WECH
Walterton and Elgin Community Homes

Newsletter
Summer 2025

A Sakura Celebration At WECH

WECH were honoured to be chosen by the Sakura Cherry Tree Project to receive a kind donation of six special cherry trees, known as 'Sakura' in Japan. The trees arrived in November and were initially planted by Bongo, WECH's Community Gardener, in readiness for the commemorative planting by the project's founder, Mr Sandy Sano, who visited with Minister Okazaki from the Japanese Embassy, the Right Worshipful Lord Mayor of Westminster City Council, Councillor Robert Rigby KSG and the Lord Mayoress, Emiko on 9th April. We were delighted to be honoured by their gifts and visit.

The project is UK-wide and almost 10,000 trees have been gifted since 2020. Each spring, the blossoms offer a striking symbol of renewal and connection, encouraging communities to engage with nature and this ancient Japanese tradition.

This month signalled the end of Councillor Rigby's year as Lord Mayor. We would like to thank him for his active support of WECH during his tenure and to welcome the newly appointed Lord Mayor, Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg, who has been supporting WECH from the very beginning.

From left to right: The Lord Mayoress of Westminster City Council, Suzanne Wolfe, WECH CEO, the Lord Mayor of Westminster City Council, Councillor Robert Rigby, Councillor Regan Hook and Gordon Quinlan, WECH Chairman.

From left to right: Founder of the Sakura Project, Mr Sandy Sano and the Lord Mayor of Westminster City Council, Councillor Robert Rigby

From left to right: Minister Okazaki, representing the Japanese Embassy, our Community Gardener, Bongo and the Lord Mayor of Westminster City Council, Councillor Robert Rigby

Also inside this newsletter:

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024/2025

New repairs & void and lettings policies

WECH in Bloom at Watson Gardens

A message from our Chair and CEO

Hello to all our residents, I hope this finds you in good spirits. In sharp contrast to last year, when we scarcely had a glimpse of the sun, the weather this spring has been fabulous. Let's see if this continues into the summer which, being London, is by no means certain!

The cost of living continues to increase, particularly food prices, and household finances continue to be stretched. Even sitting outside a café, enjoying a coffee, is a luxury some people cannot afford. The WECH household is no different to individual households and we have to be prudent as building materials cost far more than inflation figures suggest and we still have to pay back the loan taken out to finance the building of our new office, Community Centre and 43 new flats on the Elgin Estate.

That said the backlog of repairs dating back to lockdown has peaked and we have found a way to resume the cyclical works on the Walterton Estate after a 5 year hiatus.

This summer marks the 40th anniversary of the campaign by local residents to wrestle control from Westminster Council which ultimately led to the creation of WECH. For those that were there at the time it was a noble victory, a first victory nationally against the excesses of Thatcherism.

We will be marking this anniversary with a number of events in the summer and autumn, beginning with the Summer Festival on the 20th July. I hope to see many of you there.

Gordon Quinlan
Chair of the WECH Board

I hope you have been able to enjoy this year's Spring sunshine and are looking forward to Summer. It's been a busy year so far, with much to look forward to – and more for us to do in the months ahead.

Residents' Satisfaction Survey

Thank you to those residents who took time to complete the annual Resident Satisfaction Survey, the results of which can be found inside. These showed a significant improvement in satisfaction levels generally compared to the previous year, and highlighted areas for improvement. In common with many other Housing Associations, we conduct this survey annually, enabling us to compare the progress we make internally and against others' results.

Repairs and Maintenance Update

Getting our repairs service right is a top priority. Since last writing, we have pressed ahead with repairs to your homes, including essential electrical and fire safety checks and improvements, making sure all WECH homes meet current standards. We are continuing with the external decorations on the Walterton Estate and look forward to seeing more homes restored to their former glory, as well as completing installation of upgraded communal doors at Campaign, Victory and Rodborough Courts.

Keeping WECH Independent

These are tough times for almost everyone. The Cost-of-Living Crisis shows no sign of easing and is hitting our community hard.

Our Board is keeping rents low - and getting the best value from what's available. We've secured funding to keep valued WECH community services, including the weekly Food Bank, Brunch and Coral Williams' Wednesday Welfare Advice Surgery, free for everyone who needs them. Get in touch with the office or see our website for details of what is available. Repairs costs faced by all Housing Associations are currently high, but the work being done is essential. We have therefore reviewed what we spend carefully to balance our books and so safeguard WECH's ongoing independence. We've reduced the size of our team and set out clearly which repairs we can carry out, and which are discretionary (discretionary works will still be undertaken for residents who are vulnerable). More details about the Repairs Policy can be found inside.

WECH In Bloom & WECH Summer Festival

This year's 'WECH in Bloom' free planting event, supported by the Council's 'Greening Westminster' grant, takes place on Saturday 31 May 2025 from 12 noon to 3p.m. in Watson Gardens. Come along, choose and plant up a free window box or planter (we can help you get this home), get advice on what to grow from RHS qualified volunteers, find out about 'Nature-hood Watch' and enter this year's 'WECH in Bloom' contest. This year, prizes will be awarded at the WECH Summer Festival on Sunday 20 July from 1p.m. to 7p.m. in Tamplin Mews Gardens. We want this year's Festival to be the biggest and best ever, marking the 40th year since the start of the WECH campaign. Save the date!

Suzanne Wolfe
Chief Executive

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024/25

About the Survey

Between November 2024 and January 2025, many of you took part in an important survey. The survey was carried out by postal and online questionnaires. It focused on how happy you are with the way Walterton and Elgin Community Homes (WECH) maintains your homes and delivers key services. The survey was carried out by an independent market research company – Acuity Research and Practice.

The findings will provide a view of the main things that are affecting satisfaction levels and the issues residents are most concerned about, helping shape WECH's future plans.

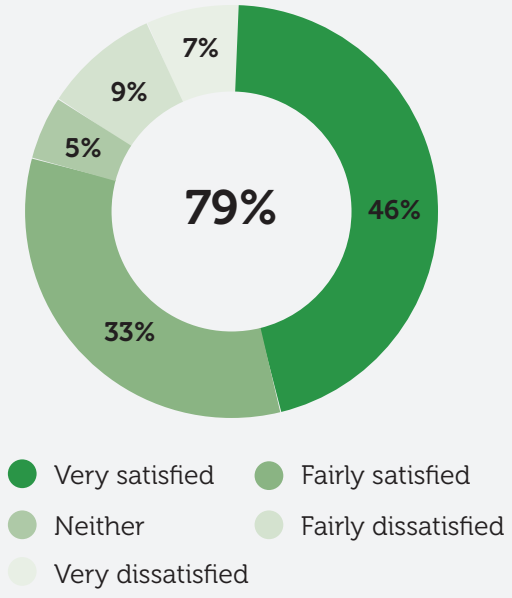
This report contains key survey results regarding residents' opinions about their homes and the services received. A big thank you to everyone who took part!

86 tenants took part out of a total of around 600

Overall Service

8 out of 10

tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by WECH **(79%)**

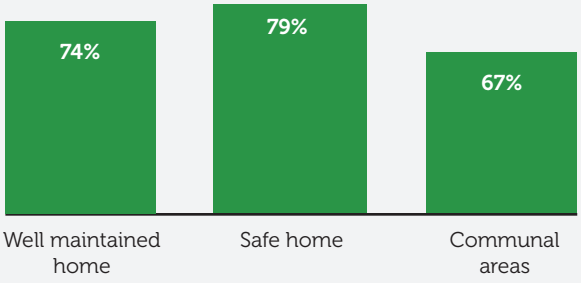


The Home and Communal Areas

Three-quarters of tenants are satisfied that they are provided with a home that is well maintained **(74%)**

Slightly more tenants are **satisfied** that WECH provides them with a home that is safe **(79%)**

Two out of three tenants with communal areas satisfied that these communal areas are kept clean and well maintained **(67%)**



Repairs and Maintenance

Seven out of ten tenants are satisfied with the way WECH deals with repairs and maintenance generally **(69%)**

More tenants **satisfied** with the overall repairs service over the last 12 months **(83%)**

Three-quarters of tenants are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair after they reported it **(75%)**

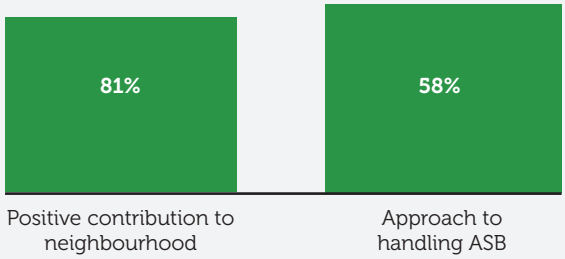
84% of tenants had a repair carried out in the last 12 months

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024/25

The Neighbourhood

Eight out of ten tenants are satisfied that WECH makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood **(81%)**

Fewer tenants are **satisfied** with WECH's approach to handling anti-social behaviour **(58%)**

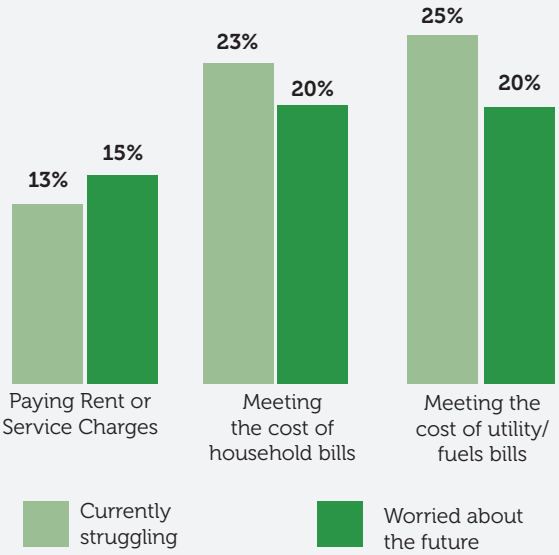


Wellbeing

Fewer tenants are currently struggling to pay their rent or service charges **(13%)**, than with meeting the costs of household bills **(23%)** or utility/fuel bills **(25%)**

While some other tenants are worried about making these different payments in the future **(between 15% and 20%)**

Around one out of three tenants currently have damp or mould issues in their home **(35%)**. Of these tenants, **88%** have reported the problem to WECH.



Communications and Tenant Engagement

Around **seven out of ten** tenants are satisfied that WECH listens to their views and acts upon them **(73%)**

Slightly more tenants are **satisfied** that they are kept informed about things that matter to them **(77%)**

Over **eight out of ten** tenants agree that WECH treats them fairly and with respect **(83%)**

Around **eight out of ten** tenants are also satisfied that WECH is easy to deal with **(78%)**

Around **four out of ten** tenants who made a complaint in the last 12 months are satisfied with complaints handling **(43%)**

Tenants' Comments

Tenants were asked what one thing WECH could do to improve its services, and **56 tenants** gave comments.

Tenants also mentioned they would like improvements to the communal areas, customer service and communications.

Tenants commented on the repairs service, including outstanding repairs that have not been dealt with, the quality of work and the time taken to complete repairs.

While other tenants gave positive comments, being happy with the current services provided and offering no improvement suggestions.

Top Comments

4 Day-to-day repairs - Outstanding/ forgotten repairs	**3** Communal areas - Quality of cleaning service	**3** Customer services & contact - Multiple contact methods	**3** Customer services & contact - Time taken to resolve enquiry
3 Day-to-day repairs - Quality of work	**3** Day-to-day repairs - Timescales to complete repairs	**3** Positive comments - Generally happy, no problems	**3** Positive comments - Good overall service
2 Communications & information - Consult or inform before acting	**2** Customer services & contact - Care, empathy, support, etc.	**2** Customer services & contact - Contact information	**2** Customer services & contact - Return call/ email

Your Views

WECH appreciates the time everyone took to complete the survey for us. It is important that through your feedback, we understand the services that work well and those we know can and should be, improved. Where you have said that you are happy for us to, we might contact you to discuss your survey responses, invite you to participate in other feedback events or ask for more information.

Carrying out this survey is just part of the work WECH does to involve you in developing services. As well as publishing the results of the survey, WECH plans to put the findings to good use by working with tenants to further improve the services provided.

Publish findings to tenants

Use findings to plan and improve services, e.g., repairs, customer service and communications

Involve tenants in shaping service improvements

Thank you once again to everyone who took part.

Repairs policy

We have updated our Repairs Policy to ensure a high-quality, responsive, and resident-focused service. The revised policy outlines clear responsibilities for residents and WECH, sets repair categories with defined response times—from emergency (24 hours) to planned maintenance (90 days)—and reinforces WECH's commitment to safety, value for money, and legal compliance. New measures include enhanced standards for vulnerable tenants, a 'right first time' repairs approach, and improved communication on repair progress.

A copy of this policy is available from the WECH office and the website:
wech.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Repairs-Policy-2025.pdf

Void & lettings policy

WECH has revised its Voids and Lettable Standard Policy to ensure that every property is safe, clean, and ready to move into. The policy sets out clear minimum standards for re-letting homes, covering everything from gas and electrical safety to energy efficiency, pest control, and decorative condition.

It also outlines responsibilities for both WECH and incoming residents and offers guidance on "gifting" certain items like appliances and sheds.

A copy of this policy is available from the WECH office and the website:
wech.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/voids-and-lettings-policy-2025.pdf

The WECH Summer Festival

Sunday 20 July 2025, 1 – 7pm at Tamplin Mews Gardens

Come and join your neighbours for a day of fun including:

- Local DJs
- Face painting, t-shirt art, children's arts and crafts and henna tattoos
- Food and refreshments
- A Magician and other entertainment
- Window box competition, WECH In Bloom prizegiving, bug hotels and gardening advice
- Raffle with lots of great prizes to win

Summer Festival Volunteers

Please get in touch if you would like to be involved in this year's festival. We welcome your help with planning and on the day.

Donations for the raffle stall

We would also appreciate any unwanted items for our raffle stall. If you have anything to contribute, please drop it off at the WECH reception.

CLIMATE Champions

WECH IN BLOOM

SATURDAY 31st MAY 2025

12 - 3pm

Watson Gardens

Free plants, windowsill planters, lessons on what to garden, and seed bomb making

All welcome, not just WECH residents

NATURE-HOOD WATCH

How to contact WECH

WECH
Walterton and Elgin Community Homes

Opening Hours
Monday to Friday
9:30am – 5:30pm

Address
Selbourne House,
36A Elgin Avenue, London, W9 3AZ

Telephone
020 7266 3347

Out of Hours Emergencies
0208 979 2220 (Just 24/7 Ltd)

Useful numbers

Emergency Gas Leaks Cadent
0800 111 999

National Grid Electricity
0800 3163 105

Thames Water
(no water or low pressure)
0800 3169 800

Disposal of large items
020 7641 2000

Crimestoppers
0800 555 111

Police Non Urgent Crime & ASB
0300 123 1212

Police Emergency
999