



Barnet

Census and survey results

See inside

Contents

Leader's column	2
News in brief	3
Civic Awards Ceremony 2013	4
Public Health	5
Waste and recycling changes	6
My Barnet	8
Parenting support	10
Council tax freeze	12
A changing council	12
Right to Control	13
New library hours	13
Contact your councillors	14
What's on	15
Working hours	16

Contacting your council

Corporate Customer Services

tel: 020 8359 2000

email: first.contact@barnet.gov.uk

Contact us and we will identify the correct service or person you are looking for

Street-based services

tel: 020 8359 4600

Covering refuse collection, holes in the road, abandoned vehicles and graffiti

Parking enquiries

tel: 020 8359 7446

www.barnet.gov.uk/parking

Planning and licensing advice

tel: 020 8359 3000

Social Care Direct

tel: 020 8359 5000

Out of hours emergencies

tel: 020 8359 2000

Barnet First is published by Barnet Council's Communications Team.

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Leader's column



This latest edition of Barnet First follows the publication of the 2011 Census. We have included some of the figures here.

More residents as a percentage completed the form than ever before. I want to say thank you. It is important to get these figures right as they are used to plan health and school provision for Barnet. The government also allocates the money that we receive for these important services based on the Census.

There are also figures that show Barnet is rated highly as a place to live. We want to keep it that way. Our goal is to improve what is already good and make what is not so good, better.

Because of EU regulations we have to increase the amount of waste that we recycle. It is also the right thing to do. We will be making changes to the recycling boxes and bins in October (see page 6).

Our schools are amongst the best in the country but we need to expand them, invest in them and keep the standard up, as Barnet expects. We have set aside a big chunk of capital for just that.

The council has done this while making a commitment to freezing council tax (see page 12) for the next two years. We have been able to do this because of the savings generated by the council's change programme. (The second year of this commitment is dependent on our winning a court case brought by opponents of the proposal.)

Of course council tax in Barnet would be much lower if the council received the same level of central government support as inner London boroughs – £642 (excluding the GLA) if we received the same level of support as Wandsworth for instance. I will continue to make the case for fairer treatment of the outer London boroughs over the next year.

Yours

Richard Cornelius

News in brief



Helping hand towards employment

A new drop-in clinic has been launched for anyone needing practical advice and support in finding a job.

The Transition Project is run by St Barnabas Church, Woodside Park and is staffed by volunteers with experience in business as well as recruitment. It is completely free of charge and open to anyone facing redundancy or currently unemployed. It will open its doors every Monday morning from 10.30am to 12.30pm at St Barnabas Church, Holden Road, Woodside Park, from 30 April. No appointments necessary.

Advice includes:

- helping identify your transferable skills
- how to prepare an effective CV
- using internet resources for job searching
- interview skills and techniques.

For more information, visit:

www.stbarnabas.co.uk/transition

or email: transition@stbarnabas.co.uk



Council Tax Benefit changes in Barnet

On 1 April, the Government abolished the Council Tax Benefit scheme. The scheme has been replaced by a local Council Tax Support scheme which means that each council in England and Wales will run its own system to meet local needs. Councils have also seen a 10 per cent reduction in government funding compared with the current level of Council Tax Benefit subsidy. After consulting with residents last year, a new local scheme has been introduced in the borough.

The Government is also making major changes to the welfare benefits system. Other changes may affect claimants who have a spare bedroom (under-occupancy) and those who receive benefits of more than £500 per week (benefit cap). This means that you may receive less money than you had before.

The council is working with its partners to help those affected stay informed about the changes and to make sure they can cover their rent and council tax.

For more information on the new replacement Council Tax Support scheme and other benefit changes, visit: www.barnet.gov.uk/welfarereform or call: 020 8359 2111.

Special ceremony honours Barnet's civic award winners

Six nominees, including one community centre, considered to have made a significant contribution to borough life have been honoured at the council's annual Civic Awards Ceremony.

There were 24 nominees for the awards, recognised at a special ceremony at Hendon Town Hall, on 21 March.

All of those nominated were presented with certificates by the Worshipful the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Brian Schama. The six nominees judged to have made an outstanding contribution were presented with a framed vellum in recognition of their achievements.



The six vellum winners are:

- **Mr Adam Bass** – Spearheaded a campaign to renovate his dilapidated local playground. Mr Bass has successfully fundraised £150,000 and brought together his local community.
- **Mr Prem Modgil** – An active member of numerous societies including founding president of the Lions Club, Chipping Barnet, Mr Modgil is also an active fundraiser and has raised more than £500,000 for the Hindu Cultural Society.
- **Dr Lalit Nirmal** – Instrumental in setting up and developing a cardiovascular screening programme for many of Barnet's members of the South Asian community, Dr Nirmal has been integral in improving many residents' quality of life.
- **Mrs Jane Porter** – A dedicated charity worker who has raised money for Help for Heroes, Royal National Lifeboat Institution and The Royal British Legion, Mrs Porter is also an active member of the organising committee for Barnet's Diamond Jubilee Commemoration Appeal.
- **Ms Rachely Plancey** – Founder of Camp Simcha, a charity supporting families with children suffering from cancer and life-threatening illnesses, Ms Plancey works tirelessly to support every family member that her charity sees.
- **Barnet Multi-Cultural Groups:** Barnet African Caribbean Association (BACA), Barnet Asian Older Peoples' Association (BAOPA) and Barnet Somali Community Group (BSCG) – For their years of work supporting the elderly in their communities, for strengthening community cohesion through championing and celebrating cultural diversity, and for setting up the Multi-Cultural Centre to provide services to the wider community.

For more information about what each of the winners have done for their community, visit: www.barnet.gov.uk/civic-awards





Public Health joins the council

This month sees the beginning of Public Health becoming part of the council for the first time.

After a successful move to a shared legal service between Barnet and Harrow last year, the two councils will be working closely together to create a joint public health service which will help residents of both boroughs.

Councillor Helena Hart, Cabinet Member for Public Health, said: "This move gives us a chance to properly integrate public health functions with the rest of the council to improve health and wellbeing. Although we will be jointly running a Public Health department with Harrow, with a single director, we will very much have our own strategy for Barnet.

"This move lets us keep our back office costs down so we can concentrate the maximum possible resource into the service.

"Moving Public Health into the council means that the local service will be under democratic control and that priorities will be developed locally after consultation with key groups. It will allow us to target Barnet spending to Barnet priorities."

The new approach will focus on some vital local health issues, including adult and child obesity and stopping smoking.

One of the key issues for public health in the borough will be to tackle childhood obesity.

Around 10 per cent of children entering reception classes in Barnet primary schools are, by the health definition, obese, with 25,000 adults in the borough registered by their GP as overweight. Being overweight can lead to diabetes, heart disease, and a shorter life expectancy among other health problems.

Public Health will be working over the coming months to create new healthy habits in childhood, such as eating healthily and exercising regularly which should hopefully lead to healthy adults. Investments are also being made to support our schools to promote healthy lifestyles. The new Orion Primary School being built for 2014 will have community sports facilities.

Smoking also remains an issue for young people, with smoking amongst teenage girls a recognised problem.

Although Barnet residents are doing well at stubbing out for good, smoking still accounts for 440 smoking-related deaths in Barnet per year. As well as leading to heart attacks, smoking is linked to strokes and different types of cancer. The Public Health team will be working hard to make sure they continue to drive down those figures even further.



Your waste and recycling service is changing

From 14 October, Barnet Council will be making changes to the way your waste and recycling is collected, making it easier to recycle more.

The changes will mean recyclables – including paper, cardboard, cartons, food tins and drink cans, plastic bottles, glass bottles and jars – can be mixed together and be placed in a new bin.

Currently food waste makes up one third of the average refuse bin. By collecting food waste separately from your household rubbish, we will considerably reduce the amount of waste sent for disposal. This will significantly reduce our carbon emissions.

Sending rubbish for disposal already costs more than twice as much as recycling. With waste disposal taxes set to rise it's more important than ever that the borough increases its rate of recycling.

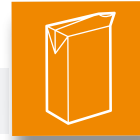
Projections show the new service can achieve a 43 per cent recycling rate in 2016/17, compared to a 31 per cent rate if we were to continue as we are.

We will be sending you more details of the new service in the months to come.

You do not need to do anything now.

For more information about the new service, visit: www.barnet.gov.uk/14-october or call: 020 8359 2000





From 14 October, we are making it easier to recycle more

14 October



 **recycle for Barnet**

My Barnet



Travelling thousands of miles from South Africa to the UK and starting a small business in a new country might sound daunting to most of us – but it's all in a day's work for Barnet resident Dr Jonathan Collie.

Jonathan moved from Cape Town to the borough in 2002, where after first living in East Finchley, he moved to Whetstone, near Friary Park. He found the borough a great place to start his new social enterprise, Trading Times.

"I was born in London, so the UK was the obvious place to go," he says. "I've worked in medical roles in Yorkshire, Scotland, Birmingham, and Portsmouth but north London is a place in which we enjoy living more each year. It is a very neighbourly area and that really makes a difference. My wife and I are Jewish, so we naturally gravitated towards the north London Jewish community."

Since moving into the borough Jonathan admits to putting down his roots. "Barnet has a good feel to it – a good sense of community. We've made some really good friends in the area, especially parents of our kids' friends.

"I love having the tranquillity of the suburbs while being able to get to central London in no time. You have all the advantages of staying local and having parks, cinemas, places to go rollerskating... and at the same time it is nice to be able to get easily to the centre of town."

At the weekends, Jonathan can be found cycling, rollerskating or kite flying in Friary Park with his two children Ruby, 10, and Tyler, six. He's also a frequent visitor to Finchley Lido and plays at North Middlesex golf course.

Barnet is also home to Jonathan's brainchild, Trading Times, a new online service that matches the work

skills and availability of people who are 50 and over, family carers, and lone parents, with the needs of local businesses.

Jonathan explains that Trading Times is a "free match-making job service for those who have much-needed skills, flexibility and time." It is aimed at those who may be excluded from the nine-to-five full-time workplace, but who still provide businesses with experienced and skilled local workers.

He explains: "We aim to find work within a few miles radius of someone's house, and it is popular with people who want to work from home. Requests include sales, customer service, finance, media, design, and IT work. The work can be as varied as monthly book-keeping, weekly HR support, or one-off house-sitting assignments."

Jonathan entered Trading Times into the 'Living well with dementia' Design Challenge last year, run by the Design Council and funded by the Department of Health. Trading Times won the £60,000 in grant funding, to co-develop it with carers.

Trading Times has also recently been awarded £24,500 from Barnet Council's Big Society Innovation Bank, an initiative aimed at helping schemes get off the ground which come up with innovative new ways of addressing local issues. This funding helped his project to be piloted in the borough.

Jonathan adds: "Developing Trading Times has been made a lot easier with the involvement and support of local groups, particularly Barnet Council's Adult Social Care and Health Directorate. Last month we launched the website and 10 years from now I hope it will be a national brand.

"I believe everyone has a useful skill and I really want to help make sure these skills are used to their fullest in Barnet."

For more information on Trading Times, visit: www.tradingtimes.org.uk





Jonathan with Ruby and Tyler in Friary Park



North Finchley High Road



Barnet's high street amenities



Good transport links



Jonathan frequently visits Finchley Lido



Enjoying a game of football at Friary Park

Parenting support

“I wanted to help my family but didn’t know how”

Watching Sian’s* children Ella, two, and Ben, three, playing happily at her feet it is hard to tell what tough times her family has been through.

Before each child was born they were placed on a child protection plan and Sian spent her days worrying they would be taken into care.

“I was petrified I would lose my kids,” she recalls. “I was paranoid and wasn’t coping very well.”

In May 2011, following a violent argument with her mother, Sian was referred to social services. She was five months pregnant with Ben but her complicated family history, involving a number of abusive relationships, meant her unborn son was at significant risk of harm.

At this point Sian was rarely leaving the house and her two older children Louise, 14, and John, 13, were frequently missing school. John, who has ADHD, was prone to violent outbursts and had lashed out at Sian when she was pregnant.

At social services’ request, Sian was assigned an Intensive Family Focus (IFF) worker, Julie Smith*, to offer parenting support.

The IFF Team are skilled professionals who work alongside families such as Sian’s to improve their life opportunities and provide a coordinated approach to the many agencies such as police, health, housing and youth offending which they may be involved with.

Julie is one of 32 IFF workers supporting Barnet’s 450 troubled families; the IFF forms one strand of the council’s Early Intervention service. With the help of a £2 million grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government, the programme aims to work with those families who pose the most complex and costly challenges. Through intervening early the service aims to shift the balance from reacting when things go wrong to offering support to strengthen families’ abilities to cope beforehand.



“I assessed Sian and put together a plan targeted to her and her children’s needs,” Julie recalls. “I’m not here to pass judgement and in the early days I did a lot of listening.”

With Julie’s support, Sian began a system of rewards and sanctions to calm some of John’s behaviour. He was referred to a targeted youth support scheme and Louise began to access support at Canada Villa Youth Centre in Mill Hill. Ben was also given extended free childcare at a local children’s centre.

Sian admits to being wary of Julie at first. “I wasn’t sure in the beginning but after a while I could see it was working. I’d wanted to help my family myself but I didn’t know how. With Julie’s support I learned to keep calm and listen.

“By putting firm boundaries in place John started to understand there were consequences to his behaviour.

“If there was a problem I knew Julie would be on the other end of the phone to offer support day or night. She became like one of the family.”

Bit by bit the children’s school attendance and behaviour improved. In March 2012, Ella and Ben were taken off the child protection plan although they are still classified as children in need.

“There have been dramatic changes in the family,” says Julie. “John still needs emotional support and his challenging behaviour isn’t going to go away. But things are a lot more settled.”

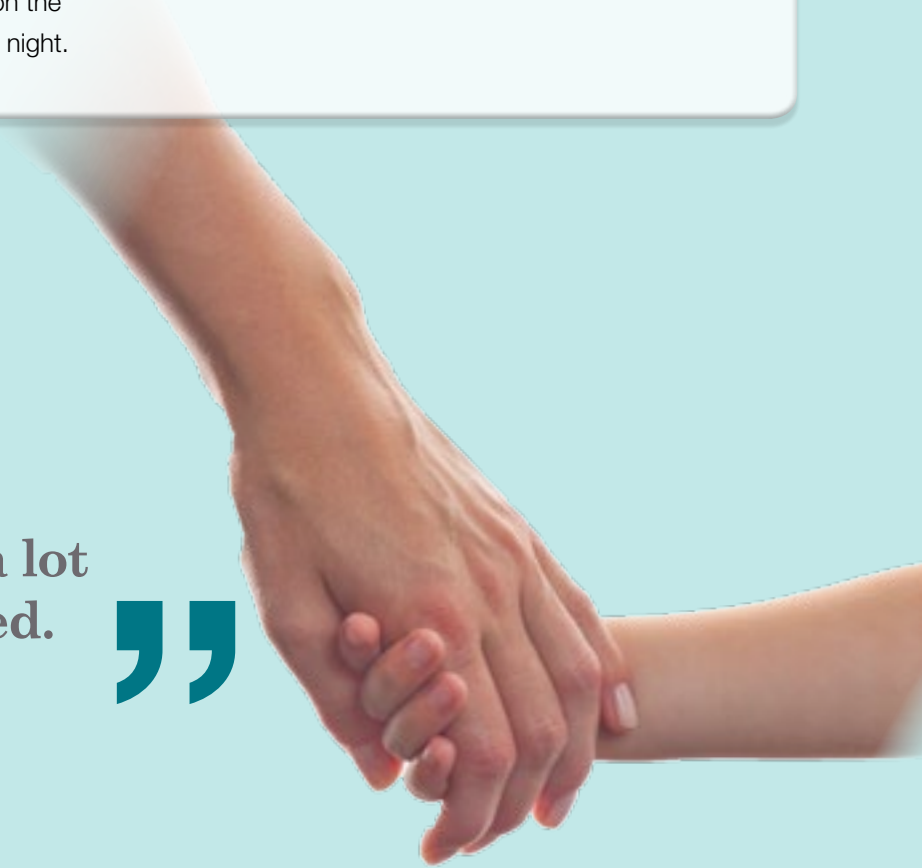
After putting a help plan in place, Julie has moved on to support other families. Recently, a new worker has been assigned to the family to offer John some more assistance.

“IFF is an ongoing service and it’s about looking at everyone’s behaviour,” says Julie. “When you are dealing with people’s complex lives there may always be times when we need to step back in again.”

*All names changed to protect identities.

“ Things are a lot more settled. ”

”



Your council

Council tax frozen until 2015

A meeting of full Council in March confirmed that council tax will be frozen in the borough for another year. This is the fourth budget in succession to freeze council tax in Barnet.

The council also made a commitment to freeze council tax a further year – up until the end of March 2015. However, this may need to be revised depending upon the outcome of the legal challenge described below.

The freeze means that council tax will not have risen from 2010 to 2015.

During the same period cumulative inflation is expected to be almost 18 per cent while the council will see central government funding reduced by 34 per cent.



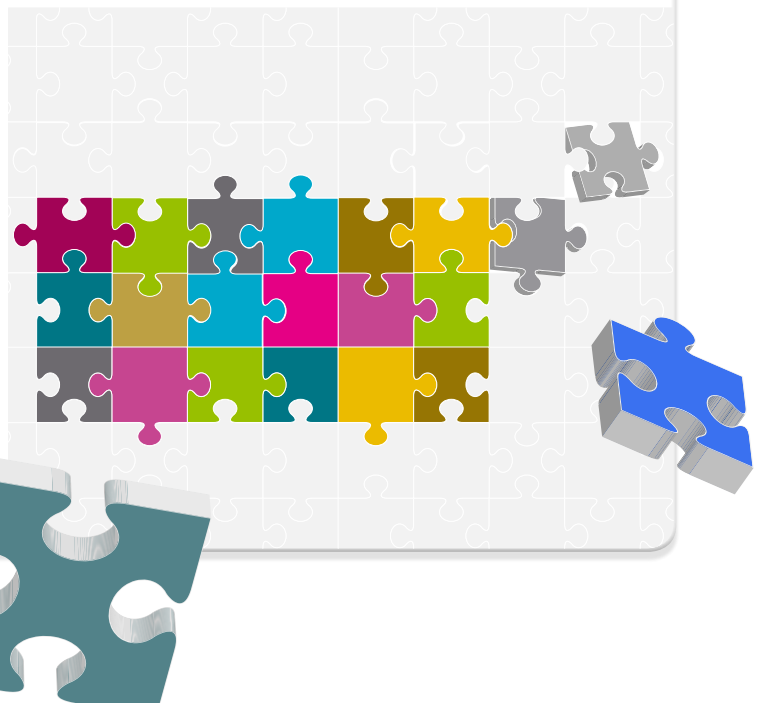
A changing council

The council is continuing to make changes to the way it runs services for residents, to protect the quality of services while reducing costs.

A new streamlined management team has seen the number of senior staff reduced and more clearly makes a difference between staff who commission services from outside providers and those who manage the way that specific council services are delivered.

The council will bring recycling services 'in-house' (the services are currently provided by a private contractor) to work more closely with the household waste collection service. Plans to move back office services such as Human Resources and payroll to an outside contractor have been put on hold following a legal challenge. The plans will save £120 million over the next 10 years if given the go-ahead.

Other proposals to also be put on hold include proposals for development and regulatory services (the back office function of planning and environmental health) to be run by a joint venture between the council and a commercial partner, as they are covered by the same court case. These proposals should save the council at least £26 million over the next 10 years.



Right to Control initiative extended

Following a successful pilot, a scheme which gives disabled residents greater control over how money is spent on their support is being extended.

Right to Control allows residents to decide, with support, which activities and services would best help them achieve their goals and lead a more fulfilled and independent life. The scheme allows people to combine two or more types of financial assistance related to their social care, housing or employment support.

For more information on Right to Control, visit: www.barnet.gov.uk/right-to-control



Right to Control was introduced in Barnet in 2010 and additional government funding will allow the project to continue until this December.

More than 200 people have already benefited from the scheme.

The council was one of seven 'trailblazer' authorities in the country to trial the approach.



New library opening hours

Barnet's libraries have new opening times from 1 April.

The changes do not mark a decrease in opening times. Instead, the days the libraries are closed are now staggered, resulting in more libraries being open on any given day. All libraries offer a late night opening and will continue to do so on the same night as they have previously done.

The changes mean residents can visit an open library near to their home on any given weekday.

For more information on the new library hours, visit: www.barnet.gov.uk/libraries



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or write to us: Members' Room, Hendon Town Hall, The Burroughs, Hendon, NW4 4BG

What's on



City Read 2013: 'A Week in December'

Barnet libraries are hosting a range of events to promote the City Read 2013, which aims to get Londoners all reading 'A Week in December' by Sebastian Faulks during April.

Photography competition

Closing date 1 July

This year's City Read is 'A Week In December', which is set in many iconic locations in the City of London. We will be running a photography competition with the theme 'Your London'.

For details on how to enter, rules and prizes, visit:

www.barnet.gov.uk/libraries

The Friern Hospital Story

North Finchley Library, 16 April, 6.30pm – 7.30pm

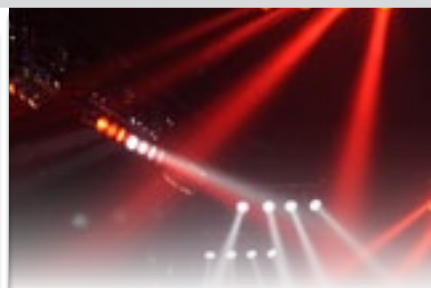
David Berguer, local historian and author of 'The Friern Hospital Story' will be giving a talk on the once-famous Colney Hatch asylum. For more information, contact North Finchley Library on 020 8359 3845.

London City Read Book Group Discussion: 'A Week in December'

East Barnet Library, 25 April, 6.30pm – 7.30pm

Join all of London as we read and discuss this contemporary tour de force and celebrate Faulks' 60th birthday.

For more information on City Read 2013, visit:
www.cityreadlondon.org.uk



Yiddish Twist Orchestra

Date: 13 April, 7.30pm

Venue: artsdepot – £14 / £10 conc

Taking inspiration from 1950s Soho, the Yiddish Twist Orchestra mixes surf rock guitar, jazzy horns, calypso, the Twist and Jewish folk melodies to create a highly original sound.

Ockham's Razor: Not Until We Are Lost

Date: 19 – 21 April, various times

Venue: artsdepot – £16 / £10 conc

Atmospheric aerial theatre which unfolds above and around you.

Jo Caulfield: Better The Devil You Know

Date: 27 April, 8pm

Venue: artsdepot – £14 / £12 conc

Feisty, funny and wonderfully sharp. Come and join Jo's celebration of anger.

Shirt Tail Stompers

Date: 11 May, 7.30pm

Venue: artsdepot – £15 / £13 conc

One of London's top vintage bands plays trad-jazz hits from Ellington, Waller, Basie and more.

Booking details for all events

Box Office: 020 8369 5454

artsdepot

5 Nether Street, Tally Ho Corner,
North Finchley N12 0GA

www.artsdepot.co.uk

Working hours

Environmental Health Officer Tony Mercer has lived in East Finchley for about 40 years. He joined the council in 1995 and has worked with the Empty Properties department since the team started last December.

What does your job involve?

Our team's job is to stop houses from standing empty, as this can cause problems such as burglaries, vandalism and squatters. An abandoned property can also suffer from vermin, rubbish being dumped and burst pipes flooding neighbouring properties.

Many of our referrals come from residents.

We act as a link between funding to improve the house and the landlord, and work with Barnet Homes to get the house in a fit state to be re-occupied.

We occasionally see owners who have multiple properties standing empty, when the council could do up the houses and the owners could start earning rent again. Everyone benefits when our houses are clean and occupied, and we play a vital role in making this happen.

How would a typical day for your team go?

Usually I might spend two days out on site, and three days in the office. I could visit eight houses in a day, and we aim to get 100 properties renovated each year.

I investigate the properties to see if they are really empty or if the owner is just away on holiday, in which case I return in two weeks.

How do you interact with other organisations?

We act in an advisory role, providing financial support and grants if needed. We solve problems, trying to create a win-win situation for the owner, the council and the community. To do this, we can provide details of builders as well as arrange and supervise work for the landlord. We can also board up and secure the property as an interim solution, to prevent the situation from getting any worse.

What's the best part about your job?

We were called recently to a house which clearly hadn't been lived in for some time – rats had moved in and were also infesting the house next door. There was rubbish in the garden and their neighbours were obviously not happy! We required the owners to restore their property and make it secure. Once the house was in a much better state, the owners leased it back to Barnet Homes who found a family to rent it. The owners were financially better off, the family said it was perfect for their kids and they enjoyed living there. This is when our job is really rewarding and satisfying; when we achieve these positive results.

To report an empty property,
email: housingconditions@barnet.gov.uk
or call: 020 8359 7995

