• Gardens and drying areas including clearing the areas and drying lines
• Bin stores including improvements to existing or the installation of improved bin areas

The long term programme of improvements will run over a period of five years beginning in April 2013.

The Council would like to thank everyone who has taken part in the consultation including tenants, leaseholders, the Dartford Borough Residents’ Forum, our contractor Breyer Group Ltd and all of the other agencies who took part in our community days. We couldn’t have done it without you.

Five prize draw winners will soon receive their £20 B&Q gift card to spend in store.
NEW HOUSING ALLOCATIONS & TENANCY POLICIES 2013

Following recent changes from government the Council has made changes to its Allocations and Tenancy policies. Please read the following to ensure you are aware of how the changes may affect you.

ALLOCATIONS POLICY
Tenants thinking of applying for a council or housing association home, or want to transfer need to be aware that there is a new Allocations Policy from April 2013. The new policy is very different from the previous version and it may affect whether you are eligible to join the list and your banding.

Consultation with a range of people, including housing register applicants, took place during December 2012/Jan 2013. The majority of people agreed with the proposals to offer housing to local people and those who need it most. A list of frequently asked questions about the new allocations policy can be found overleaf but if you have any specific questions please contact the Council on 01322 343114 or email housingadvice@dartford.gov.uk.

Only online applications will now be accepted by the Council, via the Kent Homechoice website (www.kenthomechoice.org.uk). Paper application forms are no longer accepted.

TENANCY POLICY
Flexible tenancies will now be offered to the majority of new tenants, following the development of a new Tenancy Policy.

A one year Introductory Tenancy will usually be followed by a five year Flexible Tenancy, which can be renewed depending on a household’s circumstances.

Existing tenants will only be affected where:
• A tenant wishes to move to another landlord or area which operates a different tenancy policy, or
• Where a secure tenancy becomes demoted (for example because of anti-social behaviour), in which case, the tenant is likely to lose their secure tenancy and be offered a two year flexible tenancy at the end of the demotion period.

Tenants who transfer to another Dartford Council property with a secure tenancy will keep their secure tenancy.

A list of frequently asked questions is overleaf but if you need further information please call your housing officer, or email housing.management@dartford.gov.uk

See overleaf for more information

Energy Deal

SWITCH together to save £s on your bill

Ever wondered if you could be paying less for your energy?
No time to shop around to compare tariffs?
Join Energy Deal for hassle-free, no obligation switching and see if you could benefit from lower energy costs.

What makes ‘Energy Deal’ different?
Energy Deal offers households assistance to get a better tariff for their gas and electricity bills. We enable residents to group together to harness their buying power and negotiate lower energy tariffs on their behalf. The more households signed up the better the results!

Energy Deal is due to launch in Spring 2013. Register your interest online at www.dartford.gov.uk/energydeal
Alternatively, complete the form below and we will notify you when Energy Deal is open for registrations.

To register your interest, complete this form and return it to Environmental Promotions Officer, Dartford Borough Council, Civic Centre, FREEPOST DT26, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent DA1 1BR

Full name: ____________________________
Address: ______________________________
Town: _________________________________
Postcode: _____________________________
Email: _________________________________

Preferred method of contact: □ post □ email
Have you switched your supplier before? (optional): □ yes □ no

Please note that a limited amount of information will be collected from the information you provide to us. This information may be used by the Government for research or statistical purposes. However, this information will be anonymised and so cannot be used for marketing purposes.

If you require this information in large print or any other format, please contact us on 01322 343056
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR THE NEW ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Why are you changing the policy?
The Government has introduced new legislation around how councils allocate properties that will help those in most housing need and to be creative in helping people to make progress with their lives.

I’m already registered on the waiting list, do I have to reapply?
Yes, everyone that currently has an application must reapply to go on the housing register. If you reapply before 29 April 2013 and you still qualify to go onto the waiting list, you will keep your current application date. If you apply afterwards, it will be the date your re-application is verified.

Will I have to provide proof of my circumstances?
Yes, you will be expected to provide proof of your household income and circumstances and your application will not go live until all the proof has been provided.

I live outside the borough, can I join the list?
No, not unless you are over 55 and need supported (sheltered) accommodation.

I’ve got a girl and a boy under 10, are they expected to share a bedroom?
Yes, until the eldest reaches the age of 10.

I just want to move but I don’t think I have a housing need. Can I join the register?
No, you can only join the waiting list if you have a housing need such as you are overcrowded or have a medical need agreed by the Council.

I’ve just moved to the borough, can I join the list?
No, you can only join the list if you’ve lived in the borough for two years or more.

Why has my band changed?
Everyone’s banding has been reviewed and is likely to have changed to fall in line with the new policy.

Why have I gone down a band(s)?
All of the bandings are now different and you have now been banded under the new policy criteria.

My friend’s circumstances are the same as mine but she is in a higher band, why is this?
It maybe that your friend has also qualified for the community contribution category which means that they could be working or volunteering. Please bear in mind though, because of the Data Protection Act 1998, we cannot discuss your friend’s case with you.

I’ve been told I can’t join the list because I earn too much, why is this?
Social housing is an extremely limited resource and should be for those most in need. It is expected that those earning a higher income will be able to access accommodation within the private sector. The Housing Options & Private Sector Team may be able to help with this.

Will the bidding process still be the same and will the properties be allocated in the same way?
Yes, the bidding process including the allocation of properties will be exactly the same. You will have a different application number though if you are eligible to join the list.

My medical situation has already been assessed; will this have to happen again?
Your medical circumstances will only be taken into account if you are eligible to join the list. However, if you do qualify, we will apply the new policy to the evidence that has already been submitted and there will be no need to resend the information.

Can I complete a paper form rather than do it online?
No, everyone will be expected to apply to go on the housing register online. For more information on where you can do this if you do not have access to a computer at home, please contact the Housing Options & Private Sector Team.

Will I still need to reregister every year?
Instead of re-registering, you will be asked to provide up to date information about your household income and circumstances on an annual basis.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR THE NEW TENANCY POLICY

What is a tenancy policy?
Under the Localism Act 2011 all housing providers with stock must publish a policy on how they issue different types of tenancies. This is called a tenancy policy.
Other social housing providers (housing associations) in Dartford are expected to take account of this policy when making their own decisions on tenancies.

Why is the Council operating flexible tenancies?
There is a very limited supply of council housing and strong demand for it.
Flexible tenancies mean that council homes will become available more regularly as people move into alternative accommodation.
This will help the Council ensure that council homes are available for people in the greatest housing need.

What is a tenancy?
A tenancy is a legal document that sets out the terms under which you are allowed to live in your home and explains your rights and responsibilities and that of the Council as your landlord.
The Council provides introductory tenancies, flexible tenancies, and secure tenancies. Tenancies may become demoted tenancies following the granting of a demotion order by the Court.
If you are a new tenant you will be given an introductory tenancy for the first year.

What is an introductory tenancy?
All new tenants will be given a 12-month introductory tenancy.

What is a flexible tenancy?
This is a fixed term form of tenancy that is limited to two or five years.
The length of the tenancy depends on the tenant's circumstances. We will review flexible tenancies at least nine months before the end of the term.
What rights do flexible tenants have?
Flexible tenants will have the same rights as secure tenants except the right to be compensated for alterations and improvements.

What is a ‘lifelong’ secure tenancy?
This tenancy lasts as long as the tenant wants it. The tenant can continue to live there as long as they pay their rent and observe the tenancy conditions.
Housing association tenants with the same type of tenancy have what is called an ‘assured’ tenancy.

Who will be given a ‘lifelong’ secure tenancy?
We will only consider giving a ‘lifelong’ secure tenancy to applicants listed in section 2.4 of the Tenancy Policy.

I am an existing secure or assured tenant, what happens to my tenancy?
The rights of existing secure tenants are protected by law. You will not be affected by the introduction of flexible tenancies unless you become a demoted tenant, in which case your tenancy may become flexible after the demotion period.
If you move to another Council property you will remain a secure tenant.

Who is given a flexible tenancy?
All new tenants who do not meet the criteria for ‘lifelong’ secure tenancies will be given a flexible tenancy following the successful completion of their 12 month introductory tenancy.

Who will decide what kind of tenancy I will be offered?
The member of staff responsible for deciding this will be a housing officer having regard to this Policy.

How will you review flexible tenancies?
We will carry out a final review of your housing needs and circumstances nine months before your tenancy is due to come to an end. Tenants will also need to complete an annual review of their household circumstances.

What are the possible outcomes of a tenancy review?
There are several possible outcomes:
• You may be given a new flexible tenancy and remain in your home
• You may be given a new flexible tenancy and move to a different home (if your home is too small or large or no longer suitable for your needs)
• You may be given a ‘lifelong’ secure tenancy and stay in your current home (for example if a household member becomes terminally ill)
• You may be given notice that the Council will not grant you another flexible tenancy and you will have to find alternative accommodation

What will happen if it is decided that I no longer require a flexible tenancy?
You will be given at least 6 months’ notice of the Council’s intention not to grant you another tenancy. We will offer you advice and assistance to explore other housing options. If you refuse to move the Council will start eviction proceedings by applying to the Court for a possession order.

Can I appeal a decision to terminate a tenancy?
Yes, there is an appeal process set out in the tenancy policy. Details of the appeal process and the deadline for lodging your appeal will be supplied with the Council’s decision.

How does this affect applicants who are offered housing association properties?
Tenants of housing associations will be given a tenancy according to the practice of the housing association.

What if I want to mutually exchange my property with a tenant living in another borough?
Tenants who move to another borough through mutual exchange will have to accept the tenancy conditions offered by the borough they are moving to.
**NEW BEDROOM QUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATIONS**

### Bedroom Need Changes

- **Current Policy**
  - Parent(s) who have one son and one daughter under ten
  - Are currently eligible to bid on three bedroom properties

- **NEW Policy**
  - Will be eligible for two bedroom properties

- **Current Policy**
  - Parent(s) who have one son/daughter under 10, and another of the opposite sex over 10
  - Are currently eligible to bid on three bedroom properties

- **NEW Policy**
  - Will still be eligible for a three bedroom property

- **Current Policy**
  - Parent(s) who have one son/daughter over 21, a child between 10-21 and another child under 10
  - Are currently eligible to bid on three bedroom properties

- **NEW Policy**
  - Will now be eligible for a four bedroom property, a person over 21 is eligible for their own room

*Children of the same sex are expected to share the same room until one reaches 21*

### Banding Changes

- **Current Policy**
  - An overcrowded family who need one more bedroom are currently in band A2 for overcrowding

- **NEW Policy**
  - Will go into band C for minor overcrowding

- **Current Policy**
  - An overcrowded family who need two or more bedrooms are currently in band A2 for overcrowding

- **NEW Policy**
  - Will go into band B for major overcrowding
NATIONAL CAREERS

National Careers are now booking FREE face to face appointments in the Civic Centre.

Offering careers and skills advice, National Careers is an independent organisation funded by the Government.

WHO IS IT FOR?
It is for anyone over 19 (18 only if claiming benefits). The service can be accessed up to three times so it is possible to have three sessions if required.

WHAT WILL THEY DO?
During your confidential 40 minute (approx.) appointment a fully qualified advisor will give individual advice on careers and skills to suit your needs, and help you make the right choices about learning and work.

This includes:
• helping to find learning and training
• improving reading, writing and maths
• understanding the local job market
• finding out about funding to support your learning
• developing a CV
• improving interview and presentation skills
• progressing in your current job
• finding out about disability and child care support available

HOW DO I BOOK AN APPOINTMENT?
Call 01322 343577 to book your appointment today! More information about National Careers can be found via www.direct.gov.uk/NationalCareersService

KENT TRAINING PROGRAMME

A new Kent wide training programme is being piloted over the next 12 months for tenants of Kent Housing Group landlords. The training is free and lunch will be provided for full day courses.

Topics include:
• Social Media Training
• Bid Writing
• Food Hygiene Level 2
• First Aid Level 2
• CSCS Card
• Conflict Resolution
• Basic DIY

Courses begin in June and numbers will be limited per session.

For more details and book a place call 01322 343682 or email rio@dartford.gov.uk today!

DOWNSIZE FOR CASH

Dartford’s Council tenants are being encouraged to downsize their homes to make room for families in the borough’s larger Council houses. The ‘Downsize for Cash’ scheme offers a financial reward to secure tenants who are under-occupying their homes and helps them to move to a smaller property. This then frees up larger properties for families in need.

To be eligible, secure tenants need to be under-occupying their home by one or more bedrooms and be willing to move to a smaller property.

If you are eligible to take part in the scheme, you will currently receive £500 for each bedroom and parlour released plus £100 to help with moving costs. Additional funding may be available for removal and packing expenses too. For more information, call the team on 01322 343378 or email housingoptions@dartford.gov.uk

We are currently reviewing this policy and will let you know of any changes in the next edition of the Link.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Misleading information has been circulating on Facebook suggesting that Section 326 of the Housing Act 1985 states that a bedroom of 70sq feet or less is a box room and should not be counted as a bedroom under the under-occupation rules due to be introduced on April 1st this year.

In fact this clause deals with whether or not a property is overcrowded and does not define what is or is not a bedroom. The Government’s view on this is very clear – it is for the Landlord to specify the size of a property.

To check this you should look at what your tenancy agreement says and this will also link in with the rent you are charged. If you are still in any doubt about call 01322 343134 and we will be pleased to answer your enquiry.
NEW RULES OF HOW MANY BEDROOMS FOR CHILDREN

If you receive housing benefit make sure you understand the new rules regarding the number of bedrooms you will get benefit for after April 2013.

- Children under 10 are expected to share a bedroom, regardless of sex. For example a three year old girl and an eight year old boy are expected to share.
- Children of the same sex are expected to share until they reach 16 years of age. For example two boys of 4 years and 13 years.
- The rules apply to the number of bedrooms. It does not take into account the size of bedrooms when calculating benefit payments.
- No benefit will be paid to cover extra bedrooms for children who do not live with you permanently.

BEDROOM STANDARD

This is the size criteria which reduces benefit for people who are claiming housing benefit for more bedrooms than the government say are needed.

How much will you lose?

- For one extra bedroom this will be 14% of the rent that is due, about £13 per week.
- For two or more bedrooms 25% of the rent that is due, about £25 per week.
- This means that in April 2013 if you have more bedrooms than the government say that you need you will lose housing benefit.

To work out how much you may lose each week, use the following calculation:

Take your weekly rent, divide by 100 and then multiply this by 14 or 25 (the percentage you are likely to lose). See new bedroom qualification criteria for allocations on page 8.

Example one:
- One bedroom extra

Example two:
- Two or more bedrooms extra

The limit the total amount of benefit a person or family can claim to £26,000 per year. That is £500 per week for people with children and £350 for people without children.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Introduced from October 2013 Universal Credit will replace most existing benefits with one monthly payment. Payments will be paid direct, which means that you are responsible for paying your rent from your payment.

If you have trouble managing your money, you must ask for help now so that help can be provided for when the change happens.

Your home is at risk if you don’t keep up to date with your payments. Letters to tenants that are known to be affected by the changes have been sent, and we strongly advise that you follow the guidance given and become familiar with any options open to you. The new rules apply to working age people only. The pension credit age in April 2013 will be approximately 61 years and 5 months for a woman and 65 years for a man.
WHY WEIGHT?

Healthy Living Centre Dartford, in partnership with Dartford Borough Council, is continuing to run their successful Why Weight programme.

The twelve-week programme includes weekly meetings, which offer expert advice on food portion control and healthy diet. The meetings also include 30 minute exercise classes. The programme is completely free to join and is open to anyone over 18 with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 28 or over.

One successful participant is 30 year old Lee Jones who lost almost four stone after joining Why Weight in October. Lee was referred to the programme after visiting his GP in September suffering from indigestion and chest pains. Lee was told by the doctor that he weighed almost sixteen stone and had a BMI over thirty, meaning that Lee was obese.

After attending the weekly Why Weight meetings, Lee now weighs just over twelve stone and is back to being in the healthy BMI zone.

Lee couldn’t speak more highly of the programme and describes his experience with Why Weight, “Last summer I was inspired to take up running, although there was one major problem. I was 16 stone and could not run more than 10 metres without being worn-out.”

“Why Weight has helped me in so many ways to gain back control over my life, the advice I was given was fantastic and the food diary is an excellent tool that I will continue to apply to everyday life, even now that I have completed the programme.”

“My advice to those thinking of joining Why Weight is, if you want to change you will. It’s a great way of meeting others in the same circumstances and supporting and encouraging each other to achieve the weight loss goals that you all want.”

For more information about the next set of course please contact the Healthy Living Team on 01322 311265 or e-mail info@hlcdartford.co.uk

ESTATE INSPECTIONS

From clearing litter, fixing broken handles, cutting hedges and fixing guttering - we’re working through your ‘to-do’ list!

If you have something bugging you then why not help us by coming and pointing it out on an estate inspection.

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<th>Time</th>
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<td>Alamein Gardens</td>
<td>Community Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Apr</td>
<td>10am</td>
<td>Galley Hill/Swanscombe</td>
<td>1-6 Gilbert Close/Davidson House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Apr</td>
<td>10am</td>
<td>Longfield/Southfleet</td>
<td>Fawkham Road Flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ingress Terrace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAY 2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>11am</td>
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<tr>
<td>12noon</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUNE 2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Jun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Jun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Jun</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
You can contact Dartford Borough Council via its main switchboard on 01322 343434 Monday to Friday between 8.45am and 5.15pm (4.45pm on Fridays).
At any other time, call the emergency out of hours line on 0845 634 1212.
You can also visit our website www.dartford.gov.uk or write to us at:
Dartford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Home Gardens
Dartford
Kent DA1 1DR

Allocations: 01322 343907
Benefits: 01322 343705
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB): 01322 224686
Community centres: 01322 343902/343066 community.centres@dartford.gov.uk
Community Safety Unit: 01322 343000 www.safedartford.gov.uk
Council tax: 01322 343700

Domestic Abuse Information Line (Kent and Medway): 0845 603 6813
Housing repairs: 01322 343800 www.dartford.gov.uk/housing/interactive.htm repairs@dartford.gov.uk
Housing options & advice: 01322 343814/343082
Housing management team:
For help with tenancy issues, anti-social behaviour, etc 01322 343133
Housing services: housing.services@dartford.gov.uk
Kent Highways: 08458 247 800

Kent Homechoice bidding line: 0906 294 0020
Leaseholder service charges: 01322 343368 leaseholders@dartford.gov.uk
Payments:
To pay rent, service charges, Council Tax or set up a Direct Debit visit www.dartford.gov.uk/do-it-online or call 01322 343760
Propertyline: 01322 343100
Refuse, recycling & cleansing: 01322 343290
Rents team:
For help with rents, payments and arrears 01322 343134 rents@dartford.gov.uk
Resident involvement officer: Louise Gray: 01322 343841
Right to buy: 01322 343832 righttobuy@dartford.gov.uk
Senior supported housing officer: Terry Smith: 01322 343366
Supported housing:
supported@dartford.gov.uk

Text service:
Text REPAIR, CHASE or RENT followed by your surname, first line of your address, when you are available and details of the service you require to 07881 668706.

Emergencies should be reported verbally via the office or out of hours contact numbers above.
Examples of text:
- REPAIR Mrs Smith 65 Tintagel Manor in all day Tuesdays blocked toilet
- CHASE 47 Cooke Street repair front door
- RENT Mr Smith 45 Main Street check payment amount

PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT
AND WIN A PRIZE!

Paying your rent has never been easier! You can pay on the 1st, 9th, 16th or 23rd of the month and all you have to do is fill out a form and we’ll do the rest.
All tenants and leaseholders paying their bills by Direct Debit are entered into a monthly prize draw for a pair of Orchard Theatre show tickets. Payments are automatically adjusted each year to take account of any changes to the amount you need to pay and you can keep track of your payments through your bank statement.
If you would like to pay your rent by Direct Debit, please download a form from www.dartford.gov.uk/do-it-online or contact the rents section on 01322 343134.

DARTFORD DOMESTIC
ABUSE ONE STOP SHOP

The one stop shop brings together representatives from Dartford Borough Council’s housing department, the police, Women’s Aid and Neves Scott Brand Solicitors all offering free advice on issues concerning domestic abuse.

OPENING HOURS
Every Tuesday between 9.30am and 12 noon at the Dartford Citizens Advice Bureau, Trinity Resource Centre, near Holy Trinity Church, Dartford. All advice is free to anyone visiting the shop.

GRAVESEND ONE STOP SHOP
Every Thursday between 10am and 12 noon at the Gravesend Citizens Advice Bureau, The ARC, 44 Windmill Street, Gravesend, Kent DA12 1BA.

SWANLEY ONE STOP SHOP
Every other Wednesday 1pm - 3pm at Swanley Citizens Advice Bureau, 16 High Street, Swanley, Kent BR8 8BG.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE LINK WILL BE WITH YOU IN JUNE.
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