

HOME

NEWS

SUMMER 2017

Hexagon



HEXAGON ACHIEVES TOP MARKS!

See page 03 →

**LOVE LONDON
WORKING**

See page 10 →

**APPRENTICESHIP
VACANCIES**

See page 08 →

**ADVICE
WITH
MONEY**

See page 20 →



WELCOME...

to another edition of Home News.

Hexagon is registered as a charitable housing association with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The HCA are the social housing regulator and we therefore have to comply with all of their regulatory requirements. It is in that context that I am happy to report that following a recent 'In-Depth Assessment' (IDA) from the regulator, Hexagon has been awarded top grades.

This applies firstly to the strength of our financial position. This is important because we have lots of ongoing financial obligations to our residents such as responsive and major repairs. And in addition to the top rating for finance, we have also received top marks for our governance, or how well Hexagon's Board runs the organisation. Housing association businesses are generally getting more complex, so in that context, this is really great news.

Hexagon is committed to opening our services to residents' scrutiny and one of

the ways we do that is to bring in a team of trained Resident Inspectors to look at service areas in some depth. We feel strongly that our best chance of improving services is to listen to our residents closely, so if this is of interest you can read about this on page 5.

Our Community Investment Team continues to go from strength to strength and we are happy to share some good news with you about a programme called Love London Working which is on pages 10 and 11.

Lastly, the Community Investment team is also helping those who are not online to enter the digital world by arranging a basic digital skills course. This is helping many to get to grips with the world of computers. You can read a bit more about this work on page 17 and if it is of interest to you, please don't hesitate to let us know.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Home News.

Tom McCormack
Chief Executive



WOULD YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE BY EMAIL?

You can stop receiving Home News by post if you prefer and have the magazine emailed to you instead.

If you would like to take up this option, simply send your name, address and email address to getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk and we will remove you from the mailing list and arrange to email you the magazine every three months.

Cover image: Nadine and Igor at the Hexagon Annual Co-op Seminar (see page 18)

WHAT'S INSIDE

Regulator Awards Hexagon Top Grades	03
Contact Performance in Customer Services	04
Resident Inspection	05
Rechargeable Repairs	06
Development Update	07
Apprenticeship Vacancies	08
Soap or Reality?	09
Love London Working	10
Care & Support	12
Community Investment	13
The Hexagon Annual Co-op Seminar	18
Money Matters	20
DIY Top Tip	22
Kids Corner	23
Get In Touch	24
Competition Time	24

GOVERNANCE

HEXAGON AWARDED

TOP GRADES

As a registered housing association, Hexagon is regulated by a social housing regulator within the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

The regulator's key focus is to promote a viable, efficient, and well-governed social housing sector which can deliver homes that meet a range of needs.

A couple of years ago, the regulator introduced a new methodology for assessing housing associations. Any registered provider with more than 1,000 homes, such as Hexagon, became subject to a process known as 'In-Depth Assessments' (IDAs).

These do what they say on the tin – that is to say they have a detailed and in-depth look at each housing association on a three/four year cycle. Their principal focus is to determine our financial viability (in other words, our ability to meet our financial obligations); our approach to Value for Money and our governance. Governance basically means how well Hexagon's Board runs the organisation. The HCA looks at whether the Board has a clear strategy, whether they understand the risks the business faces, and how well they manage those risks.

The process involves providing the regulator with hundreds of pages of documentation which they then review over a period of roughly two months. They then come into the office to carry out their In-Depth Assessments (IDA) and this involves interviewing the Executive Team at Hexagon as well as key Board Members including our Chair, and the Chair of our Audit & Risk Committee.

Hexagon's In-Depth Assessment took place at the end of 2016 and in early 2017 we received the results. The result for our regulatory judgement on Financial

Viability was a V1 rating. There are four ratings and this is the highest possible rating, so this is an excellent outcome. Their judgement means that we meet their viability requirements and that they have concluded we have the financial capacity to deal with a wide range of adverse scenarios.

There is similarly good news in respect of our Governance rating. The Board has been awarded the highest possible rating of G1 which means that they meet all of the governance regulatory requirements.

The Chair and the Chief Executive of Hexagon held a feedback meeting with the HCA and we received lots of positive feedback.

This is great news for Hexagon and indeed for all of Hexagon's residents. This is an important external validation which shows that the finances of Hexagon are in robust shape and that the Board has a clear, strategic sense of direction and is managing the association effectively and efficiently.



CONTACT PERFORMANCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM

How much do you love being on the phone?

Throughout 2016-17 our Customer Services team of 10 advisers spent just over **3,800 hours** on phone calls to our external and internal customers.

So, how many calls did we handle?

We handled just **over 114,000 calls** throughout the year. These calls came to us from the main customer queues, from internal calls made to our direct extensions and calls that we made out.

From the main customer queues:

- We were presented with a total of **67,465 calls** (3,156 fewer than the previous year)
- We answered **62,450 calls** (1,674 fewer than the previous year)

Of the phone calls received **78% were answered within 30 seconds**, and that is a **2.39% increase** on the previous year. Some **7.43% of all calls were abandoned**, which is a **0.5% decrease** on the previous year. An abandoned call is where a person rings into Hexagon, but then hangs up before the Customer Services Adviser answers.

We all lead busy lives, so having more streamlined communication channels helps our customers to get in contact with us to report issues and get answers to their queries. To allow us to deal with these requests in a smarter way, last year we introduced email queuing. This means that repair emails sent into repairs_reporting@hexagon.org.uk go into a queue in our contact centre management system in the same way that a phone call does. This increases our response times and provides our customers with a better and more reliable service.

So what did we achieve?

We achieved a **Service Level of 100%** for all repairs email requests – we received **3,519 emails** which were all dealt with within 1 working day; this is against our target of 3 working days. On top of this we also handled **2,664 Housing and General** email requests throughout the year. A big “well done” to Hexagons Customer Service team. It has been another year of delivering great results, improving the service we are delivering to our customers, increasing our response times and improving customer satisfaction.

AT A GLANCE



ON PHONE CALLS TO OUR EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CUSTOMERS



REASONS FOR THE PHONE CALLS



(194 MORE THAN LAST YEAR)



(120 MORE THAN LAST YEAR)



(2,109 FEWER THAN LAST YEAR)



(TO OUR NEW LINE SET UP ON 6TH DECEMBER)

RESIDENT INSPECTION

The Resident Inspection project is a team of residents who do an in-depth analysis of an area of service which residents receive. When residents inspect a Hexagon service area they make evidence based recommendations on how the service can be improved.

The Resident Inspection project has been ongoing for a number of years and the Inspection team have made some fantastic recommendations where changes have been made to the service Hexagon delivers to its residents.

The Inspection team are currently inspecting the defects process (repair and build issues experienced by residents when they move into a new-build Hexagon property) and this project is almost completed. The resident's recommendations from the defects inspection will be published in the next edition of Home News.

The last inspection the team completed was into Customer Services. After working closely with the Customer Services Manager and analysing figures and reports the team made some key recommendations arising from their inspection. This included suggesting all members of staff on the reception desk have name badges; an enhanced monitoring of complaints data; and the tracking of responsive repairs jobs to ensure that the job is logged correctly at the first point of contact. The Customer Services Manager welcomed the residents' recommendations as these will all go toward making the service delivered by the Customer Services team a more efficient one for all customers.

Resident Inspection is a great example of co-regulation working at its best. Having residents explore and review our services and gaining the residents perspective is invaluable to improving the services Hexagon delivers.

WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR RESIDENTS TO JOIN THE INSPECTION TEAM

If you are interested in becoming an Inspector please call **Catherine Foxwell** on 020 8768 7962 or email cfoxwell@hexagon.org.uk for a role description and application form.



Our repairs service is here to help maintain your home and to keep it safe and warm. Hexagon aims to efficiently carry out the repairs which are our responsibility however, there will be occasions where Hexagon has carried out a repair which is the tenant's responsibility. On these occasions, the work that Hexagon has done becomes a "rechargeable repair".

We will recharge tenants the cost of a repair if:

- You are at fault (for example you have called to say there is no electricity and in fact you have not topped up your electric key or paid your bill).
- If you, your family, and your visitors have caused damage deliberately, maliciously or through neglect.
- If you agree to meet the cost of the work, we will, under certain circumstances, carry out repairs that are your responsibility. These are jobs which you cannot organise for yourself (for example because you have support needs) or in emergencies, (e.g. gaining entry when you have lost your keys).
- You miss an appointment which has been arranged and agreed by you. We recharge £10 if you do not provide access for day time appointments and £90 if no-one is home for out-of-hours appointments.
- We will recharge departing residents for any clearance; damage; or outstanding repairs, which are their responsibility which we have to do following their departure.

At the end of your tenancy please ensure that you return the property to us in a good condition. We expect residents to clear away any unwanted goods from the home and to make good any damage they have been responsible for, allowing for fair wear and tear.

Our aim is to provide a service that is fair to all residents and our rechargeable repairs are an important part of that commitment. Ultimately the cost of the repairs service is met through the rent we collect and it is unfair to expect tenants to pick up the costs of damage or misuse of services by others.

OUT-OF-HOURS

Our out-of-hours service is here to ensure that if an emergency happens to your home outside of normal working hours that you are not left in a dangerous situation. Our contractors are instructed to 'make safe' on out-of-hours calls. This means that they will isolate services (such as electricity or water) but they will not carry out the repair. The actual repair will be arranged via an appointment during normal working hours.

If you do need to call our contractors out outside of working hours, please also remember to call our Customer Service Centre the next working day as this is the quickest way to arrange the full repair and any follow-up works.

DEVELOPING FOR THE FUTURE

Hexagon has just agreed an ambitious Development Strategy which is aligned to the new Corporate Plan and aims to maximise the number of affordable homes Hexagon can build over the next four years.

The Government funding limits means that grant rates for building new homes are lower than in previous years. If Hexagon wants to carry on its good work of building affordable homes for rent, it needs to borrow more money, and generate income from other activities – this is referred to as "cross-subsidy".

Hexagon provides subsidy for new developments from the surpluses it generates. As Hexagon is already a developer of housing it makes sense that we generate this extra money from building homes for private sale. We are utilising our non-charitable subsidiary; Horniman to do this. In this way, the profits generated can help to pay for the much needed rented homes. We will do this in a modest and responsible way, taking account of the financial risks associated with the housing market. Despite the risks, we recognise

the huge rewards that can come from this activity by raising money which can help us in our core mission which is to build new homes for rent at affordable levels.

We have plans to build at least 240 affordable homes with grant funding. These homes will be for rent and shared ownership and will be built over the next 2 to 6 years. We expect to continue to build mainly flats but we will also build some houses for a range of households; single people, couples and families.

Other exciting features of our new approach includes a focus on working in partnership with other organisations such as Local Authorities and developers to increase the opportunities for development and sharing the risks involved on larger developments in particular. We also want to explore the use of new 'factory based'

construction methods as a way to deliver good quality homes, which also responds to the skills shortages which are well recognised in the construction industry.

We remain focussed on improving the repairs service that residents receive when they move into their new home. This is referred to as the defects service, whereby the builder of the new homes is responsible for most repairs for the first 12 months. We are aiming to deliver the defects service to the same high standard as our day-to-day repairs service, and achieve high levels of resident's satisfaction.

Hexagon remains committed to continuing with its mission of building new affordable homes, and our new Development Strategy will help ensure we are best placed to deliver on our aspirations for building new affordable homes.

Image: Park View, Clifton Road, Welling





APPRENTICESHIP VACANCIES

Are you currently not working?

Are you looking at gaining a qualification and earning money?

Want to gain a trade?

If you are answering “yes” to the above then we need you to give us a call!

Do it now by contacting the Employment and Skills Team:

Lorna Campbell
020 8768 7984 or
lcampbell@hexagon.org.uk

Lionne Whitfield
020 8768 7915 or
lwhitfield@hexagon.org.uk

We are holding an **Apprenticeship Assessment Day** on **Wednesday 19th July** where there will be an opportunity to meet with local employers and find out more about what's available.

Please contact us to find out more and to book your place.

These apprentice vacancies will be in **painting & decorating** and must be filled by **August 2017**, so don't delay, get in touch today!

SOAP OR REALITY?

Psssst... Have you been watching Eastenders recently?

For those of you who are not familiar with the show, here's a brief synopsis. Eastenders is a BBC1 soap, which focuses on the lives, loves and losses of the residents of Albert Square in the fictional east London district of Walford.

Some people say that some of the storylines are quite far-fetched and beyond belief - until now! The current storyline regarding unemployment features the journey of Denise Fox, Michelle Fowler and Lauren Branning who are all trying to find suitable employment.

Denise's storyline is particularly gripping, where we have seen her lose her long-term job at the Minute Mart after she bad-mouthed her employers to the local newspaper.

We've seen Denise fall on hard times and this has isolated herself from her friends and family and she has generally not had much 'luck' with her search for gaining employment.

We recently saw Denise make an unsuccessful trip to the Job Centre and then having to face the daunting task of making an online application for Universal Credit.

In the real world, a lot of people can feel ashamed or embarrassed about being unemployed, and as a result avoid social situations. Being unemployed can be a difficult time. It can be hard to cope and it's very rarely something anyone intentionally wants. In fact, at any given time, people are always in and out of, and in between jobs. Jobs change, markets change, jobs disappear and new jobs are created. As tempting as it may be to dodge friends and family, it can become a dangerous habit. You need support to make it through this transition with minimal stress and anxiety. If this sounds familiar and you can relate to Denise's story, then you don't need to go through this alone because Hexagon's friendly and supportive Employment and Skills Team are here to help you.

HEXAGON'S FRIENDLY AND SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS TEAM ARE HERE TO HELP YOU

From the first time you meet your Hexagon Employment Adviser, they will work with you to understand your employment history, your current situation and what kind of job is most suitable for you. Our Advisers are specialists in finding people jobs, and will work out your own personal plan to get you where you need to be. We will support you all the way, helping you to: build your job-searching skills; find vacancies; write a great CV and cover letter; and to perfect your interview techniques.

Our support is aimed at helping you find a job that will last, so that you can look forward to and feel confident about the future. Our work does not stop there. We understand the transition from being on benefits to moving in to employment can be equally as scary. Once you're in work, we will work with you to understand what support, if any, you may need. This could range from us paying for your travel expenses, clothing for work, childcare or gaining additional skills to accessing workplace aids if you have a disability. We will agree an in-work action plan with you, which will describe what you need and help you to stay in work.

To find out more, please feel free to contact the **Employment and Skills Team** on **020 8768 7984** or **020 8768 7915**.

LOVE LONDON WORKING



Walter finds it handy at Hexagon!

Walter Bravo is a Hexagon resident who is a Handyperson for a nursing home. Here he shares his account about how Love London Working helped him achieve his career goals.

Why did you join the Love London Working Project?

I read the Home News magazine, where I saw an article about the employment support that Hexagon offers residents. I decided to contact Lionne Whitfield to arrange an appointment. From then on it was the start of my success.

What support did you receive, whilst you were on the project?

When I met with Lionne, I informed her I wanted to work as a Handyperson ideally near to my home. We sat down and put a plan together, where she identified what I needed to have and what I needed to do to achieve my employment

goals. Although I was an experienced labourer, Lionne advised me I needed to complete a Health and Safety and a CSCS course in order to meet the required standards. She assisted me with booking and paying for the courses as well as obtaining my actual CSCS card.

I then met with Lionne on a regular basis, where she helped me improve my CV and cover letter and also my interview techniques. I was allowed to have as many mock interviews as I wanted until I felt confident enough to have a real interview. I was also referred to Suited and Booted, where I received a free, made-to-measure suit and other items suitable to wear to an interview. We made applications using various methods – online, newspapers, recruitment agencies and spec letters. Within a short period of time I was invited to several interviews and was finally offered a position as a Handyperson in a care home within my local area.



Walter Bravo, with his wife, preparing applications



Walter Bravo at the interview

What does your current role involve?

I am responsible for carrying out DIY and general maintenance work and am involved in all aspects of the care home maintenance, both internal and external. My role includes basic carpentry, plumbing and flooring and painting and decorating. I do regular checks and assessments of both private and public areas, liaising with the domestic assistants, housekeeping and the Care staff. I also carry out other jobs as and when they are required. I am doing a job I really love!

What would you say to anybody who has doubts about joining the Love London Working project?

You have no reason to have any doubts. The team at Hexagon are very friendly and welcoming. Give it a try, you have nothing to lose.

If you are experiencing difficulties finding a suitable job or you have barriers to gaining employment on your own; why not work with an Employment Adviser at Hexagon to learn about the resources and support available to you? We can also provide a well-coordinated support system to help you develop your skills, and help you find training and a job.

Give our Employment and Skills Team a call today on 020 8768 7984 or 020 8768 7915.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook - @Hexagonhousing
Twitter - Employability Team @Hexagonhousing
www.hexagon.org.uk/lovelondonworking



MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO RESIDENT'S LIVES

In the last edition of *Home News* we told you about how Kirkwood Road celebrated its first anniversary. Kirkwood Road is a support project providing a service for residents with high support needs. As a follow-up to that article, we feature Eve Warren who is the Community Links lead at the project. Here she describes her role and the importance of the service that is provided at Kirkwood Road.

This role has enabled me to support residents at Kirkwood Road and allowed me to facilitate activities led by the residents' interests and needs. Some of our residents like to have a chat over coffee and are willing to try out new things. The Relaxation and Aromatherapy sessions have proved popular and they have given residents a regular time to develop skills to help manage their struggles with hearing voices and with stress management. The physical exercises also help us all by creating endorphins which make us all feel good.

Kirkwood Road works with the recovery model and supports residents to move forward with living more independently whilst supporting them to achieve their own goals and aspirations.

We have tried various activities and a few have remained popular. The walking group has given one of our residents a chance to exercise regularly and cheaply and by using a pedometer to measure our steps we have been able to record our weekly achievements and still enjoy the occasional coffee and cake! Walking helps to improve our mood and has allowed a space for residents to talk to staff without being part of a structured meeting. Being able to talk through problems and everyday stresses with residents does help them to work things out themselves; and this is very rewarding. I feel that my new role allows me to be supportive towards the residents and helps them to develop skills; as well as, to grow their own support network. Although, due to the challenge of budget cuts, access to day services and support has been increasingly difficult.

I have found that bringing in professionals to run activities in our communal area enables vulnerable residents to access therapeutic ways of dealing with day to day life. The introduction of "mindfulness colouring" and "grounding toys" led to an interest in arts and crafts for some residents and as a result we now run an Art Therapy session on a Friday. Mindfulness colouring is a way of therapeutically focusing attention on a simple colouring activity that makes a relaxing connection between the mind and hand movement. Grounding toys are used to help reduce levels of anxiety by use of texture and appearance which can help calm the mind down. The sessions encourage our residents to create some wonderful artwork which in turn has increased the confidence of some of our residents and encouraged one to spend more time with others.

The communal area has started to become a relaxing as well as a very busy space for everyone to use. I have found that I am able to use all my skills in Psychotherapy to Art almost every day. I have started activities that I have found very enjoyable myself, this has made it easier to support and encourage residents to take part in something new.



12 Ryan and Emeka at Art Therapy

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

CAREERS + OPPORTUNITIES + SUPPORT



VOLUNTEERS WANTED



Techy Tea parties are where we bring together people who want to get more confident using technology with those who can share a bit about it over some tea and cake.

FREE I.T TRAINING SESSIONS

Save yourself time & money learning how to manage your utilities online.



COMMUNITY ROADSHOWS

Hexagon will be running a series of events that will be taking place across all the boroughs and would like your input in what you would like to see.

WIN A TABLET



CODING, ROBOTICS AND VIRTUAL REALITY WORKSHOPS

A series of workshops for young people between 6-16.





INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?



Techy Tea parties are where we bring together people who want to get more confident using technology with those who can share a bit about it over some tea and cake.

We would like to organise some of these parties and need you to help make this happen. Would you be interested in coming along to a 'Techy Tea'? or maybe you are interested in volunteering as a 'Tech Know'?

Volunteer 'Tech Knows' wanted

We are recruiting a team of volunteer 'Tech Knows'. Are you a 'Tech Know'?

How do I know if I'm a 'Tech Know'?

You don't have to be an expert to help people learn more about technology. If you have a mobile phone and use the internet, it's likely you can help people who lack confidence when it comes to technology. Maybe you've shown your gran how to text, helped

a friend to download and use apps or helped your neighbour to set up Skype.

What does a 'Tech Know' do?

As a 'Tech Know', you will spend an hour or so with anyone who comes along to one of the Techy Teas, or other community events, who wants a bit of help with their tech challenges. This might be learning how a tablet works, setting up an email account or finding out how to shop online.

What support do 'Tech Knows' get?

All 'Tech Knows' will complete an induction training session. At the session they will learn about the role and types of things they could be

asked. You will also learn about the knowledge you have so you are able to help people based on what you know.

We will pay travel costs of volunteers.

Interested? Want to know more?

Please contact: **Nicky Hazelwood on 020 8768 7913 or nhazelwood@hexagon.org.uk** or come along to one of our **Tech Knows Induction Training Sessions** and find out if it's for you. The next session is on **Tuesday 19th September, 10.30am till 1pm** at Hexagon offices in Sydenham.

Please contact us to book your place.

FACEBOOK

The Community Investment Team have now set up a Facebook page specifically for all the boroughs that we have properties in. The Facebook page will have all the latest information on up and coming projects, activities and events for all Hexagon residents.

There will be local information on what's happening in your borough and local resources that you can access for FREE or at low cost. For example: FREE tennis lessons for children.

Please search and add yourself by liking our page:

- Hexagon – Lewisham
- Hexagon – Southwark
- Hexagon - Greenwich
- Hexagon - Bexley
- Hexagon – Croydon



Message from André Peters: I will be running a competition to see how many likes we can receive so please tell your neighbours to like our page and see what great things we will be promoting through the page.

For all those who have liked the page by Friday 4th August I will be putting their names into a hat a picking a winner for the fantastic prize of a **BRAND NEW TABLET (AMAZON KINDLE FIRE)!**

So get liking to be in with a chance for this great prize!



FREE I.T TRAINING SESSIONS

SAVE YOURSELF TIME & MONEY LEARNING HOW TO MANAGE YOUR UTILITIES ONLINE



TRAINING SESSIONS INCLUDE:

GOV.UK

Universal Credit
Benefits
Local Services

PAYMENTS ONLINE

Shopping Online
Auction Websites
Paying Bills

COMPARISON WEBSITES

Searching for the best deals

Interested?

Contact our **Community Investment Team** on **0208 768 7910** or apeters@hexagon.org.uk

FREE SOCIAL MEDIA COURSES

Explore how you can stay connected and safe online!



SOCIAL MEDIA & HOW TO USE IT



CONNECTING WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY



CONNECTING WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY USING SKYPE



GETTING THE MOST OUT OF EMAILS



SOCIALISING ONLINE USING FACEBOOK



SHOPPING & SELLING ITEMS ON FACEBOOK MARKETPLACE



IT training at Hexagon Head Office



The IT Trainers with Hexagon residents Allison, Tina, Clara & Pat

COMMUNITY ROADSHOWS

This summer we are taking to the roads and coming to you. Our Summer Roadshow will be packed with information, activities, goodies and prizes! Here is a sample of some of the things on offer:

DIGITAL DROP IN

Find out how to make the most of your iPad, laptop, mobile phone.

FAMILY GAMES

Have a go at giant jenga or giant connect four.



HULA HOOPS

Have a go at hula hooping and other fun activities.



WHAT'S ON

Find out what's happening in your area this summer.

INFORMATION

We will have lots of information on the different services we offer such as employment support, money advice and help getting online.

SNACK & CHAT

There will be plenty of snacks and plenty of time for a chat.

Each week we will be visiting different areas; we will be in a van with the Hexagon logo on so if you see us, please come and have a chat and see what's happening.

If you would like us to visit your area and/or have an idea for an activity you would like to see happen then please let us know, if we can do it we will.

To find out more, please contact **André Peters** on 0208 768 7910 or apeters@hexagon.org.uk

CODING, ROBOTICS AND VIRTUAL REALITY

We are looking to run a series of workshops but would like to gather interest before setting up these fantastic opportunities.

LEGO MINDSTORMS is a programmable robotics construction set that gives you the power to build, program and command your own LEGO robots. The new LEGO MINDSTORMS EV3 set includes everything you need to create any of 17 robots and make them walk, talk, move and do whatever you can imagine. This is aimed at young people between 6-16.

INTERESTED IN VIRTUAL REALITY?

You will be creating your own goggles and having a good play around in another reality.

There is lots of fun to be had and believe it or not there will be loads of new skills picked up along the way!

If there is a good response we will look into running the activity over the summer holidays or alternatively over the October half term.



INTERESTED IN CODING?

The Micro Bit (also referred to as BBC Micro Bit, stylized as micro:bit) is an ARM-based embedded system designed by the BBC for use in computer education in the UK.

The board is 4 cm x 5 cm and has an ARM Cortex-M0 processor, accelerometer and magnetometer sensors, Bluetooth and USB connectivity, a display consisting of 25 LEDs, two programmable buttons, and can be powered by either USB or an external battery pack. The device inputs and outputs are through five ring connectors that are part of the 23-pin edge connector.

Contact me now to find out more details: **André Peters** on 0208 768 7910 or apeters@hexagon.org.uk

FRANKIE'S DIGITAL WORLD JOURNEY

My name is Frankie and just over two years ago, I had a fear of anything to do with technology. I knew I had to do something about it because without the basic knowledge of how to use a laptop or other essential digital items, like a mobile phone, I felt I was going to be left out in the digital world around me.

My journey started when I saw an article in *Home News*, which invited people like myself to go on a Basic Digital Skills Course. I enthusiastically enrolled in the course, but I found that due to my lack of self confidence and my fear of all things digital, I didn't manage to learn very much at all. Fortunately for me, the course tutor recognised I had a problem and referred me to the Community Investment Team, who in turn referred me to see Adrian, Hexagon's Digital Champion Volunteer.

Over a period of time, Adrian has been able to help me learn the basics of how to use the free laptop that I was given on the computer course. He also taught me how to use my mobile phone more effectively. I now know how to make and receive emails; manage my online bank account; my online mobile phone account and also how to set up and use an Amazon account. These are just a few of the examples that have allowed me to take back control and feel digitally included, rather than excluded in this digital world that we all live in today.

Having these basic digital skills has finally enabled me to have more freedom of choice, which has resulted in vastly improving the overall quality of my day-to-day life.

As time passed and with Adrian's help, I slowly gained more self confidence in myself and became happier as a result. With this new found confidence, I decided to explore the world of online dating. It took me a little while, but optimism and perseverance paid off in the end. As a result, I am thrilled to tell you, I eventually met someone who also shares similar interests to myself in life. To this very day, we are still very happy together. Currently, I don't need to see Adrian that often now but I still have access to receive ongoing help and support from the Community Investment Team, should I need it.

The reason I wanted to share my story with you, is because I want to give hope to those of you who feel digitally excluded, like I used to be, in this online digital world that surrounds us all. There is still hope for everyone out there, so please don't be scared anymore. Enrol on the digital skills course offered by Hexagon and get help now. If I can do it, so can you!

For further information please contact **André Peters** on 0208 768 7910 or apeters@hexagon.org.uk



Adrian & Frankie

THE HEXAGON ANNUAL CO-OP SEMINAR

Some 29 Co-op residents and staff attended the ninth annual Hexagon Seminar held at Goldsmiths University in May this year. This is an opportunity for our residents who live in properties that are run by managing agents (housing co-ops) to network and meet with Hexagon staff.

Rumana Khair, Stock Improvement Manager, presented "Planned Maintenance to Your Home" and Stephen Lee, Head of Housing Services, led a discussion on "Tenancy Succession Rights." Rumana talked about making improvements in the energy efficiency of properties such as new windows, roofs, boilers and heating systems which was described as "very informative and useful." Steve answered questions including the right to succeed a tenancy following the death of a tenant. This was said to be an "excellent, lively, interactive presentation."

An evaluation at the end of the night showed 88% of respondents were satisfied with the Seminar. And all residents said they would attend another Seminar in the future. One resident said, "Attending the seminar is always very good because you meet different people who add more to your morale."

We would like to thank all those who took part in making the seminar successful.

Hexagon partners with 9 co-ops / managing agents who are responsible for approximately 300 properties in Lewisham, Southwark and Greenwich. Co-op residents collectively control and manage their housing by overseeing the day-to-day running of the properties. By holding an annual Seminar we place the interests of our co-op residents at the heart of what we do by discussing issues that are important to them.



Barry & Eileen (Co-op members from Lewisham)



David and Celia (Co-op members from Southwark)



Nadine & Igor (Co-op residents from Lewisham)



Engrossed in the Seminar presentation



The Seminar in action



Kim (Co-op Staff)

ADVICE WITH MONEY

We know that sometimes it can be difficult to keep up with everything financially. To help with this, we provide help and advice with a number of issues related to money. The service is completely free and confidential, and we can help you with a wide variety of money related issues. We offer help and advice around most main aspects of day to day money, but some of the most commonly used services include the following:

BUDGETING ADVICE

We can help you to make your money go further, and making the most of what you have. We offer advice on everything from managing day to day spending to getting the best deal on energy.



BENEFITS ADVICE

Navigating the benefits system and making sure you are getting everything you are entitled to can be difficult. That's why our service helps you to understand exactly what you are entitled to, and help you to access those funds.



AFFORDABLE LOANS AND SAVINGS

Helping you access affordable credit when you need it (subject to acceptance) and providing a safe place to save through our partners at London Plus Credit Union.



DEBT ADVICE

When you are in debt, getting out of it can seem daunting. But remember, almost any debt problem can be sorted out with the right advice, so get in touch if you are struggling to deal with any debts that you have.



BANK ACCOUNTS

Having and using a Bank Account is key to functioning in the modern economy. That is why we can help you open an account, and advise you on how to make the most of your account.



Remember, the services above are just examples of what we do, so whatever your money related query, please contact us to see how we might be able to help. Around 400 Hexagon residents have already accessed the service for help with a wide variety of money related problems. Remember, with the right help, it is possible to solve almost any money related problem.

If you need some assistance with any money related problem, please contact our **Financial Inclusion Adviser** on **0208 768 7925**

UNBLOCKING A SINK

Under section 3.1 of the Tenancy Handbook there is information on the various minor repairs that tenants are responsible for. Included within these tenant responsibilities is the unblocking of sinks, washbasins and baths. Here we provide some information on how to go about preventing and clearing blockages.

PREVENTION

It's a good idea to always use a sink strainer. This is a small grill which can be placed over your plughole. It is designed to stop most food waste from going down the sink and creating a build-up and blockage. It can be purchased from any DIY or hardware store and is relatively cheap and very easy to use.

Make sure no oil or grease finds its way into the pipework, as it will solidify into a strong, sticky substance when mixed with cold water.

Boiling water works wonders on most sink blockages. It will help to gradually erode any soap or dried liquids; however, do not try this if your drain is not seeing any movement. If it is completely backed up, you may end up needing to use a plunger or a chemical sink un-blocker.

RINSE OUT THE PIPE

If plunging doesn't work, the problem may be a blocked pipe below the sink. Here are a few steps that may help solve the problem:

- Put the plug into the plughole.
- Place a bucket under the sink pipe.
- Unscrew the pipe carefully, ensuring the bucket is positioned below to catch any water.
- Rinse the pipe out thoroughly, removing anything that's blocking it.
- Try using a piece of stiff wire to poke out the blockage.
- Re-connect the sink pipe before emptying any waste water from the bucket.
- Pour boiling water and washing up liquid down the plughole to clear away any remaining debris.

USING A PLUNGER

To flush the gunk out, press a plunger firmly onto the plughole and pull upwards slowly. Keep doing this and you'll hear water gurgling as the blockage is released. If this doesn't work you may need to apply more pressure – do this by covering up the overflow holes with a damp cloth.



REASSEMBLE

- Put the system back together, firmly tightening all nuts. Squirt a little disinfectant down the plughole to finish the job off.

If this doesn't work then the blockage may be in the waste pipe connected to the sink pipe or further down the pipe. If this is the case then please contact Hexagon Repairs (see back page) who may be able to assist you further.



KIDS CORNER

SUMMER JOKES

Q: What is the best day to go to the beach?

A: SUNday.

Q: Why do bananas use sunscreen?

A: Because they peel.

SUMMER CROSSWORD

Across

- The month at the end of summer
- The book is _____ the table
- The time when you don't go to school
- How's the weather in summer?
- A big fruit you eat in summer

Down

- What do you make at the beach?
- You go to the _____ in the summer
- What do you do at the beach?
- The month at the beginning of summer
- A machine that makes you cool?
- I _____ swimming

APPLE AND YOGHURT ICED LOLLIES



How to make

- Peel, core and chop the apples
- Put in a saucepan with the water, lemon juice and sugar
- Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes or until the apples are soft - set aside to cool
- Put the mixture into a food processor and blend until smooth
- Fold in the yoghurt
- Pour the mixture into ice lolly moulds and freeze for 6-8 hours until solid

You will need:

- 4 apples
- 2 tbsp. lemon juice
- 100ml water
- 100g caster sugar
- 500g Greek yoghurt

Solve the crossword puzzle above and once completed send in your entry by **Friday 4th August** to Resident Involvement Team, Hexagon Housing Association, 130-136 Sydenham Road, London, SE26 5JY.

You can take a picture of your completed crossword and email it to getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk Remember to include your name and address. Three correct entries will be drawn at random. **Each will receive a £10 Love2Shop voucher.**

Kids Corner Winners Congratulations to **Holly Githendu (SE1)**, **Alisha Badchkam (SE13)**, and **Robin Berry (SE5)** who each won the last Kids Corner competition.



Freephone

☎ 0800 393 338

Landline

☎ 020 8778 6699

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

Option 2 for all repairs related queries

Option 3 for tenancy and rent queries

Option 4 for general enquires

Gas Central Heating Contractor

☎ 0800 206 1367 (open 24 hours 7 days a week)

Emergency Out-of-hours Repairs

☎ 020 3701 3518

Other ways to contact us

@ Customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk
for all general enquiries

🔧 Repairs_reporting@hexagon.org.uk
to report a repair

🖱 www.hexagon.org.uk

📱 Text: 07537 400 527

✉ 130-136 Sydenham Road,
London SE26 5JY, United Kingdom

TRANSLATIONS

Always happy to translate!

Chinese

永遠樂於翻譯！

Eritrean

"ንኽነተርጉመልኩዎ ኩሉጊዜ ሕጉሳት ኢና!"

French

Toujours heureux de traduire!

Portuguese

Sempre feliz a traduzir!

Vietnamese

Luôn luôn vui lòng phiên dịch!

Urdu

ترجمے کے لیے ہر دم تیار

LARGE PRINT OR BRAILLE

If you would like this edition of Home News in large print or braille, please contact Hexagon, giving your full contact details.

COMPETITION TIME

Congratulations to Miss D Mills (SE23), Ms Ife Akintoye (CR0) and Christine Matthews (SE26) who each receive a £20 voucher for their correct entries.

The answers to the last Competition Time were:

- | | |
|--------|----------------------------|
| 1. 13 | 4. 3 |
| 2. 77% | 5. Care Quality Commission |
| 3. 4 | |

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

1. How many co-ops does Hexagon partner with?
2. How much is recharged for a missed daytime repairs appointment?
3. How many affordable homes are Hexagon planning to build?
4. What are the Residents Inspectors currently inspecting?
5. What rating did Hexagon achieve for Financial Viability?

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

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

Three correct entries received by **Friday 4th August** 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.

WIN £20