

Peabody News

BERKSHIRE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE,
AND OXFORDSHIRE
SPRING 2024



Spring into action

Ways to make
a difference

Nature on
your doorstep

The benefits of
regular exercise

It's never too
late to learn

Peabody News

SPRING 2024



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Welcome to the spring edition of your resident magazine. Hopefully soon we’ll be moving from colder, shorter days to brighter, sunnier ones.

Over the past few months, we’ve been busy working with residents to find out more about what you want and need from us. Residents have been involved in focus groups, co-design sessions, consultations and listening events. And we now have our first resident-led panel (page 16).

It’s clear that we need to improve our services, and getting the basics right is an absolute priority for us. This will take time as we change to a new much more joined up and local way of working. But we are making progress and our local teams are now mostly in place – in this issue we speak to one of our neighbourhood managers to find out more about their role (page 7).

We also know we need to make it easier for residents to access our services. As part of this, we’re working to cut the time it takes to speak to someone in our contact centre and encouraging more residents to use My Peabody, our online service. Did you know, you can now upload a photo or video of your repair to My Peabody to help us identify the issue more quickly?

We know the changes will take time, but we’re determined to make a difference to your service.

In this edition, we focus on change and in particular, the move from winter to spring. We find out how it’s never too late to learn, look at the benefits of exercise and catch up with a local resident who knows how to make a difference.

As usual, please do get in touch if you have any stories to share, we’d love to hear from you.



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We're still listening...

Around 80 residents attended our final listening event of the year at the Hugh Cubitt Centre in North London near Kings Cross in December, the biggest turnout yet.

Top of the agenda for residents were repairs, community safety and estates issues.

Since August last year we've held four listening events in different regions and spoken to around 300 residents as part of our plans to find out what really matters to you.

At the Hugh Cubitt event residents were particularly keen to talk about repairs, with many saying that repairs they'd reported had not been completed. People also expressed concerns about the contact centre, saying it was difficult to get through to someone or stay on top of an issue as there were often a number of different parties involved.

It's great to hear your feedback and we know we need to do much better. We're putting plans in place to transform these services, particularly how we handle repairs and complaints.



But it won't happen overnight. We'll keep you informed about what we're doing and make sure we get your feedback as we make the improvements.

We're now planning a new schedule of listening events for 2024,

so look out for details about when we're coming to your area.

In the meantime, our local neighbourhoods, repairs, contact centre and transformation teams will work together to make sure any changes we make benefit you.

Complaints

From September to December 2023, we received a total of 2,183 complaints. While this was up 15 percent on the previous three months, the number of complaints that were escalated to stage two – that's when residents are not satisfied with the resolution after stage one and ask for a further review – fell in the period. We also responded to more complaints within ten days.

We continue to treat all complaints seriously and are working hard to improve our services. We're also making sure we learn when we get things wrong. The main theme among the complaints were repairs, particularly damp and mould, plumbing and external leaks. Neighbourhoods received the second-highest number of complaints, while gas repairs ranked third. Both were influenced by cold weather.

The number of stage two escalations reduced by 1 percent each quarter to 13 percent in the three months to the end of December. The number of stage one complaints we responded to within 10 days increased to 62 percent from 52 percent in the first quarter.

In January, we started a project to improve the way we handle repairs-related complaints. We're focusing on three main priorities:

1

Improving satisfaction with repairs-related complaints from the current 20 percent.

2

Reducing complaints about current repairs by 50 percent.

3

Closing a repair-related complaint within 40 days rather than the current 56 days.

Find out more

To find out more, visit peabody.org.uk/about-complaints



A host of golden daffodils...



I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

(William Wordsworth, 1804)



After what feels like a long winter, there's nothing more exciting than spotting the first signs of spring. After all, who doesn't love seeing the yellow head of a daffodil poking up out of the ground or the first bit of blossom in the hedges and trees. It's a hint that the days are getting longer and that soon it will get warmer.

Hopefully you've already started to notice the differences around your neighbourhood. And while some spring flowers just seem to appear, others are the result of serious planning and hard work by

our landscaping and garden teams. As early as October last year they were out planting around 24,000 blubs in North, South and East London and Essex. So it's them we need to thank for many of the daffodils, tulips and crocuses you can see around us.

"Many people think there's not a lot to do during the winter months," says Dave Errington, one of our landscape service officers. "But that's when the hard work starts."

As well as prepping and planting for later in the year, the teams also collect fallen leaves, cut the

grass, hedges and shrubs, tidy the flowerbeds and prune the plants. This year they'll also plant 50 trees and 15,000 shrubs and herbaceous plants around Peabody properties as part of plans to continually invest in our landscapes.

"By making our communal spaces attractive safe spaces where residents want to spend time, we're showing that we care," says Dave. "And having a well-maintained garden to spend time in or even just admire from the window can be a great boost for people's mental health."



Making space for nature

In our winter edition of peabody News we looked at sustainability. We talked about making sure everything we do has a positive impact on the future. And looking after our surroundings, and in particular the green space, is an important part of that.

As part of this, we're mapping our ponds, lakes and green spaces

to find out more about the plants and animals that live there. We're doing what we can to reduce the impact our estate services have on nature and working hard to increase the biodiversity of those areas.



So how can you help?

It's simple really – look after your surroundings and encourage your children to do the same. We've put together two family activities to help you make the most of your surroundings.

The first helps you spot the signs that spring is on its way, while the urban birdwatch can be done either from your window or whilst out in your local neighbourhood.

Five signs *spring* is on its way

1 Snowdrops - one of the very first signs of spring and can be seen as early as January.

2 Frogspawn - this starts to appear in ponds from January onwards.

Did you know?

Only one in 50 of these eggs will go on to become an adult frog?

3 Longer days and lighter evenings - this happens gradually and you should already be starting to notice that on fine days it's lighter longer in the evening. In March we move our clocks forward and it's light even longer in the evenings.

Did you know?

Bees, caterpillars, blackbirds and even mammals like voles and badgers rely on these trees for food and shelter?

Did you know?

We've lost 38m birds from UK skies in the last 60 years?

4 Blossom - the white flowers of Blackthorn are the first to appear each year, followed by the pink blossom of the cherry and apple trees shortly after.

5 Birds - whether it's hearing their song or spotting a nest, seeing birds out and about is a sure sign that spring is here.

Nature on your doorstep

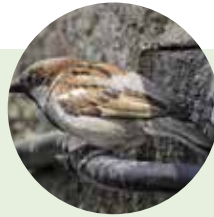


Tick off the birds you see in your area

You may have heard about the RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch, which took place at the end of January. It's the world's largest garden wildlife survey and takes place each year to help find out how birds are getting on in our gardens. Last year half a million people counted 9.1m birds.

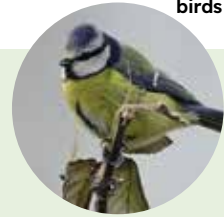
While it's too late to join in with this year's survey, why not challenge your kids to spot common garden birds or to count how many times they see a particular type of bird?

We've listed the top five birds seen in UK gardens last year to get you started. You can find out more, including what each particular type of bird likes to eat, at rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch/birdwarch-id-guide-round-one



House sparrow

- A small chirpy bird who hangs around in a group in shrubs or perched in house guttering.
- Males have a black beard and grey cap. Females are less distinctive, although their wings are striped with buff, cream and dark brown.



Blue tit

- A feisty, colourful little bird made up of a mix of blue, yellow, white and green feathers.
- Has a short, thin black beak - perfect for nibbling on nuts.
- They like chasing other birds around the garden or hiding in nesting boxes.



Starling

- Medium-sized bird with black feathers that shimmer with purple and green in the sun. They're also dappled with white.
- Hang around in groups.
- Often swoop through the sky at dusk.



Woodpigeon

- Light grey with a white and green collar and white patches on wings when in flight. Use the neck colour to avoid mixing up with Feral Pigeons or Stock Doves.
- Easily startled and will fly off with a clatter of wings.



Blackbird

- Coal-black feathers.
- The male has a bright orange beak and matching eye ring, while the female has a bright yellow/orange eye ring.

Dealing with noise nuisance – it’s better to talk (*quietly!*)



- that’s a legal term for unreasonable noise that stops you from enjoying your home.
- If in any doubt, you can contact our contact centre. They’ll be able to advise you what to do next.

What is mediation?

It’s a voluntary, impartial process that aims to explain the problem to you and your neighbour(s) and find a solution that all sides are happy with.

What are the benefits of mediation?

- Alerts people to behaviours they may not have realised were impacting others.
- Helps deal with issues resulting from a clash of lifestyles.
- Practical and free to Peabody residents to help settle disputes.
- Confidential (except for information relating to fraudulent or criminal activity or where a mediator identified a safeguarding issue).

Whether it’s music or TV, loud gatherings or barking dogs, we all know it can be frustrating having noisy neighbours. And how much of a problem it is, depends on how often it occurs and when.

Increasingly we’re seeing that residents are contacting their neighbours to try and resolve the issue, which is great. After all, it may be that someone is running the washing machine late as they work shifts or that they haven’t told their neighbours that they’re doing some home improvement work. Issues like these can often be solved with a brief conversation.

But sometimes, this doesn’t work and unfortunately disagreements can escalate into a full-scale dispute. This can cause stress, negatively impact wellbeing and make it difficult to move forward. When this happens, we usually recommend independent mediation to help find a solution that suits everyone.

What to do if you’re being disturbed by excessive noise from a neighbour:

- Talk to your neighbour and explain how the noise they’re making is affecting you. Residents often don’t know that their activities are disturbing others.
- If you’ve tried talking and feel it hasn’t worked, try writing to them to explain the problem.

Make sure you keep copies of any correspondence. In fact, it’s sensible to note down any conversations you have about the issue in case you have to take the matter further.

- You should also report the noise disturbance to the local authority. They will normally have an environmental health protection service who’ll decide whether the noise is a statutory nuisance

Case study: Think about what you say...

Michelle is a friendly and helpful resident in her block, regularly doing what she can to help her neighbours. Unfortunately, one of them, Amir, wasn’t so keen on her neighbourly interactions. He started to verbally abuse her, calling her a busy body and other names that upset her.

Michelle withdrew into herself and stopped helping her neighbours. Others in the block noticed and told the Neighbourhood Manager who called on Michelle to see if she was ok. She reluctantly explained the situation and the Neighbourhood Manager said what she’d experienced was verbal harassment and unacceptable behaviour.



Michelle was reluctant to report it to the police for fear of reprisals, especially as she still had to live in the same block. So the Neighbourhood Manager spoke to Amir.

It turned out Amir was totally unaware that his behaviour was harassment. He admitted he hadn’t been very neighbourly and put it down to stress as he’d recently lost his job. Amir then wrote to Michelle, apologising for his behaviour and for the way he had made her feel.

When Michelle bumped into Amir a few days later she explained to him how he had made her feel. Amir apologised and reiterated that he hadn’t realised his behaviour was causing distress.

Meet a local Neighbourhood Manager



We know that having someone to talk to can make all the difference. That's why you have a Neighbourhood Manager - to listen, provide support and connect you with the services you need to help keep you safe, secure and comfortable in your homes.

We caught up with **Eamon McLoughlin**, a Neighbourhood Manager in Reading, to find out more about the role and how they support residents.

What does a typical day look like for you?

My day starts with checking emails and messages. Most residents appreciate the personal touch and speaking face-to-face is easier than speaking on the phone, especially if they're going through difficult times. Residents can get to know me and I can get to know them.

I'm out and about at least three times a week visiting different areas. It's great when people come over to ask a question, have a chat about something, get an update on things or even just say hello. It's what I'm here for.

What's the most rewarding part of what you do?

The most important and rewarding part of what I do is getting to know residents and them getting to know me and how I can help. It's important for residents to be involved in the solution. So if I can share my knowledge and put them in touch with people that can help, then that's great.

It's often the smallest thing or just knowing the right person to speak to that makes a huge difference. I live in the area so it's also important to me to get to know what's going on in the town.

What do you enjoy most about working for Peabody?

A chance to give something back and help people flourish. I really like being part of an organisation that puts residents first. I enjoy connecting with other teams like our wellbeing, estates and cleaning teams who all help make residents' lives easier.

What's important to you?

Doing the right thing and making sure I do what I can to help people in their homes and make their lives better.

Where can residents find you?

Most residents have my phone number and email address. We also have housing surgeries every two weeks and I'm out and about in the neighbourhood at least three times a week. If I'm not about, residents can call the contact centre and leave a message for me. I'll call them back as soon as I can.

What were you doing before you joined Peabody?

I've been working for Peabody for over 10 years, and in the housing sector for 25 years. I love it. It's a vocation, not a job. It goes back to helping people, making life better for people - giving something back. It gives you a sense of enormous wellbeing.

Tell us a bit about yourself

I live in Reading and have seen the area change from a small town to almost a city. I have a big family who all live in the same area.

I enjoy things that keep me grounded, like nature and cooking. I also love music and history, and I try and paint. I'm also very interested in antiques.

Contact us

Your Neighbourhood Manager is happy to talk on the phone, arrange a video call or meet locally if that's easier for you. You can book an appointment to meet them at their office nearby by phoning us on **0300 123 3456** or emailing peabody.org.uk/contact-us



Santa-drop with the Dovecote Childrens Centre in Oxford

Oxford residents and their families received more than 200 toys and over 100 selection boxes and tins of biscuits and chocolates to help their festivities thanks to our work with the Dovecote Childrens Project.

Local community partners Blackbird Leys Parish Council, the Oxford Food Hub, The Works, Waitrose and Sainsburys all gave donations so the project was able to help make an incredible difference to Oxford residents and their families this Christmas.

“It’s been a pleasure to be able to support local families, especially this year,” said Carol Richards, Manager of The Dovecote Children’s Project. “Many families have been hit hard by the cost-of-living crisis and are struggling to put food on the table, never mind buy Christmas presents for their children.”

Get involved...

To find out more about what’s going on in your area, check out our event finder at peabody.org.uk/events You can also keep an eye on Facebook and Twitter for updates.

Walking, cycling, wheeling and rolling in West Reading

Over 6,500 people in West Reading, including Peabody residents and members of the Dee Park community, walked, wheeled and rolled an incredible 79,894 miles over six weeks as part of Beat the Street.

Beat the Street is a free and interactive game that encourages people of all ages to get moving and incorporate physical activity into their daily lives. Participants need to scan a card at various posts in the area and the further they walk, cycle, wheel or roll, the more points and prizes they get.

To make the most of the initiative, the team at the Dee Space Community Centre invited local partners including Reading Walking Tours, Reading Green Wellbeing Network, Sport in Mind, Nature Nurture, Cycling in Reading, Berkshire Orienteering and local Brownie and Scout packs along to take part.

Lots of people joined in, with residents and their families joining a walking tour across the estate to boost points, steps and miles. Back at the community centre, the team from Nature Nurture were on hand to get people crafting, creating and colouring all things wildlife that they may have seen while out and about in the area.



Calling all budding *artists*

Budding local artists had the chance to try out their skills in a special workshop at Dee Space, our new community venue in Reading.

About 10 local people came together for the drawing, printing and collage workshop. It was a trial

session aimed at giving participants the opportunity to create and explore in a safe environment.

All materials were provided and no prior experience needed.

Look out for other sessions coming up.

More information...

To find out more about this or any other activities in the Dee Space Community Centre email sam.stronach@peabody.org.uk



Celebrating in *Style*

The Dee Space Community Centre celebrated its first Christmas in style, with a traditional lunch, festive arts and crafts and even a surprise visit from Santa.

Joy's Kitchen, run by a local resident, provided the lunch with all the trimmings and other local residents provided homemade mince pies and delicious cakes.

Santa and his helpful elf gave out gifts to the children that had been kindly donated by Tropical Wellbeing Youth Services and the Jamaican Society of Reading. There was also festive arts and crafts and Stephen Proctor from Norcot Church did an amazing puppet show for the children. Thanks to everybody who made this a success!

More information...

To find out more about this or any other activities in the Dee Space Community Centre email sam.stronach@peabody.org.uk



Come and chat to us!

At Dee Space, we're running housing surgeries on the last Wednesday of each month between 11am and 1pm. Come and meet your Neighbourhood Manager and report any repairs you need.

We're running the sessions with Reading Borough Council and Thames Valley Police so there's everybody in one place for you to speak with. Pop in and say hello - no appointment necessary.



Damp, mould and condensation

Damp, mould and condensation can continue to be a problem even as it gets warmer outside. Moisture naturally builds in our homes from daily activities, such as cooking, washing and drying clothes – even taking a shower. If it can't escape, it leads to condensation, which in turn can cause damp and mould to form on windowsills, tiles and walls.

Making sure you have a warm, safe and dry home is a priority for us. So if you're experiencing any damp and mould issues, please get in touch immediately.

You can call our contact centre on **0345 123 3456** or use the form on our website at peabody.org.uk/damp-mould-and-condensation

Make things right



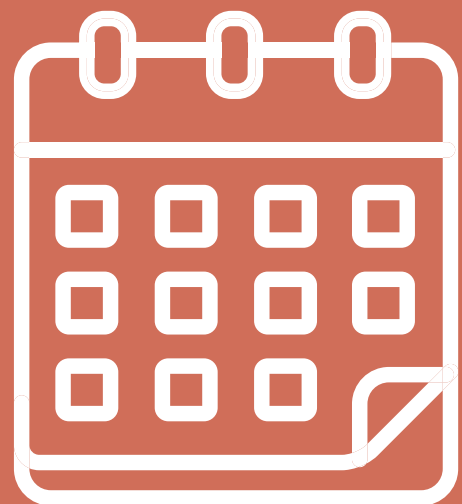
Social housing issue?



We're supporting the government's **'Make things right'** campaign. It aims to make sure social housing residents know their rights, know how to complain and feel empowered that their voice will be heard. We agree strongly that everyone deserves a home that is safe, secure and well maintained and are doing our best to make it a reality.

Your event Calendar

Find out what local events are going on in our neighbourhoods.



peabody.org.uk/events

 Peabody

Rita's savvy saving *tips*

Like many people, Peabody resident Rita is feeling the pinch from rising prices, particularly when her pension only goes so far. Here she shares some of the money saving tricks she uses to help:



1 Try some own-brand products when you do your weekly shop. I've swapped some of the expensive stuff for cheaper alternatives and they're just as good.

2 Use coupons and discount codes whenever you can. I always search online and look out for bargains in-store. www.moneysavingexpert.com is great for the latest deals, tips and tricks.

3 See if you can get free or discounted prescriptions. I was amazed how much I saved with a prescription prepayment certificate that a pharmacist recommended me.

4 Check what help you can get from your local council. Even a bit toward bills makes a difference. Visit www.gov.uk/find-local-council to see what's available in your area.

5 Contact your energy provider if you're having trouble paying your bills. Many can help with creating payment plans, and small measures like payment breaks or emergency credit can help take the pressure off.

Let me know if these ideas are useful or if you've got your own tips to share. **Rita**

Don't let your clutter become a hazard

Now's the time for a traditional 'spring clean'. It's a great opportunity to declutter and get rid of things you no longer need or use.

But before you start any decluttering, please think about how you plan to get rid of any large items. Leaving unwanted belongings in communal areas can block emergency exits and be a fire risk. They can also be a trip hazard for your neighbours, especially in the event of a fire when smoke can cause reduced visibility. Check out gov.uk/find-local-council to see if your local council provides a free collection service for items you no longer want.

You can find out more about keeping safe at peabody.org.uk/fire-safety/



Peabody Supporting you

Support Finder provides help and support based on where you live.

- Reducing your energy bills.
- Household costs and accessing food vouchers.
- Debt advice and money management.
- Government funding and assistance.
- Training and education opportunities.
- Mental, physical and emotional wellbeing support.

Scan here to try Support Finder!

supportfinder.peabody.org.uk



There's more to exercise than just getting *fit*



For many people, the idea of exercise isn't very appealing, especially when it means physical effort and getting out of your comfort zone. But it can also be a social activity which can make it a lot more fun.

"Exercise brings a lot of people together," says Alicia Aliane, a swimming teacher and gym instructor who works at the Healthy living Centre in Darwin Court, Southwark. "For many, it's a social thing."

Alicia's been running an aqua aerobics session at the centre for about seven years. She says for a lot of the regulars it's as much about socialising as it is about the exercise. "There are people who come every week. They love singing and dancing to the music and at the same time they're getting fit. They're also making friends."

Janet Price, a resident who attends dance classes twice a week at the Sundial Centre in Tower Hamlets, agrees. "I thoroughly enjoy all the classes," she says. "They really get me moving and make me feel more energised. I also get to meet lots of different people and would really miss them if they were ever cancelled."

Whatever the reason people decide to get involved, there's no doubting the benefits. Exercise is good for you - both physically and mentally.

Six benefits of regular exercise:

- 1 - Controls weight.
- 2 - Combats health conditions.
- 3 - Improves mood.
- 4 - Boosts energy.
- 5 - Promotes better sleep.
- 6 - Can be social and fun!



In fact, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can help reduce the risk of disease and strengthen bones and muscles. It can also help reduce anxiety, depression and improve self-esteem.

So why not give it a go? Whether it's a fitness class, a yoga group, swimming or going to the gym, exercise comes in all forms. And if group exercise isn't for you, then go for a short jog or walk near where you live. In fact, a report published last year by Public Health England found that walking for 10 minutes a day can cut the risk of an early death by 15 percent.

And if that isn't enough to encourage you to get moving, why not focus on the social aspect like Zahed Abedipour, Swimming Service Manager at Darwin Court. For him, the healthy living centre is even better than a social club. (The pool and gym are in the same building as the food pantry and café.)

"Rather than just coming for a coffee, people come and exercise and then have a coffee. It's a win-win for all."

More information

To find out about exercise classes in your area check out your community noticeboard or see the events page on our website at peabody.org.uk/events

Hello, are you ok?

We care about you and your wellbeing.

We all have busy lives, and we don't expect you to contact us if you don't need to, but we also want to make sure you're ok.

So, if we haven't heard from you in a while, we'll be emailing you to ask if there's anything we can do to help.

As well as queries about your home, we can offer help with:

- Support services and community projects in your area.
- Aid and adaptations needed to make your home more comfortable.

- How to get referrals to social services and other agencies.

- The different types of benefits you may be entitled to.

- What to do if you're experiencing domestic abuse.

If you don't get back to us when we email you or if we don't have your email address, we'll call you. If we still can't get in touch with you, your Neighbourhood Manager will visit you to check everything is ok.



In the meantime, if you'd like to talk to us about anything please call **0300 123 3456** or visit peabody.org.uk/contact-us/



Did you know?

You can live longer and healthier by exercising regularly. Exercise can reduce your risk of major illness, such as heart problems, stroke, type two diabetes and cancer and lower your risk of early death by up to 30 percent.





It's never too late to *learn*

Billy Bennett isn't shy to admit that he should have worked harder at school. At 23 years old, he's just passed his maths GCSE and says it was much harder to do now whilst working than it would have been when he was at school full time.

But the days of not working hard are now behind him.

Billy, who grew up in Abbey Wood, currently works on a building site four days a week as an apprentice electrician for homebuilder Durkan. On a Thursday he ditches his overalls and goes to Holly Hill College in Erith, South East London. There he's working towards his functional skills qualifications – designed to help young people and adults develop their essential maths, English and ICT skills.

Billy had wanted to work on a building site. But after leaving school with no qualifications, he ended up claiming Universal Credit because he couldn't get the necessary health and safety qualification – a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card. Someone from the Universal Credit team put Billy in touch with YouthBuild Ventures UK, a charity and one of Peabody's partners who work with the construction industry.

In a matter of weeks Billy had passed the CSCS test with 49 out of 50 and was offered a week's work experience with Durkan. At the end of the first week he asked if he could stay for another week. And two years later, he's still there working as a proper paid

apprentice while studying for his functional skills qualifications.

"I would recommend to any kid at school now that they pay attention," says Billy, admitting that he was perhaps a bit naughty at school. "It's so much harder to learn now in one day whilst I'm working than when you're at school full time."

As for the future, Billy is on track to become a qualified electrician. His apprenticeship lasts four years and he hopes to continue working

on site once he's qualified to gain as much experience as possible. But really his opportunities are endless.

"By the time I'm 40 I want to be higher up the ladder," he says. "I now know that things don't just get given to you. You have to show that you're willing to work hard for what you want."

Asked if he'd recommend doing an apprenticeship: "Definitely," he says. "It's so worthwhile."

We're here to help

Follow in Billy's footsteps and sign up to our newsletter to get the latest news on jobs, apprenticeships and training. You'll also find out about any special events and job fairs in your area.

peabody.org.uk/jobs-bulletin

We also have a range of partners who offer support and advice to help you take the next step in your career, find suitable employment or prepare for working life. Check out our dedicated page peabody.org.uk/business-support for more information including advice, career paths and even how to start your own business.



Resident voice: Get involved to create *change*



Peabody resident Jan Tucker likens her involvement in her local community to the saying 'the more you're prepared to put in, the more you get out'.

That's because she's spent a lot of time on community panels, leading local community groups and even had a seven-year stint representing residents on the Peabody Board. And believe it or not she's enjoyed (almost) every minute of it.

"I've lived on the Palmer Estate in Islington for most of my life. I'm in my 70s now, still working as a bookkeeper, and I live in a flat that backs onto the home I grew up in. The sense of community here is strong, and I love being part of making it better.

Over the years, I've seen our community grow and change, and I've always been committed to contributing to its wellbeing. I've

been part of many groups, like the Palmer Estate Tenants' Association and the local school's Parent Teachers Association. It might not be everyone's thing, but if you're open to listening and helping, it's really rewarding.

Joining these groups doesn't need any special agenda, you just need to genuinely want to get involved. It might seem a bit scary at first, but I want to tell other residents not to worry. To those who have issues to resolve, I say: "get involved. If you think things aren't up to standard, find out why and help fix it."

The point of groups like tenants' associations is that together, our voice is stronger. If there's an issue, we can solve it better as a team

of residents. It could be a small thing, like a door in our building not being fixed properly. If one person complains, it might not be heard. But if a group of us from a tenants' association speak up, it's more likely to get attention.

I'm happy to see Peabody focusing more on a local approach with Neighbourhood Managers. Each area has different needs, and it's good to feel like someone is listening. Working locally means that local groups have a say in what happens. So, to my fellow residents, my message is simple: get involved, help out, and together, we can make our community better."

If you'd like more information on setting up a resident group or to have of a say in how we do things, contact us at get.involved@peabody.org

Recipe corner *Banana loaf*



Got a recipe idea to *share*?

Send us your favourite recipes and we'll include a selection in our next magazine.
communications@peabody.org.uk

Didn't manage to eat those bananas before they went brown? Why not try using them to make a banana loaf – the riper the banana, the tastier your loaf!

Ingredients for a 2lb loaf tin (about 21cm by 11cm)

- 140g butter or margarine
- 140g caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 140g self-raising flour
- 1tsp baking powder
- 2 ripe bananas

Method

1. Heat the oven to 180c.
2. Grease your tin and line with the base with baking paper.
3. Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
4. Add the eggs and beat.
5. Add the flour, baking powder and mashed bananas and beat some more.
6. Bake for about 40 minutes. (To check it's cooked, insert a skewer – a piece of dry spaghetti will do – and it should come out clean.)
7. Leave to cool in the tin for about 10 minutes before removing.

Working hard to get it *right*



Have you been to The Garden?

The Garden is an online forum for residents to share thoughts and ideas and find solutions together. You can join in with online surveys, get involved in projects and help provide feedback on our services. You can find out more and register at thegarden.peabody.org.uk

Introducing our new Chair



Caroline Corby was named as our new Chair in January following the sad passing of Lord Bob Kerslake last year. Caroline will take up the role in April and is looking forward to supporting our local focus and commitment to improving our services.

She said: "I can't wait to get started and plan to visit estates and local teams and meet as many residents and colleagues as I can over the next few months."

A group of five residents helped support Caroline's recruitment by questioning her and feeding back to the recruiter and Governance Team to help them decide who was best for the job.

Our nine-strong resident-led strategic panel is now up and running and ready to give residents more of a say in how we improve our services.

As part of their induction, they'll meet with our Executive Team to discuss their priorities and aims. After that, they'll work together with our Resident Engagement Team to help improve services and performance. This could be anything from helping to make strategic policy decisions and exploring potential improvements to services, to what goes on in local neighbourhoods.

The resident-led panel is part of our wider plan to deliver what residents really want. But it isn't the only way residents have been getting more involved with Peabody. Over the past few months, we've consulted with residents on a wide range of issues, including the effectiveness of our contact centre, the safety of high-rise buildings and the process of reporting complaints.

For the outcome of all these group discussions, keep an eye on our website, our resident engagement platform, The Garden, and future editions of this magazine.

My Peabody Service made *simple*

My Peabody is your easy way to access our services and information about your home online when it's convenient for you.

You can:

- Manage your home
- Raise and track repairs
- Access essential information and services
- Pay your rent
- Update your personal details

It's part of our ongoing commitment to getting the basics right.

peabody.org.uk/my-peabody

