

# Hounslow Gazette

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## Search for Hounslow Rangers begins as borough strives to be greener, healthier, and wilder

**Local residents needed for new Hounslow Ranger community**

**Become a Hounslow Ranger for access to a supportive community, training, resources and funding**

**Pilot community supported by Thriving Communities and delivered by London National Park City**

**Application deadline Sunday 13th April 2025**

**Community induction begins May 2025 in various locations across Hounslow including green-blue spaces**

**A local Ranger coordinator is at helm of project in a first for London National Park City**



A team of Hounslow Rangers, all present and correct in the community, after obtaining funding from the borough's Thriving Communities fund.

London National Park City announced this week that it has opened applications for a new cohort of Hounslow Rangers in the community, after securing funding from the borough's Thriving Communities fund.

Based on its proven Ranger model in the capital, London National Park City will find and train a group of active local volunteers that will work both individually and together to design and deliver community-driven

urban nature projects in Hounslow, particularly in areas of the borough that aren't yet green, healthy, and wild and would benefit from Rangers enthusiasm and support.

The pilot community will be delivered by key members of the London National Park City team including Community Director Becky Daniels and Partnerships Manager Louis Rutherford. They will be supported by the newly appointed Hounslow Ranger coordinator Mar

Peláez-Muñoz, a first for the charity—who will help forge important connections with local stakeholders to ensure that Hounslow Rangers are deeply embedded into the wider community.

"In my role as Hounslow Ranger Coordinator I will strive to ensure that communities that are less represented in the environmental movement and those who seek a more proactive role in their local communities are given a voice and a role to play in making

their patch of London cleaner, greener and more biodiverse," Mar Peláez-Muñoz.

"Hounslow's residents are already doing amazing things to improve biodiversity and connect their neighbours to nature. I am excited to support this wonderful work, connecting locals together as well as with others doing similar projects across London, while providing access to resources and funding, alongside skills training," Becky Daniels.

Hounslow Rangers is open to anyone who is 18 or over—or will be by 10th May 2025—living, studying or working in the London Borough of Hounslow, with preference given to those who are already actively contributing to local causes and initiatives. Full eligibility criteria can be found on the application below. Applications close at midnight on Sunday 13th April 2025.

<https://nationalparkcity.london/hounslow-rangers>



## Hounslow student at UK's largest public speaking competition



(L to R): 2nd place Luna Pikula, 1st place Gerda Labortas, and 3rd place Treasure Yiga.

A Hounslow student is now just one step away from the Grand Final of the UK's largest youth public speaking event due to take place at the West End in July 2025.

Gerda Labortas, Year 10 student representing Brentford School for Girls, was crowned winner of the Regional Final of the Jack Petchey's "Speak Out Challenge" which took place at Green School for Girls on February 25th, 2025.

Over 30,000 Year 10 students (14-15 year olds) in over 500 state schools in London and Essex take part in the annual event, hosted by the UK's leading public speaking and communication charity, Speakers Trust and funded and supported by the Jack Petchey Foundation.

Previous winners of the Grand Final have gone on to...sell their businesses for 6 figures, act in Hollywood and in critically acclaimed projects, become influencers and public speakers. These include: Actors Jamie Flatters and Idris Sobande, entrepreneurs Tim Armoo and Mike Omoniyi, writer Poppy Noor, and more.

Gerda Labortas was crowned Regional Champion, with a powerful speech titled "It's about HOW you say it", the key message being that effective communication relies not just on words, but significantly on tone of voice and hand gestures to engage and influence an audience.

Her eloquence and passion caught the eyes and ears of the expert judges, including: Alison Benjamin, Tanya Taylor, Hardip Begol, Cedric Fromageot, Louise Chandler and Madiha Azizi.

Gerda now proceeds to the online semi-finals with just 37 other regional champions, before the final 15 are selected for the Grand Final, taking place at the prestigious Cambridge Theatre on 7th of July!

During the training, students are given the skills and the confidence to develop and deliver a competition speech on a topic that is important to them. The aim of the training and competition is to amplify young voices.

Gerda said: "I'd like to say a huge thank you to Jack Petchey for this amazing opportunity!"

The winner receives a £100 gift certificate and is now on track for the Grand Final of the competition, held at the Cambridge Theatre, Covent Garden.

Runner-Up title went to Luna Pikula, representing The Green School for Girls, with a speech titled "We are lucky to be alive" and Third Place went to Treasure Yiga from Gumley House RC Convent School, FCJ, with a speech about faith.

At the Grand Final, Gerda could be competing not only for the honour of becoming this year's Jack Petchey's Speak Out Challenge Grand Champion but also for the chance to win £5,000 (a £2,000 bursary for himself and £3,000 for his school.)

## Students embark on trip of a lifetime to NASA headquarters



Students from Aspirations Trust academies including from Rivers Academy and Space Studio West London at NASA Control Centre.



Students from Aspirations Trust academies pictured alongside a replica of the Saturn V Apollo 11 rocket at NASA Johnson Space Centre, Houston, Texas, USA that was sent on a historical first moon landing mission on 16<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July 1969. (Apollo Lunar Module Eagle landed on July 20<sup>th</sup> 1969, at 20:17 UTC).

A group of students travelled across the pond on an extraordinary trip to the home of NASA. The annual trip, run for students at Aspirations Trust academies including from Rivers Academy and Space Studio West London, gives young people the opportunity to visit Houston, Texas.

The trip involved lots of hands-on engagement with the space industry and included a tour of NASA's Johnson Space Centre.

They explored some of the most iconic and cutting-edge facilities in space exploration including having the chance to sit in and drive a Lunar Rover prototype.

They also visited multiple schools, directly engaging with students, focusing on interactive workshops, particularly for the younger students and their teachers.

The trip also included a tour of Space Port Houston.

At Clear Lake High School, they collaborated with the NASA-sponsored Robotics Club and they visited Rice University to attend a lecture by Professor David Alexander

OBE, who shared invaluable insights into the space industry in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

Matthew Stow, from Rivers Academy, added: "This trip is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Getting to meet amazing people and experience the culture is an opportunity that can't be afforded anywhere else."

Simon Sterland, Associate Assistant Principal at two of the Trust's academies in Oxfordshire, said: "This was a hugely successful trip which was enjoyed greatly by all students."

"It has not only ignited students' passion for space exploration but also laid the foundation for a more diverse and enriching experience in the future."

"As we continue to build on this momentum, the possibilities for future educational adventures are limitless."

"The trip's success marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter. The partnerships established with schools, NASA, and other space industry leaders will continue to grow, with plans to enhance educational programs and robotics collaborations."

Hounslow Gazette

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Public Notices

Town and Country Planning  
(Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 13 OF APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT 170 HATTON ROAD, FELTHAM, TW14 9PY

In accordance with Article 13 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 we give notice that Mr Abbasi (as the Applicant) is applying to the London Borough of Hounslow (as Local Planning Authority) for Planning Permission for the following description of development:

“The subdivision of the existing residential plot and erection of a new dwelling at 170 Hatton Road”.

Any owner\* of the land or tenant\*\* who wishes to make representations about this application should write to the London Borough of Hounslow at the following address within 21 days of the date of this notice:

Development Management  
London Borough of Hounslow  
Hounslow House  
7 Bath Road  
Hounslow  
TW3 3EB

Signed: Savills (UK) Ltd  
On behalf of: Mr Abbasi  
Date: 26 March 2025  
Statement of owners’ rights

The grant of planning permission does not affect owners’ rights to retain or dispose of their property, unless there is some provision to the contrary in an agreement or in a lease.

Statement of agricultural tenants’ rights

The grant of planning permission for non-agricultural development may affect agricultural tenants’ security of tenure.

\* “owner” means a person having a freehold interest or a leasehold interest the unexpired term of which is not less than seven years.

\*\* “tenant” means a tenant of an agricultural holding any part of which is comprised in the land.

Notice of Application for  
Grant of Premises Licence Under Section 17  
of The Licensing Act 2003

Notice is given that RARA CATERERS LTD of 528-530 Victoria Road Victoria Road, Ruislip HA4 0HD, has applied to the London Borough of Hounslow for the GRANT of a Premises Licence for a cultural community programme for about 900–950 guests. Where there will be live music. The serving of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

All the food arrangements will be provided by us (Rara Caterers Ltd). Event timing will be between 12:00–21:00 hours on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2025

Application has also been made for the following hours Monday to Sunday, 11:00–05:00 hours for the premises Tudor Park Field situated at Browells Lane, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 7EF

The following opening hours are applied for : 9 hours.

Anyone wishing to make representations to this application must give notice in writing via email by 21/04/2025 to: [licensing@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@hounslow.gov.uk)

Representations will still be accepted via post, however there could be a delay in us receiving them within the limited 28-day time period to:

Environment, Culture & Customer Services - Licensing  
London Borough of Hounslow  
Hounslow House, 7 Bath Road, Hounslow, TW3 3EB

To view the application please go to: [www.hounslow.gov.uk/licensing](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/licensing)

Within 28 days of the date of this notice specifying the grounds of your representation. Should any representations be received, members of the Licensing Committee will determine the application. Any person who has made representation will be invited to attend the hearing, although all valid representations will be read and taken into consideration in the determination process. The Council are required to copy all representations received in full (name & addresses) to the applicant.

This notice must be completed and displayed for a period of no less than 28 consecutive days starting on the day following the date of submission of the application to the Licensing Authority. It must be exhibited prominently at or on the premises where any person outside of the premises can easily read it.

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with an application; the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is £5000.

Goods Vehicle Operator’s Licence

AL MUADH LTD

of: 37 Ledgers Road,  
Slough,  
SL1 2RQ

is applying for a licence to use:

Heathrow Truck Park Ltd  
Church Road Heston  
TW5 9RY

as an operating centre for 1 goods vehicle and 1 trailer.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given above. A Guide to Making Representations is available at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-objections-and-complaints-goods-vehicle-operator-licensing](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-objections-and-complaints-goods-vehicle-operator-licensing)

New licensing regime needed to tackle rogue shisha bars

Tougher new powers are needed to crack down on shisha bars that breach smoking laws and are linked to anti-social behaviour, councils have urged.

The Local Government Association is calling on the Government to introduce a new licensing regime for shisha premises, which would strengthen the powers available to councils.

While the number of shisha premises has increased significantly in recent years, councils currently lack the tools with which to regulate them and take enforcement action where necessary.

A new licensing regime would enable councils to grant or refuse licences for new shisha premises, revoke or suspend licences, and add conditions to licences to improve safety.

This follows incidents involving shisha premises allowing smoking indoors, flouting fire safety and selling illicit shisha.

There are also concerns over the health risks associated with shisha smoking, as well as issues such as noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour, which councils have limited powers to address under current legislation.

Shisha bars do not require a licence or registration unless they serve alcohol, have other regulated entertainment or serve food between 11pm and 5am.

Although tobacco is not licensed, there aren’t any smoking lounges for other types of tobacco. Therefore, councils argue shisha premises should be licensed given they are venues specifically designed for its consumption, which can be detrimental to people’s health.

The LGA is also calling for:-

- An increase in the level of fines for indoor shisha-smoking and for these to be levied against businesses and not just customers. Current levels are not sufficient as a deterrent.
- A ban on flavoured shisha tobacco, as is currently the case with regular tobacco products.
- Mandatory labelling of health warnings on shisha products, including smoking paraphernalia
- Mandatory warning signs that tobacco must not be sold to under 18s on every shisha bar table.

Cllr Heather Kidd, Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: “Currently shisha premises generally fall outside existing licensing laws.

“It is not right that a venue requires a licence to serve a hot drink after 11pm but not for smoking shisha. Licensing shisha would also send a stronger and clearer health message around the potential dangers of shisha smoking, as there is a common misconception it is a safer alternative to smoking cigarettes.

“Shisha also needs to be brought within scope of existing tobacco control strategies to ensure consistency.

“A new regulatory regime would enable councils to work with shisha businesses to ensure they operate safely and lawfully.”

London Councils responds to HCLG report on children in temporary accommodation

Responding to a new parliamentary report on homeless children in temporary accommodation, London Councils has highlighted the “undeniable need for urgent action.”

As cited by the report, London Councils’ analysis suggests 90,000 children in the capital are homeless and living in temporary accommodation arranged by a London borough.

This means one out of every 21 children in London are homeless—equivalent to at least one homeless child in every London classroom.

London is grappling with the most severe housing and homelessness pressures in the country. London Councils estimates that 183,000 Londoners overall (one in 50 residents of the capital) are homeless. Boroughs collectively spend £4m every day on temporary accommodation—with homelessness expenditure jumping by 68% in a year.

Cllr Grace Williams, London Councils’ Executive Member for Housing & Regeneration, said: “This report lays bare the dire circumstance facing many families living in temporary accommodation.

“Secure and stable housing is fundamental for education, health, and well-being. London boroughs are hugely concerned by the tens of thousands of children caught up in the capital’s homelessness emergency, and what this means for London’s next generation.

“In the face of a worsening shortage of affordable accommodation, boroughs increasingly find ourselves forced to use the least-worst options in order to keep a roof over the heads of homeless families. We are determined to raise standards in temporary accommodation—and to reduce the number of families reliant on it – but we need the resources and support to make this happen faster.

“There is an undeniable need for urgent action. London boroughs are fully committed to tackling homelessness and determined to work with the government in achieving this.”

London boroughs are collaborating through the Setting the Standard programme, which they launched in 2020 and organises inspections of the highest-risk section of the temporary accommodation market (B&B and studio properties) in the capital, with the aim of rooting out poor accommodation.

London Councils is calling on the government to: Better fund councils for the cost of temporary accommodation by ending the fourteen-year freeze on the amount councils can claim back from government to meet their temporary accommodation costs. This has become the single biggest driver of financial insecurity for London boroughs and consequently leading to lower quality accommodation.

Make the increase in Local Housing Allowance rates a permanent measure. Research published by London Councils shows only 5% of London’s private rental listings in the capital are affordable to households in the private rented sector relying on Local Housing Allowance.

Boroughs want LHA rates updated annually to track market rents and help ensure adequate support for low-income tenants in the private rented sector. This would prevent significant levels of homelessness.

Bring forward a cross-departmental strategy to reduce homelessness. Tackling homelessness must become a major priority at a national level with government departments working together—in addition to key partners such as local authorities—as effectively as possible.

The chronic and longstanding shortage of affordable housing is the key factor driving London’s homelessness emergency.

# “Unfair” Met Police paternity leave policy revealed by The Dad Shift

**“Grossly unfair” Met paternity leave policies mean frontline officers get less than half of the paternity pay of back office staff.**

- New research reveals that the Met’s back office staff are entitled to 50% more paternity leave and nearly three times as much paternity pay as frontline officers

- Campaigners call for Yvette Cooper to intervene on paternity leave policies which mean most frontline police officers return to work just 1 week after their child’s birth

- The lack of support for fathers is causing some to leave the police, contributing to a crisis in retention where 63% of resignations cite family impact as a major cause

- Testimonies reveal a culture that stigmatises police dads who want to be involved parents, including one dad who was “mocked” and “ostracised” for taking two weeks unpaid leave to look after his partner following her C-section

Back office police staff in the Met are entitled to 50% more paternity leave and nearly three times as much paternity pay as the force’s 33,297 frontline officers, new research by The Dad Shift, the UK charity campaigning for better paternity leave, has found.

Under the Met’s paternity leave policy, civilian staff—those working in roles like IT, administration or 911 call handling—are entitled to three weeks of paternity leave at full pay. However, frontline officers get only two weeks, only the first of which is fully paid. The second is at the statutory rate of £184.03 a week, just ¼ of the starting salary for a Met officer.

Statutory pay is so low that many officers can’t afford to take the second week and instead return to work just seven days after their baby is born. Indeed, new FOI requests from The Dad Shift suggest that across 28 forces where the second week is paid at statutory rates, the majority of officers (60%) go back after only one week, whereas in the five forces where both weeks are fully paid, the majority (88.5%) take two or more weeks and just 11.5% return after one week [2]. A new poll of police staff found that 97% said this wasn’t fair—and that officers leave should be increased to match that of back office staff.

In some forces, rules tying paternity leave entitlement to shift hours, not calendar days, mean that officers aren’t even entitled to a full two weeks of paternity leave. For example, under Gwent Police’s policy, a typical shift worker would have to use nearly two days of annual leave to achieve one full week off work with their newborn child and recovering partner.

The findings come as testimonies from police officers reveal a culture across multiple forces where dads seeking to spend more time with their children are “mocked,” “slagged off” or “ostracised”.

Alex Lloyd Hunter, co-founder of The Dad Shift, said “Police officers put themselves in harm’s way to protect the rest of us, but when they need to be there to look after their own families, the Force lets them down. The Met’s back office staff do vital work, but how is it fair that their paternity leave is three times better than frontline officers who risk their safety every day? If you want

to talk about “two tier” policing, this is it. Two tiers of support—both nowhere near enough, but one scandalously so for dads and other parents that the country asks a lot of.”

“Yvette Cooper has done a lot to ensure the police are doing better to protect women and girls. Supporting dads in the force properly, so they can be involved caregivers, is part of that same equality agenda. We need her to take this really seriously, speak to the Met Commissioner about sorting out this grossly unfair policy immediately, then put pressure on all the police heads until every officer in the country gets a decent amount of properly paid paternity leave.”

A toxic culture towards active fatherhood in the police

More than 50 police employees or partners across multiple forces have come forward to share their experience of paternity leave in the police. A number have chosen to go public, some under the condition of anonymity, to shed light on the exclusion and lack of support faced by fathers in the police.

The testimonies reveal a deeply entrenched culture that stigmatises fathers who want to be involved parents. One officer’s partner described how “male colleagues are mocked and often denied any flexibility” while female colleagues receive approval for flexible arrangements. Matthew, a former officer, was “treated very poorly by management and colleagues” and “slagged off behind his back” simply for taking two weeks unpaid leave to care for his partner after an emergency C-section.

These stories highlight an issue

that directly feeds into the policing retention crisis, with 1 in 5 officers planning to quit within the next two years. The Police Federation’s 2024 Police Leavers’ Survey found that 63% of officers who resigned cited the impact on their family as a major reason for leaving. In our research, Kevin\* explicitly stated he’s “looking for other jobs outside the police” with his one week of paternity leave being “the final straw,” while Matthew confirmed this was “one of the biggest reasons I left the police.”

These attitudes create serious safety issues too. In a particularly concerning case, a firearms officer “wasn’t allowed to adjust the dates of his paternity leave” when his baby arrived three weeks early, forcing him to work a back-to-back day and night shift with a firearm on the day his wife and newborn came home from hospital. The combination of sleep deprivation, stress, and being rushed back to frontline duties raises significant questions about officer well-being and public safety.

“Join the force, get a divorce”

The toll on officers’ personal relationships is significant and sometimes devastating. Sarah\*, whose partner is an officer in one of the UK’s largest forces, revealed they “nearly broke up several times during that first year because he couldn’t get time away from work to support me” while their child had serious health issues. She says she “felt like a single mum.” Matthew cited the strain on his relationship as a key factor in his eventual separation from his partner, describing how being “out of the house for 15 hours a day, sometimes up to 10 days in a row” put

“a huge strain” on his relationship. Kevin, a current officer, spoke about the guilt he felt being torn between his family and his duty, feeling he was “letting my wife and son down” by returning to work after just one week. As he puts it, “as police officers we’re very quick to protect communities, but when it comes to our own families we have to put them on the back burner.”

George Gabriel, co-founder of The Dad Shift, said “There’s a saying in the police—“Join the force, get a divorce.” It’s no secret the police are struggling to hold onto officers, and if serving in the police means you hardly get any time with your kids and your marriage might break down, I can see why. If the police want to stop officers resigning, they need to look at supporting dads and other parents better—starting with giving them better paternity leave.”

The Dad Shift is a non-for-profit organisation campaigning to improve the UK’s statutory paternity leave, which is the worst in Europe—two weeks paid at £184.03 a week, less than half the minimum wage. There is high support amongst the public for improving paternity leave, including for public servants like police officers. Polling conducted by The Dad Shift revealed 80% of people agreed with the statement “All Dads, including public servants like soldiers, police officers and MPs, should be able to take a decent amount of paid leave in their baby’s first year”.

To find out more about the campaign to improve the UK’s statutory policy, for the police and for dads and other non-birthing parents up and down the country, head here.

## Afghanistan and Central Asian Association: A Lifeline of Free Legal Support Amidst the Legal Aid Crisis

The Afghanistan and Central Asian Association (ACAA) continues to stand as a pillar of hope for refugees and vulnerable individuals, offering free drop-in advice on housing and employment despite the drastic decline in legal aid services across the UK.

Over the past decade, access to legal support has become increasingly difficult, with the number of legal aid cases plummeting from nearly a million in 2009/10 to just 130,000 in 2021/22. The rising costs of legal advice—often

reaching thousands of pounds—have left many individuals unable to get the help they need. However, amidst this crisis, the ACAA has remained steadfast in its pro-bono commitment, providing vital assistance without charging fees or requiring appointments.

### Empowering the Vulnerable

Every day, the ACAA opens its doors to those in need, welcoming individuals from across the world who are facing

hardships. Whether it’s navigating the complexities of housing, securing employment, or understanding legal rights, the charity ensures that no one is left without guidance simply because they cannot afford it.

### A Backbone for the Community:

For years, the ACAA has worked closely with local council authorities, strengthening its role as a trusted resource for disadvantaged communities. Despite

a lack of funding, the charity has never wavered in its mission. Operating without external financial support, the ACAA relies on dedicated volunteers and community partnerships to sustain its life-changing services.

“Our mission has always been to empower those who have lost hope,” said a spokesperson for the charity. “We believe that by providing accessible, high-quality advice, we can make a tangible difference in people’s lives and help them rebuild their futures.”

### Unwavering Commitment to Pro-Bono Support:

When legal aid is scarce and professional services are unaffordable, the ACAA remains one of the few organisations offering legal support to those who need it most. With an unwavering dedication to human dignity and social justice, the association ensures that refugees and vulnerable individuals are not left behind in a challenging system.

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or email: ads@hounslowgazette.co.uk**