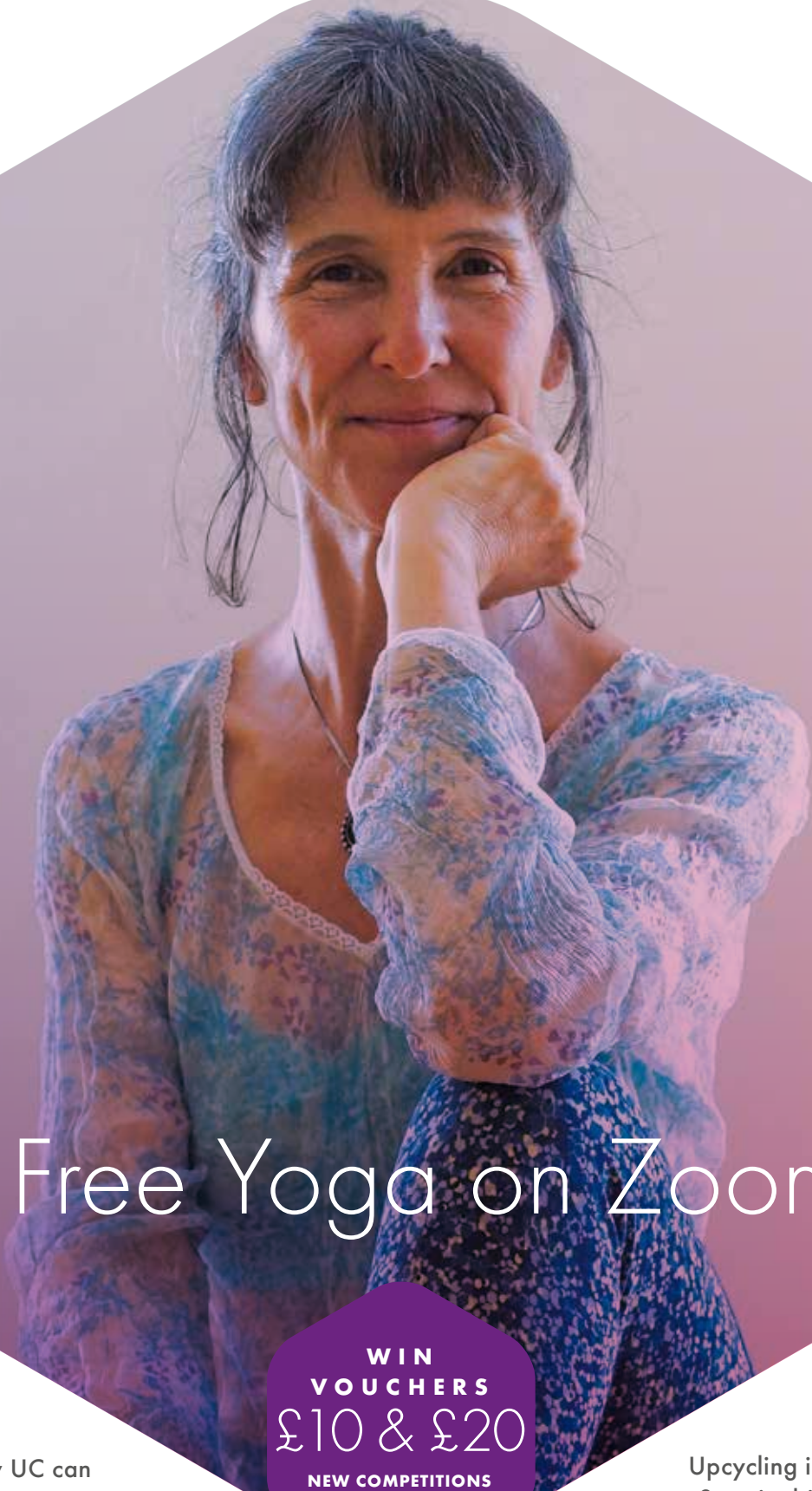


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HOME NEWS

Hexagon



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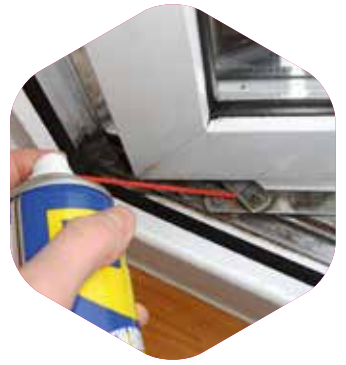
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If you would prefer to receive this magazine digitally instead of by post, simply send your name, address and email address to homenews@hexagon.org.uk

This email address can also be used to write your **Comments To The Editor**.

Follow us online to receive regular updates, event invitations and news:

 /HexagonHA

 @HousingHexagon



TOM'S WELCOME



I am writing this as we move into step 4 of the Government's plan to ease lockdown. We have heeded the advice to "proceed with caution" so for the moment our office remains closed to visitors and will continue to be staffed by a small number of people unable to work from home.

We will keep this under review as things change and keep everyone informed. In the meantime, all our service delivery, including repairs, will continue to be delivered and we will continue to abide by our existing procedures to keep everyone safe (i.e. operatives wearing masks, etc).

The pandemic is not over, and we are very aware that as the job furlough scheme ends, some residents may be facing redundancy and all the challenges that brings. This edition provides lots of information about money advice, including accessing universal credit, so please take up our offer of advice and assistance if needed.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive

SUMMER FIRES

The summer months are traditionally a time when people tend to head outdoors. With lockdown rules easing, you might be inclined to have friends round for a BBQ. Please consider fire safety.

BBQ Safety Tips

- Place your BBQ on firm level ground where it won't tip over
- Position your BBQ a safe distance from all combustibles eg tall grass, tree branches, buildings, timber fencing, sheds
- Position your BBQ away from thoroughfares where people may need to squeeze past
- Only use approved BBQ fuels and firelights – never paraffin, petrol, nor aerosols
- Keep pets, children, guests and garden games at a safe distance
- Never leave a BBQ unattended
- Keep a bucket of water or sand nearby for emergencies
- Ensure the BBQ is cool before attempting to move or dispose of it

BALCONY Fire Safety Tips

To help ensure the safety of ALL residents, you **MUST NOT** have a BBQ on your balcony. If Hexagon become aware that you have a BBQ on your balcony, we will instruct you to remove it immediately.

BBQs on balconies are not safe, and are not allowed. Other fire safety tips for balconies include:

- **Avoid** using plastic and wooden tables and chairs, plant pots, artificial grass, paint tins and other flammables. **Instead consider** using metal tables, chairs and other non-combustible items which are far less likely to cause fire spread
- **Avoid** candles and tea lights which greatly increase the risk of external fire spread. Use solar powered or LED flameless candles instead



Hexagon resident
Kai (age 7)

Do you need a PEEP?

A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan is a bespoke evacuation plan for individuals who may have particular difficulties evacuating a building to safety without the support or assistance from others, in the event of a fire emergency.

To share details of anyone in your household who has special evacuation needs in the event of a fire emergency – for example if you (or they) may have difficulty reaching an exit or hearing the alarm – please contact Michael Galt, our Head of Property Safety via email on propertysafety@hexagon.org.uk or call our Customer Service Team on **020 8778 6699**.

SUBJECT TO SCRUTINY

The Residents Inspectors group of residents gave an independent in-depth assessment on how Hexagon is doing on managing Anti-Social Behaviour.

To make sure that we're on the right road for providing you with the service that you expect, a small pool of residents regularly inspect an area of the service we provide. Their most recent inspection was into how Hexagon handles reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) from Hexagon residents. To inspect the service, Residents Inspectors set about their work by reviewing the Anti-Social Behaviour policy, interviewing staff, undertaking anonymous casework reviews and analysing satisfaction data.

The Residents Inspectors found a number of areas which were seen to have impacted on the ASB service. Key among these areas were communication with residents who had made an ASB complaint; the process of recording of an ASB complaint; and the timely carrying out of residents' satisfaction surveys.

To address these, the Residents Inspectors suggested nine recommendations for improving the ASB service. The recommendations were aimed at improving the consistency of recording ASB cases and also improving the frequency of communication to residents who have made an ASB complaint.

The residents presented their report and recommendations to Hexagon managers – following which eight of the recommendations were agreed and one was provisionally agreed. An action plan was then drawn up to incorporate the residents' recommendations into how Hexagon handles complaints of ASB.

The aim of the inspection was to test whether we are meeting the ASB service standards which we aim to give to residents. One outcome was that this inspection helped identify where standards are not being met or possibly not meeting residents' expectations. Hexagon have taken on board the Inspectors' recommendations and drawn up an action plan based on these recommendations to help ensure that an improved service will be given to residents in future.

Residents Inspection plays a vitally important role in assessing the service and identifying where improvements can be made. It is by assessing what works well, and identifying where there needs to be improvements, that residents help to ensure that Hexagon is continually improving in its aim to provide the best service to all residents.

Photo modelled by
Hexagon resident
Sage (SE23)



The victims and perpetrators of ASB can be male or female, and from any social demographic. The work of our Residents Inspectors helps to ensure that the service Hexagon provides in dealing with ASB reports is kept to the highest possible standard.

ENGAGING WITH CO-OP RESIDENTS

After a year's absence due to the restrictions brought about by Covid-19, Hexagon resumed the annual Co-op Seminar. And this year, to get around the social distancing restrictions the event was held over Zoom. Some 29 residents logged on through Zoom to listen to and participate in the Seminar discussions.

Co-op residents live in Hexagon owned properties, where the housing service is provided by a managing agent called a housing co-operative. Hexagon has 293 co-op managed properties which represents 7.5% of the total of Hexagon's stock.

Our annual Co-op Seminar provides an opportunity for co-op residents to meet with Hexagon staff to discuss key issues that affect the co-op managed properties. This year's key topics were Fire Safety, and Preparing for Net Zero Carbon.

Michael Galt, Head of Property Safety, addressed the residents on how Hexagon is working to keep homes safe. He also outlined how residents can contribute to fire safety by keeping communal areas free of obstructions and personal possessions.

Judith Harries, Neighbourhood Service Manager, informed the seminar on how Hexagon is working to achieve Net Zero Carbon. This is Hexagon's contribution to a national effort to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs by the year 2050.

Both presentations led to lots of questions being raised by residents, and informed discussions were held around Fire Risk Assessments, ground source heat pumps, solar heating and access to government funds for fire safety works, amongst other topics.

The event was really well received by attendees with over 75% expressing satisfaction with the event. And whilst all attendees were happy with their event over Zoom, there was a preference for holding next year's event in-person as it would give a good opportunity to meet with other co-op residents. We hope that social distancing measures will allow us to plan a physical event, and the Resident Involvement Team is looking forward to planning next year's event with equally stimulating topics for discussion.

Photo supplied by
Rumana Khair



Rumana Khair, Stock Improvement Manager, leads Hexagon's initiatives to reach Zero Net Carbon.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Did you know that our Resident Involvement Team – who are behind our increasingly popular Home News magazine – also run our social media platforms? They also share the same staff member as principle editor – namely Hexagon resident and Communications Officer Adrian Beckingham. If you were to send us a PM on social media, it would usually be Adrian who reads your message and responds.

Like Home News, our social media pages are there for our residents – they aim to keep you informed of all issues of concern around your housing, as well as to keep you engaged with topical items about society in general. For example, we regularly share any new items from our website straight onto our social media platforms, as well as posting any employment vacancies which Hexagon may have open at the time.

In this way, one advantage which our social media platforms hold over the Home News magazine is that, whereas the magazine comes out four times a year, our social media can be updated far more regularly. We are aware that a lot of our residents like to hold the paper copy of the magazine in their hands and enjoy reading it in this more traditional way. However, a quarterly magazine can sometimes struggle to keep up with fast changing news items. For example, when the pandemic first struck last March, Home News was approaching the print stage, yet had to be withdrawn and largely rewritten because so many of the pages – which had been written before lockdown came in – were suddenly out of date. These included for example money advice items, invitations to face-to-face workshops or events, and many more examples. Social media on the other hand can keep track of changes in information as they occur, so for this reason alone we recommend that all residents are aware of our social media platforms, and have them saved as favourites in your search bar when perusing the internet. In this way, you can always keep up to date more than you might do so if relying solely on Home News magazine.



51 others like this

A recent screenshot of the Hexagon Facebook page viewed from a mobile phone. Join us on social media now – either on your phone, tablet, or computer!

So far we have social media presence on Twitter and Facebook, but plans for an Instagram platform are in discussion. What do you think? Share your views via social media or email homenews@hexagon.org.uk



SOCIAL MEDIA COMPETITION

★
COMPETITION

You could be the lucky winner of a £10 shopping voucher for visiting our social media – to be in with a chance, just like one of our Facebook posts, retweet us on Twitter, or comment below one or more of our posts on either platform.

A different winner is drawn at random every month.

You can find us on social media here:

Facebook: **HexagonHousingAssociation** Twitter: **@HousingHexagon**

Adrian Ingram (pictured below on a recent cover of Home News) is a co-op resident who accesses many of our latest information updates by following us on social media. Join up to do the same, and you could be our lucky winner for a £10 shopping voucher.



Congratulations to resident Davinia Darch who won last edition's Top Tips Competition. Here are some of the top tips from Davinia to help save you money and look after the environment too:

- Only buy the food you will eat and make random meals out of leftovers
- Leave lights off at night
- Don't leave chargers plugged in with nothing attached
- Put a jumper on before you turn the heating up

HOME NEWS FEATURE IDEA COMPETITION

★
COMPETITION

As the residents' Readers' Panel have recently expressed in the magazine, here at Home News we really do listen to what it is our readers want to hear about.

We try our best to offer stories on a wide range of subjects appropriate for a housing magazine – from updates on issues around estates or our repairs service, to tips on keeping down your energy bills, and general interest profiles on our staff and residents, plus of course competitions to enter. Home News offers all this and much more! But is there a story you – as a Hexagon resident – have been itching to read in Home News, which has never been covered? If there is, you may be the lucky winner of our Home News Feature Idea Competition.

Send in your idea to homenews@hexagon.org.uk no later than Friday 20th August for your chance to win. The winner will receive a £20 shopping voucher, and see their story idea written up as a full feature in the Winter 2020/21 edition of Home News.

When Hexagon resident Danielle Pope (SE26) won our recent Cover Photo Competition, her entry appeared as our cover image for the Autumn 2020 edition of Home News (above).



WELLBEING CALLS

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic the Community Investment Team started conducting 'Wellbeing Calls'.

Our first priority was to contact vulnerable residents and those aged over 70 to ensure they were well, and to ask if they needed further support. We worked with community groups and agencies to assist us in supporting the residents contacted.

We also conducted weekly and monthly calls to those who requested it: to support them with a friendly chat during the lockdown period. This was well received.

Wellbeing Calls are a great way for us to share with residents the services on offer – be it looking for work; assisting with financial issues; receiving digital training to stay connected with friends and family; accessing services online, or checking in on your wellbeing.



We spoke to over 500 residents, and offered regular calls to over 100 residents during lockdown.



Michelle West-Allwood (left) and Linda McMahon (right) are happy to help, should you contact us requesting a Wellbeing Call

Photos supplied by Michelle and Linda

If you received a letter about receiving a Wellbeing Call but missed out, then should you still appreciate a call please let us know. Call Michelle West-Allwood on **0208 768 7954**; or email mwallwood@hexagon.org.uk

YOGA AT HOME

For the benefit of all our residents, Hexagon host free yoga classes every Friday between 1 – 2pm. The sessions are held on Zoom and led by Linda McMahon – some of you may know Linda as one of our Digital Champions, but she is also an experienced Yoga teacher.

The classes are suitable for all age groups and levels of capability, to be enjoyed in the comfort of your own home.

Some of the benefits of attending weekly yoga classes are listed below:

- **Improved relaxation**
- **Improved balance**
- **Increased muscle strength and tone**
- **Improved flexibility**
- **Increased energy levels**
- **Improved posture**
- **Increased blood flow**
- **Better sleep**

ALL OUR YOGA SESSIONS ARE FREE AS HEXAGON PAYS YOUR FEE FOR YOU, AND THE SESSIONS ARE ONLY OPEN TO HEXAGON RESIDENTS.

Interested in giving it a try?

Please email Linda McMahon: lmcmahon@hexagon.org.uk; or tel: **020 8768 7954**

Linda will then contact you with a health questionnaire which you are required to complete for your own safety, after which you will be registered for the session.

The Community Investment Team have had wonderful feedback on these classes. This feedback makes it clear that Linda is a fantastic instructor, who is attentive to participants with all ranges of ability. Residents have remarked that they not only enjoy taking part, but also feel more relaxed, well-stretched and have increased energy levels following the class.

As the sessions are via Zoom you will need a smartphone, laptop, tablet or a computer as well as Wi-Fi to join the class. If you need help getting connected, please let Linda know. Many residents know her as a Digital Champion, so she will give you the help if you need to connect digitally to the sessions for free.



Yoga brings many benefits and can be enjoyed by anyone – just find the right level that's best for you.

Photos supplied by Linda McMahon



CORONAVIRUS AND MONEY

The pandemic has seen significant government intervention in the economy, and early on in the pandemic the government launched several schemes to support people's incomes. As we hopefully soon return to some kind of normality, most of these schemes are in the process of being wound down. A summary of the current position for the three main schemes is provided below.

Universal Credit uplift

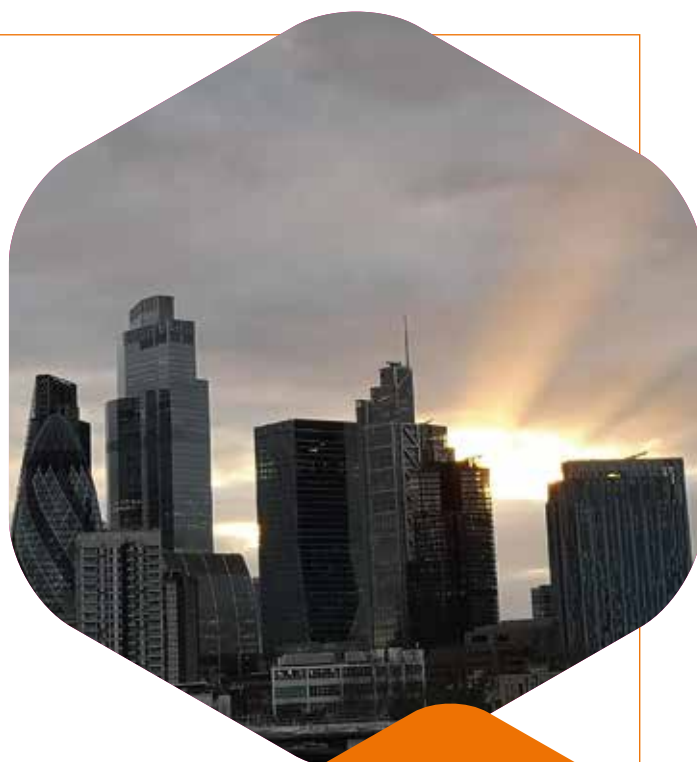
At present, anybody who receives Universal Credit is getting an extra £20 per week. In September, this is scheduled to end. Sadly, this means that if you get Universal Credit, your income will (as things stand at the time of writing) reduce by £20 per week.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (better known as the furlough scheme)

Like the Universal Credit uplift, this is scheduled to end in September. The scheme will continue until then, with the decision to place (or keep) workers on furlough remaining at the discretion of the employer. Some changes to how the scheme works for employers come into force this month (July 2021), but the maximum amount paid to employees will remain 80% of earnings up to £2,500 per month until the scheme ends in September.

Self-Employed Income Support Scheme

Claims for the fourth round of the scheme ended on 1st June. There is currently scheduled to be a fifth (and probably final) grant, to cover the period May-September. The conditions for this are stricter than previous grants, and the income paid is lower. However, many details remained uncertain at the time of writing, so to find out more, visit: <https://bit.ly/3ro1RB3>



The pandemic has seen significant government intervention in the economy, but with schemes such as the £20 Universal Credit uplift due to end soon, what comes next?



If you want more information about any money related matter (including these schemes), contact our Financial Inclusion Team on **0208 768 7925**, or by email to: Jherbert@hexagon.org.uk. Alternatively, if you are interested in getting help finding work you can contact our Employment Team on **0208 768 7915** and they will be happy to help.

MONEY SAVING TIPS

Apps can be a great way to save money and even earn money while you spend online. I have chosen some of my favourite ones here. They can all be downloaded to Apple or Android.

Airtime Rewards

www.airtimerewards.co.uk

Link your debit or credit card to the app and when you make a purchase at participating retailers, cashback will automatically be sent to your account and put towards your mobile phone bill.

Upside

www.upsidesaving.com

Similar to Airtime Rewards, except with Upside Saving the money can be paid to your bank rather than towards your mobile phone bill.

TopCashback

www.topcashback.co.uk

TopCashBack offer cashback to their customers by directing shoppers towards a range of partnered retailers and brands.

KidStart

www.kidstart.co.uk

This app allows members to collect cash towards their children's savings at selected stores.

Voucher Codes

www.vouchercodes.co.uk

Find here discount vouchers or codes from many big brands.

Thank you to resident
Nicole Garrett (SE18) for this
money-saving tip

"Shopmium www.shopmium.com/uk offer free or discounted items. It's easy to use and you just have to leave a review. When it was my birthday they sent me a free box of chocolates!"

It's true to say. Every little helps!

GreenJinn

www.greenjinn.com

Select a coupon online or instore, take a photo of your receipt and submit it. Once you reach £1.50, you can withdraw from PayPal or your bank account.

These Top Tips were written by Leanne Cairney, Money Support Advisor
Photo supplied by Hexagon

Discount food schemes and apps.

1. **CityMunch** – Bringing you exclusive discounts on eateries
2. **Happiour** – Food and drink promotions
3. **Toogoodtogo** – designed to help the fight on food waste by selling food at discounted prices

Want to know more?

If you are unsure how to make use of some of these savings, or want some more information about the internet to save money – then please email Leanne Cairney, our Money Support Adviser at lcairney@hexagon.org.uk or tel **020 8768 9019**

Sharing is Caring

Do you want to know more about saving money on energy bills, or saving money going out? Let us know what you would like us to feature and we will see what we can do. Also please share your tips and we will include those too.

REAP THE BENEFITS OF CLAIMING UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Most people know that claiming benefits provides an income if you are struggling. But Universal Credit can also provide access to training opportunities that can help you develop your career. This can be especially true if you are at the beginning of your working life.


There are many courses available to claimants, covering areas as diverse as Business Administration, Digital Skills, Health and Safety, First Aid, and Security. Claimants can also access basic skills courses in English and Maths. Indeed, there are around 400 different courses available, going up to level 3 standard. More information can be found at: <https://bit.ly/36QPIeE>

As well as training courses, claimants can access several “sector based” employment programmes. These offer many benefits, including pre-employment training matched to the needs of the sectors you are interested in, guaranteed interviews, and work experience placements that can help you demonstrate your skills and abilities to employers.

There’s also the Restart scheme. This gives Universal Credit claimants who have been out of work for at least 12 months enhanced support to find work. Support includes regular contact with an adviser, bespoke training, and support to get the right certificates to take up a job in various sectors.

Finally, there’s the Kickstart scheme – this is a scheme that enables 16 – 24 year olds on Universal Credit to access 6 months paid work (subject to an application process), providing a valuable first step in developing a career.

So if you want to get into work but are not claiming benefits, claiming Universal Credit is about more than just money. However, if you are claiming any existing benefits or tax credits, you should take professional advice before claiming Universal Credit. *Claiming Universal Credit will cause your current benefits and tax credits to end, so you need to make sure that moving to Universal Credit will not make you worse off.*



Over a year of lockdowns have put a serious spanner in the economy. Hexagon are here to help you understand which government support is right for you. Courses can help you flag down the career boost you deserve.

For more information about the programmes available, contact the Employment Team on **0208 768 7915**. For benefits advice, contact the Financial Inclusion Team on **0208 768 7925**.

THE CHANGING JOB MARKET

Covid has had a significant impact on the job market with industries such as hospitality and tourism reporting many job losses.

However, if you are currently looking for work, it is worth considering that Covid-19 has also led to new ways of working and significant growth in many sectors. Roles such as e-learning, home entertainment, safety-related work placements, pharmaceutical and medical devices, healthcare, freelancing and the 'gig economy' are all experiencing strong growth. With this growth comes new job opportunities.

Other examples of sectors that are now in a much stronger position than pre-Covid include:

IT and digital technology

Software engineers, web developers, and online security specialists are all in heightened demand because digital skills are required in all industries, from e-commerce to automating processes in factories.

Warehouse pickers/delivery drivers

Since the start of Covid more people are shopping online. Amazon has already created 15,000 new warehouse and delivery driver jobs. Hermes has created 10,500 more delivery jobs.

Lorry drivers

Large goods vehicle (LGV) drivers are in demand and this work sector dovetails with many of those mentioned above. The demand comes against a backdrop of warnings in the industry during the past few years that there is an acute shortage of drivers.

Supermarkets/grocery retail

Between them, supermarkets have taken on more than 50,000 workers during the coronavirus outbreak.



From delivery drivers to IT engineers, supermarkets are a growth employer as a result of the pandemic.

Cleaners

As well as a rise in demand for domestic cleaners, businesses are also hiring again, with recruitment website Indeed showing more than 10,000 cleaning roles.

Need help?

Increased job opportunities offering flexible and home-working options will have made entering the labour market much easier for many people with, for example, childcare issues or a disability which makes travelling into work difficult.

Whatever your situation, Hexagon are here to help you find the right position for you. For example, the retailer B & Q recently made all their Customer Service Advisor roles 'home-working'. Through Love London Working project we have supported 5 residents – including a single mum and people with special physical needs – to secure these jobs in recent months. Please contact Martyne Callender on mcallender@hexagon.org.uk or 07799 880 675 if you would like to know more.



EMPLOYABILITY WORKSHOPS AND VIRTUAL COFFEE MORNINGS

We offer free employability workshops for residents. These remain digital at present.

We also now offer virtual (ie via the internet) coffee mornings for residents where you can meet new people, and find out more about our projects and employment and training opportunities. Some of these sessions will include guests such as the employers Bell Group and/or training providers. Sessions include:

Activity	Dates, Time and Description
CV and Cover Letter Workshops	Tuesday 14/09/2021 10am – 12pm Learn how to produce a good quality CV and cover letter
Coffee mornings	Monday 16/08/2021 11am – 12pm Monday 20/09/2021 11am – 12pm Monday 18/10/2021 11am – 12pm Monday 22/11/2021 11am – 12pm Learn more about our projects and the opportunities available to you.
Interview skills Workshops	Wednesday 27/10/2021 10am – 1pm Learn how to prepare for interviews and STAR answers.
Mock Interviews	Thursday 25/11/2021 10am – 1pm Participate in a mock interview – a panel will ask you questions relating to the job/s you are seeking, as if it were a real interview, then offer you free feedback on how to strengthen your answers.
Administration careers information session	Wednesday 29/09/2021 10am – 11.30am Learn about working within administration, pros and cons of remote and blended working.
Job applications – Supporting Statements workshops	Tuesday 12/10/2021 Tuesday 07/12/2021 10.30am – 1pm Learn how to promote your skills, experience and answer “person specification” points in a supporting statement.
Housing Careers Information session	Wednesday 10/11/2021 10am – 11.30am Learn about careers and the realities of working within the Housing sector.

Some of the workshops require you to be registered on one of our employment support programmes. Please contact Martyne Callender via email on mcallender@hexagon.org.uk; or tel **020 8768 7915** to find out more and/or book you place.



'EVERYONE'S A WINNER'

So many stories have been received for 'Everyone's A Winner' that we want more! To take part, just send in a short story (up to 200 words) and photos of your hanging basket, window box plant, outside container or indoor plants that you've grown.

Every story will receive a prize, and some will be shared with Home News.

Please submit your entries to the Community Investment Team, via email to cit@hexagon.org.uk

During the lockdown period resident Catherine Pope (SE26) decided she wanted to improve the external community area where she lives. She first began working on her front garden using old jewellery to create little mosaics.

Following this Catherine began looking at ways to brighten up the walkway and car park area. Due to her love of art she used pieces of old wood to build and paint a planter. Once this was finished, she commenced with planting a variety of flowers, with the assistance of a friendly neighbour who used her contacts to obtain free soil. Catherine then began painting the bollards around the car park. Whilst doing so another neighbour came out and informed Catherine that her sons had been watching with interest and wanted to take part, so they came out to paint two bollards. Catherine is aiming to paint all the bollards and welcomes help from any of her neighbours who wish to join in.

Catherine finally began planting little garden patches with the assistance of her Hexagon neighbours who donated compost and plants from their gardens.

TO TAKE PART IN OUR GARDENING COMPETITION:

Just email in one or more photos and a story of no more than 200 words about one or more of your plants. Email your entry to cit@hexagon.org.uk



Mmmm tomato plants! From plants with colours or scents you love, to plants you can eat, if it's in a pot send us your stories and photos to win a guaranteed prize.



The planter Catherine built



Bollards painted by the children



Garden patches



Catherine

Photos supplied by Catherine

CONNECTING TO THE INTERNET: THE BASICS

Broadband and Wi-Fi

Broadband is a wired internet connection that is fitted into your home – similar to the connection for your land-line.

Once installed, you can connect your devices (eg your phone and computer) to your broadband using “wireless” Wi-Fi. This allows you to “go online” to view and interact with web pages.

Home Broadband

Home broadband is often on a monthly contract, usually with a limited length of time that you must stay with your chosen provider. The cost of home broadband can vary greatly, depending on how fast you want your broadband speed to be, how often you intend to use it and for what activities.

Broadband speed

Generally speaking the slower your broadband speed, the cheaper the cost.

0 to 30mbps (mega bites per second) is suitable only for lighter users eg only one person generally browsing the internet. Online gaming, films or Zoom meetings may jam or prove too slow.

30 to 60mbps allows for households where there is more than one person using the internet. Offers smoother gaming and film viewing online, plus more reliability in Zoom meetings for example.

60mbps is pretty fast – things download almost instantly, suitable for larger households with a lot of internet usage, or if you are using the internet for work.

60+ mbps Fibreoptic broadband is the fastest, it comes from only a very small number of providers such as BT and Virgin. With speeds often exceeding 100mbps, this is the equivalent of a streaming Ferrari. This has gained in popularity with the switch to home-working – if your household has multiple people hosting online conferences etc for work purposes, you might need this option.

Download Size and Limits

Some providers offer unlimited downloads. Others specify a total amount of internet use you can access each month. Often the less your planned usage, the cheaper it will be.

How Much Data Might You Need?

5GB data will allow you to browse the internet for around 60 hours, to stream 1,000 songs or to watch 10 hours of standard-definition video. So if you plan to use the internet for general browsing and less than 2 hours a day, this might suit you.





Finding the Best Deals

The best thing is to look on price comparison sites to find the best current deals. For example you could try: www.moneysupermarket.com/broadband

Mobile Dongles

A mobile dongle is a small modem that connects to a mobile phone network. It plugs securely into a USB port in a computer or can be connected wirelessly to devices. Dongle data allowances can be via monthly contract or pay-as-you-go.

Mobile Phone Contracts and Sim-only Deals

With increasingly fast 4G and 5G mobile data networks, it is possible to use the internet on a phone for most online tasks. Mobile data can be pay-as-you-go or on monthly contract.

Keep Within Your Data Allowance!

There can be high additional charges if you go over your data limit if you are on a contract. Alternatively, pay-as-you-go will avoid additional charges, but aren't always the cheapest option.

To Avoid Additional Charges

Set up a warning on your phone settings to let you know when you are near your limit.

Most mobile phone companies will allow you to set up a usage warning to help limit the amount you can spend outside of your usual contract.

Check what the data will cost if you go abroad (and when abroad, use Wi-Fi when possible).



Free Wi-Fi

An increasing number of locations offer free Wi-Fi. Using free Wi-Fi means you're not eating into your data allowance. But, public Wi-Fi networks are often unsecured – meaning any data you send can be intercepted. Think of public Wi-Fi as a shop window – assume people are watching and seeing what you are typing, including any passwords. Free Wi-Fi is great for browsing, but not for making purchases or banking.

<https://bit.ly/3xVuNmq>

STILL TOO MUCH JARGON YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND?

For more information on areas discussed in this article, please contact Michelle West Allwood tel **020 8768 7954**, or email mwallwood@hexagon.org.uk

Our team of Digital Champions are able to provide free 1-2-1 support.



WHO PAYS FOR REPAIRS?

The Readers' Panel – residents who meet quarterly to help guide the content and design of Home News – recently asked for an article to settle any confusion over who pays for repairs to Hexagon properties (your homes).

If you are a resident who pays a weekly rent for your home (as opposed to being in a housing co-operative, or a leasehold or shared ownership scheme) then repairs are often considered 'free'. This is because you can call to log a repair on our Repairs Line **FREephone 0800 393 338**, and a contractor will come to carry out the work without asking you for any extra money. In reality, these repairs are not actually free – but rather already covered by the rent you pay. This includes those who pay their rent from the benefits they receive.

In this scenario, Hexagon will normally be responsible for most of the repairs within the property and to the exterior. Exceptions include small repairs like general internal decorations, renewing a basin plug or toilet seat, or bleeding the radiators. But remember – if the repair has been made necessary because of damage caused by you or someone you know, this is not usually Hexagon's responsibility to repair or pay for.

If you are a leaseholder or in a shared-ownership scheme, you will generally be responsible for all repairs within the property but not for the external envelope of the building. **If you live in a housing co-op**, then your co-op will manage the repairs. The co-op receives an allowance from Hexagon, funded from co-op tenants' rents, to pay for the repairs service that they provide.

If a repair is to a communal facility or area, the cost may come out of the service charge for the block or estate rather than from individual rents. Service charges are calculated annually and whilst they may not have an immediate impact on your finances, costly repairs may lead to a rise in the rent or service charge the following year.

Our Responsive
Repairs Team are
here to help
Photo supplied
by Hexagon

The leaseholder/shared owner and resident handbooks provide more information on repairs and will have been issued to you when you moved in.

LOST YOUR HANDBOOK?

Call our Customer Service Team on **020 8778 6699** to request a free copy.



TIPS ON CLEANING AND MAINTAINING YOUR PVC WINDOWS AND DOORS



Maintaining the working parts of your PVC windows with a spray oil every 6 months will help ensure their longevity.

Photos supplied by Hexagon

Cleaning the frame

It's a good idea to clean your window frames twice a year – the more you do it, the easier the task will be each time.

Start with the windows open and use an old paint brush to loosen any dust, dirt, and cobwebs, then use the hose on a vacuum cleaner to clear it all away.

Mix some washing up liquid into a bowl of warm water and use a soft white cloth to wipe down the window frames, in particular around the very edges where the window sits inside the outer frame. Don't use a coloured cloth in case the dye comes off onto the plastic window. Also avoid any harsh chemical cleaners or abrasive cloths, sponges and creams.

If the dirt is particularly stubborn, try a top grade solvent PVC cleaner, which can usually be purchased from a local hardware shop, but be careful not to use it on the silicone seals as they may begin to lift away.



Cleaning the glass

Ideally the glass should be cleaned four to eight times each year. Avoid cleaning your windows in direct sunlight as this can result in a streaky finish.

It's best to start the process by giving the glass a good rub down with a damp cloth to remove excess dirt. Once you're ready to begin, you have a few options – warm soapy water, traditional glass cleaner or increasingly popular specialist cloths.

Specialist cloths are great if you want to avoid using any cleaning products – for glass they generally come in packs of two cloths, one for cleaning and the other for drying to a perfect shine.

If you prefer to use warm soapy water or a glass cleaner, apply it directly to the glass, working it into all the corners using a good quality cloth that won't leave fibres on the window. Then use a clean, dry microfibre cloth to polish the glass to perfection.

There are several recipes for home-made glass cleaner, just be careful not to use anything which might damage the PVC.

Maintenance

You should expect to use a spray oil to maintain the working parts of your windows every six months (the handles, the locking systems and, in particular, the hinges) to keep everything moving easily. Just be careful not to get oil on the glass.

- Handles – with the window closed, spray some oil onto the window key and insert it into the handle lock – wiggle the key gently and move it in and out of the lock several times
- Locking Systems – with the window open, spray some oil on the locking strip – wipe away any excess oil with kitchen roll
- Hinges – still with the window open, spray oil on the friction hinges. Use light oil such as WD40 or light 3 in 1 oil. If the hinges feel loose after you've sprayed them, look for a tightening screw you can use to retighten the hinge.

These simple maintenance tips will help prevent long term failure and decay.

THE COLOUR AND JOY OF UPCYCLING

Part of living sustainably is reducing the amount of new goods which consumers purchase – this helps both the wallet and the environment.

One way of doing this which is enjoying a rise in popularity is ‘upcycling’. Home News asked Hexagon resident Christine Matthews (SE26) – who recently won one of our upcycling competitions – to give our readers some tips about it.

‘Upcycling’ is a new term to many. Unlike ‘recycling’ which entails throwing your waste into the appropriate bin, with ‘upcycling’ you take something old and restore it into something new using your own hands and creativity.

Does that sound fun to you? It is! Why not give it a try? Just like me, you too can bring some colour and joy into your life by upcycling.

Take a look at the photo of my upcycled bottles. I will take you step-by-step through the process needed to create these lovely upcycled items.

To create these upcycled bottles:

- Cut a small piece of sponge from a kitchen scouring pad
- Use the sponge to dab paint all over the bottle (I used acrylic paints)
- Leave the paint to dry for 2/3 hours, then apply a 2nd coat
- Cut a piece of cardboard sized to fit the bottle base (I used the card from a delivery parcel)
- Lightly dampen one side of the cardboard (the side with faint lines)
- Gently peel off the damp paper, revealing the ripple effect below
- Fix the cardboard in place with glue (I used a glue hotgun)
- Next paint the cardboard with acrylic paint, 2 coats
- The felt flowers or butterflies, star shapes and so on can be bought from a craft store, or you can cut them out of a piece of felt and fix them in place using glue (I use a hot gun)
- To add more detail, why not decorate the flowers etc with sequins or something similar?
- Finally I fixed a bit of lace trim around the top of the bottle, this can be stuck using either the hot gun glue or Mod Podge glue (this is a bit expensive but really good for craft projects)



Most people should be aware by now that used bottles should not be thrown in with general waste – doing so adds unnecessarily to landfill and harms the environment for future generations. However, rather than simply throwing these old bottles away, or even just recycling them in the usual correct manner, Christine used some craft materials and a bit of know-how to turn them into something exciting and brand new. These upcycled bottles not only look attractive but also serve a variety of purposes around the home, from lampshades to vases.



Hexagon resident Sarah Alborn of Lewisham sent us the photo on the right. She is part of a growing trend to re-use empty drink bottles by filling them with washed plastic waste that can't be recycling easily – for example crisp packets or food wrapping – and building them into anything from shelving to furniture. In some parts of the world, whole houses have now been constructed using this method. Sarah adds, "You can even sell these eco-bricks on e-bay and make yourself some extra cash. Why not join the trend? You need to make sure the contents are clean, packed tight so use a wooden spoon to jam it solid, and of a certain weight. Just search "Eco-bricks" on the internet for more info."



Sarah also upcycled old food cans (pictured) into fun shooting targets for a grandchild who has a toy sling shot. Why not have a go at upcycling something yourself, and don't forget to enter our competition!



Another way to upcycle a bottle or jar is using dot-art:

- Ensure the glass is clean before you start this project
- You will need cocktail sticks, cotton buds, a pencil with a rubber and acrylic paint
- Decide on your design – for example a tree, animals or something else?
- Pour a small amount of paint on a non-absorbent palette
- Dip the end of cotton bud (or cocktail stick) into the paint and gently touch it to the glass, leaving a dot of paint
- Repeat continuously, alternating between cotton buds and cocktail sticks to make different size dots and form a pattern. For example, use the cocktail sticks for small dots to draw an outline of your chosen design, then infill the outline with different colours or dot sizes
- If you make a mistake the paint is easy to wipe off with a damp cloth

These upcycled bottles can be used to decorate your home, or you could put lights inside the bottles to use them as night lights, or else use them as vases.

GOOD FOR WELLBEING

Happy upcycling! You will find when you are working on your project that your mind becomes focused in a very relaxed way. It is great for developing good wellbeing as you're not worrying about anything!

UPCYCLING COMPETITION

★
COMPETITION

Email in photos and a brief how-to-make of your upcycled objects to homenews@hexagon.org.uk by **Friday 20th August** and we will choose one favourite to publish in Home News. The lucky winner will receive a £20 shopping voucher.

ANTHONY'S EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

Hexagon resident Anthony (Southwark) is an experienced support worker but when he applied for appropriate jobs, he wasn't getting responses.

Beginning to give up hope, he read about Hexagon's 'Love London Working' project in Home News so approached our Senior Employment Advisor, Martyne Callender. Anthony advised Martyne that being in his early sixties, he was seeking a full-time job to stay in until retirement.

Martyne had a long discussion with Anthony about his situation and why he thought he may not be getting responses to his applications.

With free help from Martyne, Anthony revamped his CV – which at 4 pages had been too long and needed refining. He also took part in free interview coaching which has now led to him securing full time employment as a Support Worker with Peabody Trust. Starting in April, Anthony reports that after a few months into the new role, he continues to thoroughly enjoy it. He has had excellent feedback on his work from his colleagues and managers.

Anthony is now able to cover his rent, bills and expenses because of his job. He is also accessing a great deal of training in his job, which is further developing his skills and career prospects.

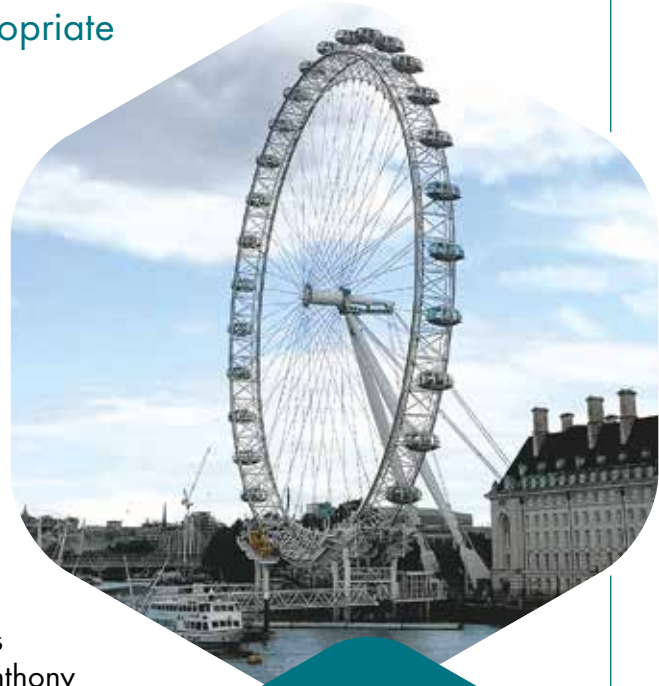
Anthony told Home News, ***"I am incredibly grateful to Martyne and the Love London Working project – for their help and support to apply for jobs, and for giving my CV a more professional look and the skills to write it. I did not think that I would be employable as I am 64 years old and believed I did not stand a chance of securing employment due to my age.***

Martyne gave me the confidence to apply for job opportunities and I ended up with 3 offers of employment after I had been interviewed. I accepted the offer which I secured employment with."

What a great result! Congratulations Anthony!

Martyne Callender, Hexagon's Senior Employment Adviser is available on

020 8768 7915 or 07799 880 675 or email to: mcallender@hexagon.org.uk



Feel as though your job prospects have ground to a halt? Hexagon and Love London Working project will help to give your career a spin in the right direction.



KIDS' ZONE



- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| AUGUST | JUNE |
| BEACH | LOTION |
| BIKINI | MOSQUITO |
| BOAT | SHORTS |
| CAMPING | SUNBURN |
| FISHING | SUNGLASSES |
| HAT | SUNTAN |
| HOT | SWIMMING |
| ICE CREAM | TENT |
| JULY | VACATION |

Find the words in the puzzle grid above. Words may go forwards, backwards, or across or down.

If you think you have found all the correct words in the word search, please send in the details by **Friday 20th August**.

Send your word search entry to:
homenews@hexagon.org.uk

To make sure **THIS COMPETITION IS AN ADULT FREE ZONE** (only children who live in Hexagon properties can win), be sure to include your full name, age and postcode with your entry!

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

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



Kids Zone Winners

Congratulations to Ruth Abolarin (DA8), Jayvaan Williams-Callam (SE19), and Basit Tijani-Olaogun (SE12) for winning last edition's wordsearch. Enjoy your £10 vouchers!

SUMMER SIZZLERS

How do teddy bears keep their den cool in summer?

They use bear conditioning!



What does the sun drink out of?

Sunglasses.

What do frogs like to drink on a hot summer day?

Croak-o-cola.



Yoghurt Buttons

Ingredients

1 x 125g pot mixed red fruit yogurt (you could also use mixed yellow fruit yogurt)

A few strawberries, sliced



Line a large baking tray with baking paper.

Spoon teaspoonfuls of yogurt onto the lined tray, spreading the yogurt slightly with the back of the spoon to make a neat round shape measuring about 4cm in diameter. You should get about 10 buttons.

Top each yogurt round with a slice of strawberry, if using, then put the baking sheet in the freezer for 1 hour until the yogurt buttons are firm. Peel the buttons off the paper and serve immediately.

COMPETITION TIME SUMMER 2021



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

Try your luck by answering the questions below and you might win a £20 shopping voucher prize! Just look through Home News to find the right answers, then email your completed entry to **homenews@hexagon.org.uk** by Friday 20th August.

ALL ENTRIES MUST INCLUDE YOUR FULL NAME AND ADDRESS INCLUDING POSTCODE.

1. Who usually pays for the repairs to Hexagon properties? List two exceptions to this general rule.
2. Are Hexagon residents allowed to keep BBQs on their balconies, and why is this?
3. What were the two main themes at this year's Annual Co-op Seminar?
4. List four areas of recent growth in the UK economy.
5. What do you have to do for your chance to win our social media competition?

Congratulations to our last edition's winners:

Christine Matthews (SE26), Nicole Garrett (SE18) and Beatrice Githendu (SE1) who each receive a £20 shopping voucher.

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

1. Employment roles offered by Hexagon within the Kickstart Scheme include Project Support and Administrative Support positions.
2. The main difference between earlier rounds of the government's Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and coming rounds, is that they will be open to people who have submitted a tax return for 2019/20, who may not have qualified for the earlier rounds.
3. All entries to the "Everyone's A Winner" gardening competition receive a prize.
4. Four residents sit on Hexagon's Board.
5. The first Hexagon Poetry Club met on 6th May, 2021.

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 **FRIDAY 20th AUGUST** 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 enquires

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

"ንኽነተርጉመልኩም ከሉግዜ ሕጉሳት ኢና!"

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.