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# SPRING<sup>23</sup> EDITORIAL



For many people, spring can't come soon enough. With energy bills going ever higher, a change in the weather will be a welcome relief. In the meantime, warm spaces in the community are doing their bit to help (see page 8) and Healthy Homes Ealing is offering advice (p11).

Spring cleans are a bit of a cliché but how about a spring upcycle instead? In Acton, a new store and a market are leading the way on giving unloved items a new lease of life (p26-27).

Also, don't miss the wonderful wildlife conservation work taking place in the borough – at Hanwell Zoo (p23) and with the rewilding of beavers in the borough (p20-21).

Richard Nadal  
**EDITOR**

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**1** Got an idea that might have a positive impact on your community? The council's **Ealing Together Fund** is back again offering you a chance to turn that idea into a reality. The latest round of £50,000 funding was due to open up to submissions on 6 March. The last round, in October, resulted in a wide range of projects receiving backing – from hedgehog highways to healthy activities for young people. To find out more, visit [aroundealing.com/news/project-ideas](https://www.aroundealing.com/news/project-ideas)

**2** During the recent **HIV Testing Week**, Councillor Aysha Raza, the council's cabinet member for tackling inequalities, was tested and said: "The test is quick, easy and pain-free." Testing is available all year round, for free, in NHS sexual health clinics, the London online e-service and via other official means. See [aroundealing.com/news/hiv-testing-week-2023](https://www.aroundealing.com/news/hiv-testing-week-2023)

**3** Members of the community and local dignitaries gathered for a service on **Holocaust Memorial Day**. The event remembered the 6 million Jews murdered by the Nazis, and also the other groups killed in more recent genocides. A permanent memorial is due to be unveiled in Ealing later this year. Read more at [aroundealing.com/news](https://www.aroundealing.com/news)

**4** The council has struck a partnership with three **food delivery companies** to tackle parking problems caused by some of its drivers. It is working closely with Deliveroo, Uber Eats and Just Eat to advise delivery drivers about safe parking. The council's parking services team has also produced maps for the bikers to show where they can safely and legally park. Visit [aroundealing.com/news/fast-food-delivery](https://www.aroundealing.com/news/fast-food-delivery)

*speedread*

## Shaping the borough's future

Thousands of you have shared your views on what you think about plans for the borough's future.



The council's draft new Local Plan sets out how life across all of our seven towns might develop over the next 15 years – from climate and transport to open spaces and homes, and many more things besides. The first stage of the consultation closed on 8 February.

Council leader Peter Mason said: "Ealing is changing. It always has. It always will. Our task, together as residents, businesses, and people who care, is to shape it to be the kind of place we want it to be.

"This process is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to have a say in how our home will develop over the next 15 years, in ways that touch almost every aspect of everyday life."

The feedback is now being used to put together a final draft of the Local Plan – which the council will then ask your views on again later this year.

For more info go to [www.ealing.gov.uk/newlocalplan](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/newlocalplan)

## Give views to tribunal

Ealing's independent Citizens' Tribunal is due to start holding public meetings soon.

The tribunal was set up over the course of last summer and autumn to hold the council and its partners to account on their commitments to tackling race inequality. The newly appointed members of the tribunal started to meet each other from October onwards. And the next stage is to start holding public meetings for residents to get involved with.

Keep an eye on the council's social media, and Around Ealing website, for details. Also, make sure you are signed up to the Around Ealing Extra email at [www.ealing.gov.uk/register](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/register)

The tribunal was set up following the recommendations of the Ealing Race Equality Commission. Read more at [www.dosomethinggood.org.uk/citizens-tribunal](https://www.dosomethinggood.org.uk/citizens-tribunal)

# Leader's Notes

'It's a testament to our sense of community'

**Councillor Peter Mason**

Leader of the council



**A**s we head into the spring, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the past few months, and look forward with hope to what the next few have in store for us all as Ealing residents.

## HOPE AND REFLECTION

Since Christmas, Ealing Town Hall has been host to several solemn and moving events of commemoration and remembrance. In January, we remembered the atrocities of the Holocaust. Pupils from Drayton Manor, Ealing Fields and Elthorne Park High Schools added their voices to our recommitment to stand against injustice, discrimination and racism.

In February, we marked the anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, coming together again as a community to condemn aggression and to offer our solidarity to the Ukrainian people. Since the invasion of Ukraine, so many of Ealing's residents have stepped up to offer support. It's a testament to our sense of community that so many families continue to host Ukrainian refugees, as we continue to welcome to our borough those fleeing war or repression in Ukraine, Afghanistan and Hong Kong.

Just as we always do, I know we will all come together again – this time in celebration – for the coronation of King Charles III later in May.

## FOCUS ON PRIORITIES

The council continues to be busy working to realise our ambitions for the borough – creating good jobs, tackling the climate crisis and fighting the inequalities experienced by Ealing residents.

In the past few months, we have taken important decisions about the future of both Warren Farm Sports Ground and the Gurnell Leisure Centre, making strides towards providing high quality sports and leisure facilities for all Ealing residents while protecting our natural environment. Both represent some real win-wins for top quality sports as well as rewilding our borough.

We are building much-needed genuinely affordable homes across the borough, doing everything we can to ensure that everyone in Ealing has a safe, secure and affordable place to call home, despite inadequate funding from central government.

We continue to set out our vision for the borough as a safe, inclusive, thriving place, and have published

two key strategies in the last few months. The first outlines our approach to combating male violence against women and girls. The second is our cultural manifesto, which describes our plans to strengthen culture within the borough and enable everyone to bring creativity into their everyday lives.

## BALANCING BUDGETS

We also set our council budget for the next year, balancing difficult decisions because of inflation and the terrible state of our economy. As a council, we will always take these decisions in the long-term best interests of our residents.

We are supporting our most vulnerable residents as the cost of everyday items spirals, including by setting up warm spaces in our libraries. If you are struggling, please seek help and advice by visiting

**[www.ealing.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/costofliving)**

I hope you enjoy reading about everything going on in our incredible seven towns in this instalment of Around Ealing.



# Here when you need help

"Although we're having to make tough decisions again this year owing to national circumstances we can't ever have foreseen, like the level of inflation, we're making sure we'll be here when you need us, by investing in key services," said Councillor Steve Donnelly, the council's cabinet member for inclusive economy, ahead of its annual budget-setting meeting.

**A**round 60p in every £1 that the council spends goes towards supporting older adults or people with disabilities, and children in need of care. And demand for these services has only increased over the last year. Alongside supporting an ageing population, our long recovery from the after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continues – with young people, in particular, needing support.

The cost of living crisis is also hitting people hard, particularly those



**60% of funds on most vulnerable**

households on lower incomes. The council is doing as much as it can to soften the blow. This includes the council tax reduction scheme, one of the most generous in the country, which sees support provided to 24,000 local people. Of these, 14,000 who are hardest hit by the cost of living crisis receive a full 100% reduction.

Help with other essential costs can also be found from the council's local welfare assistance scheme. And there are now four community hubs at Ealing, Acton, Northolt and Southall libraries providing face-to-face advice.

You can find a full list of support available at [www.ealing.gov.uk/costofliving](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/costofliving)

## COUNCIL TAX


Like almost every other council across London, as is expected by the government, Ealing's cabinet has reluctantly recommended a council tax rise of 4.99% in 2023/24. This amount includes the government's adult social care precept, which it expects councils to use to help with the increasing costs

of caring for older people and adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. Social care continues to be the biggest bill that the council pays – with costs rising every year.

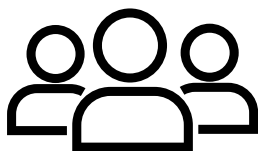
## 'DELIVERING ON PROMISES'

Councillor Peter Mason, leader of Ealing Council, said: "Despite these challenging economic times, we remain as committed as ever to delivering on the promises we made to the residents of Ealing: Bringing well-paid jobs back to our borough, tackling the climate emergency and fighting the deep-rooted inequalities that hold too many people back from achieving their hopes and dreams.

"We will always challenge ourselves to find better and more cost-effective ways of delivering, and we've been able to balance the gap in the cost of doing just that, while still delivering on our promises.

"But after more than 10 years of government cuts, inflation at a 30-year high thanks to bad economic decisions at government-level, and with more people than ever needing support, extra funding is needed." 

**14,000**  
get 100% council tax relief



 **£2M**  
on Real Living Wage for carers

## Bike hangars coming near you



Twenty-five new bike hangars are being introduced across the borough this spring following a public consultation.

Bike hangars are a great and cheap solution to help people who want to cycle but

who may not have the safe and accessible storage they need. And the council has even slashed costs from £6 per month to just 70p per month, making it the cheapest in London.

Find out where the proposed 25 new bike hangars are located at [aroundealing.com/news/bike-hangars-coming](http://aroundealing.com/news/bike-hangars-coming)

If you want a bike hangar near where you live you can have your say by visiting [www.givemyview.com/bikehangars](http://www.givemyview.com/bikehangars)

## What a waste

Fly-tipping costs Ealing Council more than £300,000 per year to clear up. That is money that could be spent on other services.

Just as an example, that could have bought 1,000 street trees and paid for their upkeep for two years. Or 44,000 children's books for our libraries.

Environmental enforcement officers will hold you responsible for your rubbish being fly-tipped, even if you did not directly fly-tip it.

Fly-tipping is easily avoided by booking bulky waste collections from the council, or by doing a simple check to find out if a waste removal company has a proper licence.

It is the responsibility of everyone to make sure your waste is removed by a licensed waste carrier. In other words, a reputable company that will dispose of it correctly.

■ Check a company's licence on the government's website [environment.data.gov.uk/public-register](http://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register) – just ask the company for its 'upper tier' waste carrier's licence number

■ Find out about the council's bulky waste collection service at [www.ealing.gov.uk](http://www.ealing.gov.uk)

■ Read more at [aroundealing.com/news/what-a-waste-fly-tipping](http://aroundealing.com/news/what-a-waste-fly-tipping)

## Cash in, cut waste

The council has launched a community climate grants programme for groups looking to make energy efficiency improvements.

The scheme is intended to help community organisations contribute to the borough net zero target by 2030 by making energy efficiency improvements, leading to lower carbon emissions. Groups could apply for grants of up to £10,000 to install solar panels, reduce food waste, introduce a re-use and repair scheme and more.

The first round of applications was due to close on 7 March and the winning groups will find out whether they were successful later this spring.

## Put down roots

Trees are amazing. Would you like to have one planted outside your home or business? Or would you like one in a park as a memorial to someone, or something, important?

The council has joined the national street tree sponsorship scheme called Trees for Streets. It offers you the opportunity to make a donation to sponsor a new street tree to go outside your home or somewhere else in your neighbourhood. It all helps to play a role in tackling climate action – and making our streets greener. Trees have the power to absorb air pollution, cool our pavements during heatwaves and help prevent flooding.

You can also sponsor a tree in one of the borough's many parks. These are called Celebration Trees and can be used to mark the life of someone important, or a significant event, such as an anniversary, or just to give as a gift.

Find out more at [www.treesforstreets.org](http://www.treesforstreets.org)





# 'Right thing at the right time'

Across December and January, 25 grants were awarded by Ealing Council to local voluntary, community and faith groups to run warm spaces – safe places for residents to find advice, company and to escape the cold.

**T**he funding is helping to cover the organisation's costs, including heating, food and drinks, activities and games.

Councillor Jasbir Anand, the council's cabinet member for thriving communities, said: "We are seeing unprecedented levels of hardship because of the cost of living crisis. Community projects such as these empower people to come together to help and support each other during challenging times."

Details of local warm spaces

available can be found by visiting [www.dosomethinggood.org.uk/directory](http://www.dosomethinggood.org.uk/directory) and scrolling down to the 'warm community spaces' section.



Enjoying art session

## 'THERE IS A WARMTH HERE – EMOTIONALLY AS WELL AS LITERALLY'

One of the warm spaces is at St George's Church in Lancaster Road, Southall. The funding from the council has allowed it to open all day on Wednesdays and offer a range of activities – from board games and arts and crafts to snooker and exercise sessions. It has proved so popular that it has an average of 50 attendees.

Idina Dunmore is minister at the church. She said: "As well as offering a

space where people feel welcomed, and warm, we also provide advocacy and mental health support. We refer people on to other services when we can and try to get them the help they need.

"It's very much the right thing at the right time – with the cost of living crisis following on the heels of the COVID pandemic."

Eddie Allette has been involved at St George's for 22 years and he oversees the warm space. He said: "There is a warmth here – emotionally as well as literally – and it makes people feel comfortable. The best thing is they can take their minds off their worries here."

### 'SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO'

A Zumba class was in full swing as we arrived. One of the regular attendees, Amrat, said she and others might not get that kind of exercise otherwise and that the dancing added to the social side of it.

She said: "It is very good and is helping us. They provide food and we do knitting and games, as well as dancing. We come out, make friends and it feels like a community."

A regular visitor, who preferred to remain anonymous, agreed and said: "People come here with a positive mindset because it is something to look forward to. You need groups like this because loneliness is a killer,



Samuel Koilpillai and Eddie Allette, who runs the warm space

## The Store Cupboard


The Store Cupboard in Hanwell is offering a shopping experience with a difference for local people most in need during the cost of living crisis. For £3.50 a week, people referred to the service get access to £40-50 worth of groceries and other household supplies. It supports up to 50 families at any one time. Read more at [aroundealing.com/news/cost-of-living-the-store-cupboard](https://aroundealing.com/news/cost-of-living-the-store-cupboard)



not just the cold. Help is available if you have a problem, which is great, especially when so much now is online and not everyone has access."

Mental health support worker Rozeena Vander Waal provides advice at St George's every Wednesday and is hoping the warm spaces funding will allow her to offer help more often.

"There is a queue of people every week," she said. "It has definitely got bigger because of the cost of living. People are unable to afford food and bills and are in arrears. They don't always know where to turn. I refer them to places to get the right help."

 Read the full story at [aroundealing.com/news/warm-welcome](https://aroundealing.com/news/warm-welcome)



## Getting help

Ealing Council's website has a section at

[www.ealing.gov.uk/costofliving](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/costofliving)

explaining what help is available during the cost of living crisis. Support is being offered by organisations across the borough.

If you do not have the internet at home, staff in four community hubs are also offering support and advice and you can use the computers there, too. The hubs are at Acton, Ealing Central, Northolt and Southall libraries. Find out more at [aroundealing.com/news/community-hubs](https://aroundealing.com/news/community-hubs)



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# Home comforts all year

Do you worry about your fuel bills and staying warm at home in the cold weather? Or staying cool at the height of summer?

**H**ealthy Homes Ealing is a free service from Ealing Council that can guide you all year round.

Extremes of weather, hot or cold, can have a detrimental effect on someone's health. This is particularly the case for those who are elderly, very young or with a medical condition.

By providing advice and support, Healthy Homes Ealing hopes to show residents what they can do in their own homes to save money while also staying warm, well and independent.

You could even be eligible for a 'green doctor' home visit. These provide tailored advice and support and sometimes provide free energy efficiency measures, or items for staying warm or cool. Where necessary, in-depth fuel debt advice can also be given.

Call Healthy Homes Ealing on

0800 083 2265 (free) Monday-Friday, 9am-5.30pm, or use the online referral form at [www.ealing.gov.uk/HealthyHomesEaling](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/HealthyHomesEaling)

## HELPING MORE HOMES TO USE LESS ENERGY


The council recently announced that it will also continue to help low-income and vulnerable households benefit from a national energy efficiency scheme for another four years.

Since April 2020, the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), has seen energy efficiency measures installed in 286 homes across the borough to help reduce the amount of fuel it takes to keep them warm – with better insulation at the forefront of these improvements. It will continue to be available for eligible Ealing residents until March 2026.

ECO works by the government requiring larger energy companies to fund the work.

If you live in the borough, you could qualify for ECO if your home has poor levels of energy efficiency and you have been identified as being a low-income household, or if your GP has said you have a condition making you medically vulnerable to living in a cold home.

Councillor Deirdre Costigan, the council's cabinet member for climate action, said: "We are committed to providing support for local people to cut their energy use and ECO is just one of several support programmes available to Ealing residents."

 To find out more about ECO, and if you might qualify, visit [www.ealing.gov.uk/HealthyHomesEaling](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/HealthyHomesEaling)



# Calling all landlords!

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- No commission or finder's fees
- Generous financial incentives
- Simple and easy to use



# Very handy service

"I really wouldn't have managed otherwise," said one satisfied customer about the council's handyperson service, which can help eligible residents with odd jobs around the house.



It might include fitting a lightbulb, sealing or unblocking a sink, setting thermostats and timers, putting up shelves, or fixing grab rails. That's not all, though.

The service is provided by Ealing Council and it is free to use up to three times in one year – all you have to do is pay for the materials.

## LIVING SAFELY AND INDEPENDENTLY

Councillor Josh Blacker, the council's cabinet member for healthy lives, said: "We want people to be able to live safely, securely, and independently in their own homes. It is important to us that they can find a trusted person to help with odd jobs and, most importantly, avoid accidents and falls."

To be eligible for the handyperson

service, you need to be aged 60 or above (not in paid employment), registered disabled, a carer, or a single parent in receipt of income related benefit and living with a child under 16.

## 'IT HAS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE'

Claire (not her real name), from Northolt, has used the handyperson service a couple of times, including fitting for a handrail when she was due to go into hospital for surgery and finding it hard to get up and down her stairs.

"I really wouldn't have managed if the handrail had not been put in place before I had surgery," she said. "It has made all the difference and helped me to manage afterwards. It has definitely made me feel less vulnerable, less worried about falling down the stairs."

## 'SO HANDY'

Nadia (not her real name), from Hanwell, was also advised by her physio to have a grab rail fitted near the stairs, kitchen and bathroom.

She said: "It was so, so handy. They even did my shopping for me."

"Last year the curtain fell down, I wouldn't have anybody to fix that, and they came and fixed it. They also fixed the tube light in my kitchen, or I would be in the dark in the kitchen. They even fixed the light in the shower room, as the fuse blew-up and the council was very quick to send the handyman."



To find out more about using the service, visit

[www.ealing.gov.uk/handyperson](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/handyperson)

or call 020 8825 6070 or email

HandyPersonReferrals@ealing.gov.uk

# A place to call home

31 new flats in Acton will shortly be let to their first tenants. They couldn't have arrived at a better time, with inflation and the cost of living crisis triggering a big rise in the number of families in need of support from the council.

**T**he new, self-contained flats at Aspect House were bought by the council in January, specifically for use as temporary accommodation. All of the tenancies will go to people from the borough who would otherwise be at risk of becoming homeless and have nowhere else to turn. Many will have already been living in temporary homes for some time.

There is a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom homes in the block in Portal Way, each with its own bathroom and kitchen. For some of the households, which may previously have been in more



At immediate risk of homelessness?  
Call 020 8825 8888  
or email  
housadv@ealing.gov.uk

limited hostel or B&B accommodation, these flats are an opportunity for a new start.

The new temporary homes have become available at a crucial time. The cost of living crisis has resulted in high levels of households finding themselves priced out of the private rental market.

Although the chronic shortage of affordable housing is nothing new, the immediate pressure on temporary accommodation places has never been worse.

## AT THE SHARP END

Council leader Peter Mason said: "The fantastic new temporary homes at Aspect House will provide a safe, secure place to stay for some of our



Watch video at  
[aroundealing.com/news/aspect-house](https://aroundealing.com/news/aspect-house)



most vulnerable residents.

"Ealing is at the sharpest end of the temporary accommodation crisis, which has been exacerbated by the UK's financial turbulence last year. The impact of the rocketing cost of living on residents who were already struggling to cope is often hidden but can be devastating. We are doing everything we can to support those families, but we need the government to urgently

step up to provide the necessary funding to help us provide more fit-for-purpose temporary accommodation, and to enable us to tackle the wider crisis of housing affordability which is so acute in Ealing and across London."

### A SHRINKING MARKET

It is becoming harder and harder for many local households to find somewhere suitable to live. Average

private rents have gone up 10% in the last six months alone.

There has been an increase in evictions and a big drop in properties available in the private rented sector, with rising interest rates and high property prices persuading many landlords to sell rather than continuing to let their properties out to tenants.

Adding to the difficulty, there are also now fewer options available for the council to offer as temporary accommodation, with suppliers rapidly leaving the market. Housing homeless households in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation to prevent them from having to sleep rough is one of the council's options in these situations – but that last resort is now proving hard to find, too.

### FINDING SOLUTIONS

Despite the challenges, the council is working hard to prevent homelessness. Just a year ago, in March 2022, B&B placements were at their lowest level since 2014 and the total had dropped by almost 90% in the last three years – which was achieved by supporting residents to stay in the accommodation they were currently in or helping them to find privately rented options. Indeed, despite the pressure the council is now under, Ealing still has the second highest rate of homelessness prevention in London.

The council has also radically stepped up its homebuilding plans in recent years and is working hard to provide thousands more of the genuinely affordable homes which are so urgently needed.

### ARE YOU A LANDLORD?

If you are a landlord and are interested in getting help from the council to let your property, email [landlords@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:landlords@ealing.gov.uk) 

# Safer and better private renting in Ealing

Property licensing schemes are now in force.  
Failure to get a licence could result in  
prosecution or a fine of  
up to £30,000.



Landlords - apply before 3 April  
and you could receive a 25% discount.



# Trapped on the street

The cost of living crisis has led to a rise in the number of people sleeping rough. Although our borough is better equipped than ever before to offer support, there are some who the council is unable to offer help to – so it has called for a law change.

**B**eds for eligible rough sleepers in the borough are now at an all-time high, with more than 100 now available, and Ealing Council has secured extra government funding to offer even more support, including for alcohol and drug addictions.

Nevertheless, a large percentage of the borough's rough sleepers are still ineligible for this publicly funded support. In recent years, an average of two thirds of rough sleepers have been non-UK nationals who are caught up in the immigration system.

They cannot legally work, rent or claim benefits (otherwise known as having no recourse to public funds, or NRPF) which makes it extremely difficult to offer them a route off the streets. Ealing has one of the highest levels of NRPF homeless people in London.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, NRPF was temporarily

cast aside and, across the country, councils were allowed to provide accommodation. But this came to an end with the end of the pandemic restrictions, and councils were again left with no legal power to offer support.

In 2021, Ealing Council and its local partners called for the government to offer temporary refugee status to people with NRPF to overcome this, but no change has yet occurred.

## 'HANDS TIED BY THE LAW'

Councillor Lauren Wall, Ealing Council's cabinet member for genuinely affordable homes, said: "No one should have to sleep rough. Everyone who needs a bed for the night in the borough should be able to access somewhere to stay and get the support they need to stay off the streets.

"However, our hands are tied by the law when it comes to offering help to the

desperately disadvantaged rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds. We urgently need a change in government policy to allow us to intervene."



Read the full story at [aroundealing.com/news/rough-sleepers-help](https://www.aroundealing.com/news/rough-sleepers-help)

## How you can help

- Concerned about someone sleeping rough? Visit [www.streetlink.org.uk](https://www.streetlink.org.uk)
- Donate to: Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter [www.ecwns.org.uk](https://www.ecwns.org.uk) and Hope for Southall Street Homeless [www.hssh.org.uk](https://www.hssh.org.uk)
- Concerned about your own housing situation? Call the council's housing advice service on 020 8825 6444.

# NO CHANGES OVER EASTER

Your usual collection day for recycling and rubbish, including communal bins, will NOT change over the Easter period. So, please carry on as normal. Thank you for recycling.

## Please remember

- ✓ Place your bins out for collection at the edge of your property by 7am on your collection day
- ✓ Put your bins back after they have been collected, or they can cause an obstruction
- ✓ Check your collection schedule at [www.ealing.gov.uk/collectionday](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/collectionday)

## PLEASE DON'T MIX US UP

Your **BLUE BIN** is for household recycling only. All your recyclable items can be put in here. If your bin contains the wrong materials it will not be collected.

Your **BLACK BIN** is only for household rubbish that cannot be recycled. Rubbish must be bagged.

**FOOD waste**. Line your food waste bin with newspaper or use a compostable bag to help prevent smells and stop food sticking to the bin.





# Better future planned for Gurnell

Ealing Council's cabinet has approved initial plans for a new 50-metre, Olympic-sized swimming pool and fitness studio to replace Gurnell Leisure Centre.

**B**uilt in the late 1970s, the existing centre is now past its expected lifespan. It was closed at the start of the first COVID-19 lockdown and reopening it has proved unviable because it is structurally unsafe.

The new plan will see the existing, dilapidated structure demolished while detailed design work for its replacement is drawn up and then submitted by the end of the year. The public will then be consulted again.

Significant consultation has already been carried out, including an in-depth survey of local people in June 2022. And the Gurnell Community Sounding Board was formed to provide a way for people to play a role in planning the future use of the site. The sounding board is made up of representatives from a diverse

range of interested groups and centre users, as well as ward councillors.

Given the pressure on council budgets, some of the cost of any option must be offset by the development of new homes on the site, of which at least 35% would be affordable. This would need to be supplemented by some council borrowing.

## 'A NEW CENTRE WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF'

Councillor Shital Manro is the council's lead member for good growth. He said: "Brexit, the cost of living crisis, and rocketing interest rates have all made this project more challenging, but we are determined to deliver the outstanding facilities that residents have told us they want to see at Gurnell.

"An independent assessor found that

the cost of fully refurbishing the existing building to extend its life would run into the region of £18million. With the agreement of the Community Sounding Board that the old building must go, we can now focus on building a new centre instead that we can all be proud of."

Council leader Peter Mason said: "The conversation does not stop here. We are at a very early stage and no final decisions have been made about the design of the scheme and, as an open, inclusive and transparent council, we will continue to work with local residents and the Community Sounding Board on the detail of the proposals."

 Read the full story at [aroundealing.com/news/plans-for-a-better-gurnell](https://aroundealing.com/news/plans-for-a-better-gurnell) 





# Beavers make comeback

Beavers will return to live wild in our borough after more than 400 years, in a rewilding first for urban London.

**A** licence has been granted by Natural England for Eurasian beavers, a native British species and Europe's largest rodent, to be introduced in Paradise Fields, a 10-hectare area of woodland and wetlands in Greenford owned by Ealing Council. Beavers were driven to extinction after being hunted for their fur and meat.

The community-led project is a collaboration between Ealing Wildlife Group, Citizen Zoo, Friends of Horsenden Hill and the council, with support from experts at Beaver

Trust. Initially, it will be carried out as a controlled, enclosed trial to allow local people to learn how to live alongside their new furry neighbours.

The public will be allowed access to the wetland, once the beavers have settled in and the project progresses. It will offer a rare opportunity to see their habitat up close.

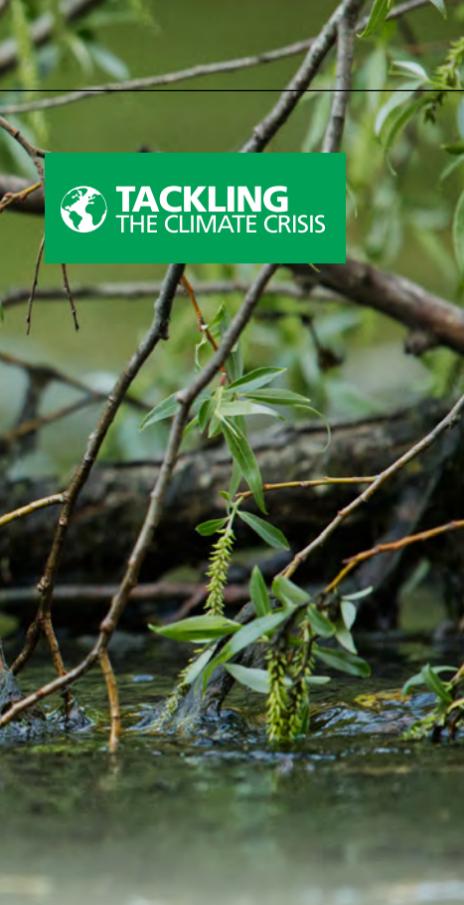
## ECO SUPERHEROES

Beavers are what are described as a 'keystone species', meaning their dam-building activities make a key contribution to biodiversity and in

helping other wildlife to thrive. The ponds they make provide nurseries for insects, fish and amphibians, while clearings they create benefit wildflowers and attract insects and birds.

Their presence can also lead to cleaner water, carbon storage, flood risk reduction and drought prevention.

This new project is expected to help a variety of important species on the council's biodiversity action plan (BAP), including Great Crested Newts, and could also lead to the reintroduction of water voles.


**TACKLING**  
THE CLIMATE CRISIS

By shaping the wetland, beavers can also help the local area combat and adapt to the impacts of climate change. It can lead to reducing the threat of flooding in winter months and, in particular, may help prevent the problems regularly experienced around Greenford Tube Station and surrounding streets. Conversely, it can also cut the effects of drought in summer months by helping the land to retain more water.

Councillor Deirdre Costigan, the council's cabinet member for climate action, thanked the local groups, and said: "Beavers being rewilded in an open, urban setting is exciting and could prove to be a real climate action success story for Ealing that, hopefully, can show other urban areas the way forward. The council is investing £45,000 in the project and it is part of our commitment to increasing the

biodiversity of our borough. We've really benefited from working with local groups on this."

### 'ECOSYSTEM ENGINEERS'

Dr Sean McCormack, chair and founder of Ealing Wildlife Group, said: "Many people assume beavers to be a wilderness species. In fact, we've just forgotten how closely we used to live alongside them. And we've forgotten the rich tapestry of life they can bring as engineers of healthy ecosystems. Healthy ecosystems clean our water and air,

reduce flooding and drought, capture carbon to tackle climate change and boost biodiversity. We're itching to get started and to get the community further involved, too."



Elliot Newton, co-founder of rewilding and conservation group Citizen Zoo, said: "We are hoping to challenge perceptions and demonstrate how London, too, can embrace these ecosystem engineers as we strive for a healthier, wilder future in which our capital can become a leader in urban rewilding. Which will greatly benefit not only wildlife populations but local communities too."

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Councillor Costigan added: "The council's biodiversity action plan, which is a key part of our climate action strategy, has been in place for almost a year now and we are beginning to see some real progress. For example, in that time, 7,000 new trees have been planted, and wildflower meadows created. We have plans to rewild land equivalent in size to 130 football pitches, which includes supporting projects such as this one in Paradise Fields. There is lots more to do in the months and years ahead, of course, and that goes for everyone who lives and works in the borough. But the beaver project is a great example of how the council is working with community groups and local volunteers to help with nature recovery."

### SUPPORTING THE PROJECT

Citizen Zoo has started a fundraising appeal to support the beaver project's running costs. If you would like to contribute, you can find the donations page at [www.citizenzoo.org/get-involved/appeal-page](http://www.citizenzoo.org/get-involved/appeal-page)

 Read more about the project at [aroundealing.com/news/beavers-return](http://aroundealing.com/news/beavers-return) 



# Health with a green heart

A local doctor is trying to help more people connect the dots between health and climate action – and her GP practice in Perivale is winning awards and inspiring others.

Vasu at the surgery

 **TACKLING**  
THE CLIMATE CRISIS

**E**aling Council has declared Dr Vasu Siva as one of its local 'climate leaders' for the work she has been leading on.

She is a partner at Hillview Surgery in Perivale, where staff have been sharing ideas with other local surgeries on how to become much 'greener' in the way they go about things; and also helping to explain to patients how 'sustainable' healthy living can help to minimise their carbon footprint, and why that is a good thing for everyone.

It has led to two awards for Hillview, including becoming the first GP surgery in London to achieve a Gold Plus Certificate from the Royal College of General Practitioners.

"I am now determined to get all the Ealing GP practices on board to work towards improving their carbon footprint," said Vasu.

## GETTING STARTED

Vasu was already very environmentally conscious at home and began to wonder why the same things were not being done at work. It led to her becoming a member of the national Greener Practice network.

Encouraging staff who live locally to travel in by bike or on foot was the first step.

"Active travel is already part of the NHS long term plan for national health anyway," continued Vasu. "It is a part of self-care and wellbeing."

Simple energy saving measures around the practice also became part of everyday life, and then it built up to include how people disposed of medical objects and much more.

Vasu said: "We started small, and then built up. We started to have a green agenda at every staff meeting

and set ourselves a target to make it fun and motivational."



## 'SMALL, POSITIVE CHANGES'

Vasu and her colleagues also talk to patients about how they can be more environmentally conscious in various ways, too, such as how they dispose of or recycle their own medical items.

She said: "It is all about small, positive changes you can make to your everyday life – nothing scary."

"It can have a ripple effect because patients talk about it to their friends and family, too."

"And once people know they can do something, and how they can do it, and you explain why it makes a difference, they are usually happy to do it."

 Read more, including Vasu's top tips for everyday climate action, at [aroundealing.com/news/health-green-heart](https://aroundealing.com/news/health-green-heart) 



# Paws for thought

With amazing animals from across the globe and fun for all the family, Hanwell Zoo is well known to most as one of the best days out in the borough – but did you know that behind the scenes it plays a vital role in conservation and education too?

In the last year, the zoo has not only welcomed more visitors through its doors than ever before, it has also reached several thousand people with its education programme, which is helping shift the focus to climate change – a vital part of its wider role in the conservation of internationally vulnerable species.

## 'MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT'

Jim Gregory, manager at the zoo, explained: "Although we are a small zoo we are part of a larger network and can have an influence in the larger picture when it comes to climate action.

"We want to help illustrate the effect this crisis is already having on many of the species we have right here."

## INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION

The zoo's conservation programme is offering threatened species vital support, whether they are found in the British countryside or in tropical rainforests thousands of miles from our shores.

Jim added: "Our work with dormice has been one of the most successful projects in a long time.

"We are also looking to start a similar project with water voles."

The zoo is also playing host to some more exotic species as part of its conservation efforts. The zoo has beautiful and enigmatic Margays, small cats from South and Central America, that are part of a population of just 25 in British zoos. They are critically endangered in the wild.

Jim said: "We are part of a European breeding programme and we are

hopefully going to help in stabilising this species with a view to reintroducing young cats into the wild in the future."

One of the zoo's biggest recent breeding success stories has been the black-cheeked lovebird (see front cover photo) – one of Africa's rarest parrots, that have been decimated by the pet trade. Jim said: "We have gone from 30 to 50 individuals here. They are going to be part of a programme that is reintroducing this beautiful bird back into its native homeland." 

Find out more about Hanwell Zoo's conservation work and watch a video at [aroundealing.com/news/zoo-conservation](https://aroundealing.com/news/zoo-conservation)



# Gardener's best friend

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collection  
service



For more information and prices visit  
**[www.ealing.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/gardenwaste)**

# Nature reserve plans

Much of Warren Farm could soon receive Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status, leading to London's largest rewilding project, and also vital new community sports facilities, too.

**E**aling Council is applying to Natural England for nature reserve status to be granted to the majority of the site at Windmill Lane, Southall.

If successful, this will lead the way for a huge rewilding project – the largest in the capital – protecting and enhancing Warren Farm's rich and valuable nature and biodiversity long into the future.

The plans follow feedback from residents in a consultation that the council ran last summer, giving an opportunity to have a say on the future of the space. More than 1,500 people got involved.

## LARGEST REWILDING PROJECT

Council leader Peter Mason said: "We are committing to maintaining the

site's wild character and the nature reserve would be the largest rewilding project Ealing has ever seen."

The nature reserve is set to be created as part of an expanded site which the council has successfully negotiated on a 99-year management lease with Imperial College London and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, which both own land adjoining Warren Farm. Future management of the reserve will be confirmed in upcoming announcements.

## SPORTS FACILITIES


Councillor Mason said: "Warren Farm is Ealing's largest outdoor sports ground, but it has been out of use for more than 10 years, and the changing rooms and the pavilions are dilapidated.

"Our sports facility strategy, adopted last summer, clearly demonstrated a need for additional cricket and football pitches in the area and the council is committed to ensuring that new sports facilities are also delivered for the benefit of local people, alongside our ambitious plans for the rewilding of much of the site."

The council is going to carry out a study on what sports pitches might be possible on the remainder of the site not included in the boundaries of the proposed nature reserve.

## MORE CONSULTATION

And the final respective boundaries of the proposed LNR and sports facilities will be confirmed in the future, following consultation with residents and local groups.

Councillor Mason explained: "Our recent consultation gave local people a voice in shaping the future of Warren Farm and we will always listen and be guided by the views and needs of our residents." 



# Market leaders

A monthly Reduce and Recycle Hub is proving a success at Acton Market.

**A**cton-based charity Action West London, which runs the market, received National Lottery funding last year to add a climate action zone.

So, the Reduce and Recycle Hub was started in October as a two-year project, initially, to help raise awareness of how we can reduce or reuse waste, provide a spotlight for 'green' businesses and also get residents involved.

## 'WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY'

Mary Horesh, Acton Market's community circular economy manager, said: "The hub usually runs on the first Saturday of the month alongside Acton Saturday Market W3. We want to encourage residents to think about what they consume, and start holding on to items for longer, reduce how much they waste, reuse items more; and, when they no longer need them, recycle them. We all have a role to play to help save the planet's natural resources.

"At our monthly hubs we gather together lots of great organisations and businesses that help people to do this."

## GIVING ITEMS A SECOND LIFE

In the first three months, the hub helped to save 122kg of unwanted clothes and

shoes from going to landfill and collected 43kg of small electrical items.

Mary runs one of the services at the hub, the Ealing Repair Café. She set it up a couple of years ago to show people how to repair clothes and other fabric items.

She said: "If we think a little bit about our attitudes and behaviour to buying clothes, we can be much more sustainable."

But that is not all you'll find at the hub. You can:

- **RECYCLE** your old or unloved clothing and shoes, small electrical appliances and laptops. These will be donated to Traid and The Fixing Factory
- **REPAIR** your clothes with Ealing Repair Café; get garden and kitchen tools sharpened by RenewSharpening; get your bikes checked with Dr Bike (2-5pm)

Mary and the Ealing Repair Café stall at the market



**TACKLING**  
THE CLIMATE CRISIS

■ **REUSE/ REDUCE** by shopping for pre-loved goods or returns/seconds clothing from high street brands.

Whether a resident or interested business, you can find out more online at [marketw3.co.uk](https://marketw3.co.uk)

## Want to trade?

If you have a passion for a product, or an idea for a business, a local market can be one of the first places to start. Action West London has a free, self-learning training course to help you do that. Afterwards, there may be opportunities to trade at Acton Market. Sign up for the training at [www.actonmarket.co.uk/trader-training](https://www.actonmarket.co.uk/trader-training)



# Re'Store revolution

“We are dedicated to repairing, reusing and reselling the things we already own,” said the woman running a new shop with a difference that recently opened in Acton.

**K**al Di Paola opened Re'Store in Churchfield Road in December and, along with battling waste, she is aiming to encourage local people to set up, or grow, small businesses in the area and help to reinvigorate the town centre.

The GLA offered funding and Ealing Council offered Kal the use of the shop on a nominal, or ‘peppercorn’, rent. It opens Wednesday-Saturday and Kal said there had been a “constant flow of customers.” But it’s more than a shop. It’s a hub for reselling and remaking household objects and clothes – and also runs workshops and classes.

“Every year we chuck away as much as we buy,” said Kal. “The old model of produce-consume-throw is outdated. We all need to do our bit to reduce this overconsumption.

“There are three reasons why it made sense to set up Re'Store: The cost of living

crisis; the need for more sustainability because of the climate emergency; and also mental health – making things with your hands gets you off your phone and in a different headspace and coming here gets you talking to likeminded people, too. I have felt the benefits of it myself.”

Re'Store is hosting anywhere up to 10 workshops a month, which have included expert guidance from an upholsterer, a knitwear designer and a furniture restorer.

There are also plans to pilot a Re'School of Entrepreneurship, with

workshops covering digital marketing and business skills. The sessions will show how to build a brand from scratch and have a particular emphasis on business ideas within the ‘green’ economy.

Kal explained: “Re'Store is all about teaching new skills, or refreshing people’s existing ones, so they can be inspired to reuse and remake, or set up their own business in the circular economy space – it is as much about entrepreneurship as it is about living more sustainably. But the key is turning waste into a material that can be used to create something new.”

Eventually, the wider aim is to push the Re'Store idea further.

“High Streets are struggling but if you have the right offering, people will come to it. We are already seeing a lot of demand and can see the project evolving to a bigger space,” said Kal. “I would ultimately like to see Re'Stores on many, many high streets.” 





# Cuppa load of this

Did you know that tea bags can be recycled as part of the council's food waste recycling service? They then go on to have a remarkable journey.

**W**hen it comes to making the perfect cuppa, everyone has their own way of making it. Some put the milk in first, while others think that is terrible tea etiquette.

However you take it, research shows that Brits drink a staggering 36 billion cups of tea a year. So, what we do with those billions of tea bags after we squeeze them against the side of our mug could make a huge difference to the planet.

## THE TALE OF A TEABAG

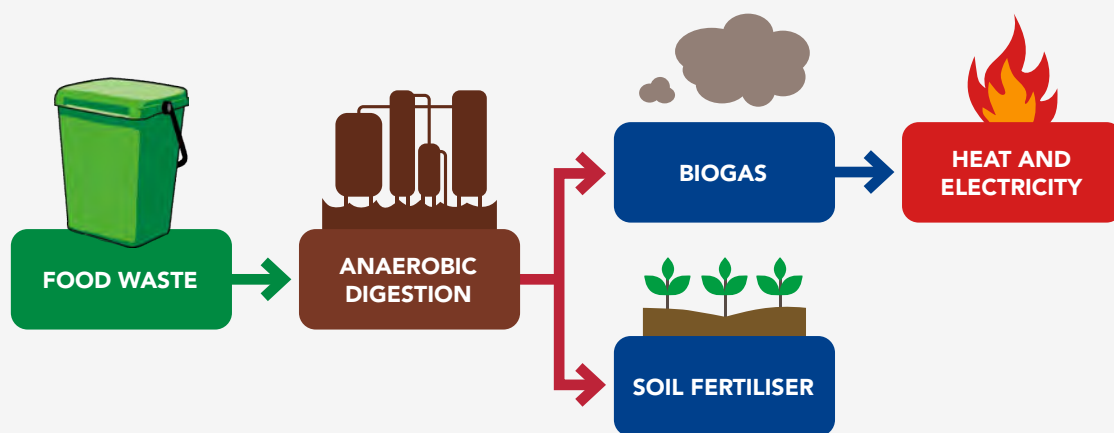
Transferring your tea bags from mug to food waste kitchen caddy and then, once it is full, to a green food waste bin if you live in a house – or a communal food waste bin if you live in a flat – means they can embark on a transformative journey.

Your tea bags, and all other food waste, are taken by Greener Ealing food waste collection trucks as part of your weekly collection to a transfer station in

Brentford run by the West London Waste Authority, which Ealing Council is part of. From there, it is transported by 'green' biogas-fuelled vehicles to a special processing plant in Surrey to begin the anaerobic digestion process. What is that, you ask? Read on.

The food waste is mechanically stripped of any contaminants and broken down into small particles to be pumped through a series of





temperature-controlled tanks and monitored to ensure the various bacteria has the optimal conditions to digest the food effectively and to create biogas.

Clever, hey?

After 72 hours, the food waste is filtered and screened for purity to generate biogas and electricity and finally fed back into the National Grid, helping to heat and power homes and businesses with clean, renewable energy. What is left is nutrient rich agricultural fertiliser to improve soil and to help local producers to grow more food.

And the cycle begins again every time you tip your tea bags and other food waste in the food waste bin.

#### 'A VIRTUOUS CIRCLE'

Councillor Deirdre Costigan, the council's cabinet member for climate action, said: "Recycling our food

waste has a triple whammy effect: It is good for the environment, it creates energy for our homes and it helps start the whole cycle again by also providing fertiliser for growers to produce more food. It is a virtuous circle.



"Our tale of a teabag shows how this happens every week. It is easy to recycle

– thanks to the council's recycling collection service, we can all do it. And it makes such a difference."

#### FIND OUT MORE

If you want to start recycling your food waste, ask for a food waste bin at [www.ealing.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/recycling) – where you can also find out about recycling other items in the borough. 



#### Why recycle food waste?

- 1 Good for the environment
- 2 Helps create energy for homes
- 3 Helps create fertiliser for growing more food

#### Did you know?

- Ealing households put out an average of 71.8kg of food waste in 2020/21. That's equivalent to the weight of an average bag of sugar or large box of cereal each week
- To make it less messy, you can line your smaller 'kitchen caddy' bin with newspaper or compostable bags (easy to buy from supermarkets).



# Did you work at **Firestone\*, Trico\* or A.E.C Southall** in the 70's, 80's or 90's?

Gunnersbury Park Museum are looking to uncover your stories. We are keen to speak to people from the local Afro-Caribbean and South Asian communities and individuals who worked in these factories.

We want to hear your story through any objects, images, documents or recording your oral history. This will be included into a co-created and co-curated digital exhibition with project participants.

To share your story contact  
**[learning@visitgunnersbury.org](mailto:learning@visitgunnersbury.org)**

**We want to  
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Nosheen inside the  
Westside Young People's  
centre in West Ealing

# Family holiday help

"It is a good way of helping families that really need a break and for keeping the children occupied and entertained," said one parent whose children attend Ealing Council's Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF).

**T**hree of Nosheen Zarait's children go to HAF clubs, and she continued: "They are happy there and they enjoy the activities and getting involved and showing me what they have made."

The HAF programme was launched in April 2021 and provides a free programme of out-of-school activities in the Easter, summer and Christmas school holidays. Children and young people in receipt of benefits-related free school meals are able to go along and participate in a wide range of fun activities and also receive a nutritious meal.

The Zarait family lives in Greenford and Nosheen's two sons, nine and 10, and 14-year-old daughter, all go to the clubs regularly.

She added: "The social side is important, and they meet new people and friends. It was easy to register."

## 'VERY UNDERSTANDING'

Another Greenford resident, Selina Eshun, said the scheme is a valuable resource for her two children. One has special educational needs, and the other has food allergies, asthma and Crohn's disease. The children have both enjoyed canoeing, go-karting and group activities as part of the HAF activity programme.

Selina said: "There are clubs all over the borough and the staff are great. We travelled to Northolt for the HAF swimming club and my daughter learned to swim in that week. It was a massive boost to her confidence and she came away with a new skill."

"The clubs are very understanding to my children's needs. It is amazing for a disabled child to be able to attend the same club as a sibling, and not have to do more than one drop-off. You can also choose the

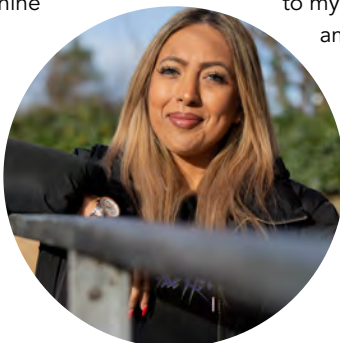
centre and days you want to go, and work around the needs of your family."

## SAFE AND FRIENDLY

Councillor Kamaljit Nagpal, the council's cabinet member for a fairer start, said: "We have received a great deal of positive feedback about HAF from parents, carers and young people and I'm really pleased that we can offer this support to so many families. It's a place where friendships are made and somewhere that adults know their children are safe and looked after – and having a great time."



Read the full story at [aroundealing.com/news/holiday-help](https://www.aroundealing.com/news/holiday-help)



## Interested?

HAF will next be running in the Easter school holidays in April. Find out all you need to know on the HAF pages of the online Family Services Directory at [www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk](http://www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk)

# Drive for Greener Ealing Ltd

## Do you have a class 2 HGV licence?

Then come and join the team at Greener Ealing Ltd.

We deliver environmental services in Ealing, from waste collections to grounds maintenance and street cleansing – and we're recruiting for drivers.



## Why join us?

- You will receive full induction and training
- Typical working hours are 6am-2pm
- Competitive pay equivalent to £16 per hour
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- Supportive team environment
- Opportunity for career progression

"I have been an HGV driver for a couple of years now and I really enjoy my job. Being on the same route every day means I get to know the residents, which is a big plus."

Darren, HGV driver, Greener Ealing Ltd

## Interested? Visit the website

[www.greenerealing.co.uk/about-us/careers/](http://www.greenerealing.co.uk/about-us/careers/)

Or email [HRsupport@greenerealing.co.uk](mailto:HRsupport@greenerealing.co.uk)



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\*Anchor Pet Policy applies.

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# 'A huge difference'

Looking for a career boost in 2023? Well, whether you are looking for training, hoping to upskill or wanting to find a new job or an apprenticeship, the council has ways to help.



Councillor Bassam Mahfouz, Ealing Council's cabinet member for decent living incomes, said: "As outlined in our Plan for Good Jobs, a key priority for us is to support residents into decent, well-paid jobs. That's why we are committed to securing 10,000 new jobs, 2,000 diverse apprenticeships and 12,000 qualifications in Ealing by 2026 – ambitious promises, but ones we're already well under way in delivering. It's a priority for you in these tough times, so it's a priority for us."

## FINDING A NEW JOB

Northolt resident Carl Richards benefited from personalised work support after being referred to the council's Work Ealing team by library staff.

Carl expressed difficulties getting a reference from a previous employer, which he felt was slowing down the DBS process for conditional roles he

had received. A Work Ealing employment advisor contacted the employer and helped Carl to retrieve the reference.

He also had help with updating his CV, tailoring it for administrative roles. He was also supported in applying for a switchboard operator role online.

Carl said: "The support I received was continued and consistent. I had both virtual and face-to-face appointments and it really motivated me to find employment."

Carl started a retail job at Apple in October, being paid London Living Wage, and is happy at work. In future he wants to go into local politics, making a difference to his local community.

Find out more about the support available at [workealing.com](https://www.workealing.com)

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The council also has ways to help you to improve your skills and work prospects, through Learn Ealing – its adult learning

team – at [learnealing.org.uk](https://www.learnealing.org.uk)

Gurpreet completed a spoken English course and said: "I enrolled with Learn Ealing in 2019 and have found a newfound confidence in my speaking and writing abilities. Because my English improved, I got a job at Royal Mail."

Vasanth Madduma Patabendige from Northolt did courses in digital skills, maths and English. She said: "Learn Ealing courses have made a huge difference to my personal and home life. They have helped me gain my self-confidence, too. The courses allowed me to help with my son's homework without any private tuition and I started work in a school as a dinner lady."

You can find out more about what courses are available and how they might be able to help you, at [learnealing.org.uk](https://www.learnealing.org.uk)

Al-nadeem's apprenticeship  
has been life changing

# Have a go. It's the best opportunity'

National Apprenticeship Week was held in February. Ealing Council's Work Ealing service at **workealing.com** can help you find an apprenticeship opportunity and also connect employers with candidates.

**A**l-nadeem Axmed is a civil engineering apprentice at construction firm O'Halloran & O'Brien in Southall. He found his apprenticeship through Work Ealing. It came after he had one year's work experience as an electrician at another company.

The council acted as the broker between Al-nadeem and the employer, checking his CV, setting up an

interview, and talking him through some practical tips in preparation for the interview.

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

He was worried about having dyslexia and said: "I was really happy with the support I received.

"I didn't used to share that I had dyslexia because I was a bit ashamed. But I was encouraged to mention my

dyslexia at the interview so they could help me as much as they could. The council reassured me that I was not going to get rejected because of it.

"I have found it a bit challenging at times suffering from dyslexia. I would like to address anyone who has dyslexia or other learning difficulty – don't be shy, come out, speak and be open about it. There is support available. If you don't ask, you will not get help."

### 'LOVING IT'

Al-nadeem started his apprenticeship in October and said: "I am loving it, 100%. This apprenticeship is important to me because I had a bit of a mental breakdown, so it's a kind of a therapy and is helping me to not feel sorry for myself and have more ambition. I felt like if I didn't work and have a distraction, I wasn't going to get better. I don't want to sit back and let depression take over me.

"When I go to work it's like my own kingdom. I have space and I don't feel too much pressure. I do have tasks and deadlines but I'm not alone. I always work with one or two other people and it's manageable.


"I would recommend people to do an apprenticeship – without a doubt. Have a go. It's the best opportunity to get experience and a qualification. Experience is highly valued in the industry

but it's really difficult to move from having a degree to starting a job because there is a lot of competition. If you went for an apprenticeship, you are already in the industry, plus you are learning. It's so much better because theory-based with no practice can be forgotten in the longer run. When you combine theory and practice – it's easier and you are also avoiding student loans." See more at [aroundealing.com/news/from-universal-credit-to-civil-engineering](https://aroundealing.com/news/from-universal-credit-to-civil-engineering)

### COUNCIL APPRENTICESHIPS

You might remember reading about Mah-jabeen Bhatti, a 47-year-old Southall mother-of-four, in a previous edition of Around Ealing. After being out of work for two decades because of a serious health condition, she joined the council as an apprentice in 2020. And Mah-jabeen recently secured a permanent role at the council.

She said: "A very big thank you to the apprenticeship team for all the help and support they have provided me with. I could not have done it without their support, which has been life changing for me. I'd recommend an apprenticeship to anyone."

Read Mah-jabeen's story at [aroundealing.com/jobs/apprenticeship-gave-me-a-new-lease-of-life/](https://aroundealing.com/jobs/apprenticeship-gave-me-a-new-lease-of-life/) 

### More info

The council's apprenticeship team can help with finding you an apprenticeship – whether at the council or with a local employer. It can be contacted by emailing [apprenticeships@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@ealing.gov.uk) or calling 020 8825 8486. Or take a look at [workealing.com](https://workealing.com)



“I  
- actually -  
UNPACKED



MY BAG”

Novia, aged 13

Do you remember what it was like to be a teenager? Now imagine your family was having difficulties and all you wanted was somewhere safe and stable to stay. Fostering a teenager can be challenging, but it's a hard time for them too. We need you to understand the needs of our young people and be there for them through the highs and lows, to support them on their journey. As a foster carer we will provide you with excellent support and training. We also pay teenage fostering allowances of between £337 to £470 per week for each young person you look after, depending on their age and your experience.

Together we can do this at [ealingfosteradopt.co.uk](http://ealingfosteradopt.co.uk) Freephone: **0800 731 6550**  
Email: [fosteradopt@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:fosteradopt@ealing.gov.uk) Facebook: [/ealingfosteradopt](https://www.facebook.com/ealingfosteradopt)


**FIGHTING**  
 INEQUALITY

# 'This is their home'

"It feels like it is like my purpose to look after the children," said Amina Berhe, winner of the council's Foster Carer of the Year 2022.

**Y**ou get the feeling when talking to Amina that, when it comes to fostering, she is a complete natural. The three children in her care are clearly just as much a part of the family as her own son.

She said: "I want to protect them. It doesn't matter how long they stay with me, this is their home. I advocate on their behalf and make sure they receive the support they need. Every child is an individual and they need understanding and empathy."

Since 2008, Amina has looked after 10 children, whether for long or short periods. The first was 3-and-a-half years old when he first came to stay and he returned at the age of five.

To start work in foster care, the process usually takes around six months. Since becoming approved, Amina has built up a good friendship

network of foster carers.

She said: "We have very nice foster carers in Ealing and the support and training I receive from Ealing Council is also excellent."

## MORE CARERS NEEDED

Councillor Kamaljit Nagpal, the council's cabinet member for a fairer start, said: "Amina was a very deserving winner of our annual award as Foster Carer of the Year and the way she looks after children is an inspiration.

"It is a consistent message from our carers that they find it deeply rewarding and I'd urge anyone who thinks fostering might be for them to have a chat to our team to find out more.

"Currently, our borough has approximately 100 fostering households but, with around 300

looked after children, more carers from all backgrounds, ethnicity and ages are needed.

"Carers receive pay and training, and ongoing support."

## FIND OUT MORE

Foster Care Fortnight takes place in May, but you can find out more about fostering any time. Information sessions are held every month, and you can call the fostering team on freephone 0800 731 6550, email [fosteradopt@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:fosteradopt@ealing.gov.uk) or you can visit the website

[www.ealingfosteradopt.co.uk](http://www.ealingfosteradopt.co.uk)

Read the full interview with Amina at [aroundealing.com/news/home-foster](http://aroundealing.com/news/home-foster)

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# Helping you with the cost of living crisis

જીવનનિર્વાહ ખર્ચ માટે  
મદદ વિશે તમારી ભાષામાં  
માહિતી

معلومات عن المساعدة  
المتوفرة فيما يتعلق بتكلفة  
المعيشة بلغتك

Informacje  
o pomocy związanej  
z kosztami  
utrzymania  
dostępne w Twoim  
języku

Macluumaad ku  
qoran luqaddaada  
ee ku saabsan  
**kharashka sare ee  
noolosha**

اطلاعاتی درباره کمک در  
تأمین هزینه زندگی به زبان  
شما

Informations  
dans votre langue  
concernant les aides  
pour pallier à la  
hausse du **coût  
de la vie**

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ਦੀ ਲਾਗਤ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ  
ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ

آپ کی زبان میں رہن سہن  
کے اخراجات سے متعلق  
مدد کے بارے میں معلومات

உங்களுடைய  
மொழியில்  
வாழ்க்கைக்கான  
செலவுகள் பற்றிய  
தகவல்கள்

Information about help with the cost of living crisis in your language  
[www.ealing.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/costofliving)



# Stay healthy this spring

To find out the latest health information in your language  
[www.ealing.gov.uk/springhealth](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/springhealth)

