

Hexagon HOME NEWS

Quarterly magazine for the users of
Hexagon housing and support services

January
2015

REPORT A
REPAIR

PAY YOUR
RENT ONLINE

HEXAGON CELEBRATES
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

Hexagon has been recognised for the quality of our
homes in a prestigious environmental awards scheme.

READ MORE

RESIDENT'S
LOGIN

New Website

see page 2

Money Matters

see page 16

Volunteering with Hexagon

see page 18

Home News is printed
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Welcome...

from the Chief Executive

Welcome to another edition of *Home News*. Happy New Year to all our readers!

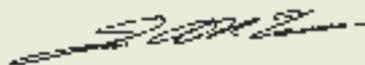
Good communication is at the centre of providing great services to our residents. With that in mind, in early February we will be launching our new website at www.hexagon.org.uk. We hope you find that this new and improved website is easier to use and that it provides accessible information in a clear and friendly way. You can read more about this on Page 2.

Our Resident Inspectors have taken another close look at one of our services, namely our Cyclical Decorations Programme and they have made some recommendations about how we can improve our service. I would like to say a big "thank you" to all of them and to draw your attention to their findings which are outlined on Page 4.

Innovation is important at Hexagon. Finding new and better ways of providing services is what drives us. One of our most recent innovations is something called Peer Mentor Support. The idea here is that people with some experience of mental health problems are trained and paid to provide support to people who are moving from a high support environment to independent living. You can read more about the new and exciting Athena Project on page 7.

Lastly, we continue to be able to offer some apprenticeships in construction and you can read more about these on Page 15. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if this would be of any assistance.

I hope that you enjoy reading this edition of *Home News*.



Tom McCormack CEO



Staff Excellence Awards

Thank you very much to those of you who took the time to nominate members of staff for our Annual Staff Excellence Awards. Those selected were presented with their Award at our Staff Conference in November.

As in previous years we had a good response to requests for nominations and received 28 nominations for 27 members of staff. After consideration by a panel, it was decided that 13 members of staff would receive Staff Excellence Awards. Recipients included the following members of staff:-



Brian Hughes
– Resident Involvement Manager -

"I find him to be helpful, supportive and understanding. He is very approachable and will always point you in the right direction if he is not able to assist you. He is very encouraging and committed with residents. We all have off days, but with Brian you would never know as he is always the same – smiling and polite!"



Lloyd Morgan – Stock Improvement Surveyor –

"I've been having some soundproofing done and he has gone out of his way to make sure I know what is going on. I work full-time and he has popped in on his way home just to make sure I know what is going on. He has read all my emails where I have concerns and made sure that my concerns are dealt with."



Jason Herbert – Financial Inclusion Adviser –

"He has worked hard with residents to ensure that they are getting all the benefits they are entitled to – this has included residents getting large HB payments for rent arrears. He has also worked hard to set up the credit union."



Suzanne Jones – Supported Housing Officer –

"She shows determination and persistence in seeing through a problem until it is resolved. She explains clearly to the customer what needs to be done; keeps them informed and when resolved checks with them that they are happy with the outcome."

Jenny Pratt – Supported Housing Officer - *"She has shown great flexibility in changing her working hours to enable the residents at a property that we are in the process of selling, to receive a good service. She has truly cared about the residents and has been helpful with all aspects of the transition of this service. Her presence has reassured the residents during an unsettling period."*

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Hexagon's New Website

Hexagon launches its new website early February

Recently we have been working with CAST Media who also produce our Annual Report and Home News magazine, and who know Hexagon very well. Staff from across Hexagon have also been involved through a working party.

We recognised that the existing website needed a refresh, and we have engaged with resident's focus groups, staff and other organisations whom we work with to get feedback on what they would like to see from the new website.

Shortly after the website launch we will be sending you a username and password to enable you to register onto the new website. This will enable you to access certain services such as reporting a repair or SeeMyData, as well as send us a compliment, comment or complaint. These are all services which are currently available on our existing site, but with the new website residents will be able to see a log of all communications sent to easily refer back to.



We will continue to review the performance of the new website and improve it following feedback from all users, in particular from residents. We will also be looking at what other services we can offer to residents via our website recognising that not all of our residents have internet access.

In order to help as many residents as possible access the website, and all of the other benefits of the internet, we will be running another computer training course for residents in the Spring. Residents who complete the course will also receive an internet ready refurbished laptop. If you would like to take part call our Financial Inclusion Adviser, Jason Herbert, on 0208 768 7925

The new website will:

- be easy to navigate with good search facilities
- provide accessible information in a clear and friendly way
- generate interest & promote Hexagon's activities in local communities
- present a professional and approachable image of Hexagon



This new website is part of our drive to provide a better service to residents and communicate information in an easily accessible way.

The new website can be found at www.hexagon.org.uk



If you have any feedback on the website please let us know by contacting us using the details below.

Key Details

Tel: 020 8768 7970

Email: getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk

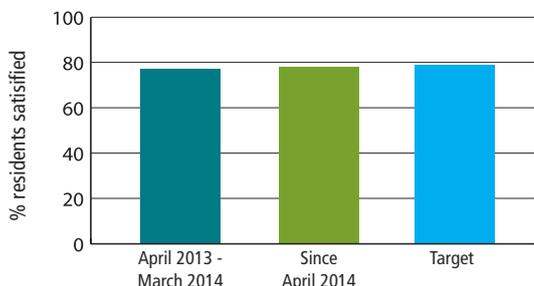


Our Survey Says...

We asked 125 residents in October (as part of a survey carried out every 3 months) a short series of questions about our services; they are standard questions that most housing associations use. The survey was done for us by an independent market research company called M-E-L. The survey responses are shown in the graphs with our response to the findings showing in *italics* beneath.

Overall – how do you rate Hexagon?

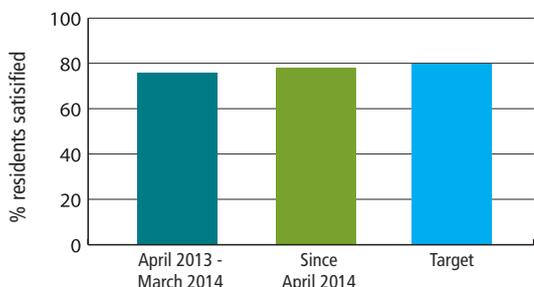
For the six months since April, 76.7% of residents in our general needs homes were 'satisfied' with the service that they get from us – almost exactly the same as last year.



We want to be better than this, as this is almost exactly the same as the mid point for London housing associations (76.5%); our target is 79% which would put us close to the best 25% of housing associations.

We know that a key reason that residents are not 'satisfied' with the service they get from us centres around repairs – and as you'll know, we have had to end our contract with RR Richardson, so hopefully you should see some improvements over time in this area.

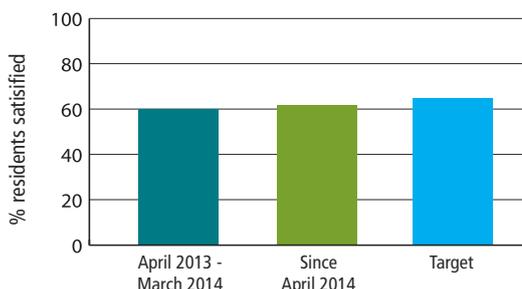
Satisfaction with Quality of Home



Hexagon is improving on this - but has still a little way to go to reach our target.

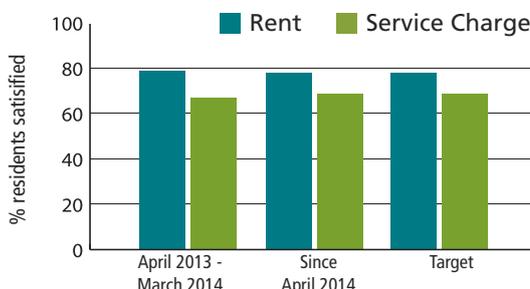
If you don't want to take part in the phone surveys that M-E-L run for us, please let Paul Browning at Hexagon know (020 8768 7950 or email pbrowning@hexagon.org.uk) and we'll make sure that your details don't get passed to them.

Satisfaction with Listening to Views and Acting on them



Another area where we are improving and getting closer to our target.

Satisfaction with Value for Money of Rent & Service Charge



With the value for money of both rent and service charges, the ratings are stable and are at the target (for rents), which puts Hexagon in the top 25% of London housing associations.

Thank you to everyone who answered the questions for this survey and to others that responded to surveys we have run in the recent past. There will be an update in a future *Home News* about very recent surveys on estate services and one we undertook on looking at the potential for providing more services on-line.

Customer Surveys



Resident Inspectors

Taking a Closer Look...

Towards the end of last year a small team of residents carried out a detailed service inspection into the way that Hexagon works. The area which the resident inspectors chose to review was the Cyclical Decoration programme. Cyclical decorations are where Hexagon contractors paint the external areas of a block and the internal communal areas such as staircases, walls and landings. This is usually done in a 6 yearly cycle.

The team of three residents came into Hexagon to plan the inspection, interviewed staff and the consultant and carried out resident satisfaction surveys over the phone. They also went out on site to see examples of cyclical decorations works being carried out and met with two sets of contractors.

At the end of the inspection the residents concluded that the contractors completed the works to a good standard, but felt that there was room for improvement. In their report the residents made 13 recommendations based on their findings.

These include:

- improving communication to residents
- giving residents clear details of who to contact in the event of a query or problem
- ensure that residents are given the choice of paint colours to be used

The resident's inspectors have reported their findings and recommendations to senior managers and Hexagon will now get busy to put these improvements into place. The feedback from the inspectors will mean that we can expect to see further improvements to the good work already being done in the cyclical decoration service.

The resident's inspection of the cyclical decoration service is a good example of residents working together with in partnership with Hexagon to identify and deliver improvements to the housing service. If you would like to find out more about becoming part of the inspection team, simply contact us using the details below.

Key Details

Contact: Catherine Foxwell

Tel: 020 8768 7962

Email getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk



Condensation

What is Condensation?

Air contains moisture. The temperature of the air determines how much moisture it can hold, and warm air contains more moisture than cold air.

When warm, moist air comes into contact with either a surface or air that is colder than it is, the warm air is unable to retain the same amount of moisture as it did and the water is released either into the cold air or onto the colder surface, causing condensation to form, quickly followed by mould.

What are the Causes?

Day-to-day activities such as cooking, washing and drying clothes, heating and even breathing all produce water vapour. Air can only hold so much moisture in the form of invisible vapour, no matter what temperature it is.

When the air contains more moisture than it can hold, it reaches 'saturation point' and when this is reached, the moisture turns back into water and condensation occurs. The temperature reached at saturation point is called the 'dew point'.

How can you cut down condensation in your home?

There are a few basic ways to control the problem of condensation:

- Try not to dry clothes in your home - if you do, dry them in your bathroom with your extractor fan on and the window or trickle vent open
- Do not put wet clothes on radiators
- When cooking, use extractor fans and keep the kitchen door closed. Use lids on pans especially when boiling.
- When bathing or washing keep the bathroom door closed and switch on the extractor fan. If there is a lot of steam then open the window.
- Keep furniture, such as beds and wardrobes etc, clear from the walls in order to help the air to circulate.
- Keep your house/flat warm
- Open any air vents in windows and/or walls

While sleeping we produce about a litre of water vapour, so it will also help if you leave your window vents/windows open at night (weather permitting).

Improvements in Estate Services

Improving the appearance of our blocks of flats and estates is a key priority for the Housing Services Team. Resident satisfaction in this area, based on an annual telephone survey, has dropped over the past year or so, and the team are determined to improve the situation.

One of the areas for improvement is to make sure that our cleaning and gardening contractors are doing a good job. With this in mind, we have recently taken on a new team member with specific responsibility for monitoring the work of our cleaners and gardeners.

Her name is Julieanna Korell and she is the new Estate Services Contracts Monitor. If you live in a flat or on an estate you may well see her going about her work, inspecting and checking on quality.

If you have any concerns about the quality of the cleaning or gardening service where you live, Julieanna wants to hear from you. You can email her on jkorell@hexagon.org.uk or phone her on 020 8778 6699.



Family Indoor Bowls

Fancy trying something new or even just having fun?

Hexagon is offering FREE sessions that will take place at the wonderful Lewisham Indoor Bowls Centre based in Sydenham.



It's a perfect activity for all age groups and if you haven't played before it's worth having a try. Indoor bowling can be played for relaxation or for competition purposes. It's a non-contact sport requiring skill, concentration and good hand-eye co-ordination.



Family Self-Defence Session

Hexagon has arranged for a fully qualified martial arts teacher who can teach you and your family self defence techniques. It's also a great way to keep fit!

The best thing of all is that the sessions are designed to ensure that you have as much fun as possible.

Sessions are being held in Deptford and places are limited so don't waste time. Get in touch to secure your place. You too can be as good as Bruce Lee!



Interested in bowls or self-defence?

What are you waiting for? Pick up the phone and book a place

Key Details: Contact: André Peters Tel: 0208 768 7910
Email: apeters@hexagon.org.uk · Text: 07903 429 071



Over 50's Club



Would you like to meet up with other residents that have similar interests and go on trips and activities for FREE?

If so, then this is for you. There is only one entry requirement:- you must be a minimum of 50 years young and be willing to make friends and socialise with the other members.

We really look forward to welcoming new members to join the club.

Previous trips which the club have arranged include Bingo and Indoor Bowls.

Where we go is up to you as all members are asked what their interests are and each time we meet we discuss and plan the next activity. Potential activities could include salsa, arts and crafts, tai chi, quiz nights, walks, book clubs, theatre trips and much more.

Come, join up and contribute your ideas for future activities for you and other members to attend.

André Peters
 Tel: 0208 768 7910
 Email: apeters@hexagon.org.uk
 Text: 07903 429 071



Athena Project



Hello, my name is John Lake and I am the Project Coordinator for the new Southwark based Paid Peer Mentor project for people with mental health needs which was covered in the July edition of *Home News*.



The project now has a name, the Athena Project. Athena was the goddess of wisdom in ancient Greece. We have chosen her name because at one time she took the form of the man named Mentor, so she accompanied and supported Telemachus in his quest to find his father Odysseus.

During September and October the Athena Project started in earnest with the appointment of myself and the recruitment of the first group of potential

peer mentors. The training programme is now underway and runs from October through to February.

There are 12 people on the course from a range of background and ages. The aim is that by this Spring they will become Athena Mentors and be paid to support people moving from high support accommodation into independent living.

The next round of training will start in the summer. To be eligible for this you don't need to have experience of academic learning but you do need experience of mental health problems and helping people in your community.

Please call me if you would like more information or are interested in taking part. You will receive help with the work that needs to be submitted and I can put you in touch with some of the people who are doing the course at the moment if you'd like to find out what it is like.

So, if you would like to be part of this new project and would like more information on it, just contact me using the details below

Key Details

Contact: John Lake
Tel: 07961 108588

Email
jlake@hexagon.org.uk



Meet the residents...

Adrian has been a Hexagon resident for many years. Despite him living with long term chronic health conditions, he manages to volunteer some of his time, when he is able to do so, for other Hexagon residents. This includes giving and receiving support from within the housing co-op where he lives. He is also as a member of a couple of Hexagon involvement activities, namely the Residents Forum and the Readers Panel. More recently, he has been helping some Hexagon residents to learn basic IT skills. Here Adrian answers a few questions on what it's like to be a volunteer and an involved resident with Hexagon.

What prompted you to participate in resident involvement at Hexagon?

I think it started off in the very early days with the concept and creation of what is now the Residents Forum. It started off with about five or six of us and after we drafted a mission statement and a constitution then it really took off. My interest in starting up the Residents Forum was based on my past experience. When I was 18, I got involved in setting up my first housing cooperative. I had been involved in social housing from a young age and, based on my experience, Hexagon invited me to participate and was I willing to get involved because I realised how important resident involvement was and still is.

How do you find the work of the panels you are on?

The Readers Panel is interesting and challenging because it's all about how we present *Home News* to residents. It's a small but effective team and it's rewarding because it's keeping people informed as well as encouraging other residents to get involved. The Residents Forum was very exciting as it was a chance to be part of something new. After it was launched I was democratically elected as the first Chair and consequently I was voted back in each year, to serve for five years in total. It was exciting to be involved in important discussions, reviewing housing policy and voting on issues important to residents.

Do you find the work of the panels has had an impact?

Often the Resident Forum meetings can get very passionate about items that are raised on the agendas, but the meetings always succeed in making the right decisions for the residents. The Resident Involvement team works well to assist the Forum to keep on track and as a result, Hexagon does certainly listen to all decisions made.

You are currently involved with one of the housing co-ops that Hexagon works with. How did you get involved in that?

Much like my involvement in the Resident Forum, I was approached because of my past experience having lived in a housing co-operative before. Hexagon had a building available, that required commitment and voluntary input to work on the architects design. They asked me if I would like to get involved and I said "yes" immediately. It wasn't just me of course; there were a few of us who got involved. It took a few years to get the project completed, but was very much worth it in the end!

Do you feel the relationship with Hexagon is strong despite managing yourselves?

While I do feel that it is strong I also feel that a lot of the co-ops do worry about the future. Hexagon has a preference to directly manage all of its properties, however I do feel that with the current political and financial state of the country, its austerity and the way that benefits are moving, that having co-ops may become more of an asset in future. Co-ops can provide a lot of informal support for their members and self-management of housing is the ultimate form of resident involvement.

I hear you are volunteering to help some of Hexagons' residents to learn basic IT skills. What inspired you to take this on?

I saw an article in *Home News*, spoke to Nicky and Magda from the Community Investment Team and became interested on what was on offer. I believe that as society progresses today there will be more and more demand for people to be digitally capable and self-reliant in being able to access the internet. For example the Universal Credit that the government is about to roll out, will require individuals to apply for their benefits online. That is just one example of where everything has become more and more online centred. This is where I try my best to help others and volunteer my time when I am able to do so.

With your commitment towards volunteering, do you find that Hexagon provides you with the opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others?

I find that volunteering is very rewarding, but it is also a two-way street – as well as helping others, volunteering to help in the community helps to develop my skills further and is a great way to meet new people. I feel that it is a valuable undertaking to be in a position to help others. Thanks to Hexagon for being an excellent social landlord in being able to make this possible for me.

If you would like to suggest a resident from your area who you would like to see featured in *Home News*, just contact us at 0208 768 7970 or by email at getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk

THE NEXT GENERATION



SELF-DEFENCE CLASSES - FOR FREE
BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

see page 2

Homework Help

Improve your grades in English & Maths with Masterclass sessions

see page 3



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 Hexagon Youth Mag

FREE GOLF LESSONS!
See page 2 for details

APPRENTICESHIPS

LOOKING FOR WORK? ARE YOU AGED BETWEEN 16- 24?

WE'LL HEXAGON HAS A WIDE RANGE OF CONSTRUCTION APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE NOW!!



Electrical >>>>>>

You will be expected to carry out skilled tasks. Examples of the work you will be carrying out include:

- Plan, prepare and install wiring systems and associated equipment in buildings, structures and the environment
- Terminate and connect conductors, cables and flexible cords in electrical systems
- Install electrical equipment and accessories e.g. isolators and switches, distribution boards and socket outlets
- Inspect, test, commission and certify electro technical systems and equipment
- Diagnose and correct electrical faults in electrical systems

Plumbing >>>>>>

You will be expected to carry out skilled tasks. Examples of the work you will be carrying out include:

- Install and maintain domestic plumbing and heating systems
- Use and work to risk assessments including heating equipment
- Remove, prepare, set up, install and test hot, cold, central and gravity rainwater systems
- Isolate supply
- Install taps and fittings
- Remove and install baths, basins, toilets and radiators
- Connect pipes
- Re-connect supply and test it afterwards

Carpentry >>>>>>

You will be expected to carry out skilled tasks. Examples of the work you will be carrying out include:

- Install door/window frames, floor joist coverings, partitions, cladding, stair components
- Erect inclined roofs with gables
- Repair or replace doors, windows, mouldings, frames
- Set up and use saw, drills, biscuit jointer, disc cutter

Dry Lining >>>>>>

Dry Liners build internal walls and ceilings in residential and commercial structures. They use plasterboard panels to reduce cost and time and also to make the walls easier to move or be removed. Dry Liners need have a good fitness level. Some of the tasks that you will undertake include:

- Fixing stage – measuring, cutting and installing stud work
- Finishing stage – Sealing, taping, skimming and sanding

Dry lining methods are used to hide wiring or pipes, to improve a room's acoustics, to improve a cavity space for insulation or to smooth out uneven walls during renovation work. This role can be combined with traditional plastering or other types of work, for example sectioning off areas in open-plan offices.



Painting & Decorating >>>>>>

Painters and decorators use a range of coverings to enhance and protect surfaces. Examples of the work you will be carrying out include:

- Prepare, prime and seal exterior and/or interior surfaces for decoration
- Apply water-borne and/or solvent-borne coatings to internal and/or external surfaces
- Erect and dismantle equipment such as stepladders and mobile scaffold towers.

Business Administration >>

As an administrator, you will be making sure that day-to-day office tasks run smoothly. So it's important that you are organised, accurate and pay attention to detail. It is likely that you will be working for a construction-orientated firm, with some tasks including:

- Document control
- Receptionist duties
- Organising meetings and travel arrangements for management staff
- Using office equipment and systems such as databases

Earn while you learn positions range from 1 – 3 years.

If you would like to apply for any of the current vacancies please contact me immediately. Please only apply if you are serious about working in the construction industry.

**André Peters Tel: 0208 768 7910
Email: apeters@hexagon.org.uk
Text: 07903 342 9071**



SELF-DEFENCE

October Half Term Self Defence Sessions

During the October half term we had great fun learning techniques to protect us from danger. We had 8 young people attend and even some parents getting involved. By the end of the week participants felt more confident to deal with people acting in a threatening way towards them. All participants felt that they were more aware of potential dangers around them. I have included some pictures for you to look at.



FREE Family Self-Defence

I would like to continue the sessions and for those that have attended last year, Israel from Fitness BKS who is a fully qualified martial artist who can teach you how to be safe and to defend yourselves. The best thing of all is that the sessions are designed to ensure that you have as much fun as possible.

Sessions are being held in Deptford and places are limited so don't waste time secure your place. You can be as good as Bruce Lee so call me:

André Peters

Tel: 0208 768 7910

Email: apeters@hexagon.org.uk

Text: 07903 342 9071

FREE Golf Lessons?

If you are 6 years or older you can get FREE golf lessons?

You could be the next Tiger Woods or Rory McIlroy

You will:

- Have a 1 hour lessons every week for 6 weeks.
- be taught by a professional golfer
- given tips and guidance on how to grip and swing using different clubs
- be taught the rules
- have fun with other young residents your age
- will be given all the equipment you need (clubs and golf balls)

So if you want to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity or to find out more please contact:

André Peters

Tel: 0208 768 7910

Email:

apeters@hexagon.org.uk

Text: 07903 342 9071



Places are limited so don't waste time register today!

FAMILY INDOOR BOWLS

Fancy trying something new or just having fun?

Well Hexagon is offering FREE sessions that will take place at the wonderful Lewisham Indoor Bowls Centre that is based in Sydenham.

It's a perfect activity for all age groups and would like to encourage everyone to try. Indoor bowling can be played for relaxation or competition purposes.

It's a non-contact sport requiring skill, concentration and good hand-eye co-ordination.



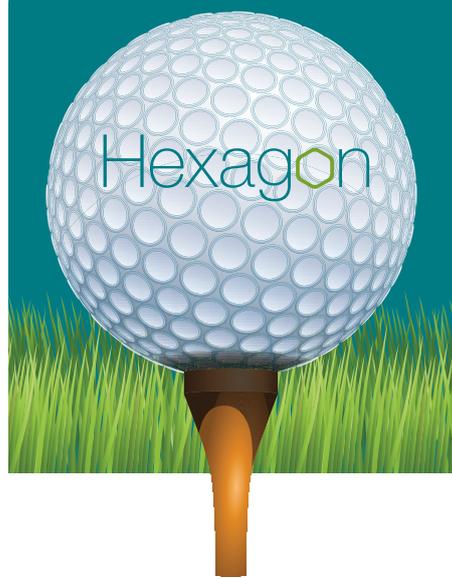
So what are you waiting for pick up the phone and book a place

André Peters

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Text: 07903 342 9071



YOUR CORNER

This is a page that is dedicated to you the reader to put articles, stories, art work. Below is an article from a 17 year old resident called Elethia who is studying Art and Fashion Design at University

LET'S GET CREATIVE...



I have been studying in the creative industry for more than 4 years. At the moment I'm studying a level 3 diploma art & design fashion course at the UAL (University of the Arts London).

Although fashion is a demanding industry I find it very stress relieving. I personally would find life very boring if I didn't have fashion to express myself, the reason I am saying this is because as a younger teen I was very impatient, boring, I followed other people's fashion, I didn't have a mind of my own but now am the opposite of that.

I realised that if you want to be in the creative industry you can't be impatient because if you are you won't get any work done at all. There are times I want to stop

doing fashion because it's hard work, you have to do development, designs, sewing, research and lots more but my friend Zedeesha James is like a teacher to me, she supports me, helps me and she gives me that extra push so I recommend for any subject you should have a friend there with you.

In the future I would like to have my own clothing line and have a charity shop that you can trust but I was going to link my clothing line with the charity because I love to help others but if that doesn't happen I at least want to get into the fashion industry or have my own catering business.

I know you must be thinking why a catering business? What does that have to do with fashion? ... Well I

love cooking that's something else I like to do, also art & design and fashion is a part of catering.

Why? Because of the clothes the caterers wear and for art & design it's the way you put the food on the plate because you can't dump the food on the plate without care. Anyway let's get back to fashion... so these designs that you see on the jumpers were designed by me.

I did this in my spare time. I loved it and I would do it again and again but now is the hard part for me which is selling them but I don't mind the challenge.



Improve your grades

FREE English and Maths master classes' sessions. To be top of your class or to find out more, call today and don't delay!

Andre Peters
0208 786 7910
Apeters@hexagon.org.uk
07903 429 071



Hexagon pilots LED lighting



Energy efficiency is a major part of the Hexagon's Sustainability Strategy. The Stock Improvement team have recently piloted a scheme to help reduce energy bills by installing LED lighting to the communal areas to three blocks. Our aim is to roll out the replacement of communal lighting in a planned programme to assist in reducing residents' energy costs and also to cut carbon emissions to help the environment.

What is Led Lighting?

LED stands for 'Light Emitting Diode' a new form of lighting that is energy efficient.

Advantages

- ✓ **Efficiency:** LEDs are the most energy-efficient bulbs: they use 90% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs. LEDs can sometimes pay for themselves through energy savings in just a couple of months.
- ✓ **Lifetime:** LEDs are claimed to be ultra long lasting - lasting for 25-30 years, depending on which one you buy and how you use it.
- ✓ **On/Off time:** LEDs give out their light almost instantly when you flick the light switch, so you don't have to put up with dim light while they get going.
- ✓ **Shock resistance:** Unlike fluorescent and incandescent bulbs which are fragile, LEDs are difficult to damage with external shock.

Did you know?

Lighting consumes one third of energy usage in homes.

LEDs use 90% less energy than a traditional incandescent light bulb



Sources have hailed LEDs as the future of home lighting within the next 5 to 10 years as LED lighting uses very little energy. They also last a very long time and, unlike regular energy-saving bulbs, they are instantly bright when switched on. The initial cost of installation is high; however this is outweighed by the significant savings in making our homes more energy efficient.

This pilot scheme which Hexagon ran has been very successful with the financial reduction in lighting costs being remarkable, as well as seeing reduced call outs to replace fixtures and fittings. And residents have seen the lighting costs in their service charge decrease as a result of having the LED Lighting installed.

Energy Efficiency

IAG Career, Advice and Guidance with childcare

One-to-one session available to all Hexagon residents. Make an appointment with a Careers Advisor who can assess your CV, discuss your training and work placement needs and signpost you to the relevant opportunities in your area.

We will also provide help with childcare during the session. Please call to make an appointment.

Job Club in Lewisham

In partnership with Phoenix Community Housing.
Every second Tuesday
between 10am – 12pm
at The Green Man,
355 Bromley Rd,
Catford, SE6 2RP



Open to all unemployed Hexagon residents. Please pop in to get help with job search, CVs, application forms and general career advice. For further details please contact us using the Key Details below.

Customer Service Work Placement

This is an unpaid voluntary position to help you update your skills and experience. Duties include: covering reception, answering calls, taking messages and dealing with incoming and outgoing post.

You will be based at the Hexagon Head Office in Sydenham once a week, initially for 6 weeks. Travel expenses will be paid.



We value our employees, and strive to ensure that Hexagon is a great place to work. This is evidenced by our achievement of the ORC International Award for Employee Engagement 2014. We were very proud to achieve 2nd place out of 200 international companies, and 1st place in the UK. This Award was based on direct feedback from our employees, which resulted in an Employee Engagement Score of 88%.



To register your interest or to talk about the opportunity you are interested in please contact Magda using the details below.

KEY DETAILS Contact: Magda Tyra

Phone: 020 8768 7915 Email: mtyra@hexagon.org.uk



Apprentice Surveyor makes good

Hexagon resident Aaron Harris was appointed as an Apprentice Surveyor over a year ago and we are pleased to report that he is progressing very well in his role. Aaron has been doing the job for a year and now is as good as any time to catch up with him to find out how he's finding it

It has been a year since you were appointed as an Apprenticeship Surveyor. How has the year been for you?

"I feel I have learnt so much in the past year that I have been at Hexagon. In spending a lot of my time out on inspections with the other surveyors, I find that my knowledge and experience of day-to-day maintenance has improved a great deal. This, linked in with my current college course in Building Surveying, has made me a lot more skilled in diagnosing repairs and resolving them."

What do you enjoy the most about your role and working in Hexagon?

"As well as having a supportive team in the office, I mainly enjoy getting out on site and dealing with the various repairs that I come across daily. I find this a welcome challenge. We have such a wide range of inspections, and I enjoy this most as I learn something new from each one of them."

What is next for you?

"I think that the next step for me is to start carrying out inspections in which I can diagnose and resolve some of the repair issues that residents face. I feel like this will not only help build my knowledge within this industry, but also allow me to relate my role here to my course at college."



We asked his supervisor, Martyn Howard, about his experience working alongside Aaron.

How is Aaron progressing in his new role?

"Aaron has been progressing very well as a trainee. I find that he is quick to learn and grasps technical issues very quickly. He also shows willingness to take on any tasks given to him"

How do you find Aaron's capability when carrying out visits to residents homes?

"Over the past year Aaron's confidence in dealing with people has grown. He is very good at taking on technical issues. He has now got to the stage where his technical knowledge is such that he is ready to carry out some inspections on his own and raise any works required. In fact he raises orders now when carrying out joint visits with me and other surveyors. I am very pleased with the way that Aaron has been progressing."

Congratulations to Aaron and all the best in his career.

Apprenticeships in Construction

Are you aged between 16-24 and looking for employment? If the answer is yes, have you considered a career in construction?

Hexagon has vacancies NOW but requires your commitment to complete the apprenticeship and become fully qualified.

We have the following opportunities on offer:

- ✓ Electrical
- ✓ Plumbing
- ✓ Carpentry
- ✓ Dry Lining*
- ✓ Painting and Decorating
- ✓ Construction Operative^o
- ✓ Business Administration

* Dry Liners build internal walls and ceilings in residential and commercial structures. They use plasterboard panels to reduce cost and time and also to make the walls easier to move or be removed.

^o To be a construction operative, you will need a good level of fitness, a basic knowledge of building methods and an understanding of the materials used in construction. At the start of a job, you will help to prepare the site, unload and store building materials, with further duties required as the job gets underway.

If you are ready for any of the above opportunities, let me see how serious you are and pick up the phone!

Contact: André Peters

Tel: 0208 768 7910

Email: apeters@hexagon.org.uk

Text: 07903 342 9071





Benefits are changing – Universal Credit is on its way

Universal Credit (UC) is a new benefit for people of working age which is replacing the following six working age benefits:

- **Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)**
- **Income-related Employment and Support allowance (ESA)**
- **Income Support**
- **Working tax credit**
- **Child tax credit**
- **Housing Benefit**

If you are currently in work but worried you might lose your job in the next few months, read on.

How will Universal Credit be paid?

In most cases Universal Credit will consist of a single monthly payment for the householder (or a couple) paid in arrears into your bank account. The payment will include eligible housing costs (because it is replacing housing benefit) and this means that you will be responsible for managing your own rent payment to us. In order to ensure that your rent is paid and your home is safeguarded, you may well want to set up a monthly payment to pay your rent, for instance on the day after you receive your Universal Credit payment.

If the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) agree there is a need, they may agree to make an Alternative Payment Arrangement for the payment of Universal Credit. This could be a more frequent payment, a payment split across the household or a payment relating to the housing costs made direct to the landlord.

When is it due to start?

The most up to date information we have is that from February 2015 onwards, Universal Credit is due to start in Swale and in some London boroughs but none of those where Hexagon has homes. We understand that it will start in the South East London boroughs later in the year. It will be introduced gradually and single claimants will change over to Universal Credit before couples. The first people to be affected will be single people making a new claim for what would have been Job Seekers' Allowance and they will go onto Universal Credit before existing

benefit customers. Once we know more detail about the timescale for different areas, we will put the information on our website at www.hexagon.org.uk

Getting ready

We know that our residents will be anxious about being able to keep up with their rent with changes in benefits. There are a few things you can do now to get ready:

- Make sure you have a bank account which will allow you to make payments for your rent to us, preferably without using cash – that is by direct debit, or standing order
- Make sure you can use the internet which will help you to claim Universal Credit and allow you to keep in touch with DWP
- When you claim Universal Credit, make sure that we know straight away so we can support you in making the change-over. The Job Centre staff should be asking you who your landlord is and whether we can be informed about your claim but it will help us support you if you also tell us directly about your claim.

Support we can offer

We can help you with the change-over to Universal Credit by:

- **Providing support to get a bank account which will help you pay the rent safely and minimise the risk of running up arrears or bank charges through "bounced" payments**
- **Providing support to get online or to improve your skills to become a confident internet user**
- **Providing general money advice**

We may also be able to help provide support for persuading the DWP to make an Alternative Payment Arrangement or for getting an advance of benefit, providing we are aware of your needs. So please do keep in touch and let us know what is going on when your claim for benefit starts to move over to Universal Credit.

Through the Hexagon Academy, we also provide employment support to help you get into work.

Phone Customer Services on 020 8778 6699 to access any of this support.

We want to help.

Give your finances a fresh start in the New Year

In a recent edition of *Home News* we reported about the new partnership with London Plus Credit Union. This enables you to access savings, budgeting accounts, and apply for affordable loans based on you being a Hexagon resident. This could be particularly useful if you have struggled to access financial services from mainstream organisations, and if you do need to borrow, a loan from London Plus will usually be much cheaper than a company that collects loan repayments from your door, or a payday lender.

But as we're into the New Year, and with Christmas already

seeming like a distant memory, now is a great time to start putting a little away each month. Whether you're thinking about a holiday, or next Christmas, or even just having a little tucked away for a rainy day, saving a small amount each week or month can make a big difference by the end of the year.

London Plus offers savings accounts to let you do just that, and building up a savings record with them may help you if you need to access a loan in the future (although each loan application is considered on its merits, and acceptance is not guaranteed). The Credit Union is also part of the



financial services compensation scheme, meaning that your money is protected in exactly the same way as it is in a major bank or building society.

If you want to contact London Plus, please call 0207 471 2620, or visit www.londonpluscu.co.uk. Alternatively, if you wish to discuss money matters more generally, please call our Financial Inclusion Adviser, Jason Herbert, on 0208 768 7925.

Making the most of your money in retirement

When you've worked for many years, it's only right that your retirement should be made as comfortable for you as possible. But did you know that over five billion pounds worth of extra income that is available for retired people goes unclaimed every year.

Most people know about the state pension, but many people don't know that several other forms of income are available to retired people, and if you don't claim them, you don't get them. The most common is Pension Credit. This is available to everyone of pension age, whose income is below set levels. For single people, anyone of pension age with an income of less than £148.35 a week is eligible to claim Pension Credit, while couples are able to claim if they get less than £226.50 a week

between them. You can claim Pension Credit by phone on 0800 99 1234 or get more information at www.gov.uk/pension-credit.

If you are of pension age and suffering from health concerns, there may also be other things that you can access. The most common is Attendance Allowance which may be available to people of pension age with a health condition that places limitations on their daily lives. There are qualifying criteria which means not everyone with a health condition is eligible, but it's always worth applying if you think you might qualify.

You can get an application form and more information by calling 0345 605 6055, or by visiting www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance.

There are also a number of other things that people of (or even near) pension age can claim. A good example is the 60+ Oyster Card. This is available to all Londoners aged over 60, and while it costs £10 to get, it then gives free bus and tube travel. Go to www.tfl.gov.uk for more information.

If you want more information about what might be available to you in retirement, please call our Financial Inclusion Adviser, Jason Herbert, on 0208 768 7925.



Volunteering with Hexagon

Here we show how important the work of volunteers is to the support service that Hexagon offers. We talked to residents at two projects, along with the volunteers who support them.

NEWSTEAD ROAD- Philip (resident) and Lee (volunteer)



Philip (left) and Lee, resident and volunteer at Newstead Road Project

HN - Thanks for talking to us about the work that volunteers do with Hexagon clients. What do you work on together?

Philip - I've been a resident of Newstead Road flats for 4 years. I've not had a one-to-one worker like this before. It's nice to have somebody to talk to, a single volunteer coming to my room to talk: we can compare notes, because he's into poetry as well.

Lee - We have discussions about poetry and we give each other great ideas and test it out!

HN - How did you get involved in volunteering for Hexagon?

Lee - I was already running a Mindfulness class at Newstead Road with MIND and Ingrid, the manager, told me about this volunteering position when it became available. I've been here since the end of June. I work with two clients at the moment, and I hope to be building up from this. We meet once a week for...

Philip -...for as long as we've got. An hour, two hours, maybe more.

HN - What plans have you got for your volunteering together?

Lee - I plan to help Philip get involved in creative writing classes, and to find a slot for his poetry. We give each other inspiration and ideas

WOODCOTE ROAD- Kyu (resident) and Sarah (volunteer)



Sarah, volunteer at Woodcote Road

Home News- What do you get out of volunteering at Woodcote Rd?

Sarah - Volunteering gives me the opportunity to work in a way that's flexible around my family. I have a family member with mental illness, so there's a personal motive for it. Also I studied psychology at university. I do other volunteer roles with children as well. I work directly with about 6 clients here, two days a week and I've been here about a year.

HN - What does a typical day involve?

Sarah - I have to keep an open mind - days can frequently change and I find that I need to be flexible. I might do computer work with residents, or I might help them search for things on the internet, or I might be playing pool or cards. Sometimes I help with people's art work or maybe a walk out to the coffee shop. Some residents are keen for my help, others less so. I try to find a connection with the people that I work with.

Kyu - I've been working with Sarah for about a year. We do things like have a chat, go to the coffee shop, use the internet, and do some artwork. We meet for an hour and a half twice a week.

HN - How has having a volunteer helped you?

Kyu - Sometimes I find that I can get bored. The staff may be busy and may not have time for me, so if I see Sarah, it refreshes the time. What are we planning next? Maybe going out to another coffee shop!

Thanks to volunteers and residents for speaking to Home News!

If you are a resident in supported housing and would like some support from a volunteer, please contact Hexagon. If you would like to become a volunteer and would like to find out more, please contact John Lake (Peer Mentor Project Coordinator) on 07961 108 588 or at jlake@hexagon.org.uk

Volunteering with the



Meet Lynne Simmons, a Hexagon member of staff who gives up some of her time to help out with the Samaritans. Here Lynne gives us an insight into the work that the Samaritans do.

What motivated you to volunteer?

About 10 years ago I had a bout of depression; I felt in a low place and called the Samaritans, who were a great help. Now the children are older I found that I had more time and wanted to do something in my spare time and give something back to the organisation. So, I looked online for Samaritans, found their website and discovered they were having an Open Evening five minutes from where I live.

Making the Connection

The Evening was very informal. I was one of 20 people who attended, and the event itself was a great opportunity for me to learn more about the Samaritans, the different volunteer roles, and what I could expect as a Samaritans volunteer. I found the evening really interesting, decided I wanted to take the next step and submitted an application to become a Samaritans volunteer.

Becoming a Samaritans Volunteer

There are a number of different volunteering opportunities with the Samaritans. There are listener roles that provide the Samaritans service, and support roles including administration, fundraising, staffing our charity shops and more. The support roles provide essential services which help to fund the Samaritans service.

I had an interview and said I was interested in both roles. The support role did not require special training, but the Listener role did. Once I passed the interview I started a 10 week training programme. The training was quite intensive, but I found it really interesting. It took place once a week in the evening.

I passed the training stage and progressed to taking calls under the supervision of a mentor who was an experienced Samaritan. Having a mentor was really beneficial as they monitored me taking calls, listening in on calls and guiding me. In addition to the calls, we also respond to emails and texts.

After a couple of months I was able to be on the phones on my own for the first time. This was a scary experience, though there was always another Samaritan on shift with you to help. After about 6 months I passed my probation and became a fully fledged volunteer member of our branch.

The Role of a Samaritan

The role of a Samaritan is to listen, not to give advice. A Samaritan will listen to the caller, asking questions along the way to help the caller work through their own options. I would describe the role like a washing machine on a spin cycle with lots of clothes in it. It's not until you stop the machine and fold the clothes that you can get things into an order.

My experience

Until I did the training, I had no idea how much I didn't really listen to family and friends. I find myself now listening properly, rather than jumping in with advice.

I find being a Samaritan is so rewarding, it doesn't matter what sort of day I have had, as soon as I walk into the Samaritans branch, I leave everything at the door and focus on the caller. There is at least one call each shift where I think that my work is worthwhile.

About the Samaritans

The Samaritans was started in 1953 by the late Prebendary Dr Chad Varah CH CBE. One of his patients was a young girl who committed suicide. He did not want this to happen again so set up a support group. The name was given to the organisation by the press after the biblical story about the Good Samaritan although Samaritans are not a religious charity. There are now over 200 branches, throughout the UK and Ireland, all run by volunteers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide can contact Samaritans. The international network exists under the name Befrienders Worldwide.

They are entirely funded through donations and through income earned through their support services. The branch Lynne works at gets its main funding from a visitors coffee bar at Belmarsh prison.

How to contact Samaritans

For more information about Samaritans, or to find out about becoming a volunteer, or to find your local branch, please go to their website at www.samaritans.org

For emotional support contact:

Telephone: 08457 90 90 90 (UK)
020 8301 1010
(Bexley & Dartford)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

In person: phone or visit the website for your local branch

By text: 07725 909090

ALL CALLS TO SAMARITANS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.

Would you like to learn how to play golf for FREE?



Open to all Hexagon residents living in Lewisham, Southwark, Greenwich, Croydon and Bexley boroughs aged 6-99 years old

This is aimed at beginners and the course will include:

- six weekly lessons, one hour long, learning golf with a PGA Qualified Instructor.
- a step-by-step guide to the basics of golf from the grip to the full swing, using a variety of clubs.
- learning the basics of golf rules and etiquette as well as the different techniques in completing a course.
- the opportunity to meet other golfers and gain the full benefit of learning in a small group.
- free loan of a 7 Iron - if you have your own clubs please feel free to bring these with you. All you will need is a 7 iron.



Hexagon will also pay for your golf balls on the day, for you to knock about on the driving range.

This is a great way to entertain the family as everyone can get involved and have fun at the same time. So if you want to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity or to find out more please contact:

André Peters

Tel: 0208 768 7910

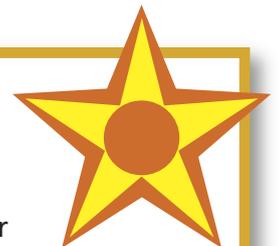
Email:

apeters@hexagon.org.uk

Text: 07903 342 9071

Places are limited so don't waste time register today!

Competition Time



Congratulations to Christine Matthews (SE26), Ife Salako (DA17) and Zita McKie (SE4) whose entries were drawn for the last Competition Time and who each receive a £20 voucher.

The answers to the last Competition Time were:

1. 1. 6, 2. Over 50s Fun Club, 3. 20, 4. 3, 5. 13

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

1. Is the residents' satisfaction with the service since April above or below target?
2. How often are cyclical decorations carried out?
3. What do construction operatives do at the start of a job?
4. What is the "dew point"?
5. What Employee Engagement score did Hexagon achieve in its ORC award?

Please send your entries, by post, to:
Resident Involvement Admin,
Hexagon Housing Association,
130-136 Sydenham Road,
London, SE26 5JY

or by email to:
getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk

Three correct entries received **by Friday 13th 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.

getting in touch



Repairs freephone

0800 393 338



General Enquiries

020 8778 6699



Gas Central Heating /
Hot Water problems

0800 206 1367

If you need to report a repair; except for gas central heating and hot water.



Repairs freephone: 0800 393 338
The line is staffed from 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday. You can call this number at any time. When phoning outside of normal hours, this number will forward to the number in the red box

You can also report a repair by any of the following;



emailing us at:
customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk



visiting us online at: www.hexagon.org.uk



giving details to any member of Hexagon staff visiting your home

If you have a non-urgent repair you can also write to us

You can also text us on 07537 400 527



Please make sure you include your name and/or your address

If you have a query on your rent or about estate services, or any other general enquiry, you can contact us by phone.



General Enquiries: 020 8778 6699
The line is staffed from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday-Friday

- Or you can visit or write to us at:
130-136 Sydenham Road, Sydenham, London SE26 5JY
- Office hours: 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs
020 3701 3518

translations

Hexagon residents come from a wide range of backgrounds, and many have particular needs. We know that communication in writing, in English, in the usual way is fine for most people, but may not be ideal for everyone.

To make sure we can communicate with you in the best way to meet your needs, we have a 'Translation and Other Format Policy'. Full details of the policy are available on request, but in summary:

- We will translate, or convert to another format, any document, on request.
- If you have a particular need – e.g. for documents in translation or in large print – and you tell us about it, we will make sure key documents are sent to you in that way, without you having to ask.

Key documents include anything to do with your Tenancy Agreement or legal action, or any important changes to the way we work.

Other formats

If you prefer to have this edition of *Home News* translated to a language you are more familiar with, please contact Hexagon, giving your full contact details. If you prefer to have this edition of *Home News* made available in Braille or large print version, please contact Hexagon, giving your full contact details.

French – Français

Si vous préférez que cette édition d'*Home News* traduite dans une langue que vous êtes familiarisé avec, veuillez contacter Hexagon donnant vos coordonnées complètes.

Portuguese – Português

Se você preferir que esta edição do *Home News* traduzida para uma língua que você está mais familiarizado com, entre em contato Hexagon dar os seus dados de contato cheio.

Vietnamese

Chúng tôi hiểu rằng cư dân của chúng tôi có những nhu cầu khác nhau. Chúng tôi biết rằng giao tiếp bằng văn bản, bằng tiếng Anh, theo cách thông thường là tốt cho hầu hết mọi người, nhưng có thể không phù hợp cho tất cả mọi người.

Kids Korner

Winter Wonderland Wordsearch

Find the words in the puzzle below. Words may go forwards and backwards or across and down



BOBSLED
DOGSLED
HOCKEY
HUNTING
ICE FISHING
ICE SKATE
SHOVEL

SKI
SKIJORING
SLED
SLEIGH RIDE
SNOW
SNOW ANGEL
SNOWBALL

SNOWBLOWER
SNOWBOARD
SNOWMAN
SNOWMOBILE
SNOWSHOES
TOBBOGGAN

If you think you've found all the correct words in the wordsearch, simply cut out and send to the address below by Friday 13th February.

Resident Involvement Admin, Hexagon Housing Association, 130-136 Sydenham Road, London, SE26 5JY.

Three correct entries will be drawn at random. Each will receive a £10 Love2 Shop Voucher

Kids Korner Winners

Congratulations to Tony Odukoya (SE1), Miles Muwanga-Blizzard (SE13) and Nazmie Hamide Gania (SE13) who each won the last Kids Korner competition!



GINGERBREAD MEN

Make these delicious homemade treats for something tasty on cold winter days

100g butter
100g caster sugar
125ml treacle
1 egg yolk
250g sifted plain flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg



Method

Prep: 20min › **Cook: 10min** › **Ready in: 30min**

In a large bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until smooth. Stir in treacle and egg yolk. Combine the flour, salt, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, cinnamon, cloves, ginger and nutmeg. Blend into the treacle mixture until smooth. Cover, and chill for at least one hour.

Preheat the oven to 180 C / Gas mark 4. On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough out to 1/2cm thickness. Cut into desired shapes with biscuit cutters. Place biscuits 5cm apart on ungreased baking trays.

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in the preheated oven, until firm. Remove from baking trays to cool on wire racks. Ice or decorate when cool.

Winter Jokes

Q. What do you get when you cross a shark with a snowman?

A. **Frostbite!**

Q. What do Snowmen have for Breakfast?

A. **Snowflakes**

Q. How does a Snowman get to work?

A. **By icicle**



Hexagon

130-136 Sydenham Road
Sydenham · London · SE26 5JY
Telephone: 020 8778 6699
Website: www.hexagon.org.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/HexagonHA



INVESTORS
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