

AUTUMN 2021

# HOME NEWS

Hexagon



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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



Welcome to another Home News. On page 4 we explain a current project aimed at ensuring that in the event of a fire everyone can be evacuated safely if evacuation is required. Please contact us if this appeal applies to you or anyone in your household.

We have recently filled a vacancy on our Board via a resident election so many thanks to all of you who cast your vote and many congratulations to Roseann Ayton for gaining the most votes. We look forward to welcoming Roseann onto the Board at the end of September. Turn to page 6 to read a message from Roseann.

On pages 20/21 we have an article about condensation with some tips on how to keep this and resultant mould growth at bay. We hope this is helpful, but if you continue to experience challenges please let us know so that we can investigate further to ensure this is not an ongoing issue in your home.

Lastly, remember to also read the resident Annual Report which is delivered to you in the same biodegradable sleeve as the Autumn Home News.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive

# STAY WARM THIS WINTER: GAS SAFETY CHECKS AND CAPPING

With Autumn nearly upon on us, we will soon be turning the heating back on.

As you are no doubt aware, if **you** are a tenant Hexagon has a legal duty to carry out a gas safety check at your home on an annual basis. This is to ensure that your gas installation is safe for you, your family, and your neighbours.

It is part of your tenancy agreement to provide access for this test – however on some occasions where access is not granted, our contractor may be forced to ‘cap’ your gas meter. This means disconnecting the gas supply which as a result neither your boiler nor your cooker (if gas) will work. This is only done as a last resort, and for the purposes of safety as mentioned above.

It is essential for there to be gas supply for the engineer to complete the safety checks. So, if you have a pre-payment meter and do not have any credit on it, our contractor unfortunately will be forced to ‘cap’ (shut off) the supply.

With the temperature set to fall further in the next month or so, we do not want anyone to be without heating. If we have capped your meter for any of the reasons above, please contact our contractors BSW Heating so that they can uncapped the meter.

If you are struggling to pay your bills and would like to talk to someone, please email our friendly Money Support Advisor Leanne Cairney at [Lcairney@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:Lcairney@hexagon.org.uk) or telephone **020 8768 9019**

Our gas contractor BSW Heating can be contacted on their freephone number **0800 206 1367** (24hrs)

With gas prices forecast to soar, and a crop of gas suppliers going bust, this is a vital time to compare the market and switch to the best value supplier for your home. And remember to look for green options that help save both your wallet and the planet!

To get the best deal on your gas and electricity, try comparison sites such as: [www.gocompare.com/gas-and-electricity/green-energy-tariffs/](http://www.gocompare.com/gas-and-electricity/green-energy-tariffs/) and [www.uswitch.com/gas-electricity/green-energy](http://www.uswitch.com/gas-electricity/green-energy)



Hexagon has a legal duty to carry out an annual gas safety check at your home, to help ensure your gas installation is safe.

To keep out of the cold this winter, do remember to let Hexagon know if your gas has been capped – and equally ensure your prepayment meter has a little gas supply on it when the contractor visits to run a safety test!



Adrian Beckingham,  
Home News  
editor.

# FIRE SAFETY

## What is a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)?

The purpose of a PEEP is to provide people who would have difficulty self-evacuating in the event of a fire with a tailored emergency evacuation plan.

The government led proposal will mean a PEEP is required to be completed for each resident living in a 'high-rise' building. It is up to residents to declare that they may need assistance, before their personal emergency evacuation plan can be drawn up.

Hexagon are taking a proactive approach to the findings of the Grenfell Enquiry. We are committed to going beyond mere legal compliance, so we plan to carry out a PEEP for each resident who may need one - regardless of whether they live in a 'high-rise'.

The first step of the process is an individual assessment of the residents' circumstances. This will include a discussion with the resident, consideration of their mobility issues, and an inspection of both the individual property and the wider building to review existing fire safety measures such as active and passive fire protection. The aim is for the resident and Hexagon to think through the available options and consider the specific arrangements best suited to those circumstances.

**Each individual PEEP will consider the resident's preferences alongside any proposed risk controls.**

Hexagon continue to liaise closely with the Fire Brigade and our specialist fire advisors to make sure we are taking a 'best practice' approach.

It is up to residents to declare that you or someone in your household may need assistance for a PEEP to be drawn up. If you might have difficulty hearing an alarm or evacuating your property without assistance, it is vital that you contact the Property Safety Team **NOW** via [propertysafety@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:propertysafety@hexagon.org.uk) or **020 8778 6699**. We can then discuss with you the steps we can take to help you or a vulnerable resident in your household stay as safe in your home as possible.



These photos illustrate the devastating effect of two recent fires in residential properties. Above shows the inside of a flat which caught fire through a faulty washer-dryer. Even though the resident was home at the time and raised the alarm quickly, damage was extensive. Below shows a terrace house fire believed to have been caused by the resident making adjustments to the electrics and running appliances via multiple extension leads.



## BONFIRE SAFETY TIPS

- Build your bonfire clear of buildings, garden sheds, fences and hedges
- Check the area to make sure there's no wildlife or pets hiding nearby
- Never use flammable liquids to start a bonfire and never burn dangerous items such as aerosol cans, paint tins, foam furniture or batteries
- Always keep a bucket of water or a hosepipe nearby in case of fire spread
- Don't leave bonfires unattended. An adult should supervise it until it has burnt out. If it has to be left, dampen it down with plenty of water
- Do not light fireworks indoors or off balconies. Always follow manufacturer's safety guidelines

## BONFIRE NIGHT SAFETY

London Fire Brigade have attended over 300 out-of-control bonfires in the last five years. Make sure your bonfire is safe.



Resident Milly of Forest Hill enjoying a bonfire, lit safely in a purpose-built firepit and kept away from all combustibles such as fences, verandahs and sheds.

## Did you know you can book a free home fire safety visit with London Fire Brigade?

Many fires at home start accidentally, and the effects can be devastating – as seen in these images. Loss can be to property, but lives are also often lost in fires. Be vigilant in your fire safety! To help prevent accidents and keep you safe, follow the link below to book your free fire assessment, or simply check your own fire safety against their checklist. Their new tool allows you to carry out a thorough check of your home in only a few minutes – so there's no need to wait for a visit:

[www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/book-a-home-fire-safety-visit](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/book-a-home-fire-safety-visit)



# RESIDENT BOARD MEMBER ELECTION RESULT



Earlier this year four residents stood to be elected on to the Hexagon Board. The four residents were Blessing Adedoyin, Pauline Aweto, Roseann Ayton and Sylvia Ogundu.

Congratulations to Roseann who takes her place on the Board for the next three years. Image provided by Roseann

Towards the end of June ballot papers were sent out to all Hexagon residents along with election statements from each of the four candidates. In addition to the written statements, this year's election also saw each candidate present a video of themselves explaining why they are standing for the Board. Hexagon residents were invited to view the video statements that were hosted on the Hexagon website.

A big thank you to each of the 243 residents who returned their ballot forms. The outcome from the ballots saw Roseann Ayton secure the majority of the votes cast.

Congratulations to Roseann who will now take her place on the Hexagon Board for the next three years. Roseann writes:

*"Firstly a huge THANKS to all residents who voted for me – much appreciated!*

*"I am committed to ensuring that Hexagon*

*improves complaint handling processes and also learns the lessons from all complaints including those relating to: day-to-day repairs, stock improvement works and fire safety.*

*"I am also very keen to ensure that third party contractors improve the quality of their communication with tenants before any repairs or fire safety works commence. I would also like to better understand the needs of leaseholders and tenants with disabilities to ensure that they are fully supported.*

*"I warmly look forward to taking up my new role as a Board Member."*

A big thank you to Blessing, Pauline and Sylvia for putting their nominations forward for the Hexagon Board. Congratulations also to Trudian Smith (SE18) who won the ballot prize draw of £50 in shopping vouchers.

## DON'T MISS THE RESIDENT ANNUAL REPORT!

Once a year Hexagon's resident Annual Report is delivered to your door with the Autumn Home News. This gives you a round up of Hexagon's key services over the past year.

Resident Sarah from Bexley is a member of the Annual Report Group who help guide the report during production. She writes: "It looks stunning! I was drawn to the fresh colours as they inspire a smile, so for me a big thumbs up on the initial impression!

"With regards to the content. I also like that everything is "bite-size" which kept me engaged and reading.

"But what struck me as really well done was to have the faces of the relevant stakeholders at the

end of each article – it made it personal and connected if that makes sense. I hope it does :)."

Your copy of the resident Annual Report was delivered with this copy of Home News.

If you, like Sarah, want to play a role in guiding next year's Resident Annual Report, email your interest to: [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)

Resident Sarah Schuh is a Hexagon resident living in Bexley who gets involved as a member of the Annual Report Group Photo supplied by Sarah.



# RESIDENTS SCRUTINISE REPAIRS

Repairs are a priority for many residents and the Repairs Group is a dedicated resident-led group that works with Hexagon to scrutinise and help shape the repairs service; making recommendations to ensure that key issues affecting residents are considered.

Since it's re-launch in February 2021, the Repairs Group has met nearly every six weeks in an effort to keep up momentum and get changes happening sooner rather than later. Group members also attend monthly meetings between Hexagon and repairs contractors to get a transparent and first-hand insight into the service.

One of the first areas of focus has been to ensure the resident voice is heard as Hexagon begins work on preparing a new repairs contract. Hexagon is currently preparing for the renewal of repairs contracts and a resident sub-group will be involved at all stages of the upcoming tender process and interviews; with an aim to ensure resident priorities are embedded in the selection of contractors.

The Repairs Group has also set out priority areas for further investigation. The group will be carrying out anonymised case-study reviews and interviews to identify lessons to learn. These can be implemented to help prevent similar issues arising in the future. Some of the focus areas identified include recurring repairs and leaks, communications with residents, the repairs reporting process and gathering reliable satisfaction data.

All recommendations are tracked and responded to. The group is closely linked with the Performance Review Group, a resident scrutiny group who make recommendations directly to the Board.

On behalf of every resident undergoing repairs, Hexagon say many thanks to all Repairs Group members for giving time, valuable input and important contributions to the repairs service. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

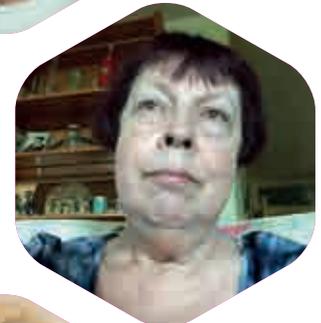
If you would like to know more about the Repairs Group, the Annual Report Group or others ways how you can get involved in resident scrutiny email to: [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk) or call **020 8778 6699** and ask for Amanda or Brian in the Resident Involvement Team.

Sonji Nurse  
DA17



Adrian Ingram  
SE4

Chris Matthews  
SE26



Carol Brown  
SE13

Orisha Stewart  
SE8



Leonardo  
Votto SE13

# HOME NEWS READERS' SURVEY

The Home News Readers Survey was an online survey to gather input from residents on how to improve this magazine. We would like to thank the 82 residents who took the time to answer each question. Whilst this is quite a small group, their feedback can offer valuable guidance towards future developments for the magazine – from the types of stories we run, to design features and more.

## KEY FINDINGS

- A relatively high number of respondents (64%) read every issue of Home News. Another 24% read at least one or two issues per year. If even 40% of all residents read every issue of the magazine, with perhaps another 10% reading 1-2 issues per year, that would make Home News a powerful tool for Hexagon to communicate with residents about the issues that matter to you
- The majority of respondents (43%) skim the magazine for items of interest, however an impressive 29% claim to read every page. Another 13% actively seek out specific articles
- Cover stories and competitions are the most attractive elements of the magazine. The most popular stories are those covering topics that affect you directly – such as ASB (anti-social behaviour), bin store areas, sustainable living and employment. The Editor's Feature section is also very popular, with about a third of all recipients reading articles in this section such as on homelessness or modern slavery. Our Top Tips on areas such as saving money and sustainable living also scored quite well, attracting approximately one in four readers. Lighter human interest stories have less wide appeal. The least popular stories among respondents were gardening features, and recipes. We will use this knowledge to help shape future editions of the magazine



Some recent Home News covers

- Most readers do not dislike anything about the magazine. That's certainly good to know, but we welcome and value your ideas on making the magazine better. Contact us at [homenews@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:homenews@hexagon.org.uk) with your Comments To The Editor
- The paper version remains the most popular. 48% of respondents prefer to receive the paper version of Home News, against 30% opting to receive it by email, and just 4% choosing to view it on our Hexagon website. If you would like to receive Home News via email only, this helps the environment and also makes money saved on printing and posting available for our other housing services to you. Please email us at [homenews@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:homenews@hexagon.org.uk) so we can add you to our list of digital recipients!
- Overall, 70% of respondents claimed they had benefited in some way by reading Home News. For example a third said it had improved their understanding of recycling or other sustainable living practises, 23% claim the magazine helped improve their fire safety at home, and another 21% claimed they had found new employment through reading the magazine

To help towards our sustainability goals, we may swap the way Home News is delivered to readers. At present, every household receives a paper copy, unless they opt out and choose an emailed digital version. This may change so that everyone receives only a digital copy, with the option to opt in for a paper version. But what do you think? Send your thoughts to: [homenews@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:homenews@hexagon.org.uk)



## CO-OP SATISFACTION

Hexagon works with eight housing co-ops who are responsible for managing properties on behalf of Hexagon. Every three years we carry out a Satisfaction Survey with co-op managed residents to help understand how well co-op services are being provided. The most recent survey took place in April and May 2021, with a response rate of 28%.

The feedback provided indicated a high level of satisfaction, with an overall satisfaction rating of approximately 82% (including those who were very or fairly satisfied). Other highlights from the survey include a 90% satisfaction rating on the repairs service received; 84% satisfaction rating on the overall quality of homes; and 73% satisfaction rating on opportunities to become involved in the work of the co-op.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to contribute your views and we have shared the more detailed results with the co-ops concerned. We would like to extend our congratulations to co-ops on an impressive rate of overall satisfaction and we look forward to continuing to work with you in delivering a first class housing service for co-op managed Hexagon residents.



# MAKE YOUR NOMINATIONS NOW FOR THE STAFF EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2021

Nominating Hexagon staff for a Staff Excellence Award is your chance to let them know if any staff members have had a particularly positive impact on your experience as a resident. Below are some of last year's winners, but who will come out as winners this year? That is up to you!

The past year has been challenging for all of us, but we hope the staff at Hexagon have continued to provide you with the same high quality service that residents have come to expect, whether it be virtually or in person.

SO it is that time of year again, when we ask **YOU** to show your appreciation to the staff of Hexagon, who you feel do a "great job". At our Staff Conference, held in November, we will present our annual Staff Excellence Awards. These awards take place to celebrate and congratulate the commitment and dedication of Hexagon's staff who are prepared to "go that extra mile" whilst carrying out their duties. As well as Hexagon staff being able to nominate their colleagues, **YOU**, our residents, are invited to nominate staff who you feel deserve to receive an award.

You may want to nominate a member of staff who you feel has provided you with excellent customer service, or has provided you with advice or extra support during this difficult year. You are able to nominate any member of Hexagon's staff.

If you would like to nominate a member of staff, please email your nomination to **humanresources@hexagon.org.uk** giving the name of who you are nominating and your reason for nominating them (please be concise and provide specific examples). Nominations need to be with us by **Sunday, 7th November 2021**.

Who will you nominate for 2021?



photo supplied by Adrian



photo supplied by Fiona



photo supplied by Sabrina



photo supplied by Melonie

Communications Officer Adrian Beckingham, Housing Sustainment Officer Fiona Jones, Recovery Worker Sabrina Chalcroft and ASB Officer Melonie Wheatle were among last year's Staff Excellence Awards winners. It is up to residents to nominate which Hexagon staff have made the most positive impact for you.

# A CONVERSATION WITH ROSE MILLANAISE

SUPPORTED HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER



**Hi Rose, please tell our readers what is your role at Hexagon, and what team are you in?**

I'm a Supported Housing Neighbourhood Officer in the Housing Service Department.

**How long have you been at Hexagon and where did you work before?**

I've been at Hexagon for around 15 years. Before that I worked for Affinity Sutton for 13 years, first as a Housing Officer then Tenancy Officer in and around Bromley, Penge and Orpington, where many of my tenants were travellers.

**What are your responsibilities in your role at Hexagon?**

I provide housing management for a number of supported housing schemes: they include shared, staffed houses for adults with learning disabilities – a small block of flats with staff on site, for people with mental illness who have left hospital and plan to move on to more independent living later. I also work in some self-contained flats for people recovering from mental illness and two shared houses for young people. I make sure repairs are reported and followed up; I inspect the buildings regularly for health and safety problems and fire hazards like for example any rubbish left in corridors or fire doors propped open; I work with the staff, Social Services and hospitals to find a suitable resident when a room becomes empty; I liaise with staff and residents when there are reports of anti-social behaviour; and liaise between support staff, families of residents and Hexagon's revenue officer to make sure that the right benefits are claimed and rent paid.

**What do you enjoy about your role?**

I enjoy the variety – no two days are the same. I might go to a scheme for one issue, and end up dealing with lots of other ones.

I have to think on my feet – especially now that I am not office-based and can't just turn to a colleague for advice. I have to wear many hats – I need to be able to talk to the staff and disabled residents in some schemes. I have to be firm but non-confrontational with the young people in their shared houses – I've noticed that they want the house to be in good condition but need encouragement to do their bit towards cleaning and tidying.

**What is important about your role?**

I make a difference to the lives of vulnerable and disabled residents, I support them to get issues dealt with quickly and swiftly. For example I might need to help a resident who tells us that his electricity has "gone off" to work out whether it's a problem with an appliance, or the supply, or the wiring so that the right people can sort it out. It's important for me, working with residents who have support needs, to help make their lives easier by offering additional assistance with managing their tenancy.

**What interests do you have outside of work?**

Outside work I like to spend quality time with my family and I'm active in my church.

**Tell us something interesting or surprising about yourself?**

I was taking part in a "swimming with dolphins" experience in Jamaica when I discovered that my swimming was not quite as great as I thought and the life guards had to lend a hand...

Supported Housing Neighbourhood Officer Rose Millanaise must wear many hats with a wide range of different clientele to ensure everyone's needs are promptly met and satisfied in this demanding role.

Photo supplied by Rose

# EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING WORKSHOPS 2021

Register onto our employment service to access any of the online workshops below.

Job applications – supporting statements workshop	<b>Tuesday 12/10/2021</b> 10.30am – 1pm <b>Tuesday 07/12/2021</b> 10.30am – 1pm	Learn how to promote your skills, experience and answer person specification points in a supporting statement.
Interview skills workshop	<b>Wednesday 27/10/2021</b> 10am – 1pm	Learn how to prepare for different types of interviews and answer interview questions using the STAR method.
Mock interviews	<b>Thursday 25/11/2021</b> 10am – 1pm	An opportunity to participate in a mock interview with an employer.

## COFFEE MORNINGS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS

These are open to all residents so get in touch to express your interest.

Housing careers information session	<b>Wednesday 10/11/2021</b> 10am – 11.30am	Learn how to start a career in housing, and hear what it is like to work within the sector from experienced professionals.
Coffee mornings	<b>Monday 18/10/21</b> 11am – 12pm <b>Monday 22/11/21</b> 11am – 12pm <b>Monday 13/12/21</b> 11am – 12pm	An opportunity for residents to hear about the range of support Hexagon offers to residents and meet some of the Community investment Team.

For more information or to book your place on any of the above, please contact Martyne Callendar by telephone on **020 8768 7915**, or via email to **Mcallendar@hexagon.org.uk**

### EDITOR'S NOTE

We apologise if Home News arrives in your snailmail after any of the dates given on this page. To get Home News as soon as it is ready and avoid any delay via traditional posting, contact us at [homenews@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:homenews@hexagon.org.uk) to add yourself to the email list.



Please specify if you wish to request the digital version INSTEAD of the paper copy, otherwise you will receive both.



# EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

Hexagon's employment support service reported 40 people securing employment and/or progressing their career since January 2021. 73% of them found work that matched their career aspirations. See some examples of their success below.

## Kickstart

An employment scheme offering six months of paid work experience at Hexagon to 16 – 24 year olds who were on Universal Credit was promoted to residents inviting them to apply.

Two residents on our Love London Working project were supported with their applications and interview preparation, which helped them secure their Kickstart roles:

Corey Sterling started work with the Customer Services Team in July and will be working with the Human Resources Team too going forward. Corey said, "I'm finding my time at Hexagon brilliant, I'm really enjoying helping people. Kickstart is definitely the best way to get started in a career in housing."

Shanice Black started work as a Project Support Assistant with the Community Investment Team in August. She said, "I received great CV support from the employment and skills team which helped me get my new role as a Project Support Assistant. The support I received has helped boost my confidence in applying for jobs. I am enjoying my job so far and I'm learning a lot."

Other success stories include:

- Jody, who returned to work as an Asbestos Contracts Administrator after being made redundant due to Covid last year. She'd struggled to find local work that fits around her childcare commitments and got to a point where she felt incredibly frustrated. Jody's advisor revamped her CV, plus provided additional employment advice and guidance. Jody was able to use her revamped CV along with her existent experience and skills to secure her ideal job. The employer liked her so much they offered her flexible working to meet her childcare needs. Jody said, "Thank you for all your help with rewriting my CV. I'm enjoying my job and things are going well."
- Sarah had a history of being in and out of low paid work. She didn't have many qualifications and her dream was to secure full time employment that provided sector specific training, which would progress her career. Sarah worked with her advisor to revise her CV, access practical support with her job applications and get access to vacancies. This led to her finding her dream job. Sarah added, "I have now secured myself a full-time position as a trainee housing assistant for Lewisham Council. Thank you for all your help!"



Do you feel like your career has run out of fuel? Contact our Employment Team who can help you hone your skills to make the most of this vibrant city's changing economy.



# EMPLOYMENT SCAMS

More than a third of the UK use the internet to search for new job opportunities. Unfortunately, this has opened the door to fraudsters looking to scam jobseekers.

## Common scams to watch out for:

### Advance-fee scams

- You're asked for money by fraudsters to write your CV or carry out security and police checks.
- You're asked to pay for expensive training programmes which either don't exist or do but are completely worthless and unnecessary.

### Premium-rate phone scams

- You're asked to call a number for an initial phone interview – you're kept on hold for a long period of time and in some cases, duped into going through a fake interview on the phone. This could last up to an hour at a cost of hundreds of pounds.

### Salary-payment scam

- Fraudsters may ask for your bank account details to set up salary payments. They will use these details to steal money from your account.
- Be mindful of providing too much personal information on your CV because this could lead to identity theft, where fraudsters can obtain your details, steal your identity and spend your money, take out loans or buy goods in your name. Do not include:
  - Your date of birth
  - Your full address
  - Driving licence number
  - National Insurance number
  - Marital status and number of children
  - A photo



## Follow these steps to protect yourself from employment fraud:

1. Be suspicious if the employer or agent provides a webmail email address such as @yahoo or @hotmail or @gmail as a point of contact.
2. Check any documents for poor spelling and grammar – this is often a sign that fraudsters are at work.
3. Check official records on websites such as Companies House to confirm that the organisation offering you the job actually exists. If it does, contact the organisation directly through officially listed contact details to confirm the job offer is genuine.

For further help and information go to: [www.jobsaware.co.uk/](http://www.jobsaware.co.uk/)

If you want more information about any money related matter, contact our Financial Inclusion Team on **020 8768 9019** or email to: [Lcairney@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:Lcairney@hexagon.org.uk). Alternatively, if you are interested in getting help finding work you can contact our Employment Team via telephone on **020 8768 7915** or email to: [mcallender@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:mcallender@hexagon.org.uk) and they will be happy to help.

# MONEY SAVING TIPS

By Leanne Cairney, Money Support Advisor

Christmas is fast approaching - it is now time to prepare so that you do not blow your budget when buying Christmas presents.

## Budget and track your spending

Make a list of all your Christmas expenses – including gifts, food, cards, wrapping paper and travel. Calculate how much money you have available to cover Christmas, decide your spending limit, then track how much you are spending as you go.

## Think outside the box with gifts

Borrowing toys from toy libraries not only helps your wallet and the planet, but it also means your child/ren can look forward to swapping to a different toy with each visit to the library. To find your nearest toy library, search “toy library near me” in any internet browser, such as Google. The one closest to me is [lewishamtoylibrary.org.uk/](http://lewishamtoylibrary.org.uk/)

Another great money saving option for children is Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (yes, as in the singer)! Here enrolled children from birth to age five years can receive a high quality, age-appropriate book in the post each month for free. Although not yet available everywhere, it operates in many boroughs where Hexagon residents live. Go to [www.imaginationlibrary.com](http://www.imaginationlibrary.com) and add your postcode in their search box to check if it available in your borough. For example, this link is for Southwark – [www.imaginationlibrary.com/uk/affiliate/lonsouthwark](http://www.imaginationlibrary.com/uk/affiliate/lonsouthwark)

## Christmas Dinner Savers

It’s a thrifty idea to make your meal plan, list all the products needed, then create a budget and stick to it. Check if any of these ingredients are already in your fridge, freezer or cupboards - but be sure to check their ‘use by’ dates too! A great way to reduce the cost of your shop is to use supermarket coupons – why not try out websites like [www.supersavvyme.co.uk?](http://www.supersavvyme.co.uk?)



Leanne Cairney, Money Support Advisor

Photo supplied by Hexagon



### EDITOR’S TIP:

You can save your pocket and the environment by upcycling some gifts, see page 22 for some examples.



Thank you to resident Nicole Garrett (SE18) for sharing another money-saving idea. Go to [www.checkoutsmart.com](http://www.checkoutsmart.com) or download the app at Apple Store or Google Play to earn cashback on your shopping at participating retailers.



# YOUR GARDENING STORIES

Over the last year many more people have started to discover the joys of growing and gardening. Whether you have a balcony, plantpot, garden, window box or indoor space, there is always a place for you to grow things.

Nicky Hazelwood, Community Investment Manager writes, "I wouldn't class myself as a gardener, but having read Denny's Digs and listened to Denny and others, I have started to become a little inspired and became a trier. I attempted to grow tomatoes for the first time, and to my absolute joy it worked. I found myself enjoying looking after them, watching them grow, gathering the tomatoes for our use. I also found myself having chats about growing tomatoes and learning tips from others. Rebecca from Croydon (see her story below) shared some great tips which helped me with my crop."

Here are a few of the stories from residents about growing and gardening

## Rebecca Neil, Croydon

Our patio used to be my husband's domain until his health worsened in 2019. We knew he would be confined to bed for some time, so I took it over. I grew some colourful flowers that he would be able to see and enjoy from the bedroom or that I could pick to put beside his bed. He's now able to get up and about a bit so this year - as well as the usual showy flowers - I thought I'd see if I've inherited my grandfather's magical skill with growing tomatoes. I'm very pleased to say that on a Croydon patio that faces a busy road my tomatoes have just started bearing fruit. The neighbours probably think I'm barmy because grandad said tomatoes grow best if you talk to them so I wander round the patio chatting away to them!

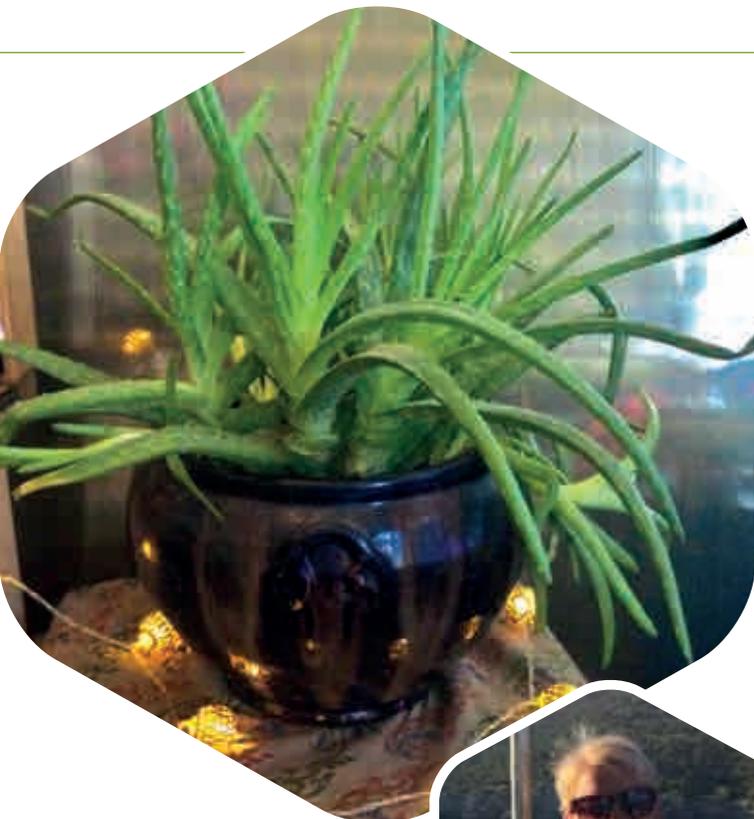


Rebecca and some of her plants.



Rebecca's tomato plants





### Dawn Hicks, Rotherhithe

**Dawn would like to introduce you to her beautiful aloe vera plant.**

This plant was given to me as a small cutting about 10 years ago by a dear man named Joe. He was also known as the "salt of the earth guv'nor of the Moby Dick" - a pub in Southwark. Sadly he passed away in 2017 and will be missed by all who knew him.

This aloe vera plant just keeps growing with little help from me. We are constantly taking clippings to use on all sorts of ailments such as mosquito bites, sunburn, face treatments etc.

It's a plant that just keeps giving and I absolutely love it.

I have other plants in the house but I thought this was the best one to share with you. I hope you love it.



Bruce's wonderful garden

### Bruce Lawrence, East Dulwich

**Linda McMahon, Digital Champion wanted to share this story with you about Bruce Lawrence, a resident who she had been regularly calling during lockdown as part of the Wellbeing Calls programme.**

Mr Bruce Lawrence has been on my wellbeing call list since the start of the calls - he is a chirpy, cockney character who always has a heartfelt story to share.

During lockdown Mr Lawrence has hardly been out as he has been shielding. During our chats he has made many references to his garden being his saving grace during lockdown. He shared a few photos of his wonderful garden and the tale of it. Originally he was in another Hexagon property and he never did anything to the garden - as a result it became totally overgrown to the extent he could not open the back door. When he was rehoused he made a commitment that in his next property he would look after the garden - as you can see from the pictures he has made his garden into something very special.



All photos supplied by residents

# ART CLASSES FOR RESIDENTS

We have a very exciting opportunity for residents to be involved in the design of our Home News magazine cover.

One of our very talented residents, graphic artist Jesse Alijore, will be volunteering his time to provide six weekly free online art classes. During this time residents will learn how to sketch and will be supported to complete their own drawing. These paintings will be used by Jesse as the basis for the design of a Home News cover early next year and we will also feature an article about this art project in the magazine.

All art materials needed for the lessons will be provided by Hexagon. Lessons are likely to start in November with dates to be confirmed.

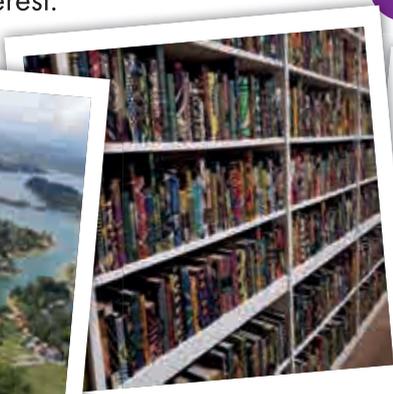
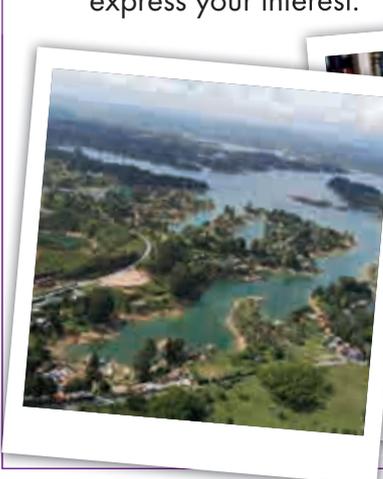
We are looking for up to eight residents to participate in the classes. You would need to be able to commit to attending every session and have an interest in learning how to paint.

Please telephone Martyne on **020 8768 7915**, or email: **mcallender@hexagon.org.uk** to express your interest.

Which of these images do you think would make a good cover for Home News, and why? Considering this will help you design your sketch.



What makes a good magazine cover? Here are some of the past images we have used as front cover photos – but this competition is for a fine art sketch or drawing, so what sort of picture would you choose to create? Perhaps ask yourself what relevance does it hold for a housing magazine such as Home News and our community of readers who are all Hexagon residents?



# WHAT ARE QR CODES?

QR codes are a quick read (QR) way of accessing a web site or make a booking or send comments.

Rather than typing in the long website address, you can scan a code with your mobile phone camera and it will take you straight to the web page. In fact, it can take you straight to the page you want, so you don't have to trawl through the website first.

## New to QR codes?

Whenever you see an article or poster with a QR code, open your camera on your mobile phone and hold it up to the code as if you are going to take a photo. Your phone will 'read' the code and you will then see a web page title, click on the title (usually at the top of your screen) and the page should open.

Use this QR code to the right to find out more about how we are planning to use QR codes as one of the ways to help keep in touch with you and improve the way we communicate.



# ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) & TENANCY BREACH

ASB affects lots of people and can have an impact on you, your home and your community. It affects not only residents but also staff. Whilst the vast majority of our residents are able to satisfactorily communicate with Hexagon; in a small number of cases we have had to take action against residents for ASB towards staff. We want our residents to feel safe in – and satisfied with – their homes. Equally, we want our staff to be safe when they go to work.

If any resident uses threats, intimidation, verbal abuse or violence towards our staff or other residents this will not be tolerated.

These can be criminal matters. When necessary, we will work with the police to investigate these incidents.

Recently legal action was taken against a resident who repeatedly verbally abused, threatened and intimidated staff over the phone. Unfortunately, the resident attended the office and damaged the entrance door to gain access. Staff were at work

at the time and some were left feeling shocked and frightened.

Hexagon immediately took legal action against the resident and successfully obtained an injunction for two years. When this initial injunction expired the resident again began verbally abusing and threatening Hexagon staff. Hexagon successfully obtained another two year injunction. Abusive or threatening behaviour is also a breach of your tenancy agreement. Further action can result in eviction.

Eviction is a last resort except for the most serious cases. We will work with residents and our partners to provide adequate assistance. Our priority is to ensure our staff are safe and secure at work to help them deliver services to our residents.



Melonie  
Wheatle,  
Antisocial  
Behaviour  
Officer

# CONDENSATION

Condensation is caused when moisture held in warmer air meets a cold surface like a window or wall and condenses into water droplets.

If this happens regularly, mould may start to grow. This usually appears on cold external walls and surfaces and in places where the air does not circulate well. The moisture created can also damage clothes, furnishings and decoration.

## What causes condensation?

Condensation usually occurs in winter because the building is cold and windows are opened less often so moist air cannot escape.

## Where does it occur?

You can often see condensation for short periods in bathrooms and kitchens because of the steamy atmosphere. Quite frequently it appears for long periods in unheated bedrooms.

Sometimes it is in cupboards or corners of rooms where ventilation and movement of air are restricted.

## When does it occur?

All houses are affected by condensation at some time. It usually occurs when a lot of moisture and steam are produced. For example:

- When cooking
- Having a bath or shower
- Washing clothes
- When using rooms for long periods of time
- After a cold night when bedroom windows mist up

## What are the main causes of condensation?

- Drying clothes inside the house/flat
- Steam from cooking in the kitchen
- Steam from bathing and washing
- Lack of air circulating in the house/flat
- No ventilation in the house/flat – this can be made worse by too much draught proofing
- Raising room temperatures suddenly. This can put warm air in contact with cold surfaces, increasing the chances of water vapour condensing
- Unvented tumble dryer



Condensation on a window



When condensation happens regularly, mould may start to grow.



Photos supplied by Hexagon

## HOW CAN I CUT DOWN ON CONDENSATION?

- Try not to dry clothes inside your home. Dry them outside instead if possible
- Don't put wet clothes on radiators
- When cooking use the extractor fan and keep the kitchen door closed and put lids on pans
- When bathing or washing keep the bathroom door closed, switch on the extractor fan – if there is a lot of water vapour, open the window
- Keep furniture, such as beds, wardrobes etc. clear of the walls to let air circulate
- Keep your house/flat warm
- Open any vents in windows or walls
- While we sleep, we produce about one litre of water vapour – so it will also help if you leave your windows/air vents open at night

## Mould

If you allow a constant build up of water vapour this can lead to mould growth on cold surfaces such as walls, ceilings and window panes.

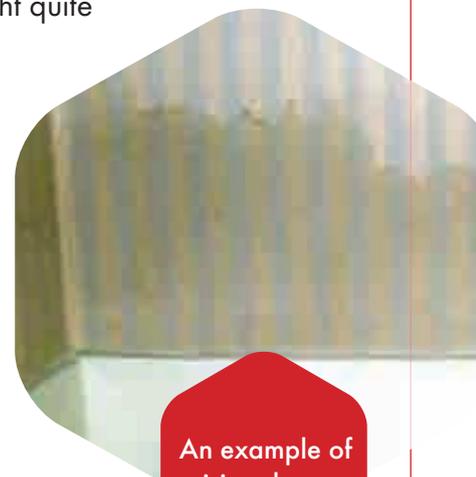
It is important to clean this mould as soon as it appears - failure to do so will allow the mould to spread to other areas of the house/flat. A mould cleaner can be bought quite cheaply from any DIY store.

## What is the difference between damp and condensation?

Damp occurs when a fault in the building's basic structure lets in water from the outside.

**Penetrating damp** occurs if water is coming in through the walls or roof, for example under a loose roof tile or through cracks.

**Rising damp** occurs if there is a problem with the damp proof course. The usual evidence of rising damp is a 'tide mark' on the walls, this is usually light brown in colour.



An example of rising damp.

## YOU SAID WE DID

Photo supplied by Rebecca



Welcome to this new section **You said We did**, a regular column by our new Housing Services Director Rebecca Outram. Here we spotlight in brief some areas where you as residents have made requests – showing how we have responded.

### You said.....

Can I send you a picture of the repair that needs doing so I don't have to take time off work to allow a surveyor to come round and inspect my home?

When I make a complaint, I want to speak to the person at Hexagon who's looking into resolving things for me

### We did...

**We started doing this during the pandemic and we're continuing to do this.**

**We have reviewed our complaints procedure to build in having a conversation with you to find out what outcome you'd like.**

# UPCYCLING COMPETITION

Congratulations to Ife Akintoye of Croydon who won the Upcycling Competition from the Summer edition of Home News. Ife receives a £20 shopping voucher as the prize.

Why not follow Ife's instructions to turn a tired old table and chairs you own into something exciting with that brand new feel? Follow Ife's instructions below:

**I recently upcycled my dining table and four chairs. It was pretty straight forward!**

1. If possible, remove the top of the table from the base.
2. Use a sanding machine to remove as much of the original polish from the table and chairs. If you are using chalk paint, you don't really need to sand or prime first but I wanted to be very sure.
3. For the top that you removed earlier, use a wood stain (I used dark oak) and follow the instructions on the bottle. It dries pretty quickly and leaves you with a fantastic completely different colour!
4. Paint the base of your table as well as your four chairs in your chosen colour (or whichever parts you want to paint, it's totally up to you!).
5. Coat everything with a wax. I used a shabby chic furniture wax to give it that shabby chic look.
6. Screw the top back to the base.



Photos supplied by Ife

The more you upcycle, the less you need to throw away and buy – this is healthy for your wallet and the planet too!

## Christmas Gift Upcycling Competition

Why not upcycle some Christmas gifts for your friends and family? It helps your wallet and the planet too! If you do, then send some brief easy-to-follow instructions along with a photo or two of the gifts you made to [homenews@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:homenews@hexagon.org.uk) by Friday 5th November. You could be in with a chance of seeing your entry published in the Winter 21/22 edition of Home News with a £20 shopping voucher to enjoy as your prize! Published in January 2022, it won't spoil the Christmas gift surprise!



Resident Sarah (SE23) upcycled empty food cans into fun-looking sling shot targets, whilst Christine (SE26) upcycled disused bottles into beautiful vases.



# 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 Friday 5th November to [homenews@hexagon.org.uk](mailto: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.



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

HALLOWEEN  
 HAUNTED  
 SPOOKY  
 BATS  
 PUMPKIN  
 COSTUMES  
 WITCH  
 VAMPIRE  
 TRICK  
 MASKS  
 CANDY  
 TREAT  
 PARTY  
 BOO  
 GHOSTS

### Winners

Congratulations to Hannah Leech, age 12 (SE13); Imani Musinguzi, age 13 (CR5); and Wisdom Okonkwo, age 8 (CR0) who each win a £10 shopping voucher for their correct entries in the Summer Word Search.



## ANIMAL SURVIVAL QUIZ



Each of these animals is in the danger of extinction. But where do they each live in their natural habitat, and how many are left?

Amur leopard:

Bornean orangutan:

Eastern lowland gorilla:

Javan rhino:

Black rhino:

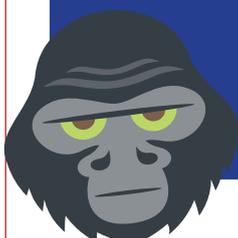
Cross river gorilla:

Hawksbill turtles:

Malayan tiger:

For example: The Amur leopard comes from forests in the Primorye region of southeast Russia and northern China. Only about 100 are left in the wild.

Send back your answers to the email above by 5th November. Three correct entries will each win a £10 shopping voucher.



# COMPETITION TIME AUTUMN 2021

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!**



**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. List the theme of one coffee morning information session being held by Hexagon for our residents.
2. What is the main difference between damp and condensation?
3. What is a PEEP?
4. List some examples of ASB.
5. What must you do to nominate a Hexagon staff member for a Staff Excellence Award?

### Congratulations to our last edition's winners:

Suzanne Cooke (SE22), Christine Matthews (SE26), and Serena Williams (SE19) who each receive a £20 voucher.

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

1. Hexagon usually pays for the repairs (covered by rental income paid by tenants) to Hexagon properties. Some exceptions to this general rule include if you are a leaseholder or in a shared-ownership scheme; if the repair is a small internal repair like a toilet seat; or if damage to a property was done by yourself or someone you know.
2. Hexagon residents are not allowed to keep BBQ's on their balconies due to the risk of fire damage to your own property and the nearby properties.
3. The two main themes at this year's Annual Co-op Seminar were Fire Safety and Preparing for Net Zero Carbon.
4. Some areas of recent growth in the UK economy include: supermarkets and grocery retail, freelancing and the 'gig economy', warehouse pickers and delivery drivers, IT and digital technology.
5. For a chance to win our social media competition you need to "like" one of Hexagon's Facebook posts, retweet Hexagon on Twitter, or comment below one or more of Hexagon's posts on Facebook or Twitter.

### HOW TO ENTER?

**WE ARE ONLY ACCEPTING  
ENTRIES BY EMAIL AT PRESENT.**

Email to: [homenews@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:homenews@hexagon.org.uk)

Include your name and postcode.

Three correct entries received by Friday 5th November 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](mailto:customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk)

for all general enquiries

[repairs\\_reporting@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:repairs_reporting@hexagon.org.uk)

to report a repair

[www.hexagon.org.uk](http://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

"ንክብርታዎን ለሁሉም ከሌሎች ሕግ-ሳት አይ!"

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.