

# home news



**Residents Day  
feedback  
p.9**



# From the Chief Executive



Welcome to another edition of *Home News*.

There are a lot of changes going on in the housing world at the moment. Grant Shapps, the Housing Minister, says that these are the biggest changes in a generation and I agree with that.

The Government has severely cut back the amount of capital grant that they are providing to housing associations to build new homes. However, as there continues to be a serious shortage of homes, we are being encouraged to continue to build new homes and to fund the difference by increasing our rents, both in our new buildings and on some of our re-lets. The new rent regime only applies to new lettings and not existing tenancies.

Hexagon recently bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for funding to help us to build 277 new homes over the next four years under this new regime. We were successful in our bid and you can read more about this on page 1.

Delivering the new programme is going to be a challenge. The rents will continue to be subsidised relative to market rents, but they will be higher than the rents we have charged in the past and we think they will be more challenging to collect.. We are also going to have to borrow more money per home compared to the levels of borrowing in the past, so we will need to manage all the risks involved in this new way of doing business very carefully.

As readers of this column will know, I am particularly keen to ensure that Hexagon does all that it can to involve residents in the decisions that we take about the delivery of services. You can read more about the wide range of resident involvement activity on pages 22 and 23.

Lastly, we are always trying to think of new ways to communicate with residents. With that in mind, we recently established a Hexagon Facebook page and you can read more about this on pages 14 and 15. We are committed to ensuring that we share information in an open and transparent way and this is just one further way of reaching out to all of our residents, including I dare say, some of our younger residents! We hope there is a good take up and we will be monitoring this in the future.

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

Tom McCormack

### Front Cover

Liking Hexagon on Facebook at this year's Residents Day.

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# Hexagon receives HCA confirmation of its 2011/15 allocation

## In May, Hexagon put in a bid for funding from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) for the 2011/15 development programme.

The way the development of new affordable homes is funded under this programme has changed from previous years. There is less grant available now due to the country's financial position. Consequently, revised approaches have been put in place to help fund the supply of new homes.

The main change is that rents can be charged at up to 80% of the market rent level for both newly built homes and for some of the existing homes that become available for re-letting.

After much discussion by the Board alongside modelling and remodelling by the staff, we submitted a bid to deliver **277 new homes**, with an overall **grant requirement of £8.6m**. We recently received **confirmation from the HCA that our whole bid has been successful**.

To deliver this 4 year programme, we expect to raise additional funding for new development by re-letting approx. 50% (or 190) of our void properties at a higher "market related rent" (i.e. up to 80% of the market rent level), and disposing of 40 existing empty homes, which have become costly to maintain. The development programme is also funded by our surpluses and rents from the new properties.

Balancing our commitment to build new homes with the need to ensure we protect our business underpins this development programme.

We have also had to consider the fundamental impact on affordability of our homes for some of our existing, as well as new, residents. We feel we have secured a sensible balance of all these factors.

We have sites for 169 new homes to identify, so the New Business Team will be very busy in the coming months!

More details on all the UK allocations are available on the HCA's website:-  
<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/news/hca-announces-successful-bidders-affordable-homes-funding>

# Leader



Patrick Court, Webber Street, SE1  
Completed June 2011

## UPDATE

## Gas Safety



### Autumn is here now and it is time to turn the central heating back on.

If you have not had your annual gas safety check carried out in the last six months then you will be hearing from our contractors, P&R Installations, with an appointment date. Our contractors will attempt to make two appointments. If they fail to gain access on two occasions it will then be handed back to Hexagon to begin legal action. Therefore, please make sure that you keep the appointment given **or** contact them to arrange a more convenient date. If you do not provide access for us to undertake the legally required check, we will take you to court and these costs, often in excess of £800, will be re-charged to the tenant concerned.

Unfortunately, it is likely that some tenants may suffer a heating breakdown over the winter months. Whilst we will do our utmost to repair these as soon as possible, we must however point out that a breakdown of heating is not regarded as an emergency but as an urgent repair which we would aim to carry out within our target time of 7 days (as published in the Tenants Handbook). Should your heating not be working and you have a pre-payment meter please make sure that you have some credit on your meter before calling anyone out.

For problems with your gas appliances, heating or hot water please do not ring Hexagon's repair line but contact our Gas contractor - P&R Installations directly on their Free phone number **0800 093 9932** during normal working hours (8am – 6pm) We do provide an 'Out of Hours' emergency call-out service but this is only for emergencies. The breakdown of Central Heating is **only** an emergency if you are elderly and vulnerable or have young children of 12 months or under and this is only applicable between 1st October and 31st March. For the out-of-hours service please ring **0800 393 338** and you will be redirected from there.



**KEY DETAILS**  
**0800 093 9932**  
Contact: P&R

## UPDATE

## Meet the Readers Panel



**Here at Hexagon we are committed to making Home News clear and easy to read with articles of interest to residents. One way of helping us to achieve this is the work of the Readers Panel.**

#### What is a Readers Panel?

The Readers Panel is a group of residents who get together shortly after each edition of *Home News* is sent out to tell us what they thought about the magazine.

The Panel feed back on where they felt passages were difficult to read or where we may have used jargon. The Panel also comment on the design and layout of the magazine with a view to making sure that what is shown on the printed page is of good quality and clear to all readers.

The Panel's work has been invaluable because it has helped to make your magazine clear, well designed and with good quality articles.

If you would like to be part of the Readers Panel then simply contact us on 020 8768 7970 or by email at [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)



**KEY DETAILS**  
**020 8768 7970**  
Contact: Marley Simmons



## UPDATE

## Up-date on fencing

### **We have extended our fencing programme to enable us to deliver all fencing repairs that have been reported to us.**

As reported in last year's issue of *Home News*, we have had a number of fencing repairs outstanding for some time. However, we are hopeful that we will be able to complete all fencing repairs that have been reported to us this year.

It is intended that the programme will be carried out as follows;

- Repairs will be carried out by postal areas – works have already started in SE6 and SE4. This will be followed by the following post codes:  

SE15	CR0	SE13	SE14	BR1	DA18
SE22	SE16	SE5	SE26	CR7	SE3
SE28	DA8	SE8	SE12	ME9	CR8
SE23	SE18	SE1	SE7	SE10	
- We will complete all fencing repairs in the order they were reported to us.
- Repairs deemed to be a Health and Safety risk, irrespective of when reported, will be given priority.

If your fencing has been identified to be carried out, you will receive a letter or phone call from the contractor when they are ready to commence in your particular area.

It will be helpful if you will respond to any contact from the contractor as this will assist speeding up the programme, even if it's to report that works are already complete or not required.

The contractor carrying out the works is Uniserve Ltd, and can be contacted on 020 8310 3968.

This line is serviced from 9.00 – 4.00pm Monday to Friday. If for whatever reason you are unable to get through, you will be able to leave a message. The contractor should then contact you the next working day. If you have not been contacted it does not mean that we have forgotten about your fencing repair. Your name will still remain on our list along with the date the repair was reported. You may contact Customer Services to check you are on the list.

We ask that you please bear with us and accept our apologies for any delays as we are dealing with not just fencing repairs reported this year, but also all those we were not able to complete from previous programmes.

We are very much aware that some residents have been waiting a long time for fencing repairs and we will do our best to ensure these repairs are completed this year. We are committed to ensuring that we carry out these repairs as quickly as possible.



## UPDATE

## What can £175 do for you?

**Hexagon Young Achievers (HYA) supports our younger residents with a small grant of up to £175. This can be used for a variety of things. If you are a young Hexagon resident, or the parent of one, and want to know what £175 will buy, here are some examples:**

- 12 driving lessons with Lanes driving school – our HYA project partner.
- A refurbished laptop can be bought from High Street retailers for £199. With a HYA contribution; you just need to find £24 and the costs of your internet connection.
- Up to 14 music lessons – learn to play the guitar, piano, even the bassoon.

If this has given you any ideas and you want to apply, call Jon in the Community Investment Team on 0208 768 7913 for more information. The next deadline for HYA applications is Friday 18th November.

### Hexagon Young Achievers Update

Our two grants schemes for residents are decided on by a panel of residents who meet to review the applications four times a year. Only one Application was received in the last round for Hexagon Young Achievers and the panel agreed to fund it. This was a £175 contribution towards a trip abroad with the Air Cadets.

### Neighbourhood & Community Fund Update

Six applications were received and the panel agreed to fund five of them. These successful applications were for:

- Play equipment for a communal garden.
- Singing Workshops.
- Community BBQ.
- Seaside Trip.
- Garden Furniture and play equipment for a communal garden.

If this has given you any ideas and you want to apply, call Jon in the **Community Investment Team** on **0208 768 7913** for more information. The next deadline for applications is **Friday 18th November**.

## UPDATE

## Tenant Board Member Election Result

**In May this year all Hexagon tenants were sent a flyer asking if any were interested in standing for a place on the Board.**

Three residents, Doreen Davis, Gaius Vincent and Ray Hill each put their nominations forward. Ballot papers were then sent out to all Hexagon residents along with each of the three candidates election statements.

A total of 164 residents cast their vote in the ballot, and in a closely fought election, Gaius Vincent topped the poll with 68 votes. The result means that Gaius has been elected to sit as a Tenant Board Member for the next three years.

*Congratulations to M. Harraway (SE15) who won the prize draw of £50 in shopping vouchers.*

### Welcome back on Board, Gaius

Gaius has been a Hexagon resident for 20 years and lives in Greenwich. He works as a Business Manager. Gaius was previously a Tenant Board Member from 2005 to 2008 and we are delighted to welcome Gaius back for a new term on the Board. Gaius is looking forward to his second stint on the Board and says "I am very grateful to have another chance to serve on the Board at a time of changes that could so much affect our lives as residents and tenants"

We would like to thank everybody who voted and also give a special thanks to the candidates for taking part in the election.

The four Tenant Board Members on Hexagon's Board are Juleen Simpson, Steven Hodges, Adenike Williams and Gaius Vincent. If you would like to contact any of the Tenant Board Members, you can write to them care of Hexagon at 130 -136 Sydenham Road, London, SE26 5JY.

*Newly elected Tenant Board Member, Gaius Vincent*



Anything to Say about Home News?

Tel: 020 8768 7970 Email: [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)

## UPDATE

## Singing Workshops



**A series of FREE Caribbean folk song workshops has been arranged to take place in Lewisham. The workshops will take place at the Lewisham Way Youth & Community Centre, 138 Lewisham Way, SE14 6PD.**

The workshops are sponsored by Hexagon's Neighbourhood & Community Fund and will be run on **Mondays, 24th and 31st October** and **7th November** from **5 to 7pm**.

*Willing participants are welcome to come along.*

The workshops are FREE to take part in and no previous singing experience necessary. You do not need to attend all of the workshops, and you do not need to be from the Caribbean. Everyone welcome, but sorry there is no crèche.

The workshops will be a chance to learn Caribbean folk songs and have fun at the same time. Interested?

If so, contact Jacqueline Grant at [jackiemusicgrant@hotmail.com](mailto:jackiemusicgrant@hotmail.com) or by phone on **020 8694 1409** for further information.



**KEY DETAILS**  
**020 8694 1409**

Contact: Jacqueline Grant

Email: [jackiemusicgrant@hotmail.com](mailto:jackiemusicgrant@hotmail.com)

# are you up to date?

**Since March of this year, the amount of money owed by Hexagon tenants in rent has gone up by around £120,000.**

**This is money that Hexagon needs in order to provide you with repairs and other services.**

If you have rent arrears, Hexagon staff will already be in touch with you about it, and please remember that we are always happy to talk to you about your rent and how we can make it as easy as possible for you to pay.

#### **Everyone has to pay**

Every tenant – including those who get help from housing benefit – is responsible for making sure the rent is paid. Paying your rent is very simple and there are various payment methods to make it as convenient as possible. Please see below for more details.

#### **Non-Payment is not an option**

We always view eviction as the absolute last resort, but if tenants don't pay their rent – they will be evicted. In the past 6 months we have evicted six households from Catford, Forest Hill, Peckham and New Cross.

#### **We are here to help**

If you are having problems with your rent, it is really important that you talk to us about it. We can't pay your rent for you but we can help you in other ways such as: agreeing a repayment plan to pay off any arrears, advice about housing benefit or advice about other people who may be able to help if you have any other money worries.

#### **Easy Ways to Pay**

##### **Direct Debit** – the easiest way of all.

You can set up a Direct Debit by one phone call to Hexagon. We will take care of future rent increases, and you are always protected by the Direct Debit Guarantee.

**By Telephone** – call Hexagon during office hours, or anytime day or night on 0844 557 8321

**By Internet** – visit [www.allpayments.net](http://www.allpayments.net)

**By Cash** – at any Post Office or PayPoint outlet

**By Cheque** – at any Post Office

**By Text message** – to register go to [www.allpayments.net](http://www.allpayments.net)

# Rent Arrears



**Anything to Say about Home News?**

Tel: 020 8768 7970 Email: [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)

# Autumn at the Albany

**South East London's most vibrant and diverse arts space and community hub.**

Autumn is always an exciting time at the Albany in Deptford – even more so as we approach our 30th anniversary next year.

A highlight this November has to be **Gina Yashere**. Gina has made a lot of changes in her life of late. She's travelled the world; from Nigeria to discover her ancestral roots, to Thailand to get her zen on, to Malaysia to...get robbed, to Indonesia to get tattooed and many other places in between. Not content with being one of the most sought after comedians in the UK, Gina decided 3 years ago to up sticks and move to Hollywood to see if she could grab a piece of the American dream.

She's not done too badly. Since landing in Los Angeles she has lost over 5 stone in weight (after all, she is in the land of Victoria Beckham) and has performed her stand up on *The Tonight Show* and HBO's *Def Comedy Jam*. Gina is determined to be different and determined to do it her own way. Join her on a rare trip back to the UK with a new show full of hilarity and joy!

**Saturday 19 November, doors 7.30pm**  
**Gina Yashere** \*\*\*\*

*'Infectiously funny'* METRO

*'Shrapnel-sharp gags'* EVENING STANDARD  
Tickets from £12

Also in November, the Albany is taking part in the London Jazz Festival. The London Jazz Festival has grown to be London's largest city-wide music festival, and also a major international event.

Don't miss award winning alto-saxophonist and **MC Soweto Kinch**, one of the most exciting and versatile musicians in the British jazz scene, as he returns to the Albany with music from his critically acclaimed album *The New Emancipation*.

**Saturday 12 November, doors 7.30pm**  
**Soweto Kinch**

Tickets £12, £10 concs



< Gina Yashere



< The Magician's Daughter

The summer holidays may be long gone but there is still plenty of fun to be had as our Family Sundays continue to delight children and grown-ups alike with a host of family-friendly shows.

This autumn, find a genie in a teapot, have a picnic on the moon, learn how to fly or explore a magical winter wonderland. Enjoy stories from best-selling children's authors not to mention our hugely popular Disco Kids. Also, don't miss **The Magician's Daughter** – a magical Christmas treat for little ones aged 3+.

For more information about Family Sundays visit [www.thealbany.org.uk](http://www.thealbany.org.uk) or call **020 8692 4446** to request a brochure or pick one up at the venue.

**Tuesdays to Sundays 6 – 24 December**  
Little Angel Theatre in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company presents **The Magician's Daughter**

*Weekday performances:* 6 – 16 December, 10.30am & 1pm

*All other dates (including weekends):* 11.30am & 2pm

Baby friendly performances Saturdays and Wednesday 21 December at 11.30am

For full details or to book tickets for any of these shows, check out the website [www.thealbany.org.uk](http://www.thealbany.org.uk) or call the Box Office on **020 8692 4446**.

The Albany, Douglas Way, Deptford, London SE8 4AG

# Groundscapes awarded new 3 year contract!



**Earlier this year we re-tendered the contracts for Estate Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance for the area that covers the boroughs of Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley.**

There was a lot of interest in the contracts and we received over 15 bids. On a tough evaluation based on both price and quality, Groundscapes came out top and won the new contract. The new contract started on Monday 5 September and will run for 3 years. If everything is still going well in 3 years time, the contract may be extended.

#### **Same.....but Better**

If you live on an estate or in a block in the boroughs mentioned above you will be familiar with Groundscapes, and they already know the area and the work. We are confident that the service will be even better than before – with resident input the contract has been improved and is now better in areas such as attendance on site and quality monitoring systems, and includes some “all new” features such as carpet shampooing and hedge trimming.

#### **Even Better Value**

To win the new contract Groundscapes had to give us their very best deal. This means even better value for Hexagon residents.

#### **Even better Services**

Groundscapes, along with their sister company Cleanscapes, have invested heavily in recent months to update and upgrade all their vehicles and machinery. New pressure washers, floor scrubbers and buffers have been purchased by Cleanscapes to ‘deep clean’ floor services in communal areas and give an improved finish. They have also purchased new carpet cleaners to use on all carpeted areas.

Groundscapes are keen to continue to improve their customer service to Hexagon residents. With that in mind they will always ask a resident or nominated on-site person to sign off completed work.

They continue to seek residents who might like to be Estate Champions. This informal role enables Groundscapes to have a specific point of contact on each site, who can act as a spokesperson for other residents, and provide general feedback regarding any improvements to the service which they would like to see.

#### **Even Better for the Environment**

Groundscapes and their sister company are constantly reviewing their environmental policy to reduce the impact their services have on the environment.

All work is carefully planned and scheduled to ensure they are as efficient as possible with their journeys. Also, much of the hand-held machinery now uses ‘4 mix 2 stroke’ advanced technology which reduces environmental pollution.

All the green waste such as grass cuttings, leaves, branches etc that is collected is recycled and turned into compost.

They ensure that all the cleaning products they use contain chemicals that have the least impact on the environment and the main solution they use is manufactured using orange skins and is very versatile.

#### **Do you and your neighbours want to do more?**

Although we provide the gardening service to estates and blocks, we welcome groups of residents who are keen to take on some of the work themselves.

As well as possibly reducing the costs to you, it is also a great way to meet people, get out doors and get some healthy exercise. Maybe you could:

- take on a flowerbed or part of a garden
- start up a vegetable plot
- plant out some hanging baskets
- put in some bulbs, for a colourful spring display

If you have any ideas, let us know and we will see what we can do to help support you. We might be able to

- supply some tools
- provide some training
- supply some plants at low cost
- help with tips and ideas

If you and your neighbours are interested, please contact your Housing Officer in the first place to discuss it further.

# 'Great day'



**Some 76 residents and 30 children came together for Hexagon's fifth annual Residents Day event which took place on Saturday 24th September.**

For this year's event we found ourselves at Goldsmiths University in New Cross for a fun-filled and informative day for the whole family.

The event was chaired by Val Oldfield, a resident from Peckham, and as in keeping with previous year's events, this year a range of different activities for our younger residents was provided, including a DJ and mixing session (provided by Positive Youth Experience (PYE) and for the under 13's a story-telling and puppet making workshop (provided by Jactito Theatre Company).

Residents enjoyed a buffet lunch before taking part in one of four workshops which were on the repairs service, "Love Food Hate Waste", Starting a Social Enterprise and the government's reform of social housing and welfare benefits.

As in previous years a lively question and answer session was held after the workshops where residents put their questions directly to a panel comprising of Chris Melville (Operations Director), Tom Harding (Housing Services Manager) and Dawn Johns (Responsive Repairs Manager) on a wide range of issues. Tom McCormack (Chief Executive) then drew the event to a close with an address which focused on the government's changes to social housing

The day was rounded off with a presentation from the children of the puppets that they had made, before concluding with a fantastic prize draw for residents. All prizes were donated by our contractors with the first prize being a £250 M&S vouchers.

The feedback received from residents about the day was very positive, with 95% of residents rating the event as either "excellent" or "good".

Feedback – what you said .....

**" Good Residents Day. Keep it going"**

**" I found today very informative..."**

**" Great day ....."**

*" Staff were excellent and helpful"*

**" Lovely day. Thank you everyone concerned"**

**" My family enjoyed it and look forward for next year"**

**" I enjoyed the workshops which were hands-on and informative and earned 5 stars!! Thanks!"**

# Residents Day



**Anything to Say about Home News?**

Tel: 020 8768 7970 Email: [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)

# get online for work

**The Community Investment Team is able to offer a limited number of places on a new course which is all about using your computer to find employment.**

We will be using training modules supplied by Hays and there will be an opportunity to do some structured job search with the team. The course will be 'self taught' so you will learn at your own speed using a Hexagon computer during the sessions, and your own computer at other times.

Hays describe the training as:

*A user-friendly computer-based teaching tool to provide you with some valuable techniques to help you in your job search. The training covers all the traditional job search methods, as well as some new ones to reflect how job hunting has changed in recent years.*

*We realise that not everybody learns in the same way, so we've tried to vary the style of the teaching materials and have included interactive sections and film-based learning.*

*You can pop in and out of the modules whenever you like, and of course you can always go back to review any modules*

*that you've completed. When you complete the programme you should feel armed with some new skills and 'insider' tips to help you confidently find the job that you want, either in your existing field or a new one.*

The course will run every Tuesday from 1st November for six weeks at Hexagon's offices in Sydenham. Each session will be made up of:

**11.00am - 1.00pm**

Training and discussion

**1.00pm - 2.00pm**

Lunch provided by Hexagon

*Please note; you must have access to a computer and the internet to register for this course because you will need to look at and complete modules between the training sessions.*

If you don't have access to this, but would like to do the course, we still want to hear from you so we can plan how to offer this course to you in the near future.

**REGISTER NOW:**

**Call the Community Investment Team on 020 8768 7913 / 7915**

Getting online



# fun and good vibes

**The Care & Support Summer Event 2011 took place on Wednesday 10 August at Woodcote Road in Wallington, Sutton.**



It was well attended by the majority of residents from our mental health services and the sun shone on the day which was full of memorable moments. The event was planned by staff and residents and aimed to provide an opportunity for residents to share their wonderful skills and talents and to provide a range of interesting activities, and everyone worked hard to make the event a great success.

A food group led by Joanne Darville, Rehab Cook from Woodcote Road, planned, prepared and cooked all of the delicious food which included curry goat, plantain, BBQ, fresh fruit cocktail and ice cream. Activities led by staff included Tie Dye, Bingo, Dance Workshop, Poetry Appreciation, Art Appreciation and Massage. Manicures were also on offer from The Riviere Beauty Spa one of the new businesses being run by Hexagon tenants with the support of the Community Investment Team.

The residents 'performances' were definitely the highlights of the day and covered a very diverse range of talents including Tai Chi, a Pub Quiz, singing, piano, a motivational talk from someone who has experienced serious mental health problems, guitar and a Chinese cooking demo and Chinese rap!

During the event the majority of the attendees completed a Satisfaction Survey facilitated by Brian from the Resident Involvement Team and the feedback from this will be shared with the residents at their next regular Feedback Forum at the end of September.

It is hard to capture the fun and good vibes that were around on that day but one special moment was listening to the poem shown in the next column, written for the event by Support Worker Onye Kingsley who works at Woodcote Road.

## WOODCOTE ROAD

A celebration of the Rehabilitation Service of Hexagon and Woodcote Road.

Little do you know how many lives you've saved;  
Little do you know how many broken homes and hearts you've mended and restored.

Little do you know how many hopeless ones you've given real hope, to carry on with their lives.  
Little do you know how many Nobodies you've made Somebodies.

Little do you know how many orphans you've given homes and families.  
Little do you know how many poverty stricken you've given riches; riches in good health cos' health is wealth.

Little do you know how many tears you've stopped people from shedding, in the midst of misery of mental illness and despondency.

If only you knew.  
If only you knew.

You've got the best job in the world, making it a better place for all of us.  
Thank you Hexagon and Woodcote Road; for you are a life saver.

The success of this event was due to the collaboration of everyone involved, so really well done to all.

# Summer Event

# aids and adaptations

**As a social landlord Hexagon has a responsibility to its residents with physical disabilities to help them maintain independence within their home where possible. We do this through the provision of aids and adaptations to the home.**

## Criteria for Funding Aids and Adaptations

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) defines a long-term disability as "an impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least 12 months or the rest of the person's life". Hexagon will not normally undertake extensive alteration to a property or install major items of fixed equipment if the circumstance giving rise to the need for an adaption is only temporary.

Hexagon's aids and adaptations service is separated into two categories:

- *minor adaptations* these are works below £500, (i.e. small concrete ramps, handrails, door releases, intercoms, bath support rails, flashing light doorbells etc.)
- *major adaptations* which are works costing over £500 (i.e. stair lifts, ceiling hoists and bathroom alterations).

All major adaptations usually require an Occupational Therapist's referral with a specification and details of any equipment required. In limited cases we can carry out our own assessments.

In order for aids and adaptations works to be carried out in the home, residents will need to be referred from a health care professional, although we are able to accept requests from residents, carers or other concerned parties as long as the resident is aware of the referral.

Once we have received a referral, the process we follow is:

- write to the resident within 20 working days advising on the next step and details of the person responsible for ensuring that the works are completed. The surveyor should also explain the scope of the alteration and agree any special requirements.

In the case of minor repairs, residents should be informed of when the adaptations will be carried out.

- carry out a site inspection to ascertain whether it is practical to carry out the proposed work.
- kept the resident informed at all stages of the work, either by phone, letter, or visits to the home by the surveyor responsible.
- on completion of the adaptation we will carry out an inspection to ensure the works have been done in accordance with the referral and to the satisfaction of the residents.



## KEY DETAILS

**020 8778 6699**

Contact: Georgia McCarthy

# electrical safety in the home

**Electricity is an important part of how we live our lives today. It is just as important to treat the electrical appliances that we have in our home properly. Here are a few useful tips to help you use your electrical appliances efficiently and safely**

- Make sure you know how to switch off your electricity supply at the mains
- Make sure all electrical appliances are switched off when they are not being used
- Do not overload your electrical sockets with extension leads
- **Never** touch switches with damp or wet hands and **never** take electrical appliances into the bathroom

### General Advice

To switch the electricity off at the mains you will need to locate the consumer unit. The consumer unit (the fuseboard) can usually be found next to the electricity meter.

Modern electric circuits are fitted with a circuit breaker fuse system. If a fault develops, a switch in the consumer unit is tripped and the circuit broken.

Circuit breakers usually trip because either the circuit is overloaded or an appliance is faulty.

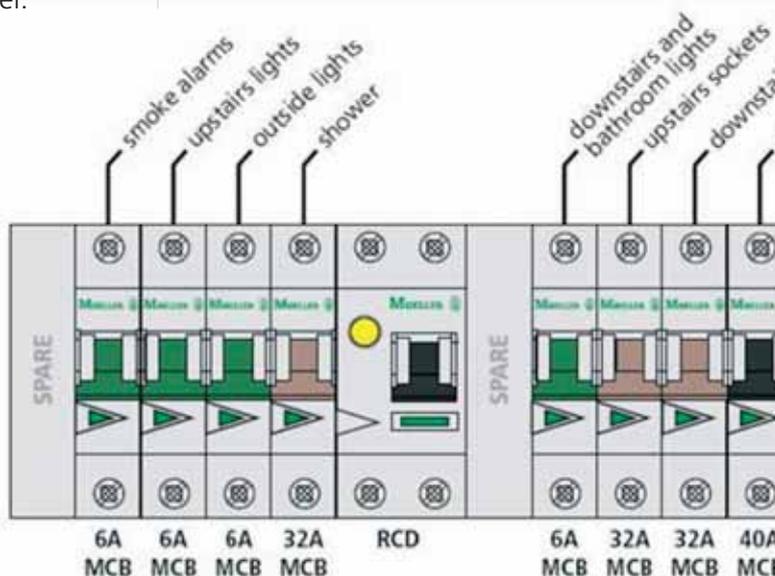
### NEVER TAMPER WITH THE ELECTRICITY BOARD'S CIRCUIT BREAKERS AND SEALS.

#### Resetting Your Trip Switch - what to do

Firstly unplug all appliances. Next, open the cover on the consumer unit to expose trip switches. Reset the trip by pushing in the tripped button or pushing up the trip switch. Plug the appliances back one at a time to check if any are faulty and tripping the switch. Replace the consumer unit cover.

If the switch keeps moving back to the off position then you need to report it to repairs freephone number on 0800 393 338.

DIY Top Tip



Above: An example of a consumer unit distribution board. Yours may be arranged slightly differently.

Anything to Say about Home News?

Tel: 020 8768 7970 Email: [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)

# facebook

# Engaging Residents

Facebook helps you connect and engage with the people in your life.





# Thumbs Up for Facebook

**Hexagon Housing Association is now on Facebook. We have joined Facebook because we believe that we should use as many methods to communicate with residents as we can.**

We hope that by communicating with residents and their families on Facebook, we will engage with more young residents who we can make aware of the services we have available to them.

But its not just about young people. Hexagon will use Facebook to promote and invite people to events, to keep people informed of what we are doing and maybe even encourage discussion.

We will use Facebook, post photos and lots of other material which there isn't space for in *Home News* and sometimes we will use it to gather your views. In future we plan to shoot video interviews, video press releases and other bits of video to really show you as residents what we are doing. Our Facebook page gives us a new and exciting way to give you up to date information about Hexagon. You can find us by searching on Facebook for Hexagon Housing Association, or simply click on the link on the Hexagon website.

**Visit us at [www.facebook.com/HexagonHA](http://www.facebook.com/HexagonHA), hit the 'Like' button and tell us what you think.**

## Win a Digital Camera

*We are really excited about using Facebook and we hope you are too. To encourage you to join us on Facebook, we will enter any residents who 'like' the Hexagon Facebook page on or before 31st October into a prize draw to win digital cameras.*



# career advice



**We had a great response to the Academy opportunities in the last issue of Home News. But did you know, as well as our pre-employment work placements, we also offer an Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) service?**

Our IAG service is available to unemployed residents of Hexagon and is provided by qualified IAG practitioners. It enables you to explore your career and training choices and even to bring out talents, skills and strengths you may not be aware you even have.

So, what is IAG? Our *jargon buster* explains all:

## Information

Up to date and easy to understand information addressing a wide range of questions about work choices and training opportunities. Also information on how to apply for jobs including filling in applications, CV building, interview techniques and signposting to local Further Education colleges and other specialist support.

## Advice

Providing a tailor-made and timely response, it helps you to link your personal interests and skills to your desired jobs/career requirements. Advice given here will support you to use any information and guidance you receive in your IAG sessions.

## Guidance

An in depth interview conducted by a trained practitioner which helps you to explore a range of options, to relate any information given to your own needs and circumstances and to make decisions about your future.

**“I lost my job three months ago. I was really depressed and lost and did not know where to start. But I did remember having read an article in Hexagon Home News about the Academy, so I decided to contact Magda Tyra to see how Hexagon could help me looking for a job.**

**The following day I had an IAG appointment. The session was very helpful, CV samples were given to me and my CV is done now. Ms Tyra was incredible with me. She made my day. I am now more confident to start looking for work and I am aware that I can explore many more fields while looking for a job. I would recommend the IAG service to anyone looking for a job.”**

Muriel (SE22)

For IAG career advice service please contact Magda Tyra on the details below. Hexagon will be hosting employability sessions. Please call for details.

# The Academy

Magda Tyra



## KEY DETAILS

020 8768 7915

Contact: Magda Tyra

# Green Quiz

**How well do you know about issues affecting our environment. Why not test your knowledge on green issues with our fun quiz!**

Just answer the 10 questions below and then check your responses to the answers at the bottom of the page to see how you did.

1. **Switching appliances off rather than leaving them on standby saves energy – but, on average, how much per household per year?**  
 a) £16 per household                      b) £65 per household                      c) £165 per household
2. **How much of the UK's total CO2 emissions are our homes responsible for?**  
 a) Around 5%                                  b) Just over 15%                              c) Nearly 30%
3. **How much energy do energy saving bulbs save, compared with ordinary light bulbs?**  
 a) 30%    b) 50%    c) 80%
4. **How much of the UK's total annual energy is used for transport?**  
 a) One-tenth                                      b) A fifth    c) A third
5. **Roughly how much of the Earth's surface is covered in water?**  
 a) 17%    b) 57%    c) 70%
6. **Roughly how much water does the average person in Britain use daily?**  
 a) 40 litres                                        b) 140 litres                                        c) 240 litres
7. **Recycling just one aluminium can saves enough energy to run a television for how long?**  
 a) 1 hour    b) 3 hours    c) 6 hours
8. **Recycling just two glass bottles saves enough energy to boil water for how many cups of tea?**  
 a) 1 cup of tea                                      b) 3 cups of tea                                      c) 5 cups of tea
9. **What percentage of cost is saved by turning down the central heating by 1°C?**  
 a) 0 - 5%    b) 5 - 9%    c) 10 - 14%
10. **How many batteries are estimated to be thrown away each year in the UK?**  
 a) 650 million                                      b) 750 million                                      c) 850 million

**How did you do? Check your answers below**

1. b £65. According to the Energy Saving Trust, standby accounts for around 10% of the average UK household's electricity usage.
2. c it's nearly 30%; according to government estimates, our homes are responsible for 28% of the UK's yearly total emissions!
3. c 80%; energy saving bulbs use up to 80 per cent less electricity than a standard bulb, but produce the same amount of light.
4. c a third of all the energy used in the UK each year goes on transport.
5. c around 70% (or five-sevenths) of the Earth's surface is covered in water; no wonder the planet looks so blue from space!
6. b we use around 150 litres of water a day in the UK; according to DEFRA, in 2009 the average consumption in unmetered households was 150 litres per person per day, and 127 litres in homes with a metered water supply.
7. b – recycling an aluminium can saves enough energy to power a TV for 3 hours.
8. c recycling 2 glass bottles saves enough energy to boil 5 cups of tea.
9. b 5-9%. Turning down your central heating just 1 degree will help reduce your heating bill by around 8% or on average by £50 a year.
10. a In the UK we throw away over 650 million batteries every year. Rechargeable batteries save energy and the slightly higher cost is recovered in the first five charges.

Answers

# Home Business Champions

- \* **Three residents, three businesses**
- \* **£500 grants and professional mentoring**
- \* **Lessons learned and shared in *Home News***

## How did we pick our Champions?

Six residents applied to be Home Business Champions and three were successful. All had to attend a 'dragons den' style interview and give a presentation to Hexagon and our partners 3D Change. This may have been a little stressful but all of the residents were great, brilliantly describing their business ideas and very competently answering questions from the panel.

The three winners were picked because they represented very different ideas so that other residents could learn from different experiences. They were also ideas that we felt we would be best able to support and help grow with mentoring and support.

## Affordable Acupuncture

**Chris Watson**, a Hexagon resident from Brockley, is one of our three Home Business Champions. A qualified acupuncture practitioner and a member of the British Acupuncture Council, Chris was looking for advice in promoting his practice and building it as a business to support him financially.

Since becoming a Home Business Champion, Chris has been awarded £500 which he has spent on publicity materials. He has spent time with his mentor, Moira from 3D Change, and has used her advice on marketing and how to build the business. As a direct result of this, Chris is in talks to offer acupuncture in new community settings and has placed an advert in *Lewisham Life*.

Chris says that self employment isn't easy. *"It takes a lot of work and it's a test of how behind your dream you are. It needs commitment, energy and inspiration"*. Chris is lucky that he still has occasional work from a previous employer to support him, and if you are looking to start a business, this is something to bear in mind.

## Special Deal for You

One thing that really drives Chris is a desire to make acupuncture affordable and accessible. With this in mind, Chris is offering sessions booked before Christmas at half price to Hexagon residents. Please note these sessions are only available in Brockley.

Call Chris on **07706 183486** to discuss how acupuncture could help you.  
[info@chriswatsonacupuncture.co.uk](mailto:info@chriswatsonacupuncture.co.uk)  
[www.chriswatsonacupuncture.co.uk](http://www.chriswatsonacupuncture.co.uk)



**Anything to Say about *Home News*?**

Tel: 020 8768 7970 Email: [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)



### The Riviera Beauty Spa

The brainchild of **Samantha Riviere** from Thamesmead, The Riviere Beauty Spa is a mobile business that comes to you.

To develop her skills and to get more experience, Samantha spent some of the summer working in a salon in Bond Street and completed her NVQ2 to become a qualified nail technician. Samantha is now complementing her mobile business and setting up from a fixed site one day a week in Canary Wharf offering nail services, manicures and pedicures.

Samantha admits to having found setting up a business challenging, but also rewarding. *"It was very slow at first and sometimes I felt like giving up. It's fun being your own boss though. You get to meet lots of people. I love beauty and people are pleased with what I do."*

Samantha spent her £500 grant on a uniform, publicity materials, equipment and driving lessons. Passing her driving test is critical to Samantha's business being successful, and she hopes to achieve this very soon. *"It can be very slow to start with, but I would encourage people not to give up. You'll get there in the end."*

---

Treat yourself; Samantha can be contacted on **07943 842691**  
[www.rivierebeauty.co.uk](http://www.rivierebeauty.co.uk)

### Divine Catering

**Candida Manuel** has set up a catering business called Divine Catering. This caters for functions, business meetings and parties, offering traditional British food and more exotic fare from Portugal and Africa.

In the three months since becoming a Home Business Champion, Candida has got permission from her Housing Officer and Environmental Health to run a business from home and has been busy designing a menu and publicity material. Candida found the support from her mentor invaluable and will continue to use this support in the future.

Candida's advice to other residents looking to set up a business is to complete a business plan first and sort out the finances. *"It's very hard in the beginning, but worth it. The benefits when the business is properly set up are the freedom it gives me to work for myself."*

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To use the divine caterer, call Candida on **0208 613 7162**  
[www.divinecaterer.co.uk](http://www.divinecaterer.co.uk)

# engaging with residents

## Summer Activities

### The Community Investment Team has been busy with a wide range of activities to engage with our residents.

The purpose of the activities was to build a rapport to find out the needs of our tenants. The Team also set out to create a sense of fun and neighbourliness combined with important information on the services that can be provided for them via the Community Investment Team.

### Southend Coach Trip (Greenwich residents)

Oh I do like to be beside the seaside.....

There were over 30 residents that attended this action packed day. Families from Greenwich clambered aboard our luxury limousine (coach) and we set off to the coast.

The weather held up well and was an absolute scorcher.

It was a shame that the coach broke down in the car park at Southend, and after some panic, the wonderful residents used this opportunity to catch a few extra sun rays and have a chat to get to know those they already didn't know. The coach was soon repaired and we set off to sunny Thamesmead!! Definitely a day to remember!



### Southbridge Place Summer BBQ

To welcome all those who recently moved into our new development at Southbridge Place in Croydon, the Community Investment Team organised a Summer BBQ for the residents.

This was to promote neighbourliness amongst residents and a way for residents to meet each other in a social setting rather than in passing.

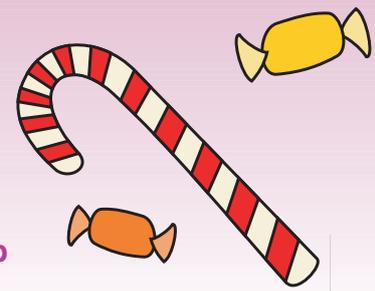
There were fun games for all, from a bouncy castle for the kids and ice breaker games that allowed residents to have a laugh at the same time as getting to know each other. There were a total of over 30 residents that attended the fun day and enjoyed a scrumptious burger or a succulent bit of chicken.

A stand promoting all the services that the Community Investment Team can offer residents was also available with a member of staff to register any interest in a range of projects. There was a good take up of information and residents commented on how useful it was to be able to access this information at the event.

There was a lot of positive feed back from residents stating that it was a fun day and that they had made friends with neighbours.

The impact of the Summer BBQ will be tracked over a year to see if this event has helped residents to come together and become more sociable with each other.





**Hexagon Football Academy  
(Greenwich Residents)**

We recently put on a one-week football academy which was held for our Greenwich residents at Linton Mead Primary School in Thamesmead.

There was an overwhelming response to the advert and we had over 20 young people attend for the duration.

The week consisted of exercise, ball control and a tournament on the final day. All the young residents involved had an award ceremony on the final day to celebrate their achievements with certificates presented for recognition of skills.

**Brighton Coach Trip**

We had over 40 residents from Southwark attend this fantastic day trip.

The sun was in full force. Sunglasses and sun hats were the order of the day. Residents spent the day swimming in the sea, eating ice cream, walking along the pier and, most importantly, having fish and chips for dinner.

There was a real sense of community as residents made the effort to talk and make friends with other residents on the trip who they hadn't met before.

Watch this space for news on the 2012 trip!



# how residents have their say

## Residents' Involvement

**Resident Involvement is central to Hexagon's work. Here is an overview of how residents have worked with Hexagon since the last issue of Home News.**

### Residents Inspectors

This is a new project where 8 residents have come together to inspect the quality of services provided by Hexagon. The residents have undergone training provided by the Tenant Participation & Advisory Service (TPAS) in how to carry out inspections of housing associations, and are now currently inspecting the time it takes Hexagon to turn around the empty properties (known as "voids").

Following their in-depth scrutiny of the handling of voids, the inspection team will make a report to Hexagon outlining their findings and identifying where improvements, if any, can be made in the process of preparing empty properties to be ready for letting to new tenants.

### Annual Report Group

This is a group of 11 residents which was set up last year to shape the Annual Report to residents. The group convened again in recent months to give suggestions on the content and style of the 2010/11 Annual Report.

You can see the work of the Group by obtaining the full report which is available on request from Hexagon. A condensed version of the report is in the middle pages of this magazine.

### Performance Review Group

The Performance Review Group (PRG) acts as a scrutiny panel by analysing and commenting on Hexagon's performance across a range of service areas. The last meeting heard that, following the recommendation of the PRG, repair orders which have gone over target are now monitored by the Repairs Manager on a fortnightly basis and raised at the meetings with the contractors.

### Estate Grading

In another new project, 6 residents have split themselves into 2 teams and gone out to inspect the condition of 17 blocks and estates. Hexagon believes that its estates are reasonably well maintained but we feel that we can do more to ensure that they are places where people want to live. This is where the work of the Estate Graders comes in. Each of the two teams have sent in a report of their findings and this will help to identify improvements and thereby drive up standards. We hope to tell you more of the work of the Estate Graders in the next issue of *Home News*.



### Residents Forum

At their last meeting, the Residents Forum heard a presentation from the Repairs Manager on the repairs service. Following the presentation, residents at the Forum raised issues around post-inspection of repair jobs, surveying of tenants following a repair being carried out, the backlog in fencing repairs, the increase in the number of repair orders and a request for call log numbers to be given to tenants when they phone in a repair. These and other issues have been taken on board by the Repairs Manager and progress will be fed back to a future Forum meeting.

### Care & Support Feedback Forum

Residents from all three nursing homes were invited to a Feedback Session held at Townley Road Nursing Home. Residents discussed issues affecting their nursing home such as repairs, care plans, group recreational activities and services from community-based agencies. Issues raised by residents will now be taken forward by managers. The meeting also took time out to help plan the Care & Support Summer Fun Day (see p.11 for more information).

### Readers Panel

The Readers Panel met following the last issue of *Home News* to give their feedback on the magazine and to make suggestions for the next edition.

Among the suggestions the Panel made were: more feedback needed on the Home Business Champions (see p.18), more information of new developments schemes being provided by Hexagon (see p.1) and regular reminders on ways for tenants to pay the rent (see p.6). See more about the Readers Panel on page 2.

*The above is only a brief overview of the way in which residents can have an influence over the services they receive. If you would like to get involved and help shape the service you receive, then why not contact the Resident Involvement Team for details on ways in which you can get involved.*



#### KEY DETAILS

**020 8768 7970**

Contact: Marley Simmons

email: [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)



**Anything to Say about Home News?**

Tel: 020 8768 7970 Email: [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)

Time

Competition

**Congratulations to S. Bonnick (SE18), R. Minova (DA8) and M. Mykels (SE23) who sent the first 3 correct entries to Competition Time.**

Please send your entries, by post, to:  
**Marley Simmons**  
 Hexagon Housing Association,  
 130-136 Sydenham Road,  
 London, SE26 5JY

Or by email to:  
**getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk**

Three correct entries will be drawn at random and will each receive a £20 shopping voucher. The deadline for the competition is **Friday 4th November**.

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

1. Name 4 different ways to pay your rent?
2. Where did the Greenwich residents go on their coach trip?
3. Name 3 activities that happened at the Care & Support fun day this year?
4. Who won the new 3 year Estate Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance contract?
5. What is the name of the newly elected Tenant Board Member?

*The competition is open to all Hexagon residents and service users. 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 093 9932

**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 6pm, Monday - Friday. You can call this number at any time. When phoning outside of normal hours, this number should be used for emergency repairs only.

**You can also report a repair by any of the following:**



emailing us at:  
[customer\\_desk@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk)



visiting us online at: [www.hexagon.org.uk](http://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 at the address below.

There is also a Maintenance Surgery held on the last Friday of each month from 9am - 1pm. No need to book an appointment - just drop in.

**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

## 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:

### 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

"Nếu bạn muốn có ấn bản này của *Home News* dịch sang một ngôn ngữ mà bạn quen thuộc hơn với, xin vui lòng liên hệ với Hexagon cho đầy đủ chi tiết liên lạc của bạn."

- 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.

# Kids Page

Can you match up the following fictional pets with their names and owners?

Type of pet	Owner	Pet's name
Great Dane dog	Spongebob Squarepants	Mrs Norris
Tabby cat	Sabrina, the teenage witch	Gary
Orange cat, black stripes	Mr Arbuckle	Schmeichel
Snail	Roxy in Eastenders	Salem
Black cat	Chesney in Coronation Street	Albert
Boxer dog	Argus Filch in Harry Potter	Garfield
Boxer dog	Roxy in Eastenders	Albert
Black cat	Sabrina, the teenage witch	Salem
Snail	Spongebob Squarepants	Gary
Orange cat, black stripes	Mr Arbuckle	Garfield
Tabby cat	Argus Filch in Harry Potter	Mrs Norris
Great Dane dog	Chesney in Coronation Street	Schmeichel

## Pet Word Search

Find all of the pet related words in the puzzle below.

Best friend

Budgie

Bunny

Canary

Cat

Dog

Feed

Fish

Gerbil

Guinea pig

Hamster

Love

Pet

Turtle

Walk

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

If you think you've found all the correct words in the Word Search, simply cut out and send to:

**Marley Simmons**, Hexagon Housing Association  
 130-136 Sydenham Road, London SE26 5JY  
 by **Friday 4th November**. Three correct entries will be drawn at random and will receive a £10 shopping voucher.

Winners of last issues of last Kids Page Competition:  
**C. Coleman, D. Henry and B. Warboyes!**

## Joke time!



A mother mouse was walking along the road with her baby when suddenly a cat jumped out and attacked them. Instantly, the mother mouse shouted loudly "Woof woof!" at which point the cat ran off. "There, you see" said the mother mouse to her baby "that is why learning a foreign language is so important".

I went into our local pet shop the other day and asked the assistant if I could buy a goldfish. The assistant said "Would you like an aquarium"? I replied "it doesn't matter to me what its star sign is".



## Recipe: Baked bananas

These look a bit weird as the skins go completely black, but they are very tasty and healthy too!

- Pre-heat the oven to 200c/400F/Gas 6. Arrange the bananas on a baking sheet and bake for 20 to 25 minutes until the skins are completely blackened but not split
- Place a blackened banana on a plate, split it open, add a dollop of Greek yoghurt and a sprinkle of sugar