

SUMMER 2022

HOME NEWS

Hexagon



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Community Gardening & Wellbeing

WIN
VOUCHERS
£10 & £20

NEW COMPETITIONS
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WELCOME FROM OUR NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Hello!

I am pleased to be making my first contribution to Home News.

I am joining Hexagon at a particularly challenging time as residents face financial pressures that I have not witnessed since the early 1980s. Food, fuel, and all the basic necessities are going up. In these most difficult times, we will do what we can to make you aware of opportunities and services that may help. The Community Investment and Money Support Teams can offer a range of support for residents facing money worries, including help with childcare costs. See pages 6 – 8.

Sharon Carter is our new Chief Executive.

I am delighted to see that Hexagon has relaunched our work experience programme, the details of which can be found on page 9. Hexagon has a strong tradition of employing local people, including Hexagon residents, as you will see from Stephen's story on page 5.

The other major challenge facing us is climate change. We are committed to ensuring all homes have a minimum Energy Performance Certificate rating of C by 2030 and we will be investing around £4 million to make this happen. If you would like to do your bit, there are some helpful tips on page 4. If you would like to work with us to meet this challenge, there is a call out for volunteers on page 13.

This edition of Home News also provides some updates and advice on repairs, the new gas heating contractor, and reducing fire risk.

I am looking forward to getting out and about so I can meet you at our Big Conversation events in late Summer. I want to hear what you love about Hexagon and what we need to change. I may turn up on your doorstep or you can join me at an afternoon tea event at one of the locations listed on page 12. If you would like to attend, please register your interest by emailing: getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk.

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. We offer a £5 voucher for any we publish!

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

/HexagonHA

@HousingHexagon



YOU SAID WE DID



Welcome to the latest instalment of our page "You Said We Did". Compiled by our Housing Services Director Rebecca Outram, readers can see recent examples of where Hexagon has listened to the frustrations of residents and taken steps to adapt our services to work better for you.



Rebecca Outram,
Housing Services Director.
Photo supplied by Rebecca

You said.....

We did...

- I've complained to Hexagon on numerous occasions and I'm concerned that you didn't reply to me in a timely way.
- I claim Universal Credit. My car insurance company give me a portal that means I can see the documents I need - will Hexagon do something similar please so I can access the copies of my rent increase letter and my tenancy agreements?
- I've experienced anti-social behaviour for getting on the best part of a year. I'm really unhappy with the way the case is being handled.
- I'm not happy with the quality of the repairs that are carried out in my home.

- We've recently employed two part time complaints co-ordinators to help us log and assign our complaints.
We have also set up a new complaints email: complaints@hexagon.org.uk
You'll get an automated response to your email, letting you know we've received it. We will contact you within 5 working days or less to let you know our reference number and who your case has been assigned to.
We've also just gone live in managing our complaints in our housing system. This means we can see at a glance what complaints we have and when the responses to our customers are due.

- This is something that we'll be working on as part of our customer portal. We're currently working on getting all of these documents stored electronically so we can give you access to them on our customer portal. We'll start with tenancy agreements first and then gradually roll out from there once we know the data is safe and secure.
- We invited the resident to a multi-agency meeting where the police and a representative from the local authority were present. We reviewed the case together and agreed actions for everyone in attendance.
- We've recently appointed a new responsive repairs contractor called Gilmartins and agreed several performance measures with them so that we can effectively manage the contract. Hopefully our customers will all see a difference.

TOP TIPS ON SAVING MONEY & THE PLANET

Home News Editor Adrian Beckingham offers top tips to help save your wallet and the planet.

I am a lifestyle supporter of sustainable living. In my youth, I worked to halt commercial whaling, tighten wildlife hunting laws, and save old growth forests. As a father of four (including twins), I switched our family to a sustainable energy provider almost 20 years ago – every light switch, kettle, or washing machine cycle we have used has cost the earth as little as possible. **Now, at a time when the environment is on everyone's lips, but the cost of living has risen by approximately 10% to the year in April – the highest rise in 40 years – householders need to be more savvy than ever on how to live more sustainably.**

Unfortunately, due to the unprecedented state of the energy supplier market, at the time of writing (May 26, 2022) no deals you can switch to will prove reliably cheaper than the price cap. So, it's only worth switching if you want a super-green tariff. Instead, focus on your habits – without seriously denting your lifestyle – to lower bills and simultaneously give our planet more breathing space in regards to energy consumption.

- Talk to your energy supplier and tell them what you can afford. Energy is considered an essential service, so energy suppliers are not allowed to simply cut you off for non-payment if you make a reasonable offer based on affordability
- Turn down the heating and hot water settings
- Have showers where possible rather than baths
- Switch off lights when not in use
- Switch appliances off at the wall when not in use
- Only fill the kettle to the amount of water you need
- Choose the eco setting on your washing machine, and always wash a full load
- Consider smart meter installation

Want more top tips like these? Hexagon cannot be responsible for advice given by outside organisations, however the Energy Saving Trust, 'Which' magazine and Money Supermarket are generally seen as reliable sources of consumer information.

- energysavingtrust.org.uk/hub/quick-tips-to-save-energy/
- www.which.co.uk/reviews/cutting-your-energy-bills/article/how-to-save-on-your-energy-bill/10-ways-to-save-on-energy-bills-aX2RS8b8IIMR
- www.moneysupermarket.com/gas-and-electricity/energy-saving-tips/



Shifting to new habits from using the eco-mode on your appliances, to switching off lights and using less water in the kettle, can form a bridge to help your wallet and the natural world – including this heron spied in Lewisham.



RESIDENTS WORKING FOR HEXAGON

Hexagon has a number of residents who work for the organisation in a variety of roles.

For example Adrian Beckingham, Communications Officer within the Resident Voice and Engagement Team; and Andrea Arubi-Johnson, Customer Services Advisor within the Customer Services Team are both residents and employees of Hexagon.

Some of the residents that work for Hexagon started as volunteers, casual bank staff or accessed support from our Love London Working Project.



Stephen Mills is a resident who joined part time employment with Hexagon as our Keys Project Coordinator. There are currently eight staff working for Hexagon who are also residents. Stephen joined part time employment with Hexagon as our Keys Project Coordinator.

CASE STUDY

Stephen Mills is a Hexagon resident and our Keys Project Coordinator.

Stephen was a full-time carer for his mum for several years until she died. He accessed advice about Universal Credit from a money support advisor, who referred him to our Love London Working Project to help him find work. Stephen needed to renew his CPC qualification to help him get work in logistics. We covered the course costs and he passed, but then lockdown happened. Once lockdown eased, he applied to many jobs and had some interviews but wasn't successful. This was disappointing, but he kept upskilling by volunteering, doing some IT training, taking on a warehousing course and attending Hexagon's job applications workshop.

We forwarded Stephen for our Keys Project Coordinator role because we thought it suited his skills. He did a great interview and was offered the job.

Stephen says, *"I would not have applied if it hadn't been suggested to me. I've learnt I can apply my skills to different things. I'm more aware of my transferable skills and will go for different types of jobs in the future. I'm really enjoying the job. I am improving my Excel skills and enjoy communicating with residents and stakeholders."*

"I would like another full-time job once my contract is over and feel that my recent experience will put me in a stronger position for future work."

"Love London Working has helped open my mind to other types of professions and broadened my horizons. It helped me see I don't always have to do what I've always done. The jobs market has changed so you need to have an open mind when it comes to finding work."

Shortly after beginning as Hexagon's Keys Project Co-ordinator, Stephen was offered a full time post with another employer. *We wish him well.*

IN UNION WE CAN CREDIT

What is a credit union?

Credit unions are non-profit-making money co-operatives owned by their members.

To have an account with a credit union you must become a member. Members share a common bond such as working in the same trade or living in the same locality. Members pool their savings to provide each other with credit at a low interest rate.

You do not have to be on benefits or struggling financially to join a credit union. Credit unions are there to form a financial community from people of a common bond, enabling members to be more financially educated and empowered.

All credit unions offer basic savings accounts and loans – contact your local credit union to find out what they have to offer and rates as they vary.

Below is a table with the credit unions closest to you.

With the cost of living increase and unexpected costs that can crop up, it is important to strengthen your finances. Do you have any savings in place? Saving regularly is not just a good habit, it is about helping to build financial resilience. Putting money away, no matter how little, can help you to cover unexpected costs, fund a holiday, or go towards your retirement.



Leanne Cairney, Money Support Advisor.
Photo supplied by Hexagon

| Borough | Credit Union – name & address | Telephone |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------|
| ● Southwark | ● London Mutual 4 Heaton Road, Peckham London. SE15 3TH | ● 020 7729 9218 |
| ● Lewisham ● Bromley | ● Lewisham and Bromley Plus 262 Kirkdale, Sydenham, London. SE26 4RS | ● 030 8778 4738 |
| ● Greenwich ● Bexley | ● Greenwich and Bexley 48 St Thomas St, Woolwich London. SE18 6HT | ● 020 8855 4344 |
| ● Croydon | ● Croydon Plus Bernard Wetherill House, 8 Mint Walk, Croydon Surrey. CRO 1EA | ● 020 8760 5711 |

Do not be alone with money worries, help is available! You can contact our Money Support Team, here at Hexagon at: moneysupport@hexagon.org.uk or by calling 020 8768 6699.

HELP PAYING FOR DAILY ESSENTIALS

You might be able to get help from your local council or an interest-free loan from the government if you do not have enough to live on.

Help from your local council

Your local council might give you vouchers to help pay for day-to-day essentials. This help is known as 'welfare assistance' or the 'Household Support Fund'. Ask if they run a welfare assistance or Household Support Fund scheme that could help you.

Help paying your rent

If you are struggling to pay for a shortfall in your rent, you could make a claim for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).

You need to claim Housing Benefit or the housing costs part of Universal Credit to get a DHP.

Contact your local council and ask how to apply for a DHP.

You can find out how to contact your local council here: www.gov.uk/find-local-council

Interest-free loan to pay for essentials:

You might be able to get a 'budgeting loan' for essentials like clothing or a washing machine if you claim certain benefits.

The loan is interest-free, so you will only have to pay back what you borrow.

Check what you could get and how to apply here: www.gov.uk/budgeting-help-benefits/how-to-apply

If you get Universal Credit, you cannot get a budgeting loan. You can apply for a 'budgeting advance' instead. Find out more here: www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-advances

If you are struggling to buy food, your nearest Citizens Advice may be able to help.



Food

If you are struggling to pay for food, you might be able to get help from a food bank. You will usually need to get a referral to a food bank before you can use it. Your nearest Citizens Advice is a good place to ask for a referral. Find your nearest Citizens Advice here: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/

New Mums

If you are at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4 years old, you might be able to get free vitamins and Healthy Start vouchers for milk, fruit and vegetables and infant formula milk.

Ask your midwife or health visitor for an application form, or call the Healthy Start helpline on **0345 607 6823** and ask them to send you a form.

HEXAGON'S CHILDCARE SUPPORT OFFER

Are you a parent? Not working?
Would you like to do something new?
Do you need help with childcare costs?

The Love London Working project can contribute up to £150 towards childcare costs for 20 residents if you meet the above criteria.

What do you need to do to benefit from this scheme?

- Register onto the project. You will need to provide proof of your right to live in the UK, proof of address and any benefits if you receive them
- Provide proof of why you require the childcare e.g. to do a short course, or to access a health and well-being activity
- Provide proof of your childcare costs eg. an invoice from the childcare provider
- Attend an online 1-hour childcare information session

Hexagon can help you to identify suitable courses, wellbeing activities and appropriate childcare if needed.

Please contact our Senior Employment Advisor
Martyne Callender on: mcallender@hexagon.org.uk
or call **020 8678 7915** if you're interested.

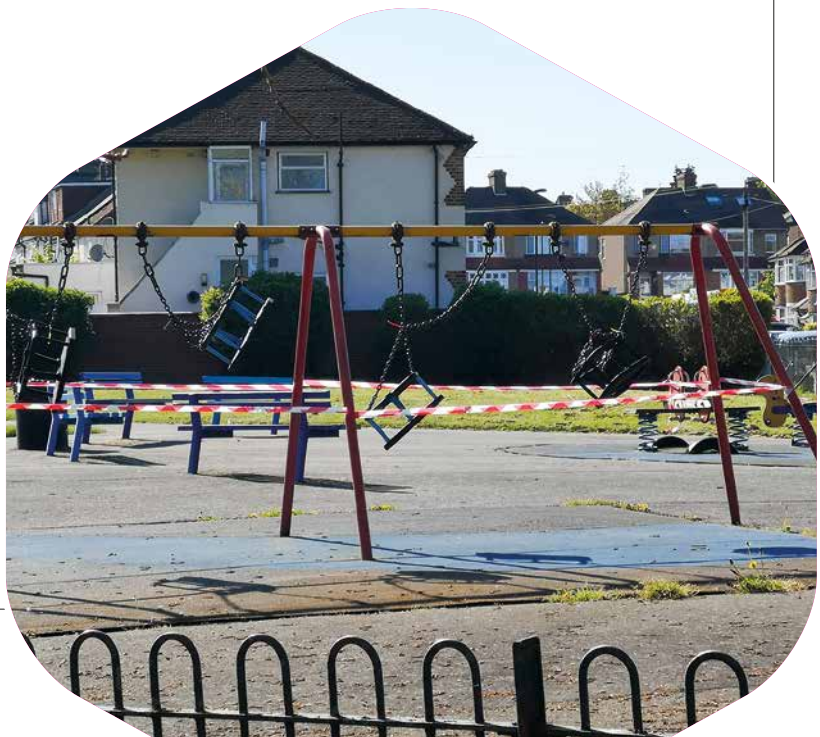


Maia (Lewisham)
and her toddler.
Photo supplied
by Maia.

Juggling a career
or your wellbeing needs with
childcare can seem a hurdle,
but your little one will thank
you for engaging in a process
that makes you the best you
can be. Call our team now for
some free advice on how to
take advantage of
this scheme.

GET BACK INTO THE SWING OF THINGS

This image of a children's playground in Lewisham marked out of bounds during lockdown is a reminder of just how much everyone – including toddlers, young children and their parents – have sacrificed recently. Now is the time to take advantage of specialised schemes focused on helping to get you, and your young children, back out into the world for a more vibrant, socialised future.



HEXAGON LAUNCHES NEW WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME

One of the biggest challenges in finding work is a lack of work experience. Hexagon is keen to support residents in addressing this. We are happy to announce that we relaunched our Work Experience programme in June. This programme is open to anyone who registers onto our Love London Working or In Work Progression projects.



Martyne Callender, Senior Employment Advisor.

Photo supplied by Hexagon

Opportunities available include:

- Six-week work experience placements in one of Hexagon's departments e.g. Community Investment or Customer Services
- Job shadowing a member of staff within housing services for a day
- Supporting staff in the delivery of an event

What you will gain:

- The opportunity to try out your career ideas
- Learn new skills and develop the ones you already have
- Boost your confidence
- Gain experience and a recent reference
- Your expenses reimbursed



Please email Martyne Callender at:
mcallender@hexagon.org.uk
 or call 020 8678 7915 for more information.



Changing skies ahead?
 These new high rises show Lewisham is developing fast, as are other areas of SE London. Be part of the change by building up your career prospects with some free employment training from Hexagon.

DENNY'S DIGS

By Hexagon resident Denny Senner

GARDENING TO GROW YOUR WELLBEING

Having an allotment for 13 years, I know how gardening can boost the spirit, strengthen the body and feed the soul.

I would like to encourage everyone to get involved with growing plants! This may be in your garden, allotment or community garden.

If you don't "DO" gardening....think about giving it a go, you will never look back!



"One lovely thing about a community garden is people from different walks of life all merge together with a similar goal and community interest."



Asparagus is a crop that is very expensive in shops, but once established grows and crops well for 20 years!



Teasels are biennial plants which are brilliant to feed and support birds with the seeds in its flower head, followed by providing a habitat for insects to over winter in.



Planting a 'nectar bar' (nectar rich flowers/wild flowers) alongside veg plants encourages pollinating insects – and feeds predatory insects which feed on pests like aphids.

What are the benefits of gardening?



Food!

- Vegetables grown organically from seed are a cheaper, fresher, healthier option than those bought in shops
- Growing vegetables and plants which are not generally available in shops, can link you to what you remember your family growing or cooking. These memories relived can be comforting and healing
- Vegetables that have been lovingly nurtured must be eaten! Waste not, want not – plus all the family can share in growing, cooking and eating. It is a proud moment when homegrown veg is on the plate!

Fitness!

- Exercise makes you feel energised and generally more positive
- But, check with your GP if you have any health concerns, to build up the level of exercise you do
- You will find yourself getting stronger, more flexible and burning more calories when you grow your own food

Wellbeing!

- Daylight has positive effects on counteracting negative moods. Despite yourself, you will feel better when you work in the garden
- Gardening through the seasons, means always looking forward. Plans are made, good results are optimistically expected, and once achieved, accompanied by well-deserved pride!
- Failures are opportunities to learn and are positive challenges to do better
- Gardening helps us focus on simple, achievable tasks so we are able to de-stress without distractions
- Sharing experiences and connecting feels good. So, garden as a family or make new friends at the allotment or community garden. One lovely thing about a community garden is people from different walks of life all merge together with a similar goal and community interest, so gardening is a great leveller!
- Successful harvests are an opportunity to think about others by sharing crops with family, neighbours or your local food charity. Giving has a big feelgood impact

Environmental

- Organic practices and planting for wildlife will support all kinds of birds and insects, which you can then enjoy seeing. Nature is truly awesome and uplifting when you invite it into your life!
- Eating fresh, seasonal food is good for the environment too!
- **EDITOR'S TIP:** Have you ever heard of food miles? That's the distance shop food must travel by truck to reach the store, think of all those greenhouse gases saved by home growing – not to mention you have control over the pesticides and herbicides sprayed over your food!



Salvia have scented leaves which are uplifting plus flowers all summer!



Communal polytunnel at Denny's allotment.



Tomatoes and nasturtiums here as 'companion planting' to help deter black fly.

THE BIG CONVERSATION

1. Saying hello!

From 30th August until 9th September, Hexagon are embarking on a great project called The Big Conversation.

Every single staff member from Hexagon including our Chief Executive, Directors and all back office staff will be knocking on residents' doors to say hello and to have a conversation with you.

We've missed the face-to-face contact during the pandemic and we recognise that it has been a difficult time for all of us over the last few years. We also recognise that in some areas, Hexagon needs to improve as a landlord!

Whilst we are putting in steps to improve areas such as complaints and repairs, we'd also like to hear what you think.

We should be able to knock on 1,400 doors during that time – don't worry if you're not in, we'll leave a way for you to express your views and send them back to us.

2. We will visit some areas

In addition, we will come and arrange events in some of our larger areas where you can come and say hello, meet our new contractors and staff teams. You can find out about fire safety, how we intend to upgrade homes environmentally and even have tea with our new Chief Executive, Sheron Carter! We will have some freebies and activities for children and adults. Sorry we can't visit everywhere – but we will get to you in future!

Please email:
getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk if you would like to book afternoon tea with our new Chief Executive, Sheron Carter.

Our plan:

Date Tuesday 30th August, 4pm–6pm
Borough Croydon
Location Canal Walk/Damsel House. CRO 6BZ
Tea with the Chief Executive, Sheron Carter at 4pm

Date Wednesday 31st August, 3pm–6pm
Borough Lewisham
Location Mount Acre Close and Cobbs Court, Sydenham Hill SE26 4BF
Tea with the Chief Executive, Sheron Carter at 4pm

Date Thursday 1st September, 3pm–6pm
Borough Southwark
Location Gordon Road SE15 2AF
 Queens Road SE15 2NG

Date Friday 2nd September, 3pm–5pm
Borough Southwark
Location Peckham Hill, Street SE15 6FZ

Date Tuesday 6th September, 3pm–6pm
Borough Bexley
Location Dryad & Rosia House, Laymarsh Close, Belvedere & Abbey Road DA17 5FD
Tea with the Chief Executive, Sheron Carter at 4pm

Date Wednesday 7th September, 3pm–6pm
Borough Greenwich
Location Goldfinch Road, Thamesmead SE28 0DG, Greenhaven Drive, SE28 8FZ, Giblin House, 39a Samuel St. SE28 5AH. Gallions View Rd SE28 0DD

Date Thursday 8th September, 4pm–6pm
Borough Lewisham
Location Falconworks, Lynton Road, SE1 5ZA
 Mayfair House, Trothy Road SE1 5BQ
Tea with the Chief Executive, Sheron Carter at 4pm

Date Friday 9th September, 4pm–6pm
Borough Southwark (co-op)
Location William Blake House, 22 Elm Grove, SE15 5DE

Hexagon

JOIN THE GREENER HOMES CHALLENGE!

Hexagon needs to meet the government's Net Zero target by 2050. By 2030 we aim for all of our homes to meeting energy performance rating C.

We don't want to do this work TO YOU and your homes, we want to do it WITH YOU!

We are looking for resident volunteers with an interest in Green Issues to help us make sure this process of transition to greener homes is as resident friendly as possible. Volunteers can influence our approach through a whole variety of ways such as online, focus groups and meetings.

If you are interested in helping Hexagon meet the government's Net Zero targets by greening our housing stock and being an engaged resident in the process, please email: getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk or telephone 020 8778 6699 and ask for our Resident Voice & Engagement Team.



Jane Eyles,
Resident Voice &
Engagement Lead.
Photo supplied by
Jane.



Like housing associations across the country, Hexagon are working to help meet the government's Net Zero target by 2050. Come and join us to make a difference and assist in Hexagon's zero carbon journey. People may all have different views regarding the environment, society and politics, but it is undeniable that we all share one planet.



RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

Below we interview resident Adrian (pictured), who is an active member of a housing co-operative based in SE4.

How long have you been a Hexagon resident?

Since 1993 – that’s nearly 30 years already. I can’t believe how quickly time has flown by!

What do you enjoy most about being a Hexagon resident?

Hexagon are good at listening to their residents. They also offer their residents the chance to get involved in various groups, to help guide and formulate their housing policy and services. This gives us more empowerment within our tenancies than we might get with any other landlords.

Are you involved in any Hexagon activities?

I am a member of the Annual Report Group, where I help to shape the Resident Report. I’m also on the Design Panel, where I have helped to contribute a wide range of ideas – from the development of greener housing, to helping people living with a disability to acquire a much more accessible place to live. I am also currently the Chair of the residents’ Repairs Group. Amanda Walker, who is the Resident Voice & Engagement Facilitator, does a great job to help make these meetings work. I meet with her before each meeting, to help with the meetings’ agendas. My role is to ensure that everyone taking part feels supported, to be able to engage and contribute in democratic discussion, with the aim of improving Hexagon’s repairs service. I am on the Readers’ Panel which reviews each edition of Home News and helps guide future editions. I also play an active role in my housing co-op as volunteer treasurer.

What do you gain from your involvement in the various groups at Hexagon and why is this important to you?

Apart from enjoying the socialising aspect of the groups, they also allow me to feel more empowered as a Hexagon resident. I feel I am actively contributing to making Hexagon a better social landlord for all residents. I know that if I want to make changes to improve my landlord, then joining the groups is a positive

and productive way forward to achieving this. It is great that Hexagon offers these opportunities for involvement. Also, thanks to the vastly improved Home News Magazine, which under the direction of editor Adrian Beckingham now reaches out and appeals to a far wider audience of residents than ever before, I find that being a Readers’ Panel member is like being a community champion – because we are making a positive difference to so many peoples’ lives.



Photo supplied by Adrian.

“I know that if I want to make changes to improve my landlord, then joining the groups is a positive and productive way forward to achieving this.”

Adrian is an active member of a housing co-op and a shining example of how residents can become involved with the Resident Voice & Engagement Team to make a positive impact on Hexagon’s services for all residents.

What do you see as the greatest challenge for Hexagon in terms of improving service delivery?

A key challenge will be communicating Hexagon's move towards becoming a zero-carbon housing provider. This journey belongs to everyone, it is not just for the staff to push it through. It is about everyone playing a role to ensure a sustainable and positive future for generations to come. But many people are caught up in old habits and are not always open to the changes that are necessary.

Another key challenge for Hexagon, is how they treat their housing co-ops. Across the sector there is a move away from a social housing focus, with more attention on business growth, by expanding leaseholder numbers and more shared ownership tenants. But housing co-ops are an essential fabric of social housing, they represent a

core ethical platform. Hexagon must appreciate the value of co-ops as a cornerstone of social housing. This will mean they maintain the added value of being a true social housing landlord.

What is the most important message you can give to your fellow residents?

Please don't hesitate to contact Hexagon and express your interest in helping to make change happen. There are a wide variety of different resident groups you can join. Take a look on the Hexagon website and see which groups interest you most, then get in touch. If you want to be involved, but you feel you're lacking in confidence, there are some opportunities for free training, so make the most of these too.

Do you have a favourite hobby?

I have an extensive vinyl collection representing a wide range of music, which include the genres of soul, dance, new age, reggae and classical.

To get involved email: getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk or phone Hexagon on 020 8778 6699 and ask for the Resident Voice & Engagement Team.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS 2022

Hexagon Board Member, Ruth Chambers, has been awarded an OBE as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours List in recognition of her 'services to the environment'.

Ruth, a Senior Fellow for Greener UK and Green Alliance, has been a Board Member for over seven years and is Lead Board Member for Community Investment and HR.

Of her OBE award, Ruth said "I'm overwhelmed to have been awarded an OBE for services to the environment. I've been honoured to be part of so many vital environmental campaigns, working alongside inspiring and passionate campaigners across the UK."

Ruth was also named on the Power List 2022 of the 100 UK's most influential environmentalists. This was in recognition for her work in shaping green policy and legislation.

We are proud of Ruth's achievements and of her valued contribution to the running of Hexagon.

This year, the Queen's Birthday Honours have been awarded to 1,134 people, with a record 51.5% going to women.



Photo supplied by Ruth Chambers.

WHAT REPAIRS ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR?

HEXAGON ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR

- Water, Heating and Electric
- External and communal repairs
- Repairs to structure, flooring and plastering but NOT carpets nor laminate flooring if the tenant owns these or the fixtures and fittings
- Repairs to bathroom, plumbing, shower, toilet, tiling but if a resident has fitted their own bath and bathroom tiles and these become defective, we may replace but as standard bath and tiles

LEASEHOLDER AND SHARED OWNERSHIP

- Householder generally responsible for any repairs internally inside the property
- Hexagon responsible for any repairs externally, communally or defective structure

RESIDENTS ARE USUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR

- Small repair jobs such as replacing toilet seats, replacing cupboard handles and hinges, plugs and chains, minor cracks in floors or walls, battery replacements in door bell and smoke alarms, bleeding radiators, shelving and curtain rails, draught exclusion, plumbing to washing machines and dishwashers, and other similar small jobs
- Replacing bulbs, fluorescent light tubes or starter switches, except in shared areas
- Damage caused by you, someone living with you or a visitor
- Anything that you have fitted to your home
- Decorating inside your home
- Gardening (unless covered by service charge)
- TV aerials, apart from shared ones
- Pest control not covered by statute
- Window locks
- Floor tiles/lino excluding wet areas
- Replacing lost keys or fitting new locks, broken glass (unless you have an official crime number from the police in such instances)

We would always take vulnerability into account when raising the repair to see if an exception to the rule is needed this would be a management decision.

The leaseholder/shared owner and resident handbooks provide more information: www.hexagon.org.uk/?s=handbook.

WHAT IS STAIRCASING & HOW DOES IT WORK?

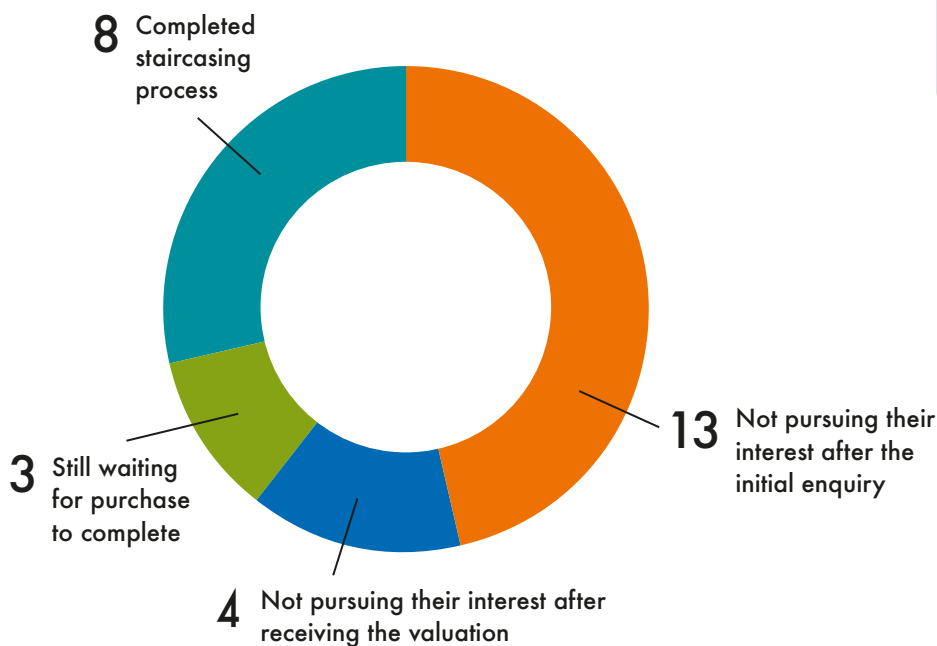
Staircasing is a process where an owner of a Shared Ownership property purchases further shares of the property from the housing association who owns the remaining part.

An owner can usually purchase in blocks (tranches) of 10% or more, dependant on what is stated in the lease.

Staircasing is simply a step closer to owning the property outright and becoming a full owner. The more shares you buy, the less rent you pay.



'Staircasing' is the term used for a process whereby tenants are able to buy the property they live in via a series of "staircased" payments.



During the last financial year, we processed 28 Staircasing applications, broken down as shown in this chart.

The process of staircasing usually takes between 2-3 months for you to buy an additional share of your property. This process starts with an enquiry then Hexagon forward you a list of our approved surveyors who will need to carry out a valuation of your property. This valuation is approved by a director and then forwarded to you, at which time you decide if you wish to proceed. If you proceed, you will need to advise us and give us details of your solicitor and pay us the staircasing administration fee. We will then ask our solicitors to act on our behalf and pass their details on to you. The solicitors then both take the process through to completion.

If you are interested in staircasing or have any questions please email our Staircasing Team at: staircasing@hexagon.org.uk

INTRODUCING YOUR NEW GAS CONTRACTOR

Hexagon are very pleased to announce that from 1 April 2022, Smith & Byford have been appointed as our domestic gas heating contractor.

They will be responsible for carrying out the following in your home:

- The annual gas service and safety check of all gas appliances
- The annual service of your carbon monoxide detector and smoke detector
- All heating repairs
- New heating installations where they are required
- The servicing and repair or unvented hot water cylinders and heating interface units (HIUs)

Smith & Byford were established in 1966 and are a family run business with a lot of experience in delivering gas maintenance and safety check services throughout London and the South of England. Hexagon look forward to working with our new contractors who share our values to deliver excellent customer service by putting residents at the heart of what we do.

To ensure you have the opportunity to book your gas servicing appointment at your own convenience, details of their online booking portal will be outlined in your appointment letter sent to you before your annual service is due.

Remember, it is a legal requirement to service the gas appliances in your home, every year. This is to make sure they 're safe and working correctly.

Annual boiler checks are just one of the services which Smith & Byford will undertake as our new domestic gas heating contractor.

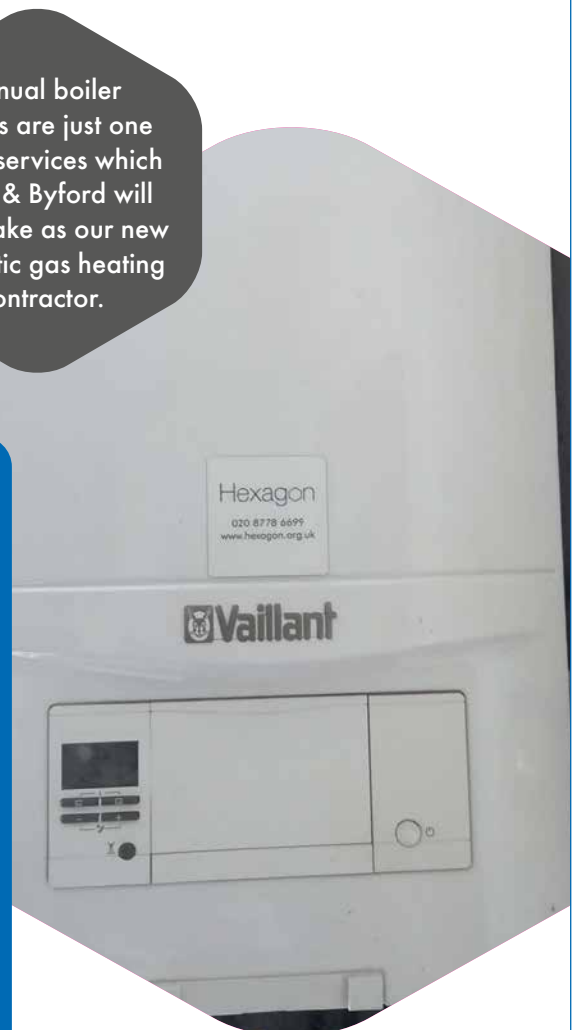
How to contact Smith & Byford

You do not need to contact Smith & Byford about your annual gas service. They will write to you first with the servicing appointment and useful information. Their letter will explain how to contact them about this.

To report any NEW repairs to Smith & Byford, their dedicated team can be contacted on Freephone 0800 088 4433, or email: hexagondomesticgas@smithandbyford.com

You can also call them on Freephone 0800 083 0151 with any gas related issues.

To book or confirm your annual servicing appointment please email: confirmservice@smithandbyford.com



PAINTING A ROOM

With summer upon us, do you fancy adding a fresh lick of paint to your home?

Preparation

Preparation is key to your success – prep your surfaces into a smooth and clean canvas to paint on.

- Fill holes, cracks or imperfections with filler and let dry. Then lightly sand the patches
- Scrape away peeling, cracked paint, then sand smooth
- Clean the walls with a damp cloth, including any old glue and residue if you removed wallpaper
- Stir paint before you begin
- Don't paint straight from the can. Pour the paint into a small bowl when using a brush, or into a roller tray. This will keep the can free of impurities (dust, wood particles, etc.) that your brush may pick up as you work
- If using tape, masking or painter's tape serve best – applied in short, overlapping strips, then pressed down firmly along the edge to ensure a crisp line
- Clear the room of furniture (or cover with a dust sheet)



Tools

- Paint
- Roller, paint pad and/or brushes
- Paint tray
- Step ladder
- Extension pole (for ceilings)
- Wet rags
- White spirit (to clean brushes after use)

Painting Ceilings

- If painting the ceiling, do this first by using a roller with an extension pole for easier access and faster work

Painting Walls

- Firstly, use a paint brush at least three inches wide to paint all the edges of the room. Use a small container to carry the paint around with you

Skirting Boards and Woodwork

- Prepare woodwork the same way you prepared your walls
- Use gloss or eggshell paint dependent on the finish you wish for
- Use a good quality brush at least 3 inches wide – one coat will usually be enough
- Woodwork takes at least 48 hours to dry
- Use a paint tray and roller or paint pad for the large areas of the room. As you work, scan the room frequently to wipe away any drips before they dry
- Finally, allow the paint to dry. You may need to apply a second coat of paint and then you are done. Remove tape

Enjoy your fantastic looking room!



Photos supplied by Hexagon

SUMMER FIRES

Balcony Fire Safety Tips

- Ensure that no combustible or flammable materials are kept on your balcony – for example avoid plastic or wooden tables and chairs, plant pots, artificial grass, and paint tins
- Candles and tea lights must not be used on balconies – use solar powered or LED flameless candles to create the same ambient effect
- **BBQs are strictly forbidden on balconies**

Garden BBQ Safety Tips

- Should you be considering having a BBQ in your garden, ensure that the BBQ is a safe distance from the building and away from any timber fencing or sheds. Hexagon recommends you position the BBQ on the far side of the garden away from any building, shed or fencing
- **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

Hoarding & Fire Risk

The aim of Hexagon's Hoarding Policy is to support vulnerable residents who are struggling with hoarding and any associated self-neglect, encouraging a multi-agency approach that focuses on meeting the resident's support needs. We strive to keep residents and their neighbours safe, to limit disturbance to neighbours, and to ensure property damage is avoided.

A high percentage of people who 'hoard' are single, isolated and suffer from underlying mental health conditions. A large number of people who 'hoard' also self-neglect – a problem which can worsen in instances where hoarding means they cannot access food preparation areas, washing facilities or a bed in their own home.

Hoarding can become a fire safety hazard because:

- the volume of items means it can be difficult to exit the property in the event of a fire emergency
- the amount of combustible material in the property – such as papers, plastic and other goods – is likely to be higher. This can make a fire more likely to spread
- haphazard storage of items can lead to them blocking off heaters, and/or overheating electrical items
- significant hoarding can represent a risk to others in the building through overloading of the floors and possible structural issues

Storytelling around a garden fire can be a popular summertime activity, but it is vital to ensure that the fire is kept in a purpose-built container and situated away from flammable objects including fences and trees.



How can Hexagon help with hoarding?

Hexagon utilise the 'Vulnerable Residents Policy' and 'Safeguarding Policy and Procedures' in its approach to hoarding. The best outcome is generally achieved with people who recognise that they are hoarding and accept help and support. A consensual and supportive approach is more effective in resolving (or containing) hoarding issues. Enforcement action should always be a last resort.

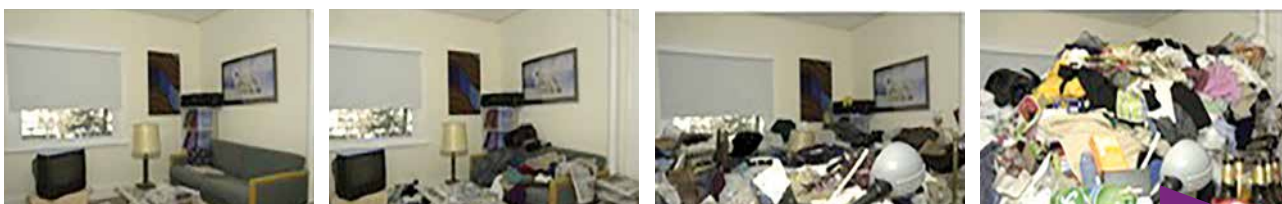
We use a national clutter rating – see below – as a guide to identify the seriousness of the hoarding. We contact contractors regarding access issues for annual gas safety checks and essential repairs, and work with agencies such as Adult Social Services, London Fire Brigade, Environmental Health, Mental Health Services, and other relevant charities. We encourage the resident to contact any friends, family or support workers to make them aware of the situation and to help them to sustain their tenancy and live safely in their home.

Unless the resident describes themselves as a hoarder, we refrain from using the terms 'hoarding', 'self-neglect' or any other negative language. The word 'collecting' can be used in place of hoarding. Residents may feel embarrassed about their surroundings and if they feel that we are making judgements about them and their home this is likely to limit their co-operation and result in worse outcomes. To help them feel more comfortable, we describe things commonly considered to have no value as 'items', and other things as 'belongings'.

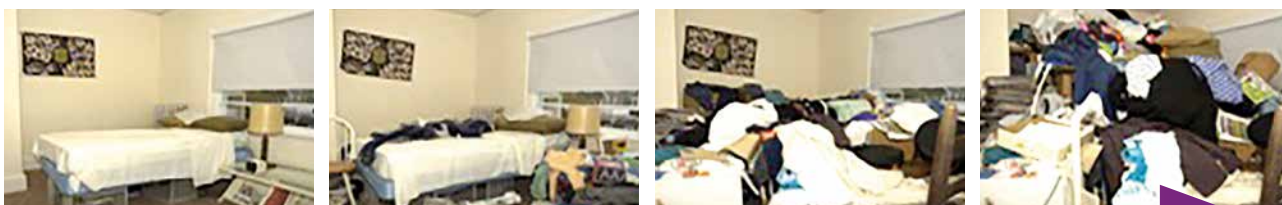
If you have any concerns about issues raised in this article, please call our Customer Services Freephone on 0800 393 338 or email: propertysafety@hexagon.org.uk



Clutter Rating Kitchen:



Clutter Rating Living Room:



Clutter Rating Bedroom:

These images supplied by Hexagon illustrate the national clutter rating sheets.

PHOTO COMPETITION

WOW, take a look at the TWO great competitions we are offering on this page!

Why not enter for your chance to win yourself a £20 shopping voucher...

GREEN ENVIRONMENTS IN LONDON LIFE

Home News were keen to celebrate your creativity by offering our residents the chance to shine in our Photo Competition. And wow, the response in entries for the spring 2020 edition of Home News was so strong, we held the competition open for this consecutive edition.

Just take a look at our latest winners – the theme was: Green Environments in London Life. Each winner receives a £20 shopping voucher.



Nicole Garrett (SE18) snapped the green parrots so popular in SE London.



Beatrice Githendu (SE1): In Burgess Park in Southwark there's a big pond. It is a calm space to unwind. What I liked about flying birds is that they flew in a team – none was left behind. I began meditating on the importance of team work for a company or in families and relationships.

1. SUMMER PHOTO COMPETITION

To enter our summer photography competition, send in your photos on the theme of Life Be In It.

Entries need to be emailed to: homenews@hexagon.org.uk by 26th August.

All entries must include the entrant's full name and address including postcode. Entrants who see their photos published in Home News will each receive a £20 shopping voucher.

SUSTAINABILITY COMPETITION

SPRING EDITION WINNER

Congratulations to Josef Green (Greenwich) whose entry (below) won our Sustainability Competition from the spring edition – by using the photos provided to prompt ideas for a change in lifestyle to help the environment:



- Use less plastic
- Invest in more biodegradable products
- Grown your own produce/veg
- Cycle/walk more where possible
- Use correct bins to dispose rubbish (food bin/recyclable waste)

Josef receives a £20 shopping voucher.



2. SUSTAINABLE LIVING COMPETITION

You could win yourself a £20 shopping voucher by answering the following question correctly:

- What is the single most important thing you can do as a resident, to play your role in Hexagon's pathway to zero carbon?

Send your answer, complete with your full name and address, via email to: homenews@hexagon.org.uk by 26th August. One entry will be published in Home News to receive a £20 shopping voucher. All entries must include the entrant's full name and address, including postcode.



KIDS' ZONE

SUMMER Search



Kids Zone Winners

Congratulations to Tayo Edwards, age 8 (SE4); Pearl Dublin, age 9 (SE16); and Ruth Abolarin, age 12 (DA8) who each won the last WordSearch competition.

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



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

Three correct entries will be drawn at random.

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

Each winning entry receives a £10 shopping voucher.

EARTH FRIENDLY KIDS' COMPETITION

Draw a picture of a favourite animal which lives in the wild. Make sure your picture includes some details about where it lives. For example, if it is a dolphin, draw some waves. Winning entries will be published in Home News and receive a £10 shopping voucher.



WHERE TO SEND YOUR COMPETITION ENTRY

To have a chance of winning, all entries to Kids' Zone Competitions **must include the child's full name, age and address.**

Please email in your completed Kids' Zone entries to homenews@hexagon.org.uk by **26th August.**

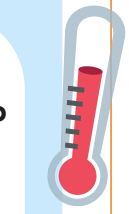
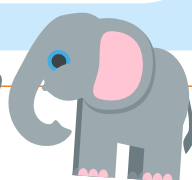
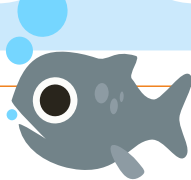
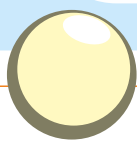
SUMMER HOWLERS

Q What do you call a dog on the beach in the summer?
A A hot dog!

Q Why don't oysters share their pearls?
A Because they're shellfish!

Q What do you get when you combine an elephant with a fish?
A Swimming trunks!

Q How do teddy bears keep their den cool in summer?
A They use bear conditioning!



NOTICE BOARD

Welcome to our 'new look' back page! Until now, this page has included the usual contact information (below), plus Competition Time.

However, because competitions are now offered on various pages, our Editorial Panel and resident-led Readers' Panel concluded it was time for a refurbished page 24. This page will now promote resident engagement, plus spotlight important features inside the magazine.

The Big Conversation. See page 12 to learn more about THE BIG CONVERSATION.

Other changes to Home News since our editor, Hexagon resident Adrian Beckingham, stepped into post include:

Editor's Feature: General human rights, social and environmental issues, or top tips of relevance to our residents. (see page 4 inside)

Resident Spotlight: Learn about a fellow resident on this page, to celebrate the diversity of Hexagon residents and challenge any social stigma towards social housing residents. Since launch, Resident Spotlight has never been short of residents wishing to appear. **Email homenews@hexagon.org.uk if you would like to feature on this page, where we can celebrate your life, a hobby or special interest you may have. (see pages 14 – 15 inside)**

Staff Focus: Spotlighting a different Hexagon employee each time, asking questions about their role with a human interest quality added too. This page has proved consistently popular via resident feedback.

You Said We Did: Requested by the resident Readers' Panel, this page written by our Housing Services Director Rebecca Outram spotlights in brief some areas where residents have made requests and showing how Hexagon have responded. (see page 3 inside)

Sustainability: every edition of Home News now includes at least one sustainable living article (pages 4, 10 – 11, and 15) and one sustainability competition (pages 22 & 23 inside)

Competitions: now throughout the magazine (see page 22 inside for adults, and page 23 for children).

Why not enter and gain your chance of winning a shopping voucher! Or contact us to become one of our resident volunteers helping to influence Hexagon services.

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

Hexagon

customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk

for all general enquiries

www.hexagon.org.uk

Text 07537 400 527

130-136 Sydenham Road, London SE26 5JY

Gilmartins

To report a repair call Gilmartins on 0808 178 6785 24 hours a day 365 days of the year, or email:

hexagonrepairs@gilmartins.co.uk

Smith & Byford

Our new gas contractor Smith & Byford can be contacted on

Freephone: 0800 088 4433.

To report any new repairs email: hexagondomesticgas@smithandbyford.com

Follow us for regular updates, event invitations and news:

 [HexagonHousingAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/HexagonHousingAssociation)

 [@HexagonHousing](https://twitter.com/HexagonHousing)

TRANSLATE!

Always happy to translate!

Chinese

永遠樂於翻譯！

Eritrean

"ንክብርታዎታልኩም ኩሉጊዜ ሕጉላት 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.