

Hexagon

HOME NEWS

SPRING
2018

FEATURED

**HEXAGON
RECEIVES
ACCOLADE.
FIND OUT
WHY** /p03

Win
£20
Shopping
Vouchers

to spend on the High Street
(see back page
for details)

**Speak Out!
Join the
Residents'
Forum** /p16

PICTURED

**Hexagon
residents inspect
the estates** /p06

**Find out how
we work to
keep your
home safe** /p15

**Looking for
employment?
There are
opportunities
available to
you** /p13

What's inside

Hexagon wins award	03
Resident Board Member	04
Neighbourhood event	05
Estate Grading	06
Get involved	07
Subletting is a crime	08
Aids and adaptations	09
Community investment	10
Keeping your home safe	15
Residents' Forum	16
Going 'green'	17
Improving customer service	18
You and your garden	19
Rubbish on estates	20
Money matters	21
DIY tip	22
Kids corner	23
Competition	24

Welcome...

to another edition of Home News.



Thanks very much to the residents' Readers Panel for giving me a helpful steer on this column for this edition. On April 1st we started a new financial year (2018/19) and in that context, I want to outline some of our priorities for Hexagon in the coming year.

First, we will continue to work hard to improve our repairs service. We are beginning to see some improvement in our residents' satisfaction measures for this service, but we still have some way to go.

We are in the third of four years where our income will be going down by 1%. That means that we need to continue to work in creative ways so that we can continue to do more with less.

We will be investing a lot of money next year in a new IT system. This will improve our services significantly. For example, residents should find it much more user friendly on the communication side as we will be able to give you clearer information using email and text, rather than letters, whichever you prefer. Once the main parts of the new system are in place, we will be rolling out a 'customer portal' allowing for some services to be 'self-servicing' for residents such as rent statements.

We are also preparing for a big increase on the number of residents who will be switched to Universal Credit during 2018/19. There are two parts to our strategy for this: The first is to support tenants transitioning into Universal Credit by helping them with their employment needs. The second is to protect our income, so that we can continue to invest in our existing homes. A lot of our money currently is paid directly to us in Housing Benefit, but this will be paid directly to residents who will need to pass the money onto us. This is a substantial shift in the way all of us operate, so adapting to this emerging world will be a key priority for the coming year.

Lastly, we will continue to build more new homes at truly affordable rents and homes for those struggling to get on the homeownership ladder via our shared ownership initiatives.

I hope that this gives you a good overview of what we are up to in 2018/19. Rest assured that we are always focused on putting the customers at the heart of what we do in all of our work.

Tom McCormack
Chief Executive

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



Cover: Hexagon Resident Carol undertaking estate grading. See page 06 for more.



A proud win for Hexagon

Hexagon are proud to share the news that it has won 'Most Improved Ever SHIFT Landlord' 2017.

SHIFT (Sustainable Homes Index for Tomorrow) is the sustainability standard for the housing sector. Provided by Sustainable Homes, recognised by the HCA (Homes and Communities Agency) and backed by the government, it is an independent assessment and accreditation scheme that demonstrates organisations

are meeting the standard and delivering good homes despite challenging environmental targets.

As a social landlord at Hexagon, we have been working in partnership with a range of local authorities and external companies to meet the housing and care needs across south east London ensuring we conduct our business in a sustainable manner.

Being a SHIFT Landlord ensures we measure and

improve the quality of life for our residents and staff through higher quality homes and offices. It also contributes towards taking care of the environment for everyone.

Hexagon was nominated and won the award for most improved ever SHIFT landlord.

What does this mean?

Since the start of SHIFT Sustainable Homes – which began nearly 10 years ago – Hexagon has improved the quality and energy performance of its new and existing properties and offices. Hexagon's continued improved assessments since 2010 were recognised as being the most improved landlord who has worked towards the enhancement of the homes and the lives of their residents, of all the SHIFT members.

See our website for more information <http://bit.ly/2H4RZnf>



Pictured: from second left, Hexagon staff members; Phil Newsam, Rachel Jones, Rumana Khair and David Collick.

Come on board!

Hexagon is looking for a resident to join the Board. Could it be you?

Recently you will have received a letter from Roy Coulter the Chair of the Hexagon Board. In the letter Roy outlines why it is important for the residents to play a prominent and active role on the Board. Do you think that this could be you?

Hexagon is run by a Board of 12 people. Four of the 12 places on the Board are for Hexagon residents and this year there is one vacancy available.

Who can be a Resident Board Member?

Anyone who is Hexagon tenant, shared owner, or a leaseholder and who is not more than 6 weeks in arrears or who has not been found guilty of a Court judgment for breach of tenancy or lease can consider standing for a place on the Board.

What does being a Tenant Board Member mean?

Being on the Board requires that you attend Board meetings (six a year), attend an "away day" meeting (one Saturday a year), attend other occasional meetings as required, and take part in training. The training helps to improve your understanding of the role and equip you with the knowledge to allow you to play a part on the Board.

How do I get on to the Board?

If you are interested in being on the Hexagon Board, simply apply using the contact form shown in the white cut out box. We will then send you an Application Pack which gives you the chance to tell us about your skills and your interest in standing for the Board. We will also invite you to an interview with a small panel to discuss your application further. Following the meeting with the panel you may be invited to go forward for election onto the Board. The election will be carried out amongst all

Hexagon residents and the majority vote determines who will fill the Board vacancy.

Interested? Want to find out more?

An Information Session has been arranged for you to find out more about what it means to be a Resident Board Member. This will take place on **Monday 23rd April** at the Hexagon Office. If you wish to come to the session please let us know by filling in and returning the Information slip below. If you cannot attend but still wish to put your name forward please indicate below and we will be happy to send you the application pack.

Attend Information Session

Name

Address

.....

.....

Telephone

Email address

.....

I wish to attend the Information Session: Monday 23rd April, 6.30pm-8pm at the Hexagon Head Office, 130-136 Sydenham Road

I cannot attend the Information Session but would like to stand for election onto the Board. Please send the application pack.

Please return to Hexagon by **Friday 20th April** or email your interest to getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk



Greenwich borough Event

Saturday 9th June
12 noon - 3pm

Hexagon coming to you in 2018

Following the staging of our first Neighbourhood Event in Croydon last October, we are on course to stage three further events this year.

For residents living in the Greenwich borough we are looking to hold a Neighbourhood Event in the Thamesmead area on **Saturday 9th June**. The event will be staged at Goldfinch Road (SE28) in Thamesmead and will run from 12 noon to 3pm.

This event is aimed at all Hexagon residents living within the Greenwich borough and it will give you an opportunity to meet senior managers who will be on hand to listen to your views of the service that you get from Hexagon. As well as engaging with Hexagon staff, the event will have a range of fun activities for all of the family. There will also be free food and refreshments available.

So, if you live within the Greenwich borough don't forget to put 9th June in your diary and look out for advertising publicity coming your way. This will tell you everything that you need to know about the event and more!

For residents living in the Bexley borough, we will be coming your way with a similar event in July. So look out for publicity nearer the time.

We are staging the Neighbourhood Events in each of the five boroughs that Hexagon works in. These are local events where you can tell Hexagon face-to-face your views about the service that we provide to you and to your home. We will hold a Neighbourhood Event for residents living in Southwark towards the end of September, and for residents living in Lewisham we will be hosting an event in your borough in the spring of 2019.

Estate Grading results

In November 2017 a small group of residents took the lead in completing another round of this successful project.

The Estate Grading project has been running for six years and involves residents visiting and inspecting our estates against set criteria.

As graders, residents attend and carry out an impartial assessment of how the estate looks, and then award it a score based on their findings.

When grading an estate, residents look at the conditions of shared areas such as:

- Communal gardens
- Cleaning
- Communal repairs
- Noticeboards (upkeep and relevance of information posted)

They also give a view on the general appearance and upkeep of the estate. The estates are then given a grade of Gold, Silver or Bronze, with Gold being the highest.

As part of this project the grading team make recommendations for improvements based on what they have seen. The recommendations form an action plan for different departments across Hexagon to resolve within a specified timescale.

The collaborative work between residents, the Housing Services and Repairs teams at Hexagon has seen the standard of Hexagon estates improve from mainly Silver or Bronze rated estates to all Silver and Gold estates in this latest grading exercise. This is a great achievement for everyone involved, and an excellent example of how resident involvement activities can lead to improvement.

The results following the recent round of Estate Grading are shared in the grid displayed opposite.

This project will continue every year in the hope that it will continue to make Hexagon estates a better place to live. We thank our panel members for their valued critique and contributions.

Results are also published on the Hexagon website.



Pictured: Estate Graders, Christine, Carol and Fatima awarding their grading scores.

You're the missing link in the Hexagon

Hexagon invites you to get involved on one of our resident led panels available to you as a resident.

You could be just the right fit. Find your place on one of our panels.

Don't take our word for it, see what residents say below.

To apply or for more information:
<http://bit.ly/2ErwGLM>
 or email
getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk
 by Monday 23rd April

As a retired person, being on panels and giving views and ideas from an older persons perspective, makes me feel I am still contributing to the community and making use of the skills I gained as a building Surveyor in housing, on the Repairs panel. It also helps to keep my brain active.

Christine, Repairs Group resident

I've developed new skills in editing articles and discussing amendments with the authors. I've also enjoyed having an input into how important information is presented to residents in the report, including layouts, fonts and photographs.

Tony, Annual Report Group resident

I've gained an appreciation of the aspects involved with design and architecture. I've worked with professionals in this specialism and learnt about safety and just how important buildings are to live in. Hexagon strives to ensure that properties built help towards a good quality of living.

Adrian, Design Panel resident

Nothing wrong with subletting your home? Think again!

Did you know that subletting the whole of your home is now a criminal offence? It is not a victimless crime.

What is it?

Subletting is when a tenant lets and receives payment for part (or all) of their home to somebody else.

This February Hexagon had to evict, and then subsequently prosecuted, a Hexagon tenant for subletting a two-bedroomed property in the borough of Lewisham. This was a breach of the tenancy agreement, which is a legal document.

Working closely together with the London Borough of Lewisham's Fraud Team and the Metropolitan Police, Hexagon built a watertight case resulting in a criminal conviction for Tenancy and Subletting Fraud. In addition, Hexagon obtained a Bailiff's Warrant through the Court, to change the locks and get the property back.

The victims of this crime, to name a few, are:

- **Occupants** – the family who thought they had genuinely rented a privately-owned property. The rent and deposit they paid lined the pockets of the subletting tenant. Through no fault of their own, they lost their home.
- **Residents like you** – the loss of rental income, the legal fees and the cost of repairs to restore properties back to a habitable state, depletes the money from our budgets for the services Hexagon provides to our residents (e.g. repairs, improvements, fencing)
- **Our staff** – the time involved investigating subletting, preparing court cases and attending court proceedings, takes staff away from other day-to-day duties
- **Community** – in some cases, subletting diminishes the spirit of community. It increases anti-social behaviour or other criminal activity in the local community as we have no control on who is in the property

Such crime also impacts the work of local authorities and government. We all appreciate that with the desperate shortage of affordable social housing, particularly in London, sublet properties stops those most in need from getting a home.

On a more positive note, once this property is restored back to a lettable condition, it will once again be available for rent to a family on the Council's waiting list.

Not a unique case

Subletting is a major concern for all social landlords; Hexagon would encourage residents to report any suspicions of subletting or tenancy fraud.

Some signs of a property being sublet or misused could be:

- New people moving in, but the usual tenant only visits from time to time
- Overcrowding or under-occupancy of the people moving in
- Mail delivered to names you do not recognise
- The property appears to be empty for long periods of time

You can report any suspicions to your Housing Officer on **020 8778 6699** or **0800 393 338** and press option 4. You can also email **customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk**. Alternatively, you can leave a message with a Customer Services Advisor who will arrange for you to receive a call back. You can also request your Housing Officer's email address to email them direct. **Your details will be treated with the strictest confidence, and are not disclosed to the person/people under investigation.**



Helping residents remain independent in their homes

Having to move home due to ill health or increasing frailty in later years can be a daunting prospect, especially if you have built up strong relationships and networks in your community and neighbourhood. We know that as a nation, we are living longer and whilst this is good news, many people have to downsize or move elsewhere to accommodate a change to life circumstances such as increased aging, reduced mobility and the reduction of good health.

As a social housing landlord, Hexagon strives to ensure residents can remain in their homes without unsettling our residents unnecessarily. We are committed to assisting residents in maintaining independence within their homes where possible through the provision of aids and adaptations.

If you or a family member has a disability or other condition that causes difficulty in mobility around the home, our Aids and Adaptation Service may be able to assist to make everyday tasks easier.

We can offer help with minor or major changes to your home.

Minor adaptations can include:

- Grab rails, concrete ramps
- Specialist window openers
- Lever taps to washbasins, sinks and baths
- Entry phones, door release intercoms

An Occupational Therapist's (OT) recommendation is not required for minor adjustments.

Major adaptations, requiring an Occupational Therapist's recommendation and specification, can include:

- Stair lifts
- Ceiling hoists
- Over bath showers and tiling
- Level access showers
- Non-slip flooring for showers
- Large ramps and handrails
- Relocation of plug sockets and light switches

For further help, contact your Housing Officer. We will discuss with you the sort of assistance you need, and whether it is possible in your home.

For more information please see our website: <http://www.hexagon.org.uk/residents-handbook/aids-and-adaptations>

Due to the fact that some specific aids and adaptations require ongoing servicing and possible replacement in future years, Hexagon may have to apply a service charge in addition to the basic rent. This charge is set to reflect the cost of the actual service provided. We will always discuss any potential charges with you.



COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

CAREERS + OPPORTUNITIES + SUPPORT

Digital Skills

Employment Support

Apprenticeships

DIGITAL SKILLS

Money
THERE ARE ~~MANY~~ REASONS TO GET ONLINE

• Cheaper financial services:

access to online only insurance policies and energy tariffs

• Wider choice of products:

access to online only accounts, some offering better rates of interest for saving and borrowing

• Online payments:

the ability to pay bills online can save money; it's often quicker and easier

• Government services:

Universal Credit, being rolled out nationwide, has to be applied for and managed primarily online.

Two top tips to save money online

Cashback sites

Websites such as Top CashBack www.topcashback.co.uk and Quid Co www.quidco.com offer money back for online purchases. Just sign up to become a member on their site (it's free), then before you make a purchase online, click through their website and it will tell you if there are any money back offers.

You can get £££'s back on all sorts of things, including when you register with a new utility company, a new mobile phone contract, or when shopping for clothes.

Supermarket deals

My Supermarket www.mysupermarket.co.uk compares prices online for 15 different supermarkets, so you can search for the bargains before you shop. You can also check out the top offers for each supermarket.



BECOME A DIGITAL CHAMPION

Have you thought about becoming a Digital Champion with Hexagon? It's a great way to make a difference to other people's lives. You don't have to be an IT whizz, you just need a bit of spare time and enthusiasm to support others using digital technology. You will receive free training and support with self-study courses and teaching resources. You can also meet and work with other Digital Champions in your community.

Become a Digital Champion with Hexagon

Many people need to use the internet and don't yet have the digital skills to search for information, contact friends and family or apply for a job. Being a Digital Champion is about encouraging others to learn more about life online, and supporting them to make the most of the internet. You don't have to be an expert with computers and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you've really helped people and communities to get connected!

Get ongoing support

Our Community Investment Team is here to help you through your training and beyond, and is happy to answer any queries you may have about being a Digital Champion. Contact nhazelwood@hexagon.org.uk for further enquiries.

Some great reasons to get involved:

- Free courses, resources and support.
- Certificates to add to your CV.
- Share ideas and receive support.
- Have fun and feel good – it's very satisfying to know you've made a difference to those around you!

Register now

Apply to become a Digital Champion by contacting Nicky Hazelwood, call **020 8768 7913** or email nhazelwood@hexagon.org.uk

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Job search checklist

Whether you're looking for work, have been made redundant or would just like to improve your job prospects, we've got loads of advice to get you through what can be a difficult time. When you first start looking for a job, it can feel slightly scary. But when you know where to look and what employers are looking for then you'll find things a bit easier. Teaming up with Hexagon's Employment & Skills Team means that we can give you loads of advice to help support you as you look for jobs, create a CV, and prepare for interviews.

When you're looking for new employment it really helps to be prepared. We have created a checklist to help you stay focused on what you need to do. Just ask yourself these questions to make sure you've got everything covered;

- Do you know what skills and experience you'll need for that job?
- Do you have a CV?
- Is your CV up to date?
- Do you feel confident with the following?
 - Interviews
 - Writing cover letters
 - Filling application forms
- Do you know where to look for specific jobs?
- Have you considered contacting Hexagon? If not, what are you waiting for?

If there is something on the above list you have concerns about, don't worry help is on hand from our friendly Employment & Skills Team who will assist you on your job search journey.

If you would like to find out more, please contact the Employment and Skills Team.

Call **020 8768 7984/7915** or email lwhitfield@hexagon.org.uk or lcampbell@hexagon.org.uk

Skills to Success

Improving your qualifications – either in maths, English or IT can improve your job prospects. If you're looking for work, it's important that you and your CV really stand out to employers. Topping up your skills can be a great way to do this and it could help to boost your confidence.

Here at Hexagon we have partnered with the Learning Curve Group and Morgan Hunt, to support our residents to progress professionally in their work. We have on offer 20 online courses each taking between six and eight weeks to complete to achieve a nationally recognised qualification. So long as you complete the course within the timeline, these courses are free to access as part of a three-month pilot partnership and can help you either in your current role, or to start work or change career direction. The courses are designed to fit around your way of life, whether you work full-time or have a family.

We have on offer a range of courses from:

- Customer Service.
- Caring for Children and Young People.
- Business and Administration.

Why not have a look at some of the courses we offer on the page opposite to see how we can help you.



Hexagon resident, Shaqueele Brown (Sales Negotiator for Andrews Estate Agent) shares his account of the support he received from Hexagon.



"The Love London Working Project was recommended to me by my fantastic Housing Officer Janay Worrel, who advised me I could get assistance with finding a job. I didn't want to go to the Job Centre as I didn't find them useful, so decided to check out what support Hexagon had to offer. When I met with Lionne Whitfield, I informed her that my dream job was to work as an Estate Agent. I first got started in the property industry by helping relatives with the building of properties, so I thought it was only natural to get involved myself. Although, I did not have any direct experience selling properties, Lionne did not dismiss what I said or try to persuade me to apply for different jobs.

Lionne gave me practical advice and tips to be able to 'sell myself' to potential employers. She guided me on the best way to construct my CV and write a tailored covering letter to accompany it. In addition to notifying me about job opportunities, Lionne helped me write to over 200 estate agents across London to enquire whether they had any Sales Negotiator roles available. Whilst I waited for call backs, I received regular mock interviews from Lionne who helped me convey my passion and determination to potential employers. After attending a few interviews and receiving job offers, I decided to take up an opportunity with one of London's leading estate agents as a Sales Negotiator. This firm was the best fit for me because despite being new to property sales they have provided me with an extensive training programme, with a strong focus on personal and professional development and career progression, which has helped me make the right start in my career.

I would highly recommend you join the Love London Working Project. It is an amazing service; I received a job within less than one month. Forget your doubts and join today, I would recommend the service over the Job Centre!"



Opportunities for professional development

An exciting partnership between Learning Curve Group and Morgan Hunt means that you can access Training and Development which will help your personal development and career opportunities.

These programmes will develop your knowledge to help you progress within your role and leads to a nationally recognised qualification. They are delivered through a Distance Learning model so it is flexible to undertake.

Level 2 Certificates	Duration (weeks)	Hours per week
Awareness of Mental Health Problems	6-8	1-2
Business and Administration	6-8	1-2
Caring for Children and Young People	8-10	1-2
Understanding Behaviour that Challenges	8-10	2-3
Care and Management of Diabetes	6-8	1-2
Common Health Conditions	6-8	1-2
Customer Service	6-8	2-3
Customer Service for Health and Social Care Settings	8-10	2-3
Dementia Care	6-8	1-2
Dignity and Safeguarding	6-8	2-3
Equality and Diversity	5	2-3
Infection Control	6-8	1-2
Information, Advice or Guidance	6-8	1-2
Lean Organisation Management Techniques	9	1-2
Learning Disabilities	6-8	2-3
Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care	6-8	2-3
Principles of Care Planning	8-10	1-2
Principles of End of Life Care	6-8	1-2
Retail Operations	8-10	1-2
Safe Handling of Medication in Health and Social Care	6-8	1-2
Team Leading	6-8	2-3
Understanding Autism	6-8	2-3
Understanding Nutrition and Health	6-8	1-2
Warehousing and Storage	8-10	2-3



Our programmes will allow you to:

- Achieve a nationally recognised qualification
- Access to high-quality learning materials and support from an experienced Tutor/Assessor
- Progress your skills to the next level
- Improve your knowledge of the industry to a high standard

For further information, please contact Hexagon's Employment and Skills Team on:

020 8768 7915
020 8768 7984

HOW DO APPRENTICESHIPS WORK?

Apprenticeships allow you to combine work and study by mixing on-the-job training with classroom learning. You'll be employed in a real role while studying for a formal qualification, usually for one or two days per week either at a college or a training centre.

By the end of your apprenticeship, you'll hopefully have gained the skills and knowledge needed to either succeed in your chosen career or progress on to the next apprenticeship level.

What you'll learn depends on the role that you're training for. However, apprentices in every role follow an approved study programme, which means you'll gain a nationally-recognised qualification at the end of your apprenticeship.

These qualifications can include:

- **Functional skills** – GCSE level qualifications in English, Maths and IT.
- **National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)** – from level 2 (comparable to five GCSEs) up to level 5 (similar to a postgraduate degree).
- **Technical certificates** – such as BTEC, City and Guild Progression Award etc.
- **Academic qualifications** – including a Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND) foundation degree or the equivalent of a full Bachelor's degree.

You'll also be constantly developing your transferable skills, otherwise known as soft skills, which are highly valued by employers. These include communication, teamwork and problem solving, as well as knowledge of IT and the application of numbers.



Types of Apprenticeships

Most job sectors offer apprenticeship opportunities in the UK, with a wide range of specific roles on offer within each. These include:

- **Business** – such as accounting, digital marketing and HR administration.
- **Construction** – such as brick laying, plumbing, painting & decorating.
- **Engineering** – such as mechanical engineering and electrical engineering.
- **Healthcare** – such as dental and apprenticeships within the NHS.
- **IT** – such as software development.
- **Law** – such as at the legal executive or solicitor level.
- **Media** – such as broadcasting, journalism, or social media.

If you want assistance with securing an apprenticeship, paid/voluntary work or finding a course, why don't you give our Employment & Skills Team a call on **020 8768 7984 / 020 87687915** or email lwhitfield@hexagon.org.uk or lcampbell@hexagon.org.uk to see what opportunities we have available.



Hexagon continues improving your home and keeping you and your household safe

At a time when lots of social landlords are reportedly scaling back improvements to their properties, Hexagon continues to have extensive programmes to update your homes. Here's a run-down on what we achieved in 2016/17.

£2.9 million

Spent on improvements

105 homes

Had new kitchens installed

72

New roofs

106 homes

Had new windows installed

58 disabled residents

Received significant adaptations to help them stay in their homes

Keeping Your Home Safe

We check flats and houses every 5 years to ensure your home is safe and meets the Decent Homes Standards policy. This helps Hexagon to plan programmes like kitchen, window and bathroom replacements.

Value for money and energy

We know trying to keep down energy bills is important to you. For the past 6 years, we have been improving the energy efficiency of many of your homes with:

- loft insulation
- LED lighting
- draught proofing
- wall insulation.

We have also been making communal lighting more reliable and electricity costs cheaper by installing LED lighting to 22 larger blocks and car park areas over the last couple of years. Last year 446 residents benefited from this sort of work.

We have more plans to increase energy efficiency in the future.

Fire safety

In the months since the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy, the importance of keeping homes safe has featured strongly in discussions and meetings with residents. Hexagon has had a programme of fire safety

checks for several years with our Board monitoring progress on actions needed to ensure residents remain safe.

As reported in the Autumn 2017 issue of Home News, after the lessons about hazardous cladding of the Grenfell Tower became clear, Hexagon checked all our taller blocks; the good news was that they found that none contained the materials that enabled the spread of flames as happened at Grenfell Tower.

We will be carrying out annual independent fire surveys of all our taller blocks along with our sheltered homes, supported housing and care homes. There will be surveys every 2 years for blocks and converted houses of 3 or more stories, and every 3 years for smaller blocks and converted houses.

Hexagon has one of the best records of London housing associations on checking the gas appliances that we maintain and with your support we want to keep it that way.

We also carry out electrical testing to all homes over 15 years old every 5 years. This is to make sure your wiring, sockets and lights are safe and free from any hazards – but do let us know if you find any problems in-between tests on **0800 393 338** or **020 8778 6699** press option 2 for all repairs related queries.

The Residents' Forum exists so that you can make a difference!

As a Hexagon resident did you know that you can get involved and have input to the decision-making that takes place in Hexagon?

The Residents' Forum is seeking four residents to become new members of the Forum.

The self-governing Residents' Forum, is Hexagon's **only** elected residents' group. Working with Hexagon's Board and its managers, it provides a residents' perspective on the strategies and policies of Hexagon and it is growing in influence.

Why join?

- You can help give a wider range of views
- You can influence the way Hexagon works
- It will empower you and improve your skills

Each year a number of Forum members who have come to the end of their three-year term stand down and their seats become vacant. These vacant seats are open to all Hexagon residents.

No experience is necessary, a belief that the voice of residents should be heard is all you need. As a new member of the Residents' Forum you will receive training and support to help you settle in and become familiar with your new role.

By joining the Residents' Forum, you will not only be helping to improve the lives, homes and communities of thousands of Hexagon residents: it is also an opportunity for personal growth and development. As a Forum Member you can gain a wide range of new skills or build on your existing skills. You will also

have the opportunity of meeting residents from other housing associations.

Meetings of the Residents' Forum are held every two months at the Hexagon office, usually on a Wednesday evening.

“Joining the Residents' Forum has empowered me in other things that I do in life. I feel more confident, plus I feel part of a friendly and supportive team.”

Valerie, Forum Member.

You can also contact the Residents' Forum directly at info.residentsforum@gmail.com for further information.

Engage with the Forum online:

 **HexagonForum**
 **HexagonResidentsForum**

How to get involved

Would you like to be part of this growing development? If so, contact the Residents' Involvement Team on **020 8768 7964** or email getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk to express your interest.

Closing date for expressions of interest:
Friday 4th May, 9:00 am.

Encouraging green forms of transport

Walk to school week, the congestion charge, recycling by your council, reducing landfill, bicycle hiring schemes and ethical consumerism – these are all initiatives or campaigns derived from the concept of environmental sustainability.

Earlier in this edition, we shared with you the news that last year Hexagon won a SHIFT award for its sustainability performance. Whilst we celebrate the recognition that our properties (your homes) are given the seal of approval, there are ways you can be involved in impacting the social and cultural aspect of sustainability.

You might think that changes you can adopt would make little difference, but think again. It is important to remember that there is impact in numbers.

One way you might consider is adopting 'green' methods of transport to reduce your carbon footprint (this is the level of energy used or chemical emissions).

Hexagon resident Carol (SE13) is doing just that. Following a health scare in 2012 she began to walk to her destinations instead of taking the bus.

This has made a difference to her health, her weight and her pocket – saving on travel fares. She tells Home News “...I had a stroke in 2012 which made me look at my lifestyle

and how I could improve it. I was 20 stone, size 26 in clothes and never liked doing exercise, but after having my stroke I decided to do something about it.

First thing I did was sign up to 'Weight Watchers' and I started walking everywhere.

As a result I have lost 5 stone over the past five years. I find that walking has really helped me to improve my health. Walking is very good for clearing your mind especially when in the park.

It is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier. Sometimes overlooked as a form of exercise; walking briskly can help you build stamina, burn excess calories and make your heart healthier.

If you don't like exercise, walking is ideal for you and it also helps circulation in the body.”

See Public Health England's campaign 'Active 10' for more on this <http://bit.ly/2sXgvoh>

There are a number of apps and equipment such as 'Map My Walk', 'Pokémon Go' or

'Fit Bit' to help you along your way, track your steps and make it fun or even competitive.

Other green forms of transport include:

- Cycling (if you cannot afford your own bike, there are cycle hire schemes)
- Car sharing/pooling – If you need to drive, consider joining a car share scheme. For journeys such as the school run, if you can share a car journey with others such as your neighbours, this reduces under occupancy of cars and reduces car journeys.
- Hybrid or electric cars
- Peddle powered transport like scooters (these are not just for teenagers)

So why not promise yourself to do regular exercise now – you'll find benefits to your health and the environment too.

Are you passionate about environmental sustainability? If you're interested in becoming an Energy Champion – see page 07 for more information.



How pleased are you with our Customer Services team?

For some time Hexagon have been collecting residents' opinions of how satisfied they are with services such as repairs.

However, to date Hexagon has never really focused on how happy residents are with our Customer Services team.

The Customer Services team is the team that picks up your phone calls, emails and other communication when you contact Hexagon; the team that are always striving to help to resolve your queries in a timely and professional manner.

This team handles around 65,000 forms of contact each year, with the majority coming in over the phone. Over the last few years we have implemented tools such as call recording alongside a high tech contact

centre solution to help us improve services to you, our customers.

We have now introduced a new piece of software which will allow you to provide, in real time, your opinion of the service you received from our Customer Services team. This is set up as an automated after call survey. You have the option at the start of the call to opt in or out of the survey. You will then be automatically contacted to provide answers to a few straight forward questions based on your interaction with one of our Customer Service Advisers. Your opinion really counts to us and will help us to further improve the service we provide to you.

Thank you for your time in answering the survey, and in future editions of Home News we will be providing feedback on the results from these surveys.

Love your garden

Following what seemed like a very long winter, the arrival of spring is a welcome change.

This means it's growing season for all plants and the prospect of seeing and enjoying gardens that are in full bloom is something to relish.

If you are a resident that has a home with a garden, Hexagon would urge you to attend to your garden if it is overgrown. As part of your tenancy agreement, looking after your home as well as your garden (should you have one) is a requirement.

Whilst Hexagon is responsible for ensuring your garden is in reasonable condition (prior to occupation), once you take up your tenancy it's over to you. You are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of your garden.

Get green fingered

Please ensure your garden doesn't get so overgrown that it impacts onto the property or on your neighbours. Here are a few tips to get you going:

- Regularly mow lawns and grassed areas
- Regularly remove ivy from walls and brickwork
- Cut grass, particularly during the growing season. Keep your patch of green at a manageable length. Domestic lawnmowers will not cope with long grass so do try mowing your lawn regularly. (Fortnightly between March – October is the recommendation)
- Do check if any garden hedges, trees or shrubs that you plant are suitable for the size and type of your garden. These should be kept at a manageable width and length.

If you fail to keep your garden in good order, Hexagon may arrange for it to be cleared and will recharge you for the cost of carrying out the work.

Our Housing Services Team will be able to let you have details of organisations that may be able to assist.

Enjoy your garden!



Bulk rubbish

An unsightly scene and added cost to you

Hexagon has seen an increase in the last year of bulk rubbish dumped and abandoned in communal areas of estates such as outside bin stores areas.

Typically we know that once one item is left, it then encourages others to leave their bulky items and this is resulting in us also collecting items that have been left by non-Hexagon residents.

Unfortunately continued fly-tipping and the cost of removing these items are passed on to you through your rent and service charges; so it's in everyone's interest to dispose of large items responsibly.

Dispose responsibly

If you need to get rid of bulky items such as furniture or fridges your local authority can collect these for a fee. Alternatively you can take these to the local household recycling centre; unwanted items could be given to another home.

Details on these services can be found on your local authority's website. Information is also available on our estate and block noticeboards.

Remove hazards and consider others

If you live in a building with communal areas such as hallways, landings, lobbies and stairs, these areas must be kept clear of clutter, rubbish and your possessions.

Items such as bicycles, toys, shoes, ladders and household items are often left in communal areas and these could potentially block someone's exit in the event of fire.

As your landlord, Hexagon has a legal duty to make sure all of the communal areas in our properties are kept clear. This reduces the risk of fire, and helps to ensure that escape routes are not obstructed so that you and your family can get out safely in case of an emergency.

Hexagon would like to remind all residents that any items found in communal areas will be removed and disposed of and you may be recharged the costs for this. To avoid upset please keep your possessions within your home.

Thank you for your co-operation.



Hexagon: Here to provide guidance to your money

Most people have questions and queries about money at some point. Whether it's worry about debts, wanting to make a budget, or just thinking about how to manage money after a life change, most of us have questions from time to time.

To help provide the answers to some of those questions, we have produced an updated version of "The Hexagon Guide to Your Money". This covers a vast range of topics, and is split into two sections to help you deal with a whole variety of issues.



Section 1

The first section "**Money Essentials**" deals with some of the main day to day aspects of managing your money. Covering topics such as:

- dealing with debt
- claiming benefits
- saving, banking
- borrowing (this section looks at how you can make the most of various aspects of your money).

Section 2

The second section is called "**Life and Money**". This section looks at the impact of various life changes on your finances. It covers topics such as:

- having a child (starting a family)
- moving in with a partner
- losing a job.

In these life changing circumstances, the guide looks at how you can respond to these issues and still make the most of your money.

The guide is available free, so to get your copy, contact Jason, the Financial Inclusion Adviser on **0208 768 7925**. Of course, the guide is not a substitute for personal advice.

If you are unsure about any money related issue always seek independent advice before making any money related decision.



Spring time pest problems and solutions around your home

As the days get longer and the weather warms up we tend to get a few additional visitors into our homes and gardens. Here are a few top tips to avoid spring time pests.

Prevent wasp stings:

Don't try to swat wasps away. You'll likely aggravate these insects and suffer a sting in the process. Instead, calmly and slowly move out of their way. Like other stinging insects, wasps love bright colours so wear white or neutral clothes to deter them. Look out for wasps' nests in your home or garden. You can have them removed by your local council or a pest control specialist.



Prevent bee stings:

Stay still and calm while a bee buzzes around you. Bees love sweet drinks and the last thing you want to do is swallow one, so be sure to look before you sip your drink at picnics and barbecues.



Prevent tick bites:

Wear long sleeves and trousers when you're walking in forested, overgrown areas and use a tick repellent.



Prevent mosquito bites:

Smells and bright colours attract insects. Avoid using scented hand or body creams and strong perfumes and sparkly, colourful jewellery if you're going to spend time outside. Insect repellents are also effective. Don't forget to cover up and use repellent at night if you're camping.



Prevent ladybird bites:

Wear gloves when gardening, but try not to intentionally kill harlequin ladybirds. It's hard to selectively get rid of them without hurting native ladybirds, and all ladybirds are good for the garden.



Prevent ant bites:

Use over-the-counter ant repellent.



Prevent spider bites:

Don't disturb spiders if you can help it - they tend to bite you only when they feel threatened.



The 3 key recommended elements to pest prevention are:

- 1. Hygiene** - cleanliness inside and outside. Reduce food source and attraction for pests.
- 2. Housekeeping** - undertake a spring-clean and reduce harbourage for pests (nesting sites).
- 3. Proofing**- if possible, reduce entry points to your home so that pests cannot dwell.

Please refer to section 3.1 of your Tenancy Handbook; Hexagon is responsible for assisting you with the following pests:

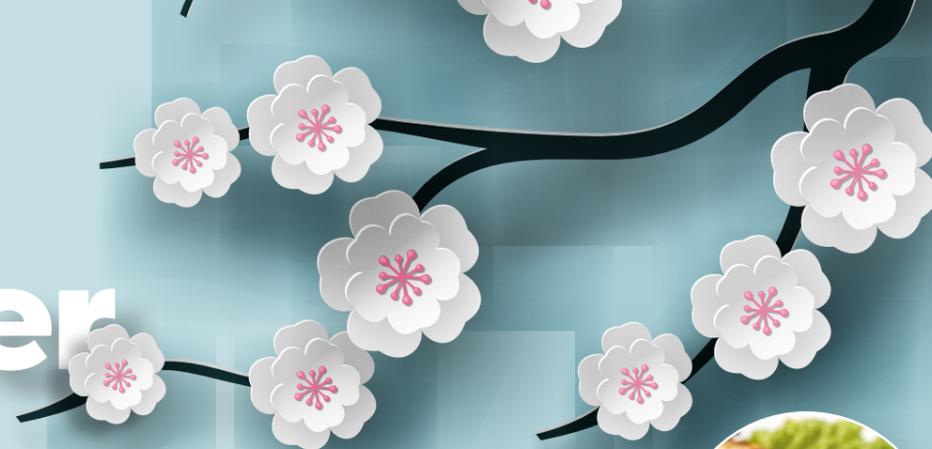
- Mice (treatments can be provided once every 6 months)
- Rats
- Cockroaches
- Pharaoh Ants

Did you know?

You can now view previous DIY tips on our website? Take a look at www.hexagon.org.uk/diy-tips-archived



Kids Corner



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

Spring Word Search

- Buds
- Grass
- Seeds
- Umbrella
- Daffodils
- Rain
- Spring
- Flowers
- Rainbow
- Tulips

Find the words in the puzzle grid above. Words may go forwards and backwards or across and down. If you think you have found all the correct words in the word search, simply cut out and send to the address below by **Friday 27th April**.

Send your word search entry to: **Resident Involvement Team, Hexagon Housing Association, 130-136 Sydenham Road, London, SE26 5JY**

Three correct entries will be drawn at random. Each will receive a £10 Love2Shop voucher.

Congratulations to A Adaja (SE13) and Holly-Ann Githendu (SE1) who will both receive a £10 shopping voucher for successfully completing the word search competition in the last issue.

Joke Time

How do oceans say hello to each other? **They wave**
 Where do cows go for entertainment? **The moo-vies**

Stuffed Jacket Potatoes



- 4 medium potatoes
- 100g strong cheddar grated, plus extra for topping
- 100g sweetcorn
- 100g mixed pepper, diced
- Small handful fresh herbs, such as oregano, basil, coriander, dill or thyme

Equipment

medium mixing bowl, small mixing bowl, fork, dessert-spoon, baking tray, grater, oven gloves.

Method

1. Get an adult to heat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6 and bake the potatoes for about 1 hr until cooked and the skins are crispy. Leave to cool completely. This can be done up to 2 days ahead.
2. To stuff the jacket potatoes, heat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6. Ask an adult to cut the potatoes in half. Using a spoon, carefully scoop out the middle of the potato, leaving the skin unbroken (like a boat). Place the scooped potato into a mixing bowl.
3. Using the fork, mash the potato until there are no lumps. Add the cheese, sweetcorn and peppers and mix well. Gently pick the leaves from the herbs. You can rip the larger leaves into smaller pieces. Stir the herbs into the cheesy potato mixture.
4. Using the spoon, carefully scoop the mixture back into the potato boats. Make sure that you use all the mixture up. Sprinkle with a little extra grated cheese and place on a baking tray. Using oven gloves, place the tray in the oven and bake for 10-15 mins until golden.

Competition Time



To enter this edition's Competition Time, simply answer the following:

1. When is the information session taking place to find out more about Resident Board Member elections?
2. What are the three key preventative recommendations you can take to stop pests in your home?
3. How often is a Residents' Forum meeting held?
4. How many disabled residents had new adaptations made to their home?
5. When will Hexagon be holding its Neighbourhood Event in the borough of Greenwich?

Congratulations

to C. Mendham (CRO),
C. Matthews (SE26), D. Mills (SE23)
who each receive a £20 shopping voucher.

The answers were:

1. Phone
2. Managing Agents
3. October 2017
4. Raising awareness of mental health in work and employability
5. Physical, emotional, sexual, financial and psychological

How to enter?

Please send your entries, by post, to:

Resident Involvement Team, Hexagon Housing Association, 130-136 Sydenham Road, London, SE26 5JY or by email to:
getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk

Three correct entries received by **Friday 27th April 2018** 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

Other ways to contact us

@ 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, UK

Translate!

Chinese
永遠樂於翻譯！

Eritrean
ገንቦተርተሎልኩም ኩሉጊዜ ሕጉሳት ኢና!"

French
Toujours heureux de traduire!

Portuguese
Sempre feliz a traduzir!

Vietnamese
Luôn luôn vui lòng phiên dịch!

Urdu

ترجمے کے لیے ہر دم تیار

Large print

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

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