

# wandle News



## Welcome

I've now been at Wandle for over six months, and wanted to share some of my thoughts and reflections on how we're doing, and what I've heard from you.

Many of you have shared frustrations that Wandle aren't visible when you want us to be, and that you spend too much time following up on requests and asking for updates. I understand how frustrating it can be to feel forgotten, or to have to repeat your problem more than once to different members of staff.

I have heard you, and we are focussed on improving this – my teams are working hard to deliver on the commitments within our Customer Strategy and we've started to see that you are happier in our regular surveys – but we know we have a way to go.

I also know how important it is to feel safe in your home, so our first in-depth article looking at these surveys focusses on this question – what you think, what it means, and how we're improving on page 4.

You can read a bit more about how we did last year, and our future plans in our annual report (page 6). "We've got some more information about what happens if you report damp and mould problems to us on page 7, following the advice booklet we shared in the last issue."

Winter can be a tough time, with shorter days and budgets stretched. We've shared some information about support available, and ways to stick to a budget in the winter on page 10.

**Anne Waterhouse,**  
Chief Executive



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## What's new

# Greenfingers winners 2023!

**Congratulations to the winners and runners-up of our annual gardening competition. The theme this year was sustainable and wildlife friendly gardens.**

We received some fantastic entries, and our Customer Empowerment team along with Wandle employees chose this year's winners. Suzanne Horsley, Executive Director – Customer and Operational Services at Wandle, visited our winners and runners-up, and was impressed by the hard work and creativity on display.

**“It was so lovely to visit gardens and chat with residents about how and why they created these fantastic spaces and what they mean to them. All the entries should be so proud of themselves, it has made me think about how I could bring some of the ideas to life in my own garden!”**

### First place

- Community garden – **Soul Food Garden**
- Outdoor garden – **Fiona Allen**

### Runners up

- Community garden – **Queen Elizabeth House**
- Outdoor garden – **Michelle Roche**
- Outdoor garden – **Glen Bottomley & Christina Marquez**

Thank you to everyone who entered this year. We were impressed by your colourful and imaginative entries, which is a testament to the joy of being outdoors and connecting with nature.

**Fiona Allen**



**Soul Food Garden**





# Meet the team

**We take anti-social behaviour (ASB) seriously and have a committed community safety team to support you.**

They will help you manage any anti-social behaviour you are experiencing, as well as signpost additional support with the aim to prevent crime and poor behaviour.

The team of three consist of our community safety team leader Frank Smith, and community safety officers Claudette Stewart and Lee Dennehy.

Wandle is committed to preventing and resolving all forms of ASB by working in partnership with other agencies. We recognise if ASB is not properly addressed, it can significantly affect your quality of life.

If you are suffering with anti-social behaviour, please contact our community safety team by reporting it on MyWandle, or calling our customer service team on **0300 2000 120**.

**Lee Dennehy**



**Frank Smith**



**Claudette Stewart**



**Glen Bottomley and Christina Marquez**



**Queen Elizabeth House**



**Michelle Roche**

# My home is safe

## Tenant satisfaction measures – what are they?

All social housing providers are regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing. They have set 22 measures that all providers must measure and publish annually. These are called Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

Some of these are data that we provide (10 landlord management information measures), and others are captured by surveying residents (12 tenant perception measures).

These measures help us to get feedback from you, and prioritise areas to improve, as well as letting us know where we've met your expectations. These measures are reported to the regulator as well as shared with you.

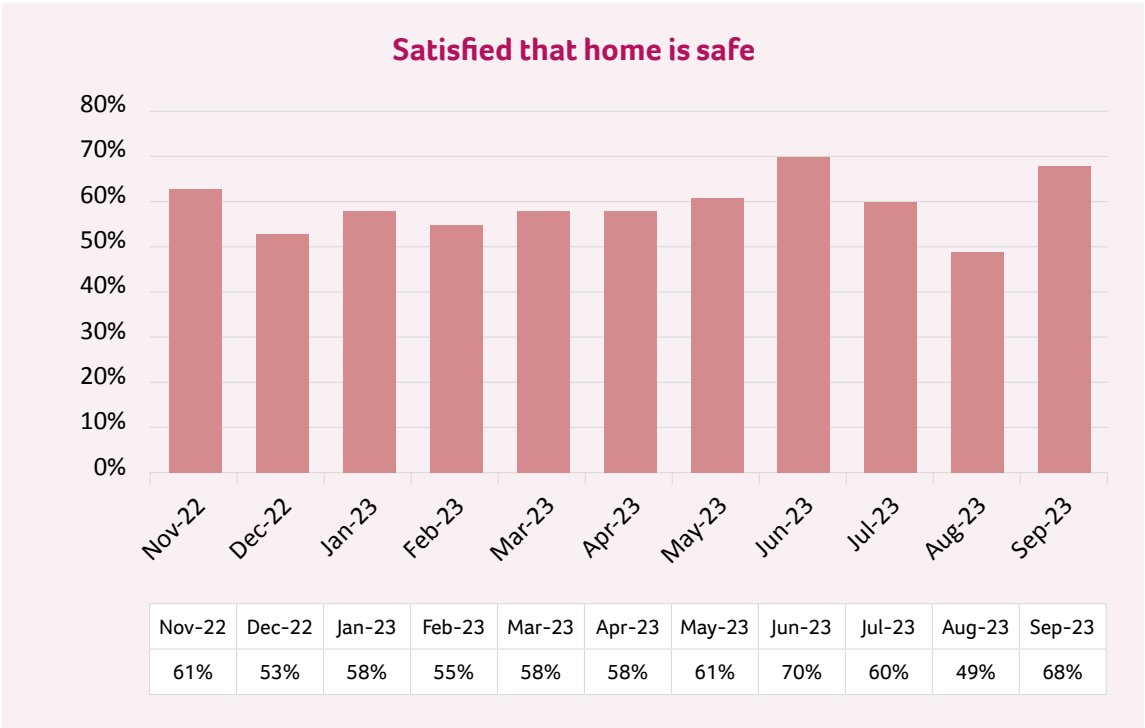
We attempt to survey you once a year, by calling you to ask you the set of questions defined by the regulator. If we call you, please do take a few moments to answer – it helps us to track your satisfaction with us and your home, and also it gives you a separate chance to flag anything you want us to follow up.

There are 12 questions to the survey, and in this issue of Wandle News we're doing a deep dive on question 5.



“Thinking about the condition of the property or building you live in, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Wandle provides a home that is safe?”

This chart shows your feedback month by month since we introduced the question in November last year.



Our average for this year (since April) so far is: 60% and our target for this year is 65%.



## What does it mean?

The survey question is about you feeling safe in your home. We know that means different things to each of us. Here, we are providing some information about physical building safety which includes things like fire doors are checked and working properly, that the wiring in your home is safe, and that you've had a gas safety check in the last twelve months (if you have a gas supply to your home).

Anti-social behaviour, and its impact on you, and satisfaction with repairs are separate questions.

## What does Wandle do to keep my home safe?



We have a building safety team, and a building equipment safety team – called our mechanical and electrical team – who manage a rolling programme of all the safety checks and works in all our buildings. Things they oversee include:

- Making sure that all homes with a gas supply have a yearly gas safety check.
- Regularly inspecting fire doors, and making sure that repairs are carried out when we spot something wrong, or you report that a fire door isn't working properly.
- If you live in a block with five or more floors, we also inspect flat front doors every year.
- We carry out checks on electrical wiring in our homes every 5 years.
- Making sure that all homes have smoke detectors, and all homes with gas boilers have a carbon monoxide alarm.
- We also inspect communal areas regularly to make sure that hallways, stairs and balconies are clear of fire hazards.
- We have a dedicated team to respond to damp and mould problems.

These safety checks and works apply to all tenants and communal areas in blocks, but homeowners have a responsibility for checks inside their homes (like making sure

you have working detectors and a carbon monoxide alarm) – you can check your lease for more information on your and our responsibilities.

You also have an important role to play in keeping your home safe. If you have any concerns about the safety of your home, please contact us on **0300 2000 120**, report on [www.wandle.com](http://www.wandle.com), or email [customerservices@wandle.com](mailto:customerservices@wandle.com).

You can read more about everything we do to keep homes safe at [wandle.com/safe-homes/](http://wandle.com/safe-homes/).

## Things we're improving, and what we've learned from complaints.

We're always looking at what we do, and working out how we can make things better, or more cost-effective, and learning from when things haven't gone well.

Over the last year we have:

- Re-trained any staff that handle complaints to make sure that we're handling your feedback quickly and taking immediate and longer term action to put things right
- Introduced a new damp and mould process, to make sure that we are responding quickly and effectively to reports, put things right and keep you safe
- Amended our mutual exchange procedure, to explicitly include fire safety checks
- Improved our system, to make it easier for staff to identify if you have an additional support need (that you've told us about), so we can consider it when providing services to you.

We also constantly review advice on the best way to keep you safe at home – adopting improved methods whenever they are advised.

## Do you have some feedback we should consider? Let us know.



We are constantly looking for feedback, and would love to hear your ideas. You can let us know through our usual channels – emailing [customerservices@wandle.com](mailto:customerservices@wandle.com), or on **0300 2000 120**.

You can also get involved to influence our policies and procedures – email [customerempowerment@wandle.com](mailto:customerempowerment@wandle.com) for more information, or visit: [wandle.com/performance-feedback/working-together/](http://wandle.com/performance-feedback/working-together/).

## What's new

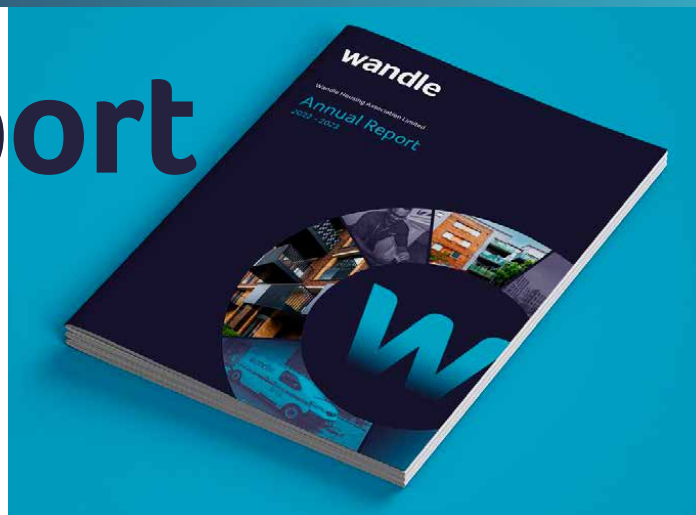
# Annual Report

Our residents annual report for April 2022 – March 2023 is published online at:

[wandle.com/annual-report-2022-23/](https://wandle.com/annual-report-2022-23/)



This year, the annual report is a video and accompanying document. The report gives an overview and insight into what we have been doing over the last twelve months.



Throughout the year we have focussed on our customers feeling safe in their homes, including our understanding of damp and mould in our homes.

There is still a lot of work to be done, but we are committed to driving continuous improvement, and deliver against our vision 'homes to be proud of and services you can trust.'

If you require a hard-copy version of the written report – please let us know by emailing [communications@wandle.com](mailto:communications@wandle.com), or phone us on **0300 2000 120**.

## Environmental strategy consultation

**We are currently working on our sustainability strategy, and we need your input. Our strategy will impact our residents, so this is your opportunity to have your say and share what matters to you most.**

### What might the strategy include?

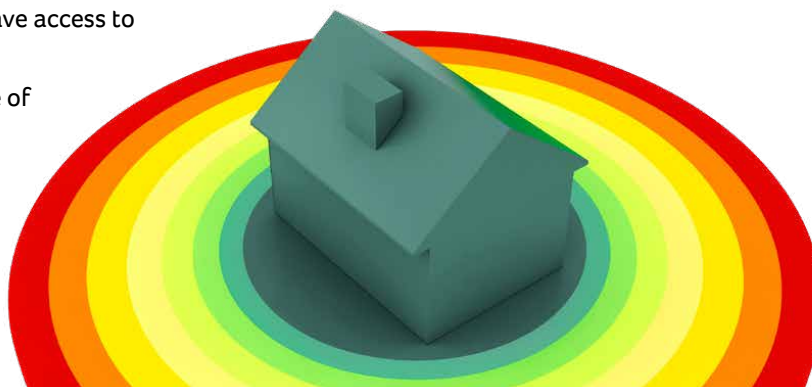
- Exploring how we can promote more sustainable neighbourhoods and the biodiversity in those spaces.
- Looking at opportunities to promote biodiversity and making use of any empty areas within our sites.
- Thinking about how we communicate with you about energy efficiency and sustainable living.
- Considering how we ensure you have access to recycling facilities.
- Promoting and supporting the use of sustainable forms of transport.
- Plans to ensure our properties achieve our energy efficiency target of EPC C by 2030 and net carbon zero by 2050.

- Ideas on how we can support the 'green economy' in areas that we operate in.
- Exploring how our repairs team can work more sustainably.

**As this strategy will affect you, we want you to have your say. Let us know:**

- What else could we include?
- How can we help you live more sustainably?
- What could we do to make your area more sustainable?

Please get into contact by emailing us at [goinggreen@wandle.com](mailto:goinggreen@wandle.com). If you have any questions, please let us know.





# Damp and mould

**In our last issue, we included a damp and mould advice leaflet, explaining some things to watch out for, and how to report it to us.**

This information is also available at [www.wandle.com/safe-homes/damp-and-mould/](http://www.wandle.com/safe-homes/damp-and-mould/), or you can ask us to send you another copy by getting in touch in the usual ways.

If you report something to us, we follow a process to make sure we're getting any building defects or repairs sorted quickly for you. Here's what to expect if you report a damp and mould issue to us:

When you first report a problem, we might ask you to try something at home yourself. We'll be clear about what that is, and how long to try it for before letting us know how it went.

## START

You can raise a damp and/or mould issue via our contact centre, MyWandle or your housing officer.

A case will be raised and a Repairs Operative will visit your home to assess, carry out a mould wash, check for leaks and check the ventilation of the affected area.

When the works have been completed, a Repairs Supervisor will visit your home to check the damp and mould issue has been resolved. If the issue has not been resolved a Repairs Supervisor will book a further repair appointment or if they feel more complex works are required, they'll arrange for a Maintenance Surveyor to inspect your home who will assess and arrange necessary actions.

When the works have been completed, the Maintenance Surveyor will visit your home to check the damp and mould issue has been resolved.

Throughout this process, our Damp and Mould Coordinator will call you at set intervals or after each stage to check that the damp and mould has not returned. If the issue persists, it will be readdressed by either the Repairs Supervisor or Maintenance Surveyor. If the damp and mould has not returned, your case will be closed.

**wandle**

Working together to  
beat damp and mould



If you have an issue with damp and mould in your home, report it on MyWandle, call us on **0300 2000 120** or email [customerservices@wandle.com](mailto:customerservices@wandle.com). You can also find out more information at [www.wandle.com](http://www.wandle.com).

# Staying safe online



Over the past year, cyber-attacks have been on the rise, and we want to make sure our residents know how to spot a scam.

## So, what is a cyber-attack?

A cyber-attack is a deliberate attempt by an individual or an organisation to steal or delete information from devices such as computers, smartphones, and tablets.

The attacker will use tactics to trick a person into telling them their passwords, credit/debit card details and personal information. In some cases, the attacker will persuade a victim to pay them money directly online or over the phone.

## Who do they target?

Anyone can be a victim of a cyber-attack. There has recently been a rise in attacks targeting vulnerable and elderly people, so we encourage our residents to look out for anyone who may need some extra help when recognising a scam.

## How to spot a cyber-attack

There are several ways an attacker can try and access your information. These are the most common methods:

Your account or email has been locked or the passwords have been changed without your knowledge.

You have received an email asking for sensitive information, such as bank details, or it asks you to visit a fake website. This is called a **phishing email**.

You accidentally visit a fake website which could infect your device with a computer virus. This is called **water holing**.

## How to avoid a cyber-attack – Here are three examples of traps not to fall into:



**Scenario 1:** A vulnerable individual receives a call from someone pretending to be from the HRMC and advises them they have a warrant for their arrest. The fraudster informs the individual they must pay a sum of money over the phone to resolve the issue.



**Scenario 2:** An individual is browsing the internet and clicks on a link to play a video. This causes a message to pop up on their screen, advising a virus is now on the device and to call the telephone number provided to fix the problem.



**Scenario 3:** A vulnerable person receives a phishing email from someone pretending to be a family member who needs money. The email looks like it is from a family member, but the email address is fake.

In all the scenarios above, you should never interact with the email or phone call.



If you think you have been targeted by a scam, please call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or visit [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).

If you want further information on cybercrime or want to test your knowledge, please visit: [www.virginmedia.com/blog/online-safety/cyber-security-quiz/](http://www.virginmedia.com/blog/online-safety/cyber-security-quiz/)



# Disrepair: Putting things right, without the courts



We are committed to making sure that your home is decent and safe. We know that sometimes things go wrong, and we have to put them right. It may be tempting to sign a contract with a “no win, no fee” firm and start a court case, but things aren’t always what they seem.

## How to tell us something has gone wrong

If you’re not happy with outstanding repairs in your home, it’s really important that you raise a complaint with us. You can do this easily on [MyWandle.com](https://www.wandle.com), or by phoning or emailing.

We have a robust complaints process, and you will receive a response, with a plan to put things right, within ten days of your initial complaint. After this, if you are still not happy, you can progress the complaint to stage two, and then, you can escalate your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman, who will investigate, make findings and orders, and award compensation if it is owed.

This process is completely free, and any compensation offered at each stage will be entirely yours.

You can find out more about our complaints process at [wandle.com/i-am-a-tenant/your-tenancy/complaints-and-compliments/](https://www.wandle.com/i-am-a-tenant/your-tenancy/complaints-and-compliments/)

## But a claims management firm tells me I should go through them

“No win, no fee” firms, will take a chunk of any compensation awarded towards their costs, and that’s if the court process awards any.

More and more cases are being suspended by court as tenants haven’t followed the landlord’s complaint process first. We’ve also spoken with tenants who want to drop the case after they signed a contract, but can’t as there are significant financial penalties owed to the firm if you want to do this.

If a case fails it could result in a large bill to you. In one case this summer, we were awarded nearly £10,000 in costs for a failed prosecution.



*“Providing homes we would be happy to live in is a fundamental priority for everyone at Wandle. We are committed to supporting residents and completing all repairs we are responsible for.”*

*“The rising number of claims through claims farmers means everyone loses out – except for them. It can leave tenants responsible for costs, and means that time and money that could be spent investing in homes is wasted on defending court cases.”*

*“I urge you to contact us and use our complaints process to get things put right if you need to – it is a totally free service, which can be escalated to the ombudsman if it needs to be, without the risk and burden of pursuing a court case.”*

Matthew Spittles,  
Director of Maintenance

## Money matters

# Cost of living tips for this winter

The UK is facing a difficult time and many of us are worried about the cost-of-living situation this winter with the rise in energy bills, food, and other essentials.



## Help with household bills

- Make sure you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to. This also includes extra government support such as the Winter Fuel Payment and the Warm Home Discount Scheme. If you would like to find out more, you can visit the benefit website at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). Or, you can call Citizens Advice on **0800 144 8848** or visit their website [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk).
- If you are on benefits, you may be entitled to a range of extra support including free dental treatment, free prescriptions, reduced train and bus fares, discounted gym memberships and cheaper broadband or phone services.
- You or someone in your home may be eligible for Pension Credit if you're over the State Pension age and on a low income. It can help with housing costs, council tax, heating bills and you could receive a free TV license. Visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) for more information.
- Your energy supplier may offer grants if you are falling into debt with them. You may be eligible to join your suppliers Priority Services Register, which is a free support service that ensures extra help is available for people in vulnerable situations. Contact your energy supplier to find out more.
- Thames Water offer financial and debt support schemes to help pay your bill. Their schemes include WaterHelp, WaterSure and Water Direct. You may be eligible for a discount, a cap on your bills or a payment plan. To find out more, visit [www.thameswater.co.uk](http://www.thameswater.co.uk) or call **0800 316 9800**.

## How to stay warm this winter



- With energy prices increasing, it's important the energy is used efficiently to heat up your home.
- When it gets dark, close your curtains to keep your room warm.
- In rooms you are not using, turn down the radiator and close the doors.
- Make sure your radiators are not blocked by furniture or curtains, as there needs to be space around them to heat your rooms fully.
- Turning the thermostat down can reduce your energy bills. If you're vulnerable, elderly or have small children, be sure to set it to a minimum of 18C.

For more useful tips, visit **gov.uk** – Keeping warm and well: Staying safe in cold weather.

## The Helping Hand Fund

The Helping Hand Fund supports our residents who are struggling financially by providing vouchers for food, toiletries, furniture, carpets, washing machines, white goods, and other essential items.

The fund is available to residents who are on very low incomes or are experiencing financial hardship. Find out more and apply: [wandle.com/support-well-being/helping-hand-fund/](http://wandle.com/support-well-being/helping-hand-fund/)







# Affordable Christmas

**It's hard to believe that Christmas is around the corner yet again, and whilst it is a fun time of year, it can be the cause of unnecessary stress for many of us.**

It's easy to feel the pressure to spend, spend, spend, but you really don't need to get in the red to have an enjoyable day. Below are some tips to have a more affordable day:

## Plan ahead before you hit the shops

Know what you can afford to spend overall, and plan out how much of this will go towards food, gifts, drink, decorations, and other. You can now look for the best deals in each category within your budget.



## Agree on a price limit

This is one of the most popular and effective money-saving hacks out there. Agreeing limits with family and friends means that you eliminate the fear that someone has bought you something much more expensive and allows everyone to stay in control of their budget.

## Be honest

If you can't afford a lavish Christmas, be honest with those around you about scaling back. Opening up means that you'll feel less pressure to buy lavish gifts and, if you are hosting, others might suggest bringing food or alcohol with them to share the cost.

## Ask for advice

If you are struggling financially, please do get in touch with us. We cannot offer financial advice but are here to help if you are concerned about rent payments and can signpost you towards support agencies to stop you getting into debt.

## Resident engagement

# Top tips – heating your home

### Check your thermostat

If your thermostat is faulty, it can cause your home to be too cold or too hot. If a thermostat cannot read the room temperature, it could make your home get hotter and hotter. Having a faulty thermostat can be very frustrating, as your home may get extremely warm or very cold. If your thermostat has a digital screen with no display, please check the batteries.

### Gas and electric meter credit

If you have a prepayment meter for gas or electric, it is important to keep it topped up for your heating system to work. Please make sure it reads 'ON'.

Please note that electricity is required for your heating system to work, whether it is electrically heated or via a gas boiler. If you have a gas boiler, credit is required on both gas and electric prepayment meters for your boiler to work.



**If you need to contact us regarding your boiler, please call us on 0300 2000 120 and choose option 2.**

If you haven't turned your heating on yet this year, please consider turning it on to check that it works – just until your radiators get warm. That way, if there's a problem, you can report it early!

## Christmas opening hours

We are open as usual over the December holidays, with our phone lines open 8am – 6pm, and our office open for visitors 9am – 5pm.

**We are closed on bank holidays – Monday 25 December, Tuesday 26 December and Monday 1 January.**

During these times, our usual out of hours service is available on our usual contact number.



## Contact us

You can access almost all of our services through:  
**www.mywandle.com** – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you would prefer to call we have a single telephone number: **0300 2000 120**  
(charged at a local rate from landlines and mobiles).

Alternatively, you can email us at **customerservices@wandle.com** if you have a general enquiry.



@WandleHA



Wandle



@wandlehousingassociation

**For more information, please visit  [www.wandle.com](http://www.wandle.com)**