

HOME NEWS

Hexagon



STAFF FOCUS: CARE & SUPPORT

WIN
VOUCHERS
£10 & £20
NEW COMPETITIONS
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This email address can also be used to write your Comments To The Editor.

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TOM'S WELCOME



Ensuring everyone's home is safe is very much a joint endeavour, and that is the spirit in which our resident inspectors carried out an inspection of fire safety. You can read about this on page 11. Thanks to the inspectors who made eleven recommendations all of which were accepted. I have no doubt this will improve the effectiveness of our work in this important area.

On page 4 you can read about our ongoing employment support offer. The furlough scheme introduced in response to the pandemic ended in October, so if you have found yourself without work, please don't hesitate to make contact.

Our plans to re-open our office in 2022 have recently taken a set back with the re-introduction of plan B restrictions. This will mean more home working and as a result, our plans to re-open the office are on hold. We will of course re-visit at the earliest opportunity.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive

YOU SAID WE DID

We introduced "You Said, We Did" – compiled by Rebecca Outram, our Housing Services Director – in the last edition of Home News. It proved so popular that the Readers' Panel of residents requested a full page!

Photo supplied
by Rebecca



You said.....

- Why do I always have to chase you for the answers?
- Why are you never pro-active at letting me know what's going on in and around my home?

We did...

- Many of the more general information updates you may need to know about as a resident can already be found:
 - in Home News magazine
 - by following us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/HexagonHousingAssociation
 - via our recently revamped website: www.hexagon.org.uk
- Additionally, we're exploring how we can use technology more effectively to keep our customers informed
- More specifically, we've started a couple of pilots with a small number of blocks of flats to use our website to keep you better informed. We'll review these and decide what lessons we can learn, before we roll this out across all our blocks of flats
- I sometimes don't feel like I'm treated with respect because of my learning disabilities
 - We've been in touch with this resident, to understand their perspective, and said sorry for anything we'd unintentionally done to make them feel this way
 - We're going to recommence our process of collecting information about our residents so we can be sure we're treating everyone fairly and with respect. So if you receive an email from us with a "getting to know you form" link, please complete it and send it back to us. This information will help us to monitor the services we're providing, and help us to deliver better services which are tailored to meet individual needs
- When I make a complaint, I want to know you've received it and assigned someone to look into it for me within a few days
 - We've reviewed our complaints procedure and are in the process of recruiting two specialist Complaints Co-ordinators to improve our complaint response process for our residents
- I understand Hexagon are going to appoint a new repairs contractor next year. Are residents involved in the decision making?
 - We've got a group of residents on the Repairs Group who are actively involved in the procurement exercise

See page 9 for a brief intro to the procurement process which is currently ongoing for new repairs contractors.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT: NEW YEAR, NEW YOU!

We are here to help you set some goals or New Year resolutions to kickstart 2022!

Maybe you're looking to change your job or career path? Or you've thought about improving your skills? We can help you to update your CV and provide free training to help you.

Hexagon's Employment & Skills Team offer a range of free workshops and other opportunities which you can access to help you achieve your goals:

- Coffee mornings where you can meet members of our team and find out what our employment service can offer you
- Information sessions on a range of careers including housing, hospitality, customer services and administration – featuring guest speakers working within these sectors!
- Employability workshops on CV and cover letter writing, interview skills and filling in job applications
- Supported referral to other areas you may need help with e.g. digital skills training, vocational training, budgeting, benefit or debt advice

Hexagon encourages you to register with our Employment Support service, so you can access the help you need.

CASE STUDY

Hexagon resident Salvatore had been out of work for over 12 months and was struggling financially. Things began to improve for Salvatore when he registered onto our Love London Working project in June 2021. We agreed a plan of action which included:

- Updating his CV
- Attending interview techniques
- Referral to money management support and debt advice through Stepchange
- Access to Transport for London apprenticeships and hospitality vacancies
- Regular 1-1 appointments to discuss his progress

Salvatore found work in September as a Chef in a school kitchen, working 30 hours a week. He was concerned about his travel costs so Hexagon contributed towards this so he could get to work.

Salvatore is regularly contacted by his advisor since starting work to make sure he is ok. He is doing really well in his job.

Photo supplied by Hexagon

Salvatore said, "Thank you so much Martyne for your support!"

NEED HELP TO FIND NEW EMPLOYMENT?

Please contact Martyne Callender on **020 8678 7915** or **07799 880 675**, or email mcallender@hexagon.org.uk



BASIC SKILLS TRAINING OFFERED

- Did you fail your English or Maths GCSEs?
- Are you wanting to start a new career but lack the basic skills you need?
- Do you dread writing anything because you struggle with spelling and grammar?
- Do you lack confidence in your mathematical skills?

If you answered yes to any of the above, Hexagon can help you for free!

Many jobs require a good standard of English and Maths. Apprenticeships also require Level 2 Maths and English.

Hexagon is committed to upskilling our residents, to help you be in the best possible position to apply for the jobs you are interested in. In a competitive employment market, we encourage you to develop the necessary skills and qualifications you need to appeal to employers.

FREE TRAINING FOR YOU!

We are offering up to 18 Hexagon residents the opportunity to access free English or Maths functional skills training.

Residents can access training from Entry Level 1 up to Level 2. To participate, you must:

- Be unemployed
- Not have a Maths or English qualification at Level 2 – or did not pass your GCSE at Grade C/4 or above
- Need proof of passing English or Maths GCSE at Level 2 to apply for jobs
- Register with our Love London Working project

What you'll get out of it:



An initial assessment to help you understand what level of support you will need and what level qualification you can do



A recognised qualification accepted by several employers as equivalent to a Maths and English GCSE



Support with travel expenses so you don't incur any costs for attending training sessions



A free tablet if you attend all training sessions and pass your exam



FREE ONLINE YOGA CLASSES



Join our FREE Yoga classes every Friday.

Our qualified Yoga instructor Linda McMahon is a Hexagon Digital Champion who can also assist you in completing your pre-class health questionnaire and connecting to Zoom. Email Linda on: lmcMahon@hexagon.org.uk.

WHAT OTHER RESIDENTS SAY

"I find yoga very beneficial because my disability makes it difficult for me to exercise but the mindful stretching helps me." Mr Neil (CRO)

"I really enjoy the yoga class on Zoom. It is suitable for people of all abilities and ages. Linda works very hard to make sure everyone can benefit from it and gives options to make each session suitable for everyone. It is fun, relaxing, enjoyable and beneficial healthwise. I find myself doing some of the stretches on my own without even realizing!" Miss O. Oduwole (SE22)

...

HELPING YOU STAY WARM AND HEALTHY THIS WINTER

Energy bills are continuing to soar. Food and other prices also are rising. Hexagon are working to do what we can to help you stay warm this winter.



How to save money on your energy bills

We have teamed up with South London Healthy Homes Initiative to offer a fantastic free service that can make your home warmer, saving you money and improving your health.

This service is open to anyone who is over 65, or on a low income, or has long term health conditions or disability. It offers:

- Impartial energy efficiency advice to help you heat your home for less
- Installation of energy saving devices
- Connect you to other sources of help

To book your free advice session, or for information, contact: **0808 169 1779**

www.cact.org.uk/swtw or contact the Community Investment Team

Telephone **020 8768 7954**, or email: cit@hexagon.org.uk

Financial Wellbeing Calls

In December 2021, our Community Investment Team launched a confidential service offering a friendly ear to listen, understand and support you. The Financial Wellbeing Calls service offers free information on a range of services and resources to help you stay on top of your finances.

We are initially targeting residents in receipt of Universal Credit, and those whose home has even higher energy costs (i.e. a low SAP rating – see below for more info).

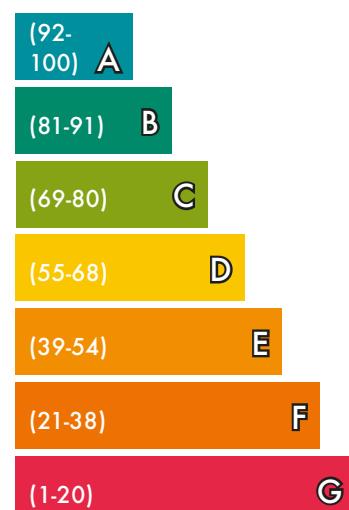
If you are not in this group, but feel you would benefit from a call, please get in touch: email cit@hexagon.org.uk or telephone **020 8768 7954**.

Help Increase Your Home Energy Rating and Save Money: Don't miss your letter and phone call!

Every property has an energy efficiency rating, commonly known as a SAP rating. The lower your rating, the more it will cost you to heat your home.

Our Stock Improvement Team have identified properties with low SAP ratings, and are working to improve energy efficiency in these homes – so residents will pay less for heating.

If your home is one highlighted for these energy-saving works, our Stock Improvement Team will contact you by telephone and in the post to arrange access to survey your property, plan the works, and work with you to cause minimum disruption.



COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FACEBOOK GROUP

I would like to wish everyone a happy new year.
A new year brings new news!

The Community Investment Team have launched a Facebook group dedicated to you and your neighbourhoods. We want to make this group the new Community Investment 'go to' place. The Hexagon Community Investment Facebook Group contains lots of information including:

- Money Saving Ideas and Information
- New Courses
- Job Opportunities
- Other snippets of information specific to the Community Investment Team's work which we think you might find useful

For this idea to work, we need your input too: please share events you know of, posters you have come across and the word of mouth that we don't hear – let others in the Hexagon community know about any suitable offers and events which you come across.

The aim of this Facebook group is to serve as a positive community hub. This is a group where you can share your own ideas and stories, around training, employment or well being, post helpful money-saving ideas or learn more about the work of our Community Investment Team. We are in this together to create a welcoming community environment.

This group differs to the existing Hexagon Housing Association Facebook page, which gives you news updates from across the entire Hexagon organisation – including positions vacant, repairs updates, fire safety, compliance and new housing policies, what's on, resident focus groups, and other news not specific to the CIT Team.

To join the Hexagon Community Investment Facebook Group:

Scan the QR code to get taken to the Facebook group –

Please get in touch and tell us know what you would like to see on the group, by emailing us or PM us on our Facebook group.

Email cit@hexagon.org.uk



Leanne Cairney, Money Support Advisor
Photo supplied by Hexagon

A massive thank you to resident Nicole Garrett (SE18) who shared the following money-saving ideas:

New year new shop? We all like a bargain – Try swapping your grocery shopping from Tesco or Sainsbury's for example to Lidl.

Have you heard of Lidl plus? A loyalty card in an easy-to-access app on your phone, including coupons you can use on certain products as well as partner offers with partner companies.



DENNY'S DIGS

GARDENING TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

It is said that we can't do everything, but we can all do something. As gardeners, we can make small changes in our gardening habits that, combined, make a difference. Here are a few suggestions for you to think about...

1 GO PEAT-FREE

As gardeners we need to change to peat-free compost. These can be a little more expensive, and you need to think a little more about which ones you buy for which planting job, but helping save our peat bogs is a worthy cause.

2 RECYCLE

Any plastic trays or pots can be thoroughly washed then reused.

New pots should be biodegradable or recyclable – check this is so when buying new plants for the house or garden. You can also make your own paper pots, or reuse packaging for things like seeds.

3 YOUR FRONT GARDEN IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSET



Plants such as hawthorn, yew, cornus and cotoneaster help absorb pollution. Add these to your garden, especially if on a busy road.



Collect rain water in water butts from down pipes.



Zero Food miles – Grow your own! As well as health and fitness benefits, home grown produce has zero food miles, is organic, and you can use water responsibly.

4 JOIN A COMMUNITY GARDEN

If you don't have a growing space, why not join a local community garden where you can be among like-minded people to grow and learn gardening skills?

Being involved in a community garden means you'll be improving the quality of life in your community – as these gardens have been shown to improve air quality, lessen local crime such as vandalism and littering, and build strong community bonds that filter into many other positive initiatives.

So, instead of feeling overwhelmed by all the environmental issues the world faces – just make some positive changes, and together we can make a big difference!

Let us know your ideas and how you get on via email to cit@hexagon.org.uk

Happy gardening – Denny Senner

We can't all be the Eden Project but together we can make a big impact on sustainability. Photo supplied by Denny



REPAIRS ON THE MEND

Hexagon is committed to strengthening social value in our supply chain. Social value is about using the money and resources we have more strategically, to produce a wider benefit. As a result, Hexagon now expects its supply chain to commit to delivering social value as part of their works.

The assessment process for who will be our next repairs contractor is nearing completion.

Residents helped to play a key role in the decision. Hexagon is using this contract as an opportunity to add social value. Below are examples of how we might expect our new repairs contractor to add social value:



MAXIMISE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR RESIDENTS
e.g. Hexagon to receive details on any jobs offered by contractor, to share with residents



SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE
e.g. contractor to play a role in neighbourhood events, Career Days, offer apprenticeships at NVQ Level 2



SUPPORT VULNERABLE RESIDENTS
e.g. employ a dedicated Point of Contact and/or Social Value Officer, with mental health, safeguarding, and befriending schemes



IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY
e.g. operatives to prioritise electric vehicle fleet, provide resources and staff to develop small gardening growing plots, develop green Community Spaces

Home News will announce who won the contract as soon as details are available.

TENANCY CHANGES

IF YOU WANT YOUR TENANCY CHANGED...

Tenants may be granted sole or joint tenancies at the beginning of the tenancy. We will usually offer joint tenancies to couples nominated to the association by the local authority. If we receive an application in one name only for a couple, we will check with the nominating local authority whether the application should be in joint names.

Hexagon cannot amend a tenancy simply because one of the joint tenants is no longer living at the home unless both parties request it and the rent account is clear.

Generally, **Hexagon will not add a partner or a spouse to the tenancy** because it does not affect the original tenants' rights, and it is an area which can be open to tenancy fraud.

If you want to discuss this further, phone our Customer Services on **020 8778 6699** and ask to speak with your Neighbourhood Officer, alternatively email your request to customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk

Hexagon
Assured Tenancy Agreement
This is an Assured Tenancy Agreement between us, Hexagon Housing Association Ltd. of 130-136 Sydenham Road London SE26 5JY and you.
If more than one person is named above, this is a joint Tenancy Agreement and each person named has the full and same responsibilities and rights set out in this Agreement.
The property let by this Agreement is _____
The property is a _____
The garden access is _____
The Tenancy begins on _____ and is for an initial term of one week, continuing weekly thereafter until determined.
This is a legal contract between you and Hexagon. It explains the services that you can expect from us and the conditions that you must keep to. It is important that you read it carefully before signing. Please ask us if anything that is not clear to you. You could also get an explanation from a Citizen's Advice Bureau or other advice agency or a solicitor.

FIRE SAFETY TOP TIPS: WHITE GOODS

Nearly every day, a fire in London begins when a faulty 'white good' catches fire.

The London Fire Brigade's 'Total Recalls' campaign has been designed to make it easier for people to protect themselves from potentially lethal faulty appliances. The campaign is building a register of product recalls, so that consumers can check whether an appliance you own is a potential fire risk.

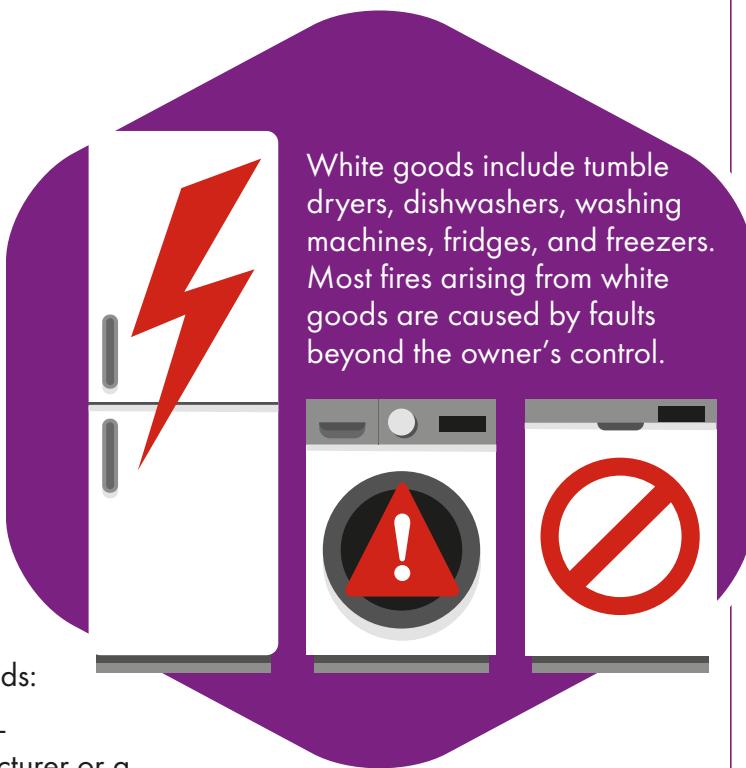
In order to make sure that your home is safe, and that potential fire hazards are avoided, we recommend the following tips for safer white goods:

- If your white goods make any strange noises – unplug the appliance and contact the manufacturer or a qualified repair technician
- Routinely check to see if any appliances you own have been recalled – most fires started by white goods are not caused by anything done by the owner, but by checking the Government's product recall site you might avoid potential fire incidents
- Keep white goods stored safely and out of the way – for example, avoid putting a freezer in a hallway. If a fire does break out in your home, you need all escape routes to be clear
- Ensure smoke and heat detectors are installed – Hexagon aim to have all homes fitted with smoke and heat detectors. Please contact Hexagon should you believe your detectors are not adequate or if you have any questions about how to test them
- Register your appliances – registering an appliance will help you to stay informed if manufacturers identify a fault with it
- Share this knowledge – let your family, friends, and neighbours know about this scheme so that we can protect each other

Registering your appliances, and regularly checking updates to the Government's product recall site, will help you to avoid potential fire incidents such as the one pictured (right).

Go to: [www.london-fire.gov.uk/
about-us/our-campaigns/total-
recalls-making-whitegoods-safer/](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/our-campaigns/total-recalls-making-whitegoods-safer/)

Photo supplied by Hexagon



White goods include tumble dryers, dishwashers, washing machines, fridges, and freezers. Most fires arising from white goods are caused by faults beyond the owner's control.



RESIDENTS INSPECT FIRE SAFETY

Fire Safety is a key priority for Hexagon and our residents. In 2021 Resident Inspectors carried out an independent review of how Hexagon is delivering Fire Risk Assessments.

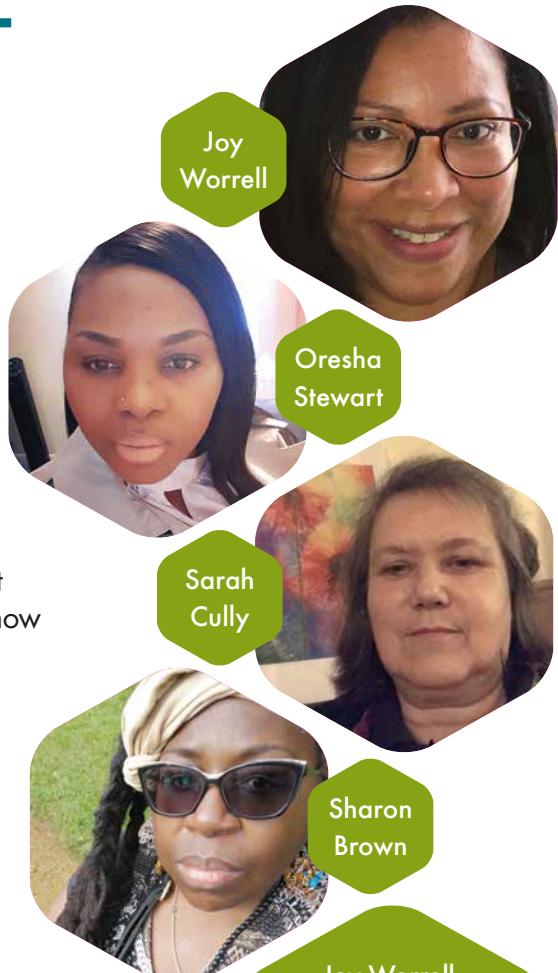
Each year a small group of residents carry out detailed investigations into areas of Hexagon's housing services. The latest resident inspection scrutinised Fire Safety, particularly looking at how Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) are carried out and acted upon.

The inspection included a review of policy, performance, communication and FRA monitoring. This was followed by eight interviews with key people, and a survey sent to approximately 600 residents.

The Resident Inspection highlighted three overarching areas to help improve service delivery for residents. These included a clearer Fire Safety policy that reflects all residents; improved communications and information available; and suggestions to make the process more effective for residents. This resulted in eleven detailed recommendations, all of which have been agreed by the Head of Property Safety and Property Services Director. An action plan has now been developed to incorporate resident recommendations into how Hexagon delivers Fire Risk Assessments.

Resident Inspection plays a hugely important role for assessing Hexagon's service and identifying where improvements can be made. Hexagon wish to express our appreciation to the Resident Inspectors for their time and commitment in helping to ensure that Hexagon is continually improving our service to residents. The Resident Involvement Team thank everybody who responded to the recent Fire Safety survey for your valuable input – understanding your experiences of Fire Safety has been key to informing the inspection.

The Resident Inspectors, who include Joy Worrell (CRO), Oresha Stewart (SE8), Sarah Cully (SE18) and Sharon Brown (SE22), sent the following comment: "We contribute by using our joint experiences to scrutinise policies and processes which affect all Hexagon residents. This brings effective changes that benefits both staff and residents. By doing this, our aim is to improve and strengthen Hexagon's service delivery and increase satisfaction for all residents."

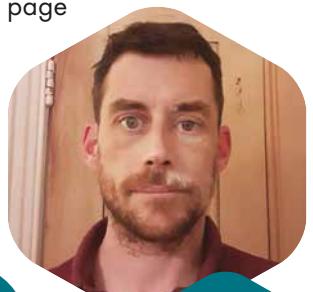


Joy Worrell, Oresha Stewart, Sarah Cully and Sharon Brown contribute time as Resident Inspectors to help improve Hexagon services

Thank you to the residents who supplied the photos used on this page

Head of Property Safety Michael Galt (pictured) and Property Services Director Charles Mtakati agreed all eleven recommendations made by Resident Inspectors on Fire Safety

Michael Galt
Photo supplied by Hexagon



GET INVOLVED!

Did you know that as a Hexagon resident, you can get involved to help analyse and improve Hexagon services?

Thank you to the residents who supplied photos for this feature

Blessing Adedoyin (SE8) tells Home News, "I'm a member of the Hexagon Resident Performance Review Group.

"I joined the group because they scrutinise the service performance of Hexagon as an organisation and make relevant recommendations that are in the interest of residents and service users.

"I believe it is vital for residents to be actively involved in activities that allow them to be catalysts for change and improvement within services they use and pay for. I am still new to the group but very much enjoying it so far."



Resident Christine Matthews (SE26) comments, "I'm a member of the Readers' Panel, the Repairs Group, and also carry out Estate Grading inspections. I do this for multiple reasons, including keeping my brain active. I feel I have some input into what happens at Hexagon. My input hopefully improves the repairs service, and also improves Home News in order that more people read and enjoy it. I have always believed it's no good just complaining, you should get involved to improve things."



Hasina Zuberi (SE28) says, "I am a part of the Readers' Panel. I have also joined groups dealing with the Environment and Anti-Social Behaviour. I used to be a Resident Inspector and also a part of the Resident's Forum for a number of years.

"I particularly love being a 'proof reader' for Home News. It's a lot of work, but it challenges my brain to remember my English grammar which has taken many knocks over the years!

"I am Grandma to 21 children, and a Great Grandma too! I gain from the Hexagon groups by being reminded I have half a brain, and that I am still fit enough for purpose 😊😊. I also get a stipend for taking part – vouchers to the value of £10 or £20, depending on the group or activity.

"I feel being involved really validates my purpose by being a part of decision making. At least I know Hexagon values my opinion."





Adrian Ingram (SE4) commented, "I am in a number of resident groups including the Design Panel and being Chair of the Repairs Group."

"The Design Panel is important because we get to contribute ideas that will help Hexagon build homes to be more carbon neutral, plus to incorporate more efficient maintenance into the building design. This can make a huge difference to the resident who ends up living there."

"I am excited to be Chair of the Repairs Group, as this allows me to bring my skills and knowledge to the fore, and enables me to encourage people in the group to come forward and contribute. Hexagon benefits from this work because we make sure repairs are done more efficiently, which can greatly help residents too."

"My involvement in these groups has a social aspect which I really enjoy. I get to meet a lot of lovely people. It is a good feeling too, to know I am helping to make a positive impact, by improving Hexagon services and adding value for other residents."

Sarah Cully (SE18) contributed, "I am one of the Resident Inspectors with Hexagon. It is a satisfying notion to be an active cog in the machinery of running our homes."



Shay Brown (SE22) said, "Being a part of the Resident Inspectors panel has gained me more experience in the running of Hexagon's services and improving them for all tenants' benefit!"



How you can get involved

Here are just some of activities where you can get involved and help improve the housing service.

- Focus groups
- Readers' Panel
- Resident Inspectors
- Estate Graders
- Performance Review Group

For more information or to express interest in joining a group, please email getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk or call 020 8778 6699 and ask to speak to our Resident Involvement Officer Amanda Walker.



Photo supplied by Amanda

RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP – A NEW APPROACH

Following a report from Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, Hexagon have changed our Pets Policy. The new approach provides greater flexibility in terms of allowing permission for dogs and cats to be kept in homes that do not have access to a private garden.

A focus group of Hexagon residents considered the draft policy in August 2020 and made useful suggestions. Their main point was that it is the behaviour of the animal, and the animal owner, that matters more than the type of accommodation.

Residents will now have to apply to have permission for cats and dogs, and if agreed, sign a Pet Contract that keeps them to conditions.

While small animals and fish are allowed as long as they cause no nuisance, Hexagon generally follow the recommendations of animal welfare charities and will not normally give permission for:

- Snakes and large reptiles
- Budgerigars and other caged birds
- Farm animals
- Dogs listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act
- More than one dog or more than two cats

While making a decision on cats and dogs, Hexagon will consider the general suitability of accommodation such as the size and type of property, size and number of communal areas, and the size and type of cat or dog. This

means that there are some blocks of flats where we cannot allow dogs or cats. For dogs and cats to have permission, we expect:

- The dog to be properly trained
- The home to be suited to the pet's lifestyle, environment and physical abilities
- The pet not to cause nuisance to neighbours including excessive barking – or meowing in unsociable hours
- The pet not to be allowed to roam on communal areas
- That any dog and cat flaps do not contravene fire safety
- The owner to immediately clean up any poop!
- The pet to have a collar and be micro-chipped
- Any garden to be made 'dog-proof'
- There is someone who can look after the pet if the owner is away or in an emergency

If you want to apply to keep a pet please call Customer Services on **020 8778 6699**.

Our new Pets Policy provides greater flexibility to allow permission for dogs and cats to be kept in homes that do not have access to a private garden – residents will apply to have permission for cats and dogs, and if agreed, sign a Pet Contract.



Thank you to Paul, for this photo of Nika (left) and her brother Fin (right)

Have your say:
If you have any comments to add, email your thoughts to:
homenews@hexagon.org.uk

A DAY IN THE WORKLIFE OF RECOVERY WORKER MEADHBH BOVINGTON

Job Title and department

I am a Recovery Worker at Newstead Road.

When did you start working at Hexagon?

I started as a Trainee Recovery Worker in July 2020 and became a full time Recovery Worker in October 2020.

Responsibilities in this role?

In this role I mostly encourage and support residents to engage in creative, social, and educational activities within the project and local community.

We have numerous activities at the project and aim to run these in a co-productive fashion.

I also assist in fostering the development of skills in our residents which are necessary to conduct daily living independently – like cooking and cleaning.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

It is amazing the variety of discussions you can have over painting a canvas or playing a board game together. So many of our residents have lived such different lives and have incredibly interesting stories to tell.

What is most important about your role?

I believe the role of anyone working in recovery is very important. We are there to help individuals recognise their self-worth and support them to discover what matters most – to help them build and maintain fulfilling and meaningful lives.

What kind of working relationship do you seek with residents?

One that involves trust, respect, and open communication. These three things help everyone understand each other better – to make active change within recovery. This recipe can work wonders!

What main interests do you enjoy outside of Hexagon work (e.g. hobbies)?

I spend a lot of my free time cooking and adapting recipes. I also enjoy drawing, creating prints, going to exhibitions with my mum and watching live music and comedy with friends.

Photos supplied by Hexagon

KL making toffee apples



ST pumpkin carving



CWLM and KB in Breakfast Club



EC plays the piano



EC in cable car



Happy 68th birthday KB!



Staff sing a remembrance song written by EC



The Wordsearch in our Kidszone (page 23) was created by Meadhdh. Isn't it good! Thanks Meadhbh!

Meadhbh Bovington



STAFF EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2021



Which Hexagon staff won 2021 Staff Excellence Awards
via resident nominations – and why?

Adrian Beckingham Communications Officer

"I am in the Readers' Panel group for Hexagon and he is very good at running the meetings and the time that he puts in for the group. He is always very good and communicating the information for the magazine."



Amanda Walker Resident Involvement Officer

"I would like to nominate Amanda Walker because she always supports everyone in her groups with great enthusiasm, compassion and tireless commitment. She also demonstrates great empathy and superb listening skills, as well as making the groups she facilitates a pleasant and safe environment for all to enjoy! Amanda always goes that extra mile to achieve the best outcomes for both Hexagon and its residents."



Errol Grant Project Surveyor

"Very best wishes for your retirement on 26th November. You've been absolutely fabulous. Thank you so much for your amazing knowledge and support. Solarium Court is now a better place because of your leadership. I wish you a very happy retirement."

Lloyd Morgan Project Surveyor

"Home News magazine Autumn 2021 had an article about nominations for a "Staff Excellence Award". I'd like to nominate Lloyd for the simple reason that he stood out for me as someone who took extra effort. Lloyd made a difference by caring when he could have fobbed me off, learning when he could have presumed to take the Hexagon official line, and showed strength and compassion when I didn't behave well. It would have been easy for Lloyd to discard me, instead he showed strength and care. I commend him."

Martyne Callender Senior Employment Adviser Community Investment Team

"Although she is always busy, Martyne takes time to respond to anything I have requested. She has helped me to secure a job through Love London Working and has kept a check on my progress with the job.



Although I have never met her face to face, I feel comfortable in her presence and trust her with my welfare. She is an outstanding person and such an asset to Hexagon and the world."



SATISFACTION SURVEY LEAVES ROOM TO IMPROVE

Hexagon always aims to deliver high quality services. One way we monitor this is with an annual survey. Our results this year were very disappointing – so we want to share them with you and let you know what we're doing to improve.

What Happened?

**2019
72%**



In 2019, 72% of you said that you were satisfied with our service.

**2021
55%**



In 2021, this dropped to 55%. In 2019, our score was among the best in our peer group, but our 2021 score is among the lowest on record.

HouseMark published a paper which estimated that landlords running surveys during the pandemic could expect a decline in satisfaction of 7%.

Nonetheless, we know our results are not acceptable and are working hard to get back to the level we were at just a few years ago.

What is the Problem?

There are many reasons why a resident might be dissatisfied, but our survey was helpful in that it identified a few key frustrations which many residents share.

1 Communication

Half of all dissatisfied residents talked about how we communicate. **Many described not hearing back from us in a timely manner, and not feeling like they were being listened to. Just 54% of residents feel that we listen to them.**

That is our worst score in the survey, and the main reason that we are prioritising improving how we communicate with you.

2 Repairs

For many residents, a good repair service is the most important thing we can offer.

Unfortunately, the survey showed that this too is an area where we have not been delivering.

What Are We Doing About It?

- We contacted every resident who commented on the survey, to talk about why they are dissatisfied, and try to resolve their issue.
- We are hiring two Complaint Coordinators to make sure that any resident who makes a complaint receives an efficient and timely resolution.
- We are re-tendering our repairs contract. Securing a better quality of service is a key priority of the tendering process.

All of these steps, and many other changes that we are making, will help. We know that to deliver a great service, we must put the experience of our residents at the heart of everything we do.

HAVE YOUR SAY about how you feel about the information in this article via email to homenews@hexagon.org.uk

We may want to publish your response, if we do we will write to you for permission first. All published letters will receive a £10 shopping voucher.

"Her ability to deliver the complaint and listen to responses was handled with care and empathy. She possesses a set of skills that are rare and is an absolute asset to the team"

"I love my home, and feel so privileged to have Hexagon as my landlord"

"I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am for all your support... You've made such a difference"

"You will never know the difference you've made to me, my family or our future"

POSITIVE INDICATORS

Rebecca Outram, Housing Services Director, shares some positive feedback about Hexagon from residents, adding "We aim to get many more similarly positive comments in the future."

PREVENTING LEAKS IN YOUR HOME

Leaks within Hexagon properties are by far the most common repairs reported and can be the most disruptive for residents. Here are a few ways you can help prevent them:

- Some cleaning products can actually cause damage to seals on pipework. It is worth reading the label to make sure yours is not one of them. This is especially important if you are using plughole-unblocking chemicals which can contain very strong acids
- Some of our properties only have a "splashback" (low tiling) around the bath. These properties are very susceptible to leaks and damage caused by water getting behind the tiles. Make sure to regulate the depth of your bath water, and take care with the direction that your showerhead is facing – avoid the use of a hair wash facility attached to the mixer tap whilst standing up rather than seated in the bath
- If tiles are cracked or loose, or the mastic seal around your bath is coming away, it is best to get it repaired straight away. Leaving these to get worse only causes more damage and can end up with water damage to other parts of your property
- A leak from cracked tiles or a mastic seal may cause a big problem to a flat below so it is important that you provide access to Hexagon for repairs if requested
- If a hose is attached to an external tap in winter, the tap and pipework are much more likely to freeze and split. This may cause leaks within your property, so always remove hoses during winter
- If your boiler needs the pressure topping up all the time, it is likely that your external boiler pressure relief pipe is freezing over. It is best to get boiler issues fixed whilst the weather is mild rather than wait for it to break down in winter

If you notice a leak, or have problems with your boiler, report it immediately. A small leak can quickly grow into a serious issue that could affect you and your neighbours. In most cases the cost of repairs is already covered in the rent payments we receive. Our free 24-hour Repairs Hotline: **0800 393 338**.



If the mastic seal around your bath and/or shower is coming away, get it repaired immediately.

Thank you to Repairs Group members for these additional tips:

Christine Matthews (SE26):

"Some cleaning products can take the enamel off the bath. This can then go rusty and a hole may appear, leaving you with a leaky bath which is also unsanitary. Do read the advice on the back of bathroom cleaners as some say not to use on enamel in the small print – it may say for bathroom use, but is only meant for tiles, porcelain or floors."

Adrian Ingram (SE4):

"Check occasionally that the water supply pipe remains securely in place at the back of your dishwasher or washing machine – maybe when you get an annual boiler service done?"



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

"You guys do a great job, I enjoy looking through Home News and reading the articles and getting all the info on stuff. I got my IT champion through that article on helping with digital matters, and Hanna's been great.

Many thanks, Sarah."

Please email your comments to homenews@hexagon.org.uk. Any published letters will receive a £10 shopping voucher as a thank you – and more importantly, your feedback is listened to and helps us shape future editions of the magazine!



GOING DIGITAL?

In the interests of taking another step towards Hexagon's overall sustainability, there is discussion regarding changing the way we produce and deliver Home News. The switch, if it comes, will only take place after ongoing consultation with you, our readers. The switch would be that instead of everyone receiving the paper copy (unless you opt out and ask for a digital copy to arrive in your email) everyone would get a digital copy unless requesting the paper version. What do you think? Email: homenews@hexagon.org.uk

Looking Forward: Watch out for a comparison of benefits paper versus digital Home News in the Spring 2022 edition.



SUSTAINABILITY COMPETITION

Bottles like these were featured in the Summer 2021 edition of Home News.

To win a £20 shopping voucher, email the following to



homenews@hexagon.org.uk by 22nd February.

ANSWER:

1. What are these types of bottles called?
2. What is the growing trend that these bottles can be used for?
3. List three important things about how to prepare them before use.

One correct entry selected at random will be awarded the £20 shopping voucher prize.

BREAKING OUT OF LONELINESS

Have you ever felt lonely in a room full of people?

Some people live with little engagement from others – yet do not feel lonely. Other people surrounded by family, friends, colleagues, or carers can still feel very lonely. Either way, these feelings are genuine and valid. There is no right or wrong.

Most people feel lonely sometimes. Loneliness is the feeling we get when our need for rewarding social contact is not met.

I am no stranger to loneliness. I was a single dad raising four children in a tiny rural village, 10,500 miles from my homeland. Working at a solitary career to fit in with the school run, I had no colleagues nor time to build a peer group. My only regular contact with adults was at the school gates – but I had a feeling the mums resented my presence there – perhaps they saw this as a space for women so my presence as the only dad was intrusive? It was a long 20 years.

Feelings of loneliness are personal, so everyone's experience is different. In my case, I cherished the company of my growing children, but lacked rewarding and stable adult interactions. Loneliness is not always the same as being alone.

Feeling lonely isn't in itself a mental health problem – but long term loneliness can have negative impacts on mental health such as low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, sleeplessness, stress, and developing 'social anxiety' where people find it difficult to engage with others.



LOCKDOWN



MORE ISOLATION



AN INCREASE IN LONELINESS.

The Office for National Statistics: loneliness levels raised 5% just in the first month of lockdown – higher still in areas with more young people; where unemployment is higher; and in urban areas.

LIFE EVENTS THAT CAN CAUSE LONELINESS



Estranged from family, friends, community networks



Single parents or carers



Minority groups isolated from cultural background



Mobility problems



Shortage of money



Discrimination / stigma / abuse



Bereavement



Relationship break-up



Retiring or changing jobs



Low self-esteem



Calendar events e.g. Christmas

TOP TIPS TO REDUCE LONELINESS



Home News Editor Adrian Beckingham offers ideas to help you overcome your loneliness.

Many people can feel awkward when asking for help with loneliness. It is easy to forget that most people, at some time in their lives, will become lonely. Thinking about what is making you feel lonely may help you find a way of feeling better.

Take It Slow

If you've felt lonely for a long time, it can feel scary to open up discussions with people or meet new people. But remember – you don't need to rush into anything. For example, you could try doing an online activity where other people attend but you're not expected to interact with them, such as a drawing lesson. Or you could join a new group – online or in person – but let whoever runs the session know that you'd rather just watch at first. Most group leaders will be very open to this suggestion.

Fancy trying our free online yoga sessions (see page 5)?

Reach Out

There are lots of free groups and other sources of help out there. These are just some examples:

The Campaign To End Loneliness recognise that loneliness affects people of all ages, cultures, and demographics. They offer a range of free resources to help people overcome loneliness, including a regular podcast. www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/

Frindow are a free service all about getting you connected and engaged with new people. You can enjoy nights out, day trips, or just a cup of tea and a chat with like-minded people. They will even help you find other community groups to help you shake off that lonely feeling. www.frindow.com

Men In Sheds featured in the Autumn 2021 edition of Home News. Entirely free of charge, they offer community spaces full of tools and conversation, where men can enjoy practical hobbies. Many guys just go along for the tea and banter, there is no pressure and everyone's welcome.

To find your local shed: www.menssheds.org.uk/find-a-shed/

Looking to reduce loneliness?



Join a community farm



Enjoy the great outdoors



Spend time with animals



Reach out to friends or family



Join a community interest group



PHOTO COMPETITION



GREEN ENVIRONMENTS IN LONDON LIFE

WE KNOW THERE IS A VAST VARIETY OF TALENT OUT THERE AMONG OUR HEXAGON COMMUNITY!

Home News are keen to celebrate your creativity by offering our residents the chance to shine in our Photo Competition.

Do you have an eye for a great photograph, and some words to perfectly define it?

Try your chance at winning a £20 shopping voucher and see your work published in the magazine!

The Spring 2022 edition of Home News will publish the winning entries. There can be up to three lucky winners so get snapping and send your entries in!

The theme for this photo competition is:

Green Environments in London Life

Winter is often a time for staying snug indoors, however getting out and about appreciating local nature can help you build feelings of positivity and is good exercise too. Your submissions could show local wildlife, some of your favourite nearby parks or waterways, a local community farm or a market full of healthy produce. Use your imagination to broaden the theme!

All winning entries will be published, so it is very important any persons photographed must have given you their permission to appear in the magazine.

Please send us your photos (up to three per entrant) accompanied by a short written caption of no more than 50 words to homenews@hexagon.org.uk

Deadline for entries is: 22nd February.

It is essential your entry includes your name, address, and age. Entries missing any of this information cannot be counted.

The photo/s you enter could show local wildlife, some of your favourite local waterways, or a local community farm. Use your imagination to broaden the theme!



★
EXAMPLES
OF POSSIBLE
ENTRIES



A big thank you to resident Hasina Zuberi (SE28) who sent in the above photos of a watercourse near her Hexagon home, to help Home News kick off this competition! Great work Hasina, we appreciate you!

KIDS' ZONE



KIDS' ZONE

Find the words in the puzzle grid below. Words may go forwards and backwards or across and down.

If you think you have found all the correct words in the Word Search, please send in your entry by Tuesday 22nd February to homenews@hexagon.org.uk

Three correct entries will be drawn at random. Each will receive a £10 shopping voucher.

To ensure only children who are Hexagon residents enter this competition, all entries must include your full address including postcode, plus your full name and your age.

W	A	R	O	C	K	E	T	N	M	T	D
S	G	E	M	A	R	S	C	P	V	E	O
H	Q	U	V	R	N	G	U	L	E	I	
S	I	C	C	G	K	M	S	U	N	E	V
A	S	T	R	O	N	A	U	T	X	S	P
T	E	A	O	B	M	L	M	O	Z	C	U
U	N	H	D	A	L	E	S	E	R	O	R
R	W	J	T	Y	E	D	T	Y	X	P	A
N	A	S	A	L	E	J	G	Y	T	E	N
O	Y	T	I	V	A	R	G	O	Y	X	U
J	K	S	P	A	C	E	S	H	I	P	S
L	S	M	O	O	N	R	U	W	P	D	Y

ASTRONAUT
CARGOBAY
COMET
GRAVITY
MARS
MOON
NASA
OXYGEN
PLUTO
ROCKET
SATURN
SPACESHIP
TELESCOPE
URANUS
VENUS



Winners

Congratulations to Daniella Faronbi, aged 10 (CRO); Hasan Ouattara Dieme, aged 8 (SE12); Hannah Leech, aged 12 (SE13) who each win a £10 shopping voucher for their correct entries in the Autumn 2021 Word Search.



ANIMAL SURVIVAL QUIZ

These creatures live in the UK but face extinction.

What terrain is their natural habitat?

What can be done to help them survive?



Cicadas:

Red Squirrel:

Hedgehog:

Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly:

Natterjack Toad:

Turtle Dove:

For example: Red squirrels usually live in forests. People can help them survive by putting a bell on pet cats, and placing squirrel feeding trays high up to avoid cats.

Send back your answers to the email above by 22nd February.
Three correct entries will each win a £10 shopping voucher.



COMPETITION TIME

COMPETITION TIME WINTER 2022

Never won anything before? Put in your answers using the entry guidelines below, and you will be in with a great chance of winning a £20 shopping voucher!

COMPETITION

WIN

a £20 shopping
voucher by entering
this edition's
Competition Time

TO WIN YOUR ENTRY MUST INCLUDE YOUR FULL NAME AND ADDRESS INCLUDING YOUR FULL POSTCODE. DO NOT LOSE YOUR CHANCE TO WIN BY FORGETTING TO INCLUDE ANY OF THESE DETAILS!

1. What is a key difference in our updated Pet Ownership Policy?
2. List two things Hexagon are doing to improve Resident Satisfaction?
3. Is using peat bags for your planting and gardening a positive thing for the environment or is it detrimental, and why?
4. How many overarching areas did the Resident Inspectors identify to help improve our service delivery to residents?
5. List two animals in our KidsZone Animal Survival Quiz, including what their natural habitat is and one thing that can be done to help them survive (why not encourage youngsters in your household to take part?)

Congratulations to our last edition's winners:

Hasina Zuberi (SE28), Christine Matthews (SE26), and Nicole Garrett (SE18) who each receive a £20 voucher.

The answers to last edition's questions are as follows:

1. Hexagon's coffee morning information sessions enable residents to get to know more about Hexagon and to meet staff from the Community Investment Team, with themes such as careers information
2. The main difference between damp and condensation is that condensation is formed from humid air within a property being drawn to cold surfaces, whereas damp is caused by water penetrating the structure from outside
3. PEEP stands for Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan. This is to help vulnerable persons to evacuate in the event of an emergency.
4. Some examples of Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) include threats, intimidation, verbal abuse, and physical abuse
5. Residents were able to make Staff Excellence Award nominations by emailing the staff name/s and reasons for nomination to humanresources@hexagon.org.uk

HOW TO ENTER?

WE ARE ONLY ACCEPTING
ENTRIES BY EMAIL AT PRESENT.

Email to: homenews@hexagon.org.uk
Include your name and postcode.

Three correct entries received by 22nd February will be drawn at random and will each receive a £20 shopping voucher. The competition is open to all Hexagon residents. The editor's decision is final.

WAYS YOU CAN CONTACT US

Freephone **0800 393 338**

Landline **020 8778 6699**

Option 1 for all gas queries – your call will be automatically transferred to our Gas contractors

Option 2 for all repairs related queries

Option 3 for tenancy and rent queries

Option 4 for general enquiries

Gas Central Heating Contractor

0800 206 1367

(24 hours, 7 days a week)

Emergency Out-of-hours Repairs

020 3701 3518

customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk
for all general enquiries

repairs_reporting@hexagon.org.uk
to report a repair

www.hexagon.org.uk

Text **07537 400 527**

**130-136 Sydenham Road,
London SE26 5JY**

Follow us for regular updates,
event invitations and news:

 **HexagonHousingAssociation**
 **@HexagonHousing**

TRANSLATE!

Always happy to translate!

Chinese

永遠樂於翻譯！

Eritrean

"ገኘነታውን ከለምበት ስትናት እና!"

French

Toujours heureux de traduire!

Portuguese

Sempre feliz a traduzir!

Vietnamese

Luôn luôn vui lòng phiên dịch!

Urdu

ترجمے کے لیے ہر دم تیار

LARGE PRINT

If you would like this edition of Home News in large print or braille, please contact Hexagon.