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Hexagon



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

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

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TOM'S WELCOME



During the last 10 months, we have taken extra efforts to ensure our engagement with you has been covid secure. This has meant some changes to the way we work, including closing the office to members of the public.

Since the end of May, however, we have worked hard to provide a near "normal" service including for example responsive repairs, major repairs, and lettings. This has involved some flexibility from everyone – including changes to working methods to keep you, our staff, and our contractors safe for which I would like to thank everyone.

The pandemic has also resulted in financial challenges for many. Some of you will have seen a reduction in income, resulting in you needing to access Universal Credit, possibly for the first time. Others will have experienced a job loss as many businesses have suffered. Hexagon can assist in these work and finance challenges as outlined on pages 5 to 9. If you do need assistance, please follow our invitation to get in touch.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive

THE IMPORTANCE OF WELLBEING

Taking time to look after ourselves is a task often too easily overlooked. We can at times be concerned about our family, friends, and work but forget to check in with ourselves. Remember the importance of doing things to look after you – because you matter!

Winter Warmth and Wellbeing Calls

'Winter Warmth and Wellbeing' calls are different to the 'Wellbeing' calls which began early last year.

Wellbeing calls began early in the first lockdown of last year, focusing primarily on our more vulnerable residents and those aged over 70. The focus was on access to food, medication and other support.

On the other hand, Winter Warmth calls are for everyone. They focus on COVID-19's impact on people, and ways we can help – read the following Community Investment pages to see the sorts of support on offer.

By the time you read this, we anticipate to have spoken to approximately 1,000 residents overall. Thus far, approximately 30% of residents we have spoken to have gone on to access one of our services.

Keep an eye out for our letter or email notifying you of our call.



Setting your home thermostat at between 18 to 20 degrees will usually provide the best balance for warmth and cost

You can read about how Wellbeing calls helped an elderly resident on Page 21

TOP TIPS: Keeping Warm This Winter

- Heat from the sun is free so make the most of it. Open your curtains and let the sunlight in during the day. When it gets dark, shut your curtains, which act as another layer of insulation and keeps the warmth in your rooms
- Programming your boiler to turn the heating on a little earlier (such as 30 minutes before you get up in the morning) but at a lower temperature is cheaper overall than turning it up to higher temperature just at the time you need it
- The recommended optimum temperature at which to set your home thermostat is usually between 18 to 20 degrees. This helps to conserve both heat in your home and your financial spend on heating
- Keeping doors closed will help conserve heating in those rooms
- Ensure no furniture or other items are blocking the heat source (this is also important for fire safety)

BALANCE YOUR STRESS

Imagine there's a bucket you carry with you constantly, which slowly fills up when you experience stress.

Sometimes you feel strong enough to carry a lot of stress, but to help those times when stress levels may seem overbearing, it's important to plan activities which help you lighten the load.

What happens when the bucket becomes too full? It bursts, it overflows, it struggles to cope with the amount of water in it. In the same way, if we experience too much stress it can become difficult for us to manage.

To stop the bucket from overflowing you need to create outlets, like a tap. These outlets help to release the pressure on the bucket and make it more manageable to carry.



Actions: gardening, meditation, yoga, reading, walking and exercise, time with friends, taking up a hobby or new interest, doing something you enjoy.

5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

CONNECT...

with the people around you. Make time to chat with family or friends, join a group and make new friends, smile or say hello to a neighbour – you might be surprised by the response you get. Use social media to connect with people about things that interest you

BE ACTIVE...

Exercise makes you feel good. Discover a physical activity you enjoy that suits your level of fitness. This might be going for a walk, cycling, yoga (see information about free online sessions – page 10), or gardening (read about our gardening competition on page 11)

TAKE NOTICE...

Remember the simple things that give you joy. Reflecting on experiences helps you appreciate what matters

KEEP LEARNING...

Embrace new experiences and surprise yourself. Learning new things will improve your confidence (see page 9 for learning opportunities)

GIVE...

Your time, your words, your presence. It can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you

TOP TIPS: NEW YEAR – NEW (MONEY) YOU

The new year is a great time to revise finances. Some tips include:

- Start to save – Even just saving a small amount each week or month can make a big difference come Christmas time (£10 monthly would come to £120)
- Make a budget – Making (and sticking to) a budget can help you better understand what is coming in and going out, so your money can help you achieve your goals!
- Get the best deal on utilities and communications – Many people spend hundreds of pounds needlessly on their utilities or phone/internet deals, when they could switch companies for a better deal

Two comparison sites include:

www.uswitch.com/gas-electricity/ppc-rev/new/utilities/

www.comparethemarket.com/energy/renewable/

(See **COMPETITION** in the next column)

- See what benefits you are entitled to – Billions of pounds of benefits go unclaimed each year, because people aren't aware what they are entitled to –
Reputable benefits calculators such as www.betteroffcalculator.co.uk help you calculate what you could be entitled to
- Deal with debts – Whether you are struggling with one specific bill, or feel overwhelmed by various debts, free help is available! There are many organisations that can provide free and confidential advice including:
Step Change (www.stepchange.org)
Citizens advice (www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- If something changes, seek help – A change in circumstances can cause money worries. Whether it's an unexpected bill, losing a job, or a change in family circumstances, events can have a knock-on effect on your finances. Always seek advice as early as possible



For help with any money related matter, contact the Financial Inclusion Team on **020 8768 7925**, or email Jason Herbert on: **Jherbert@Hexagon.org.uk**

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMPETITION



COMPETITION

What is the first key difference, before further investigation, between the two internet comparison site links opposite?

Send in your answers by email to **homenews@hexagon.org.uk** by no later than Friday 19th February. Two correct entrants will be drawn at random, each winning a £10 shopping voucher

These finance tips are provided for general information only, and are not to be taken as personal advice. If in doubt about any financial decision, always seek independent advice from a suitably regulated source

CV SUPPORT HELPS YOU OPEN NEW DOORS

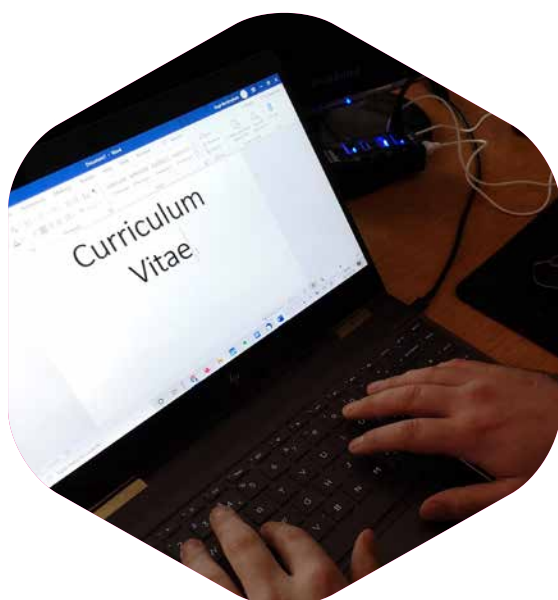


Your CV could make or break your chances of finding a new job. It represents the initial chance to grab a potential employer's attention, by showcasing your knowledge, skills and experience. A great CV can help you secure an interview in the competitive job market!

How we can help

Whether you need help to create, update or redesign your CV, Hexagon runs free monthly workshops in writing CVs and cover letters. You will get access to a 1-on-1 appointment with an employer, to offer feedback on any improvements you could make to your CV.

Please email Martyne Callender, Hexagon's Senior Employment Adviser, on mcallender@hexagon.org.uk including your name, address and contact details if you're interested in accessing support to create or revise your CV.



Are you unsure of what to put in your CV, and what perhaps to leave out? We can help you tailor your CV so it works harder for you!

One resident's story

Abdellatif (SE1) had two jobs before the pandemic but was made redundant from both due to COVID-19. When he then applied for several jobs including retail, administrative and project work, he received no responses.

Abdellatif registered onto Love London Working in July 2020, and was able to access some practical employment support from Hexagon. We helped tighten his CV by, for example, highlighting key skills and achievements related to the jobs he was applying for. We helped Abdellatif complete two different CVs relating to the different sectors he was applying for.

Following this, when Abdellatif applied for jobs he started getting called for interviews.

He sent his CV in for a part time bank staff administration role within Hexagon. The department were impressed with his CV, so he was invited for an interview and got the job. A month later, he used his new CV to apply for his ideal job as a Junior Product Manager. After a series of interviews, he secured the full-time job.

Abdellatif says: **"I noticed the difference in responses from employers almost immediately after sending out my revised CVs. I didn't realise that the changes would make such a difference! I am really glad I signed up for support and found the job I want."**

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS WORKSHOPS

We are running a series of employability workshops between now and the end of March. See dates, times and workshop descriptions below. Please register onto one of our employment programmes to access these workshops.



Martyne Callender

Photo supplied by
Hexagon

Workshop	Date and Time	Outline
CV and cover letters workshop	Thursday 28/01/2021 11.00am – 1.30pm	How to complete a CV and cover letter which meets employer expectations. Learn about the different types of CV and which is most suited to you
CV feedback one to ones	Wednesday 03/02/2021 10am – 12pm	A 1-to-1 session with Victoria Adamson from Bell Group to receive feedback on improving your CV
Interview skills workshop	Wednesday 17/02/2021 10am – 1pm	Best practice in preparing for Zoom/Teams interviews, the importance of body language, different types of interviews and how to answer interview questions using the STAR method
Mock interviews	Wednesday 24/02/2021 10am – 2pm	Have a sector-specific mock interview with the Bell Group to help improve your interview technique – tailored to customer service, retail, administration, health and social care, or construction
Careers in construction information session	Wednesday 10/03/2021 11am – 12.30pm	The different opportunities available in the construction industry including the Bell Group's apprenticeships programme. Led by Victoria Adamson, Community Engagement Officer for Bell Group
CV and cover letters workshop	Wednesday 17/03/2021 10am – 12.30pm	How to complete a CV and cover letter which meets employer expectations. Learn about the different types of CV, and which is most suited to you
CV feedback one to ones	Wednesday 24/03/2021 10am – 12pm	Have a 1-to-1 session with Victoria Adamson from Bell Group to receive feedback on improving your CV
Job applications – supporting statements workshop	Wednesday 31/03/2021 10.30am – 1pm	How to complete great application forms, specifically how to relate supporting statements to person specifications

Please contact Martyne Callender, Senior Employment Adviser on **020 8768 7915** or **07799 880 675** or email your contact details to: mcallender@hexagon.org.uk for more information.

CHOOSING A NEW CAREER PATH?

Do you want or need a career change? Then ask yourself:

- What are your transferable skills and experience?
- What do you want – for example less stress and responsibility, or less time spent travelling?
- What is your specialist area of expertise?
- Are you willing to retrain and/or start from the bottom again?
- Is consulting for other companies, self-employment or setting up your own business an option?

The National Careers Service feature a useful 'skills health check' and job profiles function, where you can highlight which jobs might be right for you. You can access this service online by visiting: **nationalcareers.service.gov.uk**

Once you have decided on which industry to join, ask yourself:

- What are the current vacancies?
- What training is needed?
- Where can you access training?
- Is training full cost, subsidised or free?



Photos supplied by Melita Bucknor

Melita's Story

Melita Bucknor (SE12) had lost her agency job as an NHS porter due to COVID-19 related staff cuts. Melita, a single parent, was concerned about how she would afford her three children's school uniforms.

Melita registered onto the Love London Working Project: **www.lovelondonworking.com**

Melita's adviser secured a grant of £300 to cover all Melita's children's school uniform costs.

What other steps could Melita take? She did not want to return to the NHS nor to portering.

We looked at the transferable skills she had developed during her career, which included organisational skills, awareness of health and safety, and good communication. We looked at what she loved to do – Melita declared she is a very skilled cook who loves making Caribbean food.

Melita went on to find self-employment support through the Department of Work & Pensions to set up her own food delivery and catering business. Her adviser will provide support to Melita for a further six months to help her access any additional support she may need to help her business grow.

Melita said, "The support has been really helpful, and I am excited to finally be starting my own business."



LEARN SOMETHING NEW!

Learning Curve

Learning Curve Group offer a range of courses with Level 2 accreditation.

For a full list of courses offered free from Learning Curve Group, please go online to: www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk/courses

Some examples include:

- Adult Social Care
- Behaviour That Challenges
- Business Improvement Techniques
- Cleaning Principles
- Common Childhood Illnesses
- Common Health Conditions
- Customer Service in Care
- Customer Service for Hospitality
- English / Mathematics
- Equality & Diversity
- Personal Exercise, Health & Nutrition
- Tenant Support in Housing
- Workplace Violence & Harassment

DSS Essentials – Improve your digital skills

Hexagon are working in partnership with DSS Essentials to offer some short courses and flexible Gateway accredited qualifications to improve your digital skills. **Open to those who are unemployed or at risk of redundancy, the courses offer a range of learning levels:**

Beginner

- Learn cyber security and stay safe online
- Find and share information using Microsoft Outlook and emails
- Create documents using Microsoft Word, including editing and formatting

Intermediate

- Become competent in Microsoft Excel
- Improve your Microsoft Word and PowerPoint skills
- Have fun designing graphics and adding images to your documents

Advanced

- Learn to use different sources to create digital files, data modelling, web development, and more!

Learning Curve Group and DSS Essentials courses are for unemployed people or those earning an income usually under £17,000 per year.

Building Pathways

Considering your next career move?

Want to change your career or start a new one?

Interested in construction and trades?

Building Pathways offer a free employer-led career exploration and employability programme.

This is for people from all backgrounds and skill levels.

The programme includes industry information webinars, mentor-led masterclasses and 1-to-1 personal development sessions, offering a package of:

- Industry insights
- Work experience
- Skills development
- Personal Development Plan
- Career advice and guidance
- Short training courses including CSCS course, test and card
- Opportunities on major local construction projects

Eligibility criteria:

- You are 16 or over
- You are a resident in the Bromley, Greenwich, or Croydon boroughs
- You are unemployed or not actively seeking employment

For more information please email mcallender@hexagon.org.uk with your name, address and contact details.

YOGA AT HOME, EVERYONE CAN DO IT

Hi there! My name is Linda. As well as working for Hexagon as a Digital Champion, I am also a community yoga teacher. I will soon be able to bring free yoga classes to you in your home via Zoom.

Over the years so many people have said things to me like, "I can't do yoga because I am not flexible!" or, "Don't you have to be young and super fit to do yoga?".

None of these things are true. The truth is everyone can do yoga, even if you have never done it before. Anyone can benefit from doing it. Most people feel immediately better after doing one class.

Some of the long term benefits, if you have a regular weekly yoga practice, can include:

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

COMING SOON! I will be offering a weekly Hexagon yoga class via Zoom on Fridays from 1 – 2pm. It is free to all Hexagon residents. Initially, the class will run for 8 weeks and then it will be reviewed. The first weekly session will begin on Friday 5th March from 1 – 2pm.

You can attend one class or as many classes as you like – with no need to book, just join the class via Zoom.

As it is on Zoom you will need a smartphone, laptop, tablet or a computer and Wi-Fi to join the class.

If you need help getting connected, please let us know. We will give you the help you need to connect digitally to the sessions for free too!

TO REQUEST DIGITAL SUPPORT

To request a call back for digital support to help you get online for these free yoga sessions, please contact our Community Investment Officer Michelle West-Allwood via:

Email to: mwallwood@hexagon.org.uk

Telephone on: **020 8768 7954**

Text to: **07770 682 768**



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

TO BOOK YOUR
FREE YOGA LESSONS
with Linda McMahon or for
more information, email Linda at:
lmcmahon@hexagon.org.uk
or phone **07936 360 126**

LET'S TEST YOUR GREEN FINGERS!

Calling all gardeners and budding gardeners! We will be launching a Green Fingers Competition in our next edition of Home News.

The competition will be open to all residents – so whether you have a garden, balcony or a planter in your kitchen, there will be category for you to enter!

If you have any ideas for categories, please let us know by emailing Nicky Hazelwood on nhazelwood@hexagon.org.uk or by telephone on 020 8768 7913.



Plants that attract bees such as this dahlia – along with planting some grow-your-own vegetables like this beetroot – are just two examples of different categories we might hold for our Green Fingers Competition. We look to residents like YOU for ideas on competition categories so please do contact Nicky!

DENNY'S TOP TIPS

Denny Senner of our regular gardening page 'Denny's Digs' offers some top tips below to get you started!

It is not too early to plan your summer garden – whether you have a large space, a balcony, or a window box.

- **RECYCLE.** Anything that can hold soil and have drainage added, can be a container for a plant. Be adventurous!
- **RESEARCH.** Check that seeds, young plants or bulbs will flower this summer. Cosmos, Sweetpea and Lobelia will have a big impact for a low cost, and it's not too late to plant Lilies and Alliums for a stunning summer display
- **ASPECT.** Is your growing space sunny, shady, or a bit of both? Ensure you choose plants that like to grow in the conditions you have
- **SOIL.** Generally providing a moist, well drained, nutrient rich growing medium will help your plants thrive. Remember to add organic matter to your gardens, and replace the compost in your containers
- **PLANTING SCHEME.** Keep it simple and grow what you love. Planting in 3's or 5's gives visual balance, choosing colours which create the feel you want to achieve. Leaf colour, shape and texture can be as interesting as flowers, and scent is a feelgood factor not to be overlooked
- **VERTICAL THINKING.** Use all the space you have by introducing climbers. This is especially important in small spaces such as balconies
- **WILDLIFE.** Finally, include wildflowers, rich in nectar, to support our pollinators whilst giving a beautiful, naturalistic explosion of colours and textures. Plant from seed or replant samples

FRIENDS AGAINST SCAMS

Friends Against Scams (FAS) is a National Trading Standards initiative. It aims to protect people from becoming victims of scams. The initiative has been running for four years, and over half a million people have already completed the free scams awareness session!

Anyone can be a victim of a scam, and Hexagon are joining Friends Against Scams to support their FASathon campaign to get as many people #ScamAware as possible.

In this time of uncertainty, Hexagon want to encourage our residents to take part in this session, and we have obtained a unique URL to enable you access. The unique URL is:
www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/elearning/hexagon

Follow this link to make yourself more aware of the many types of scams which may come your way from criminals – usually posing as someone else and often online.

If you generally lack confidence with internet security, please do not hesitate to contact Michelle via email at: **mwallwood@hexagon.org.uk** or call: **020 8768 7954**. We will connect you with one of our Digital Champions for free digital assistance.



Some scammers may knock on your door pretending to be an electrician or other tradesperson. Always check ID and when in doubt, call Hexagon or your service provider to confirm

Share your COVID-19 story with Home News readers

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, communities have sprung into action. Residents are reaching out to their neighbours to offer support. As difficult as this time has been and continues to be, a positive that has come out of it is the volunteering, giving and connecting of people.

Please share your stories with us.

Please get in touch with Nicky Hazelwood via email at **nhazelwood@hexagon.org.uk** or by telephone on **020 8768 7913**

You can also contact Home News Editor Adrian Beckingham with story ideas on any theme – and for this edition only, we are offering a prize for the submission we like best (see page 17)!

Email: **homenews@hexagon.org.uk**

NOT ALL FACEMASKS ARE EQUAL

Which? magazine recently published a free report showing which face masks do a reliable job blocking COVID-19.

Follow the link for more details:
tinyurl.com/y6sovqgy



RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT MATTERS

Let us know how you would like to be involved with Hexagon

At Hexagon we always aim to provide you with opportunities to have your say in matters that affect your home. Your views and opinions help to influence the decisions that we take, and to shape the services that we provide to you.

Last year has shown us that, in spite of social distancing restrictions, residents can remain involved and give their feedback. This is mainly done over Zoom. If you are not confident in using computers, please get in touch so we can connect you with our Digital Champions for free assistance (see page 12 for contact details).



Amanda Walker joins the Resident Involvement Team as our new Resident Involvement Officer

How you can get involved

Here are just some of the activities where you can get involved and help improve the housing service. Simply choose one or more of the options below that you're interested in and let us know:

- **Focus groups**
In focus groups, residents meet with staff to give their views on the services we provide and where and how they could be improved
- **Estate Grading Panel**
A group of residents who visit Hexagon estates and inspect the condition of the blocks. The residents give the estate a rating based on what they find, and Hexagon publishes the residents' findings
- **Readers' Panel**
A group of residents who meet four times a year to discuss what they liked or disliked about the latest issues of Home News. The feedback from this panel helps to shape the way Home News looks and reads

- **Performance Review Group**
A panel of residents who meet four times a year to scrutinise the performance of the housing service, and then make recommendations on where and how improvements need to be made
- **Resident Inspectors**
A small group of residents who make a detailed assessment of an area of the housing service, and then report their recommendations to Hexagon

For more information:

See our Residents Involvement Strategy:
www.hexagon.org.uk/residents/getting-involved

Contact the Resident Involvement Team via email to: getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

TOP TIPS: COMMON HOUSEHOLD FIRE HAZARDS

HOUSEHOLD COOKING

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the number one cause of home fires is unattended cooking. Make sure that you stay in the room while you are cooking with a heat source. If you cannot stay in the room the whole time, ask another adult in the household to watch over your food.



HAIR STRAIGHTENERS

Beauty appliances such as hair straighteners and curling irons are a major cause of house fires and dangerous burns, according to the latest research from Electrical Safety First. **Overall, an estimated 650,000 house fires in the UK have been caused by a straightener or similar device being left on.**

Hair straighteners can heat to approximately 220C, and retain that heat for a considerable time after being switched off. **This temperature exceeds the heat necessary to start a smouldering fire on combustible materials such as cushions, bedding, or carpets.** After use, these devices should therefore be switched off and unplugged.



CHARGING YOUR DEVICES

- Always use the charger that came with your device
- If you need to buy a replacement, always use a genuine branded product from a supplier you trust
- Don't leave your device on charge after the recharge cycle is complete
- Always charge your devices in a dry environment
- Don't share too many devices from one source. Overloading sockets is a common fire hazard



CANDLES

The London Fire Brigade warn that an average of 29 houses fires a month are started by candles. Nearly 40 per cent of all house fires started by candles result in a death.

To be fully fire aware use battery-powered LED candles, otherwise ensure the candle is in a safe and stable candle holder, and kept away from all flammable materials such as curtains and bedding.



STAFF EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2020

We thank residents for an excellent response to requests for nominations of Hexagon staff for our annual Staff Excellence Awards.

A total of 20 members of staff received Staff Excellence Awards this year. Of these, eight were nominated by residents – these are listed below with a quote taken from the resident who nominated them (resident names remain confidential).

Adrian Beckingham Communications Officer

"Adrian always goes above and beyond to help and support residents, especially in the groups and panels he leads."



Fiona Jones Housing Sustainment Officer

"Fiona cares about the resident and does everything she can to get you the help you need."



Photo supplied by Fiona

Jim Cameron Recovery Worker

"Jim has helped to ensure that all the residents have been able to engage with activities over the lockdown. He has cooked and delivered food to residents and supported them to access activities on Zoom and Microsoft Teams by learning new PC skills."

Vicky Shiret Senior Support Officer

"Vicky is my favourite, original, all-time great! She gives good support and good eye contact."

Joanne Snell Customer Service Adviser

"There are many times I've called and not been in the best place and Joanne has been patient and calming and given the time needed for the conversation."

Another resident added, *"Knowing I struggle talking on the phone, Joanna will always help me with this."*

Sabrina Chalcraft Recovery Worker

"Sabrina does a lot of groups, she is very polite, very pleasant and very, very helpful indeed."



Photo supplied by Sabrina

Cecilia Cole Customer Services Officer

"Cecilia is always very helpful, and a joy to call on a cold wet Monday morning for a repair!"

Melonie Wheatle ASB Officer

"Melonie has gone over and above when I was attacked by a neighbour during the COVID-19 pandemic. She has given me tremendous support and kept me up to date at every stage. She's been a counsellor throughout this difficult period."



Photo supplied by Melonie

NEW COMPLAINTS POLICY – RESPONDING TO THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN’S CODE

As a housing association, Hexagon are signed up to the Housing Ombudsman service, which provides the final stage for residents if landlords have not been able to resolve a tenant’s complaint.

The Housing Ombudsman (HO) recently published a new code, which you can find online at: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords/complaint-handling-code/

In it there are clear expectations that:

- 1) complaints are responded to promptly
- 2) there are not too many stages in the complaints process
- 3) tenants are to be kept informed of who is dealing with their complaint, and that this person has the authority to resolve the complaint
- 4) landlords will learn from the complaint, and share both our performance and any learning outcomes with the tenant

How Hexagon have responded

- 1) We have adopted the HO’s definition of a complaint – the link opposite outlines this definition
- 2) We aim to resolve complaints informally
- 3) There will be only two formal complaint stages, with an optional third stage at the complainant’s request
- 4) Each complaint will be allocated a complaint officer who is either a Manager or Director with the authority to resolve the matter
- 5) We have adopted the HO’s complaint response times:
 - a) Stage 1: 10 working days (with an option to extend for a further 10 working days if the matter is complex). The complaint officer here will normally be the service Manager
 - b) Stage 2: This will have a 20 day turn around. The complaint officer will normally be the service Director. There is again an option to extend the response time where the complaint is complex. Once stage 2 is completed the resident is free to escalate their complaint to the HO if they remain dissatisfied
- 6) We have retained an optional stage 3. This is a panel hearing with a Director outside the service area being considered, and two Board Members (including one Resident Board Member)
- 7) We will develop systems to learn from complaints and share these learning outcomes



Hexagon have adapted our policy for dealing with complaints in line with the Housing Ombudsman’s recent changes Photo supplied by Hexagon

HOME NEWS FEATURE IDEA COMPETITION

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

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

Send in your idea to homenews@hexagon.org.uk no later than Friday 19th February for your chance to win. The winner will receive a £20 shopping voucher, and see their story idea written up as a full feature in the Summer 2021 edition of Home News.



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

SUPERMARKET SPOTLIGHT COMPETITION

Home News are planning to run a Supermarket Spotlight competition, as soon as government guidelines relax the lockdown measures which are there to protect us all.

The aim of the Supermarket Spotlight competition is to help our readers to determine which is truly the best value supermarket!

We will send up to seven residents into each of the leading supermarkets with a predetermined, identical shopping list of essential everyday items. Home News will compare the prices paid, to help determine which supermarket is offering consumers the best value.

Participating residents will get to keep the groceries as a thank you for taking part.



PATHWAY TO ZERO CARBON

In response to the current climate emergency Hexagon is working towards developing a clear pathway to Net Zero Carbon (NZC) by 2050. Once incorporated within our strategic aims, this will assist us to map our journey in response to the climate emergency.

A housing association's stock is responsible on average for 99% of its total carbon footprint. To reduce overall environmental impact, it is essential for landlords to develop energy efficiency improvements in their properties. The most common way to measure the energy efficiency in these properties is called the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP).

The current science-based target to achieve climate-change targets set in the Climate Change Act of 2008, is for all housing to achieve an average SAP of 86 (Band B) by 2050.

There are seven SAP bands ranging from A – G, with A being the most energy efficient. Currently 67% of our properties are SAP Band C and 10% are SAP Band B. Hexagon's existing Asset Management Strategy target is set to a minimum energy rating of SAP 65 for all our homes by the end of 2021. Currently 88% of our properties achieve SAP 65 or higher.

However, a new government target of SAP 69 is coming in soon. We know what work is required, but are seeking to understand the investment needed to achieve this new goal.

Hexagon's starting point is strong. We have good data from our business and properties to draw upon from our recent SHIFT (Sustainable Homes Index for Tomorrow) assessment. SHIFT is the sustainability accreditation standard for the housing sector.

Over recent years Hexagon has consistently achieved a SHIFT Gold accreditation, and are currently ranked as the 6th best landlord out of the 32 SHIFT landlords. This is proof of our ongoing focus on sustainability and energy enhancement.

Gas boilers will gradually become a thing of the past, as new homes will not be connected to the gas grid. Housing developers will need to use low-carbon heating alternatives to help meet the government's zero-carbon target





Experts recommend building the home with energy efficiency as a key priority at the outset, then reducing any remaining carbon emissions by using renewable energy sources. (Stock image)

Following government consultation in February 2020 on the Future Homes Standard, proposals for new builds were for a 75-80% energy usage reduction compared to current building regulations by 2025. New homes will not be connected to the gas grid, and it is suggested developers will need to use low-carbon heating alternatives. Just 1% of new homes in England in 2018 were Energy Performance Certificate Band A. Hexagon's new builds will need to be above SAP 91 to meet the average target of SAP 86 by 2050. We need to be clear on how this is best achieved, and what the costs are in achieving this.

For Hexagon to carry out this exercise, we will need to appoint a consultant to work with us to develop our road map towards 2050. There are only a handful of firms working in this field, and we have already worked closely with some of them to develop our current strategies.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Definition of NZC: What is a 'net zero carbon' home?

- Simply put, a zero-carbon home is one that is responsible for emitting zero greenhouse gas emissions overall – meaning any emissions are fully offset by absorbing the same amount from the atmosphere
- Building a home emits carbon – in the materials used and in construction; as do heating and electricity usage. Most experts recommend first making sure that the building is as energy efficient as possible, before 'offsetting' the remaining emissions with renewables

Definition of SAP

A SAP calculation indicates a score from 1 to 100+ for the annual energy cost of a property based on:

- The elements of the structure
- The heating and hot water system
- The internal lighting
- The renewable technologies used in the home

The higher the SAP score, the lower the running costs – with 100 representing zero energy cost. Dwellings with a rating in excess of 100 are net exporters of energy – meaning for example they are able to share the energy they save with other properties.

A SAP rating is the calculation that is required in order to produce a Predicted Energy Assessment and an On Construction Energy Performance Certificate. It is now an industry requirement for new build and existing homes. Hexagon is required to provide Energy Performance certificates indicating the SAP rating and banding for each property at every new tenancy. This Hexagon energy data is held on our asset database Lifespan.

SAP calculations allow comparisons to be made of the energy running costs of dwellings anywhere in the UK. Building Regulations now require that a SAP calculation is submitted for new dwellings before they are built.

STAFF FOCUS

The Readers' Panel asked for more profiles on the work individual employees at Hexagon do to help make a difference. This new 'Staff Focus' section will run as an occasional series, focusing on a different Hexagon staff member each time.



Name: Michael Galt

Job title: Head of Property Safety

Previous experience in similar roles: Michael has worked in health and safety with a focus on housing and construction for 14 years – including roles in local government, with contractors, consultancies and at housing associations.

Responsibilities: All of 'property compliance' which includes fire safety (e.g. testing of alarms, emergency lighting), electrical, water hygiene (e.g. checking water tanks, booster pumps), asbestos, gas safety as well as mechanical equipment such as lifts and gates.

Joined Hexagon: October 2020.

Michael Galt

Photo supplied
by Michael Galt

Hear Michael's answers

What do you enjoy most about your job?

It's variety – and that while there are frustrations in this role, I believe what I do is worth doing.

Why is your role so important?

If risks relating to buildings are not managed properly, this not only puts residents in danger, but it also wastes money and breaks the law.

What kind of working relationship do you seek with residents?

One which is open and where residents trust us.

What in your view is the most important message about fire safety to pass on to residents?

All residents must make sure they test their smoke alarms regularly and be especially careful with candles.

What main interests do you enjoy outside of your work commitments?

I am part of a community gardening project which aims to help those with mental health problems to work with others and experience growing food.

Tell us something interesting/surprising about yourself?

I once performed on stage at the Brighton Dome

How has COVID-19 affected you this year?

The pandemic has been a trial from a work point of view. Trying to continue 'business as usual' and continue vital safety procedures during repeated lockdowns has been a challenge.

100 YEARS AND GOING STRONG!

Ms K. Briley is aged 92. She and her family have lived on the same road in SE15 for over 100 years!

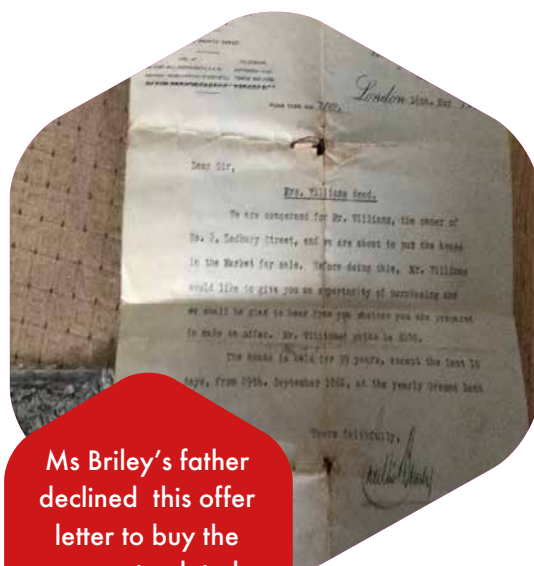
My grandmother moved onto the street in 1916 – then in 1931 my father received a letter offering him the opportunity to purchase the house for £200!

Back then everyone knew everyone on our street. There was a real community spirit. We used to have street parties – someone would bring out their piano and we'd have a sing along! You could be out till 1 or 2 in the morning without worry – now come 9pm you barely see anyone on the street. Many things were much better back then – but also there were some bad times.

I was 12 when the Second World War began. My brother and sister were evacuated, but I stayed at home as my grandmother wouldn't let me go. After 9 months of no school, I attended school one morning and one afternoon a week at a Catholic church hall on Friary Road. During the war we used to have an Anderson air shelter in our garden. I remember coming home from school, having my tea and a wash, then heading to the shelter for bed.

I moved two doors down in 1982 when the house was being modernised and have lived here ever since. Back then the housing association was Solon.

I have been receiving regular Wellbeing calls from Linda McMahon since the COVID-19 lockdown began. This has been a blessing for me. Linda is a lovely lady. We have had a lot of conversations over the months. I now also receive digital training from Linda – for example helping me to put pictures onto my computer so I can share them. Learning to do emails on learnmyway.com is my homework which I really enjoy! (Read more about Linda's free yoga classes on page 10)



Ms Briley's father declined this offer letter to buy the property, dated 13th May 1931



Ms Briley has lived on the street since she was a child

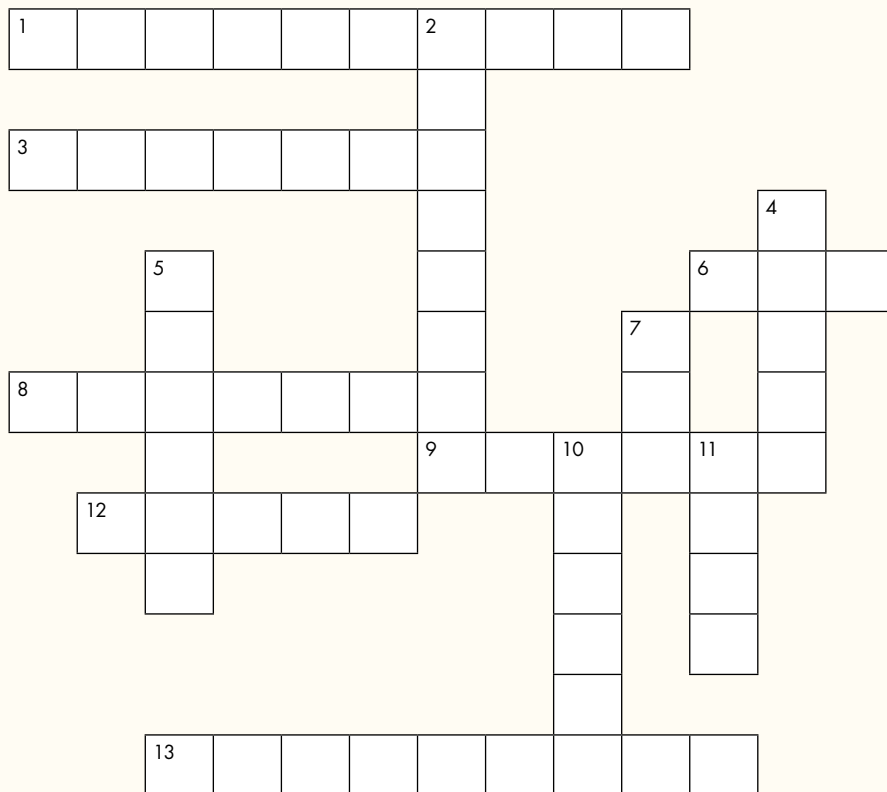


Ms Briley's grandmother (right) and friend on their street

KIDS' ZONE

WINTER Puzzle

ANIMAL CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Big animal that has one horn
- 3 This animal has a very long neck
- 6 Man's best friend
- 8 Lives in the cold and waddles
- 9 Slow moving and has a shell
- 12 Striped animal that looks like a horse
- 13 Can swim under water and walk on land and has a big bite

DOWN

- 2 This animal has a long trunk
- 4 This animal likes to eat carrots and sugar cubes
- 5 This animal loves bananas
- 7 Some say this animal has nine lives
- 10 Has big ears and likes to hop
- 11 King of the jungle

Solve the crossword puzzle above and once completed email in your entry by Friday 19th February to: homenews@hexagon.org.uk

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



SNOWMAN JOKES



Where does a snowman keep his money?
In a snowbank

What do you call it when a snowman throws a temper tantrum?
A meltdown

What do snowmen call their sons and daughters?
Their chill-dren

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?
Frostbite!

Kids' Corner Wordsearch Winners

Congratulations to: Zeinab Diallo (SE8); Zeynep Odukan (SE18); and sisters Hannah, Amy and Sophie Leech (SE13 – sharing one entry) who won the last Wordsearch competition.



Mini Pizza Quiches



Resident's Recipe

All recipes in Home News are intended to be easy enough for older children to prepare with the help of an adult. Ensure your child receives the necessary help to be able to cook safely.

Hands up who likes pizza? Why not try your hand at preparing these bite size mini pizza quiches? They are a healthy food snack for snuggling up with indoors, maybe watching a favourite film? Remember to always ask an adult in your household for help when learning to cook – who knows maybe you can learn this recipe together?

- 2 Tortilla wraps
- 4 eggs
- Chopped vegetables (optional)
- 6 slices salami
- 3 cherry tomatoes, halved
- Vegetable sticks, to serve

Method

- 1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Using a 12cm cutter (or a small plate) cut circles from the large tortilla wraps – you should get 6. Use the circles to line 6 holes of a muffin tin, pushing them into the holes to make cases.
- 2 Beat the eggs and pour into the tortilla cases (you can add some chopped vegetables too, if you like). Top each case with a slice of salami and 1/2 a cherry tomato. Bake for 15 mins until the egg has set. Top with a few basil leaves, if you like, and serve with extra tomatoes and vegetable sticks.

WINNER – UPCYCLING COMPETITION

In the Autumn 2020 edition, we asked our adult readers to explain what 'upcycling' means, and why it is good for both the environment and your wallet. Christine Matthews (SE 26) wins the voucher for her following entry:

Upcycling is good for the environment and can save you money in addition to providing you with a new hobby. Upcycling is re-using some items you already have – to make them into something new and better, rather than sending them to landfill to the detriment of the environment.

An example of upcycling is reusing bottles and jars, by decorating them with a mixture of paint, scraps of materials cut out from clothing you no longer need, cardboard packaging – all that would otherwise have ended up in the bin.

You can give them as presents, saving money.



WINNER

Some empty bottles upcycled by Christine into attractive ornaments Photo supplied by Christine Matthews



COMPETITION

Now we are asking children to upcycle something – it could be an old hat, a stool, a photo frame, or whatever you turn your hands to! While the cold wind blows outside, send photos of your upcycled object to homenews@hexagon.org.uk by 19th February. Include up to 100 words describing how you made it.

Our favourite two entries will be published in Home News and each receive a £10 shopping voucher.



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

To enter this edition's Competition Time, simply answer the following questions by Friday 19th February. Email your entry (along with your name and postcode) to: homenews@hexagon.org.uk

THREE EMAILED ENTRIES TO INCLUDE THE ABOVE DETAILS AND ALL CORRECT ANSWERS WILL BE DRAWN AS OUR WINNERS, TO EACH RECEIVE A £20 SHOPPING VOUCHER.

1. List four ways you can save some money in 2021?
2. Are Hexagon continuing most services despite corona lockdowns?
3. How can you get your CV to work more effectively for you?
4. List three ways in which residents can get more involved with Hexagon activities?
5. Looking to the future, why won't new homes be on the gas grid?

Congratulations to our last edition's winners:

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

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

1. Hexagon has won a gold accreditation from SHIFT for 4 consecutive years.
2. RAG are the new Residents Advisory Group at Hexagon. Three examples of achievements already made by RAG include helping to develop the Value for Money, Digital Engagement, and Domestic Violence strategies.
3. To help Hexagon staff and contractors when they arrive at a property to carry out a repair, residents can: wear a face covering; advise them if vulnerable, self-isolating or with covid symptoms; keep two meters away from the officer or contractor; avoid physical contact; open windows in the area they're working in; and open all doors in order that the workers do not have to touch them.
4. You do not have to pay for help with debts, the Hexagon Financial Inclusion Team will give you free advice.
5. Candles can cause fires. To keep yourself and your home safe from fire, the best option is to use battery-powered LED candles. Other fire safety measures around candles include: always put candles in a suitable fire-resistant holder, then on a heat resistant plate; and always keep candles away from flammable items such as curtains and furnishings.

HOW TO ENTER?

WE ARE ONLY ACCEPTING ENTRIES BY EMAIL AT PRESENT.

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

Three correct entries received by Friday 19th February will be drawn at random and will each receive a £20 shopping voucher. The competition is open to all Hexagon residents. The editor's decision is final.

WAYS YOU CAN CONTACT US

Freephone **0800 393 338**

Landline **020 8778 6699**

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

Option 2 for all repairs related queries

Option 3 for tenancy and rent queries

Option 4 for general enquires

Gas Central Heating Contractor
0800 206 1367

(24 hours, 7 days a week)

Emergency Out-of-hours Repairs
020 3701 3518

customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk
for all general enquiries

repairs_reporting@hexagon.org.uk
to report a repair

www.hexagon.org.uk

Text **07537 400 527**

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

Follow us for regular updates,
event invitations and news:

HexagonHousingAssociation
 @HexagonHousing

TRANSLATE!

Always happy to translate!

Chinese
永遠樂於翻譯！

Eritrean
"ንክብርታዊ ልምድ" ከሌላ ሕግ ሊኖር ይችላል!"

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.