



AUTUMN 2023

Hexagon

# Home News



P4  UNIVERSAL CREDIT

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a digital copy >

## Warning

If you receive Tax Credits, you will have received or be receiving this leaflet. But this is NOT a Migration Notice. It does NOT mean you have to claim Universal Credit (yet).

Some individuals who receive tax credits will be worse off on Universal Credit (UC) and will not receive The Transitional Protection if they apply before they receive their Migration Notice.

**See page 4 for more information.**

## Did you know Hexagon Housing Association offers FREE advice and guidance with:

### Employment Support

- Positive Pathways 2 day course
- CV and cover letter creation
- Confidence building
- Interview practice



### Social Housing Training

- 2 days course on working in social housing and meeting residents needs
- Certificate of completion



### Work Experience

- 6 - 12 weeks
- Admin and Customer Service experience in the following teams -
- Customer Service, Community Investment and Neighbourhoods



Let us help you with finding your way back to work.

Call: **020 8768 7992** or Email: **et@hexagon.org.uk**

[www.hexagon.org.uk/community-investment/](http://www.hexagon.org.uk/community-investment/)



# Interview skills programme

**Murray Birrell are working in partnership with Hexagon to offer 10 residents a mock interview at their Bromley office.**

Residents will benefit from an interview in a corporate environment with a panel including one of the organisation's directors. Verbal feedback will be given straight after the interview, followed by written feedback.

Hexagon will help residents

- Update their CV, to be sent to the employer prior to interview
- Access group or 1-1 interview coaching using Murray Birrell's interview skills resource pack
- Provide travel expenses prior to your interview

This programme will run from October 2023 – March 2024.

## Interested in a Career in Social Housing?

We will be delivering an Introduction to working in social housing course, which will run over 2 days, for 5 hours a day in October at Hexagon's Head Office. Dates to be confirmed.

The course will cover

- The purpose of social housing
- The main activities of social housing providers
- The rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords
- The different roles available within the sector
- The diverse range of tenants, their needs and how social housing providers aim to support them
- The current challenges within the sector

Attendees will get a certificate of completion.



## Learn something new?

We've extended access to our online learning platform, Skills Academy until July 2024. Residents can still access a range of online courses, some CPD accredited.

1000 courses available!

## Vacancies

Contractors such as Mullaleys ring-fenced roles for residents this year. We have residents working for them as labourers and one will start work as administration support for TJR Ventilation. More vacancies and trade apprenticeships will be available in the future.

Contact [employmentandtraining@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:employmentandtraining@hexagon.org.uk) or call **020 8768 7992** if you're interested in any of these opportunities.

# UNIVERSAL CREDIT

## Managed migration

This is where DWP move claimants from tax credits (and other legacy benefits) to Universal Credit (UC) under a formal migration exercise.

The DWP started sending out migration notices in August 2023 to claimants receiving tax credits only to claim Universal Credit.

### Who will not receive a Migration Notice?

- If you are within 6 months of State Pension age (i.e. 66)
- If you have 'Nil' Tax Credit award & no other legacy benefits
- Getting only Housing Benefit and living in 'specified' or 'temporary' accommodation.

### Who won't be getting a Migration Notice YET?

- If you have existing fraud / compliance case
- Claimants with a 19-year-old in non-advanced education
- Claimants with visual impairment / terminally ill
- Claimants who require a home visit

Note: You can request Migration Notice to be cancelled if any of the above applies to you.

There is no direct transfer to UC. Claimants will be issued with a migration notice and if you are a couple will be notified individually. You must make a claim within 3 months of receiving a **Migration Notice**-your deadline date will be stated in the notice.

When you claim UC, it will be treated in the same as any other claim and will be ask to:

- Verify ID
- Provide evidence requested.
- Attend New Claim Interview at the Job Centre and sign Claimant Commitment
- You may be asked to look for work.
- Couples must each complete their claim.

The DWP have discretion to extend the deadline day if a claimant has a physical or mental health condition, learning difficulties, is in hospital (or is about to go in), has significant caring responsibilities or has a domestic emergency.



**TAX  
CREDITS  
ARE  
ENDING**



Get ready for  
**UNIVERSAL  
CREDIT**

### How to get help and support

Contact the Money Support Team at  
**[moneysupport@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:moneysupport@hexagon.org.uk)**

# Grounds Maintenance and Cleaning

**Over the summer, Hexagon has been working hard to tender for a new Garden and Cleaning contract.**

We have listened to the feedback from residents and tried hard to address those concerns in the new contract, expected to start in December. We are working with the new provider 'Just Ask' to develop the mobilization plan and to deliver new and better services.

We know, and apologise that there were significant gaps in the quality of services previously delivered by one contractor. We are working with the remaining contractor Clearscapes who have stepped in to cover all schemes for the remaining period, and they are working hard to improve the services until 'Just Ask' start in December.

Just Ask will be carrying out a full site survey on each estate and communal area. They will publish a bespoke schedule of works for each area, which we will post on notice boards. Our Neighbourhood team will be working closely and monitoring the new services to ensure standards improve to a quality you deserve, and we expect.

You will appreciate the current financial and economic climate is impacting across all services and material costs. Increases in materials and other costs, means that we must continue to be vigilant with our finances. We know you are all facing financial challenges too. To keep service charge costs down we will not repair or replace non-essential items, such as fence panels, or intervals between grass cutting may be extended. If residents agree that they would like increased levels of service, we can arrange this if all residents on the estate/block agree with the commensurate increase in the service charge. We are happy to work with you to achieve a balance to improve the quality of service at an affordable cost.

## 2023 STAFF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Staff Excellence awards take place to celebrate and congratulate the commitment and dedication of Hexagon's staff who are prepared to "go that extra mile" whilst carrying out their duties.

As well as Hexagon staff being able to nominate their colleagues, **YOU**, our customers, are invited to nominate staff who you feel deserve to receive an award for providing you with great customer service and generally do a "great job".

You may want to nominate a member of staff who you feel provides you with excellent customer service, or a member of staff who has provided you with advice or support that has really made a difference to you during the last 12 months. You can nominate any member of Hexagon's staff.

We celebrate these nominations at our Annual Staff Conference, where those staff nominated are presented with a "Certificate of Excellence".

If you would like to nominate a member of staff, you can Email to **humanresources@hexagon.org.uk** or Tel **07920 507440** or text same number and ask for callback or via our website at **www.hexagon.org.uk**

Nominations need to be with us by **Sunday, 19th November 2023**

# Damp and Mould

**No one wants to live in a damp home. Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and cause wooden window frames to rot. It's also unhealthy.**

Some damp is caused by condensation. This can lead to a growth in mould that appears as a cloud of little black dots. Condensation occurs when moist air comes into contact with a colder surface, like a wall, window, mirror etc. The air can't hold the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. It also occurs in places the air is still, like the corners of rooms, behind furniture or inside wardrobes.

Condensation is not the only cause of damp.

Penetrating damp is moisture entering the house through leaking pipes, a damaged roof, blocked gutters, gaps around window frames and cracked rendering and brickwork. All these problems can be remedied.

Rising damp is due to a defective or non-existent damp course. This will leave a tide mark about 1m above the floor. Fixing rising damp requires building works.

Newly built homes can sometimes feel damp because the water used during construction (in cement, plaster etc.) is still drying out.

**Penetrating damp**

## How to reduce condensation at home

### 1. Produce less moisture

Simple things make a huge difference, like keeping lids on pans when cooking, drying clothes outdoors (not on radiators), venting your tumble dryer outside (if it does not have a compressor), and avoiding paraffin heaters or flue-less bottled gas heaters. If you have to dry clothes indoors, try to leave a window open or an extractor fan on, to help get the moisture out of your home. If you are using your extractor fan, especially if it's situated near a window, it's best to keep the windows closed. Dry air is cheaper to heat than warm air, so producing less moisture also helps you to keep your home warm for less.

### 2. Heat your home a little more

While you don't want to waste money heating rooms you don't use, very cold rooms are more likely to get damp and mould. Set the thermostatic radiator valve to 1 in unused rooms so the radiator gives out a little bit of heat whenever you have the heating on. Remember, unused rooms will need a good airing from time to time. You should aim to keep your home at around 21 degrees during the day and 16 degrees at night. Warm air causes less condensation than cold air and cold surfaces.

### 3. Let the damp air out and the fresh air in

Extractor fans are a good way to get rid of moist air and steam so that less condensation forms. They use little electricity and don't add much to your bill. Fans typically have a rating of 8-30W, so would cost about 10p if they were on all day.

Stop moist air getting into the rest of your home; when cooking or bathing, keep the kitchen or bathroom door shut and open the windows to let the steam out.

Meanwhile, let fresh air circulate to avoid mould forming where the air is still. Make sure there is a gap between your furniture and walls, and give wardrobes and cupboards a good airing sometimes.

Check that your trickle vents are open and keep air bricks uncovered. The vents help to remove excess moisture build-up from the air that can cause mould.

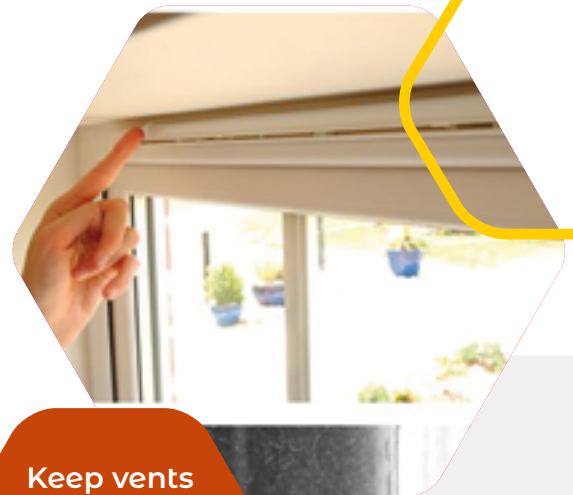
It is also more expensive to heat a home with excess moisture in the air.

- Leave air bricks uncovered
- Keep trickle vents open
- Keep vents open and be careful not block the vents.

### More tips:

You can catch condensation dripping from windows with condensation channels and sponge strips (available from DIY shops). If you wipe down windows and sills in the morning this will also help, but be sure to wring out the cloth rather than dry it on a radiator.

You may want to invest in a mini dehumidifier. These can cost between £15 – £40 and can make a big difference.



Keep vents open and be careful not block the vents.



Leave air bricks uncovered

### Repairs

Please report all damp and mould to Hexagon's repairs service. We will complete a mould wash to remove the mould, and we will investigate the source of the damp. If the mould returns, please let us know as soon as possible.

Contact our repairs team Gilmartins on **0808 178 6785** or email [hexagonrepairs@gilmartins.co.uk](mailto:hexagonrepairs@gilmartins.co.uk)

### Support

If you are struggling with the cost of heating your home or paying your electricity bills, please contact our Community Investment Team on **020 8778 6699** or email [moneysupport@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:moneysupport@hexagon.org.uk)

## £300 Cost of Living Payment for those in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) or certain other benefits

The second of three Cost of Living payments is due to be paid this Autumn. If you're on UC, income-based JSA, income-based ESA, Income Support or Pension Credit you should get your payment between 31 October and 19 November 2023.

If you're eligible you don't have to do anything – the money will be paid into your usual account. If you've been contacted and told to apply, beware – this could be a scam.

If you're on Tax Credits only, the payment should be made between 10 November and 19 November.

## Save energy save your pocket

Here is a list of common mistakes we make with tips on how to fix them and save money

### Having a fridge that's jam packed OR under-filled.

We should aim for a fridge that's about three-quarters full. If it's too full the fridge has to work harder to get cool air into all the corners. But fridges also work better when there's a good amount of stuff in there. If we tend not to have much in our fridge, just keeping some bottles of water in there will do the trick. Defrosting frozen food in the fridge rather than out in the kitchen can also cut energy use by acting as an ice pack and helping the fridge stay cool. The food will just take a bit longer to defrost.

### Not defrosting our freezer.

Lots of ice build-up stops the freezer working efficiently. So clear it of ice as often as needed.

### Hanging clothes on radiators to dry.

It might feel like we'll dry our laundry much quicker this way, but we'll pay for it. Doing this will only make our boiler work harder to keep our home to temperature.

### Letting limescale build up on our kettle.

If we don't keep the kettle clear we're using more energy to boil the same amount of water. And with all the hot drinks we'll be having over the colder months this can quickly add up!

### Washing clothes at 40 degrees.

Of course, sometimes a cooler wash isn't going to cut it. But if we use a 40-degree cycle as our default we're pouring money down the drain. Lightly soiled clothes come out just fine at 30 degrees (or even lower if we have a 20-degree setting). And a 30-degree wash can save 38 per cent on energy costs compared with a 40-degree cycle. Washing at 20 degrees uses 62 per cent less energy than a 40-degree wash. When we want to kill bacteria though, for example if we're washing sheets or towels, a 60-degree wash is still best. Just a lot more expensive!

## 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](mailto:customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk)

for all general enquiries

[www.hexagon.org.uk](http://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](mailto:hexagonrepairs@gilmartins.co.uk)

### Gas and Heating Repairs

Please call: 0800 088 4433

To report any new repairs email:

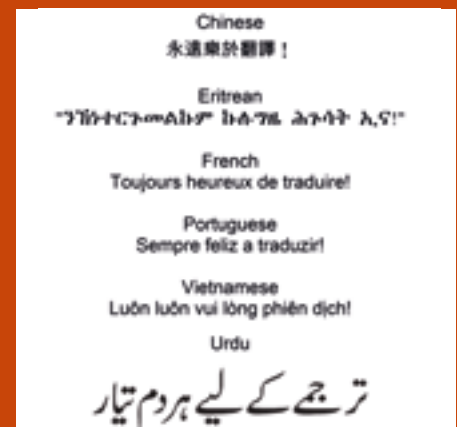
[hexagondomesticgas@smithandbyford.com](mailto:hexagondomesticgas@smithandbyford.com)

Follow us for regular updates, event invitations and news:

 **HexagonHousingAssociation**

 **@HexagonHousing**

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

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 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE | Gold

**HEXAGON.ORG.UK**