

H **NEWS** HOME

AUTUMN 2017

Hexagon



NEW ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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WELCOME...

to another edition of Home News.

The fire at Grenfell Tower has been a tragedy of epic proportion. Shortly after the fire, the Government wrote to all Chief Executives of Housing Associations and Local Authorities and asked for an urgent response as to whether they had tower blocks clad in the sorts of panels used at Grenfell Tower, namely an Aluminium Composite Material or ACM Panel. In Hexagon's case, we only own six tower blocks (i.e. buildings above 18 metres). All of our Fire Risk Assessments are up to date and we had no outstanding actions on any of them. Thankfully, we owned no buildings clad in ACM Panels.

While that was reassuring, organisations should never be complacent about fire safety. Shortly after the fire, we wrote to all residents in blocks where we carry out Fire Risk Assessments to remind them of some key messages about fire safety and these are repeated on page 7 of this edition.

We are also doing a bit more detailed work to ensure that

our Fire Risk Assessment processes are absolutely as robust as they can be. We report on a quarterly basis to our Board to ensure that all Fire Risk Assessments are up to date and that any outstanding actions are dealt with promptly.

Following Grenfell it is incredibly important that residents' voices are genuinely heard. This involves active listening on the part of all Hexagon staff. We try incredibly hard to listen to residents' feedback, particularly where health and safety are concerned, but there is always more to be done and we will redouble our efforts to ensure that a strong residents' voice continues to influence the way that Hexagon works.

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: Beverley, secured employment through the Love London Working programme, page 10.

UNVEILING OUR NEW ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

At Hexagon we've been busy creating our new Asset Management strategy. This is a four year strategy effective from spring 2017, which seeks to improve the way that we maintain your homes as well as delivering value for money in the process.

The strategy covers all rented and leasehold properties, and is a framework by which we will maintain and invest in the properties we own and manage. It aims to deliver investment in our properties, how we improve your homes and maintain them by responding to repairs in a structured and sustainable way.

The strategy is effective until April 2021 and identifies required targets and how we will meet those targets.

The new strategy will help assist with investment and strategic decisions on the future of our properties. These decisions can be linked with other key performance criteria, such as energy performance.

The strategy will be looked at every year and updated to ensure that it is keeping up with our objectives for improving and providing well maintained homes.

The strategy is based on one of Hexagon's key values which is to provide homes that are decent, safe and affordable and can be adapted to meet the changing need of our residents.

The key aims and objectives of the strategy are to:

- Continue to meet the Decent Homes standards
- Provide homes that are secure, can be economically heated, are free from damp and can be adapted to accommodate changing need
- Deliver value for money

The strategy will help develop an integrated maintenance and planned improvement process, where the day-to-day repairs and planned maintenance services complement each other.

By providing effective maintenance to the structure and its installations it helps to ensure that your home is a safe and well-maintained dwelling, preserving its safety and condition.

Each year the Stock Improvement team create work plans setting out key improvements and projects based around the surveys that we carry out to your homes.

The strategy can be viewed on our website at www.hexagon.org.uk

See bit.ly/2uSMcLT for more information on the Decent Homes Standard.



MEET THE NEW

RESIDENT BOARD MEMBER...



"...it's an opportunity that I think is quite unique."

The votes are in and have all been counted. Thank you to all of you who cast your individual vote and posted your ballots to elect the newest Resident Board Member (RBM). She is Denise Senner.

Denise, who we met this August, is a keen green-fingered gardener, a newly qualified horticulturalist and now, duly elected onto Hexagon's Board. Here she shares with us her reaction to her win and her hopes for her new position.

What was your reaction when you received news that you had won the RBM election?

"I was really stunned and shocked, and then I felt like 'Oh my goodness, what have I done?' I felt really daunted thinking 'Oh, no, am I going to be good enough to do this?' I was also really happy. The whole reason for me starting the whole process was to get it [the position on the Board] but I didn't really think I would. I was really glad."

Why did you put yourself forward as a candidate to be considered as a RBM?

"I've always lived in social housing, initially in a housing Co-op which was then taken over by Hexagon. As a resident, I was involved in the housing co-op and the management of where I lived. I've also previously worked with Lewisham Council, managing a team of volunteers to monitor Lewisham's housing service for its tenants. I've also spent some

time studying to qualify as a gardener and didn't have much time, but now I've achieved this; I felt it was the right time. I believe in challenging myself and coming out of my comfort zone and so I decided to go for it. I'm really passionate about social housing and I think over the last few years, people who live in social housing have been stigmatised, and treated like second-class citizens. Living in social housing, we're not seen as normal people, living our lives, working hard, and contributing to our community. This is something that has really upset me as I've always believed in social housing as an important part of the community. So that's really been my motivation, to redress the balance, even if it's only in a small way."

What do you hope to bring to the board as a member during your tenure?

"I'm yet to discover what will specifically be required of me, however I'm quite a hands-on person. I will speak up, I am not a shrinking violet. If I don't like what I'm hearing, it won't stop me speaking out. I hope to also bring a sense of diversity and a grass-roots perspective. I believe this helps to challenge management representation."

What would you say to anyone considering putting themselves forward to be RBM in the future?

"I think people need to not underestimate the skills that they have. People feel that if they're not well educated, or haven't got any housing industry experience, that they have nothing to offer, but they have other skills in their life. The biggest skill is that they have lived in social housing and have experienced the issues that people have to face living in this environment. If they have other skills, such as people skills, they can bring that to the Board. Come out of your comfort zone, don't be intimidated by bureaucracy. It may look scary but it's an opportunity that I think is quite unique. I understand that there can be anxiety and apathy as people are so busy, and think they don't have the time. I've always found in my voluntary roles that I've undertaken in the past, that it's never been a waste; everything I've done has become beneficial to me personally. If you want to move on, a position [such as this] is an opportunity to learn new skills."

What are your hopes for residents going forward?

"When I joined a Co-op, I had dreams of people not just having four walls because they are in some sort of crisis. These are people's homes, homes to bring up families, to grow old in (if they do choose to do so) and I would like to see a return to the idea that people are treated with respect and dignity. Social housing is a home; it is not just a property. Residents are part of their community. They work, they live, they contribute, use the local schools and they are as much a part of that community as their next door neighbour."

Do you have any final thoughts you want to share with readers?

"People should try and express their voice. If you can speak out - do. It's like voting, if you don't go and vote, you're not using that opportunity to express your power. We don't have much power, the little we do have we need to use. If as a resident you have an opportunity to fill out a satisfaction form or give your opinion, then take it and use the little power that you have. Your opinion does matter, it's important that people know that."

Congratulations to Denise. We're pleased to say that 381 ballot papers were returned to us before the deadline, 29 more than were returned from last year's election.



CONGRATULATIONS

to C. Jacobs SE15 who won the ballot prize draw of £50 in shopping vouchers!

DON'T FORGET YOUR RENT THIS CHRISTMAS

**'Christmas is coming... the goose is getting fat',
however your pocket might not be.**

With Christmas on the way, there may be more demands on your money than any other point in the year. From purchasing presents, buying Christmas food, and attending the extra social occasions that often come up at this time of year, it seems as though everything involves an extra cost.

But in the midst of all the festivities, it's important to ensure that you keep on top of your essential financial commitments in order to avoid a nasty financial hangover come the New Year.

Essential commitments like Utility Bills, Council Tax and Rent don't stop because Christmas is approaching. So it's really important that these are budgeted for before planning your Christmas spending.

Do maintain your financial responsibilities

Not keeping up with these commitments can cause money problems that can hang around long after Christmas is gone, and can have serious

consequences. Rent arrears that build up over the Festive period could put you at risk of court action in the New Year, and at worst, could even leave you at risk of losing your home.

To avoid this, make sure that you continue to keep up with rent payments during the next few months and over the Festive period. We can also help you to make the most of your money over Christmas. Our Financial Inclusion Adviser can help with a whole range of issues including:

- Helping you access the benefits you are entitled to
- Financial budgeting
- Dealing with debt

If you would like to access the service, please call **0208 768 7925**.

Alternatively, if you need help with any issue related to your tenancy, please contact your Housing Officer, who will be happy to help.

FIRE SAFETY



Following the sad and tragic events at Grenfell Tower this summer, we want to reassure you that Hexagon takes fire safety very seriously and residents' safety is our top priority.

We have robust measures in place to ensure the safety of all our properties and we continue to work closely with the fire authorities to ensure these measures meet all the necessary legal standards.

There will understandably be concerns and anxieties arising out of this recent fire, particularly among residents living in flats, and we want to reassure you that we will continue to work closely with the fire authorities in ensuring our properties meet the required standards. We will, of course, follow any new findings or recommendations coming from the Grenfell Tower fire investigation.

We have recently completed comprehensive fire safety reports detailing Hexagon blocks. This information is being shared with the relevant government departments. Also, residents have received written confirmation on the fire safety of their blocks.

Hexagon would like to share the following to reassure all of our residents. We have completed checks to our tallest properties - Hexagon has five blocks of flats that are 6 storeys high and one block standing at 8 storeys high. In all Hexagon properties, no aluminium composite materials have been found within any cladding. Tests are still being completed where necessary.

The fire at Grenfell Tower is thought to have been started by a faulty fridge freezer and a previous serious fire last year in London was caused by a faulty tumble dryer.

In light of this, Hexagon would encourage all residents to register their appliances at www.registermyappliance.org.uk which will ensure that you will be contacted if any appliances need recalling by manufacturers. Taking this step will also help to keep your property and the block you reside in safe.

The fire advice relating to your property has not changed, please read this advice and make plans so that you are prepared...

- Plan your escape.
- Make an escape plan and practise it regularly to make sure everyone knows how to get out safely.
- The best route is the normal way in and out of your home. Plan a second route in case the first one is blocked.
- Never store anything in communal areas including balconies. Items can block your escape route and be a fire risk.
- Always keep door and window keys where everyone you live with can find them.
- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste and can kill quickly. If you have a solid fuel burner, open fire or a gas boiler get them serviced regularly and fit a CO alarm.
- Never leave flammable items such as tins of paint, decorating materials or newspapers in the hallway, even for a short time.
- Always pick up any junk mail/menus that get posted and are left on the floor. These can be a Fire Risk, they can also become slippery when leaving the building quickly.
- Remember no smoking or naked flames within the shared hallways please.

Resident Inspectors Sarah, Sharon & Carol.



RESIDENTS' INSPECTION

ON DEFECTS SERVICE

Hexagon recognises that residents' inspection is a key activity demonstrating residents' scrutiny at its best. This activity is where a group of residents look at a service and see if Hexagon is meeting its service standard.

This summer residents, trained as inspectors, completed their report on Hexagon's defects process. This process is when a resident moves into a new build home and there is an issue that needs to be addressed. An issue can relate to any of the following:

- How the property is built
- A fault in the installation or manufacture of items
- Equipment which form part of the construction

The Residents' Inspection team looked at the process on how defects are handled, what a

defect is, when defects should be reported, and who is responsible for dealing with the defect.

Some of the Inspectors' specific recommendations included:

- Review the defects service standard in consultation with residents to ensure the standards are achievable and realistic.
- Look at different communication methods for providing information on defects to new residents, replacing existing out of date processes.
- Better use of recording systems to ensure contractors are held to account, defects are completed within timescale and service improvement for future new build properties can be identified.

Resident's Inspectors were very forthcoming in suggesting various ways that this service could be improved. An action plan has been developed to capture these for the Development team to deliver on.

Residents' Inspectors presented a report on their findings to Hexagon, and their recommendations and management responses are also seen by Hexagon Directors and the Hexagon Board. The work of the Inspectors shows how working collaboratively with residents will result in better outcomes for both Hexagon and residents alike.

This level of scrutiny is vital to improving the service our residents receive and the Inspection team have reported that they are really looking forward to the next inspection.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

CAREERS + OPPORTUNITIES + SUPPORT

WORKING TO HELP OTHER'S BACK INTO WORK

HEAR FROM HEXAGON RESIDENT BEVERLEY HOW SUPPORT FROM LIONNE WHITFIELD GOT HER BACK INTO WORK AND WHY LIONNE HERSELF LOVES HELPING CLIENTS ON THE ROAD TO EMPLOYMENT.

THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

THINK YOU KNOW ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING?

THINK AGAIN – IT CAN BENEFIT YOU AS WELL AS OTHERS.



OUR SUMMER ROAD SHOW ROUNDUP

FIND OUT WHAT WE GOT UP TO AT OUR SUMMER ROAD SHOW.

KINDLE WINNER ANNOUNCED



ARE YOU IN THE DARK ABOUT DIGITAL?

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU? WE WANT TO HEAR HOW WE CAN HELP YOU GET TO GRIPS WITH ALL THINGS DIGITAL.



WORKING TO HELP OTHER'S BACK INTO WORK

Some of you might remember a few years ago, Tourism Australia held a 'Best Job in the World' competition, offering the successful applicant a six-month contract and a AU\$100,000 (£67,380) salary package.

Briton Ben Southall beat over 34,000 other applicants from over 200 countries to win the dream job. The post required him 'to explore the islands of the Great Barrier Reef, swim, snorkel, make friends with the locals, all whilst enjoying the tropical Queensland climate and lifestyle.'

As great as this all sounds, I believe I'm the lucky one, as I get to wake up every day and do my dream job, which is so rewarding to me. Finding a job for somebody, quite simply, changes peoples' lives; financially, socially, emotionally and psychologically. I've had the pleasure of working with an array of people who have joined the Love London Working (LLW) programme. Each have a unique set of circumstances which have affected their self-belief, motivation and confidence about finding work.

The project provides a package of support tailored to fit Hexagon residents and non-residents to find suitable employment. The Employment and Skills Team at Hexagon, provides an outreach service to our residents and work in partnership with local Job Centres, children's centres and colleges.

One client, Beverley Duhaney, secured employment as a Receptionist at a medical centre through the LLW programme. She explains how the project has made a positive impact on her and her daughter.

"I met Lionne at Peckham Job Centre. At my first visit to Hexagon, Lionne didn't make it easy for me. She challenged me to explain what my expectations were from her and the project. Lionne also set out her expectations from me and what support she could provide to me in a manner that was clear and realistic.

Lionne made me feel welcome and gave me confidence to believe I could secure a job, a stark contrast to the Job Centre. There, I felt disillusioned, all the support they offered was never followed through.

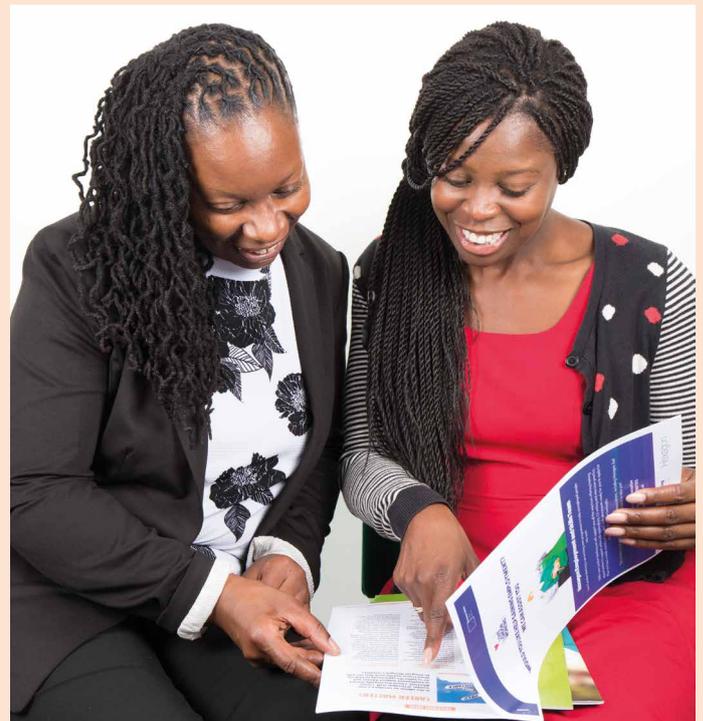
Lionne has helped me to smarten my CV and strengthen how I sell myself at interviews. Overall her support goes above the call of duty. She is at the end of a telephone at short notice, and has a manner in making you make decisions for yourself without forcing you into a specific role. She's been flexible to adjust her working hours to suit my daughter and my appointments.

My daughter says Lionne made her feel safe to open up and share her areas of weakness, which Lionne has helped her develop. She's helped her secure a part-time role in a department store.

Her service is one that I rate as 5 Star. I have recommended former colleagues and employers to approach Lionne.

I have now secured a role, but I hope my contact with Lionne will not cease. A truly inspirational person who carries out her role with passion."

If you or anybody you know is interested or thinking about gaining employment, please contact the **Employability Team on 020 8768 7915/7984.**



(pictured) Lionne Whitfield, Employment Support Adviser and her client Beverley.

ARE YOU IN THE DARK ABOUT DIGITAL?

Don't get left behind! Would you like to be more knowledgeable in how to use computers?

Hexagon would like to run more courses to support residents to become more digitally savvy.

If there is anything you would like us to run please let us know.

Previous courses include:

- ECDL – European Computer Driving Licence – (basic training around Windows Software)
- Social media – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram
- How to operate your tablet and laptop

Please feel free to contact us if we have not mentioned something that you would like to learn or would like to express your interest in.

Please contact **André Peters** on: **0208 768 7910** or **apeters@hexagon.org.uk**



KINDLE WINNER

Announcement of Kindle Winner – Facebook competition

In the summer edition of Home News we ran a competition asking you to visit our new Facebook pages. The pages have been set up to display up-to-date information on a wide variety of subjects ranging from parent and baby classes, places to volunteer and jobs reflecting each area locality.

Drum roll please!

The person who won the Kindle, simply for liking the Community Investment Facebook page, lives in the Greenwich borough...

And is a lady...

That lives in Thamesmead...

Well done to...

Hasina!



If you missed out on the competition don't miss out on all the great info that is on your borough Facebook page. Jobs, apprenticeships, free local activities and so much more.

Please Like or Add us to your friends list – don't delay do it today!

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



OUR SUMMER ROAD SHOW ROUNDUP

Despite the sun not always showing up, you showed up, helping to make our Summer Road Show a great success.

We travelled to four out of five boroughs and parked up our fun packed campervan. The van was used as our hub for residents to find out about all the great activities, courses and workshops that we have on offer.

There was a great feast of pizza and other goodies which was enjoyed by all. A special big thank you to the residents who still came out despite the pouring rain.

We visited:

- Bonding Yard Walk – Bermondsey
- Canal Walk – Croydon
- Greenhaven Drive – Greenwich
- Lyles Court – Bexley
- Culling Road – Bexley
- Cobbs Court – Lewisham

We have a big apology for the residents of Gallions View Road and Orchard Mews, because due to the weather and time constraints, we were unable to reach you. But don't worry we are planning more dates and will keep you informed of these.

We'd like to say a big thank you to BikeLife TV who facilitated workshops on bike maintenance and provided residents with a spectacular BMX bike stunt show. All the young people that took part in the workshops really enjoyed themselves and learnt new skills such as how to fix a puncture, removing and replacing brakes and much more.

Many residents also reported repair issues that are now being followed up by the appropriate team to ensure that these are dealt with appropriately.

If you feel that your street or estate would benefit from a visit please contact **André Peters** on: **0208 768 7910** or **apeters@hexagon.org.uk**



THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

The NHS have identified a number of health benefits you can achieve through volunteering. These include improved quality of life, improved ability to cope with ill health and improved self-esteem.

Echoing this is the movement 'Action for Happiness', which lists ten key ingredients for a happy and fulfilling life: giving, relating, exercising, awareness, trying out, direction, resilience, emotions, acceptance and meaning. We feel confident that volunteering ticks these boxes!

There are other benefits too:

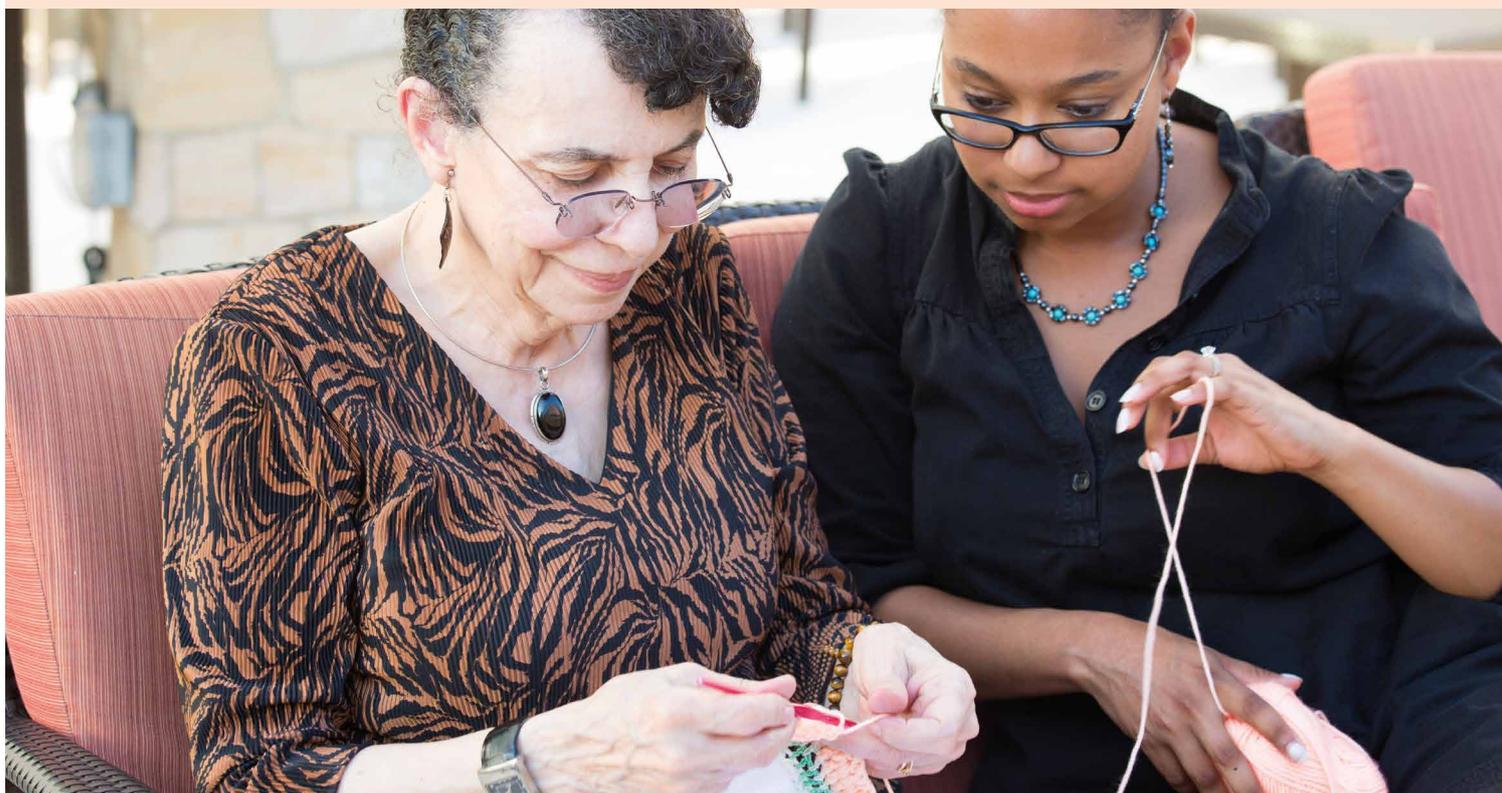
- Volunteering is an opportunity to learn new skills, and can boost employment prospects.
- Volunteering can help to heal mental ill-health and addiction.
- Volunteering enables people to play an active role in their society and contribute to positive social change.
- Volunteering helps to break down social barriers and offers an opportunity to socialise with people from different social and cultural backgrounds.

The 2016 World Happiness Report revealed that social support and generosity are key determinants of national wellbeing.

Volunteers who give their valuable time are in turn supporting vulnerable people in society enabling them to live a healthy and rewarding life. They are offering support with things which we take for granted. Examples of volunteer activities that demonstrate this include providing practical help at home for disabled or older people, mentoring a care leaver and helping them to find their feet as an adult, or supporting a young mother struggling to provide for her children.

We hope that these examples will help you to consider taking up volunteering today, particularly if you have been in the employment market for some time; volunteering might be just the answer to make use of those spare hours that you might have.

To find the best volunteer role for you, contact
André Peters on **0208 768 7910** or
apeters@hexagon.org.uk



INTRODUCING BOLA

In this edition of Home News, we catch up with Bola Odeyemi, the new Communications Officer with Hexagon. Her position is a new role, introduced to help us increase engagement with residents and explore different ways we can communicate with you. We thought it would be a good opportunity for Bola to share her ambitions for the role and get to know her a little.

What are your hopes for the role?

"I hope to use my previous professional experience in communications and apply this to my role at Hexagon. I've worked for charities in the past and am looking forward to embracing all that working for a housing association can bring. I am excited that my work will reflect one of Hexagon's key values which is to place the interests of our residents and service-users at the heart of what we do."

You started working at Hexagon in June, what have you been doing in this period?

"I've been kept quite busy. I've had a lot of induction meetings with colleagues and have been doing some work on implementation. I've also attended two residents meetings; the Readers Panel and the Resident's Annual Report Group. These were great opportunities to meet with residents and get their perspective on two of the publications we produce for residents."

I've also had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing Denise Senner, the new Resident Board Member (see my interview with her on page 4 and 5)."

What are your aspirations for your role?

"I hope to carry forward feedback from residents and use this to inform the way I work, and the content we produce. I also hope this will shape how Hexagon communicates with residents and what platforms we use."

My intention is to make use of social media, to increase the use of our website to foster engagement and improve the look of Home News. These ambitions will take more of an evolutionary approach rather than be revolutionary."

Tell us one interesting fact about you?

"I used to volunteer on a children's music programme produced by ITV called 'The Noise'. I worked on a team which took live calls from children and teenagers for a live phone-in where questions were put forward to guest pop music artists. Through this, I've had the pleasure of meeting Andi Peters (who presented the show) and being in a TV studio with artists including Robbie Williams, The Spice Girls, Boyzone and the late Whitney Houston amongst others."



CALLING ALL SHARED OWNERS AND LEASEHOLDERS

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS

Hexagon currently manages over 330 home ownership properties and we expect this number to increase over the coming years. We are still learning about the best way to provide services to existing leaseholders and want to hear your views about the service areas which you believe need improvement.

During November we intend to carry out a short digital survey of Hexagon leaseholders in order to better understand the issues which are important to you. If we already have your email address then you will receive a link to this survey via email.

If you have not yet provided your email address to Hexagon but want to take part in the survey please contact: leaseholdersurvey@hexagon.org.uk

When contacting the above email address, please provide the following details:

- Your name
- Hexagon property address
- Confirm that you want to be included in the leasehold survey

To ensure that you will be included in the survey, please send your email by **Monday 30th October 2017**.

The results of the leaseholder survey will help us to deliver a service improvement plan for Hexagon's services to home owners.

There will also be further opportunities for interested leaseholders to be involved in helping to shape the service that is provided to all leaseholders.



INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

At Hexagon investing in communities and the residents that live there is a big priority. In order to deliver on this, we organise our work around three priorities: employment and skills, money matters, and digital skills.

Employment and Skills

Our Employment and Skills programme has continued delivering a wide range of services to support residents on their journey from unemployment to paid work.

Support includes:

- **One-to-one support**
- **CV workshops**
- **Interview skills**
- **Job search** and more

Money Matters

Our financial inclusion service offers:

Budgeting advice – helping residents to make their money go further, and making the most of what they have.

Benefits advice – helping residents to gain access to all the funds they are entitled to.

Debt advice – helping residents to deal with any debts that they have.

Bank Accounts – helping residents open an account, and making the most of their account.

Affordable loans and savings – helping residents access affordable credit when they need it (subject to acceptance) and providing a safe place to save through our partners at London Plus Credit Union.

Digital Skills

The Digital Skills programme delivers an introductory IT course; on completion of the course residents receive a refurbished laptop and a dongle to access the internet for free for 12 months.

HEXAGON COMES TO YOU FIRST STOP – CROYDON

During October we're hosting our first neighbourhood event which will take place in Croydon. The event provides an opportunity for local residents to come and meet us, meet other residents from different areas and give feedback on how Hexagon are doing.

Many of you kindly responded to a snap text poll in August where we asked you where you think our neighbourhood event should be held. We had 278 responses by text and the most popular suggestion was for Croydon, so that's where we've started off. We plan to stage similar events in the other four boroughs that we cover over the years ahead.

The neighbourhood events will replace Residents Day which over recent years has seen a sharp fall in the numbers attending, suggesting that after 10 years the event has now run its course.

The neighbourhood event in Croydon is the first of many localised events. In this way we hope to engage with even greater numbers of residents than attended Residents Day so as to hear first-hand local residents' views of the services that Hexagon provides.

We would like to thank all residents who have attended Residents Day since 2007 for helping make the event the success that it was.

STAYING WELL THIS WINTER

With the colder weather upon us, now is the time to be thinking about preparing for winter.



Every year the NHS launches a campaign offering tips on how you can keep well in the winter. This is launched during the first full week in November and encourages people to do all they can to stay well in the cold season.

Here is a roundup of things you can do:

- Seek expert advice from a pharmacist for general cold-related sickness such as coughs and colds
- Consider having the flu jab - those with long term health conditions are particularly encouraged to do so
- Continue to be active where possible; consider indoor activities that you can do at leisure centres and gyms. It's important to keep mobile and encourage circulation
- Consider stocking up on over-the-counter medicines to relieve common winter related ailments
- Keep your heating at the level of at least 18c (65F)
- Retain warmth at night by keeping bedroom windows closed on winter nights. Breathing cold air can be bad for your health as it increases the risk of chest infections
- Remember to check on elderly neighbours. For the last few winters 'fuel poverty' has been in the public consciousness as a result of rising energy prices. In previous winters, the media have regularly reported that many older people, in receipt of the state pension, often have to make the decision on whether to 'heat or eat'. Tough decisions like this shouldn't have to be made, but it does happen. Those facing such a situation may feel ashamed, and if you know of, or suspect that an elderly person might be in this situation, please seek help and advice from www.ageuk.org.uk

For more general information on this years NHS winter campaign, and its launch, please visit www.nhs.uk from the end of this October.

Don't forget to see this edition's DIY Tip on page 22 on how you can prevent condensation in your home. Keeping your home free from condensation and mould build up can also help to keep your home warm.



CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Throughout October the UK celebrates National Black History Month. This is a month where the history, culture, achievements and contributions of African and Caribbean people are remembered and championed.

At the time of Home News Magazine going to print, a few events planned across the capital would have already taken place, but it's not too late for those of you that want to celebrate Black History there's a list of some events here that you can consider.

Unfortunately at the time of going to press, we could not find any events taking place in either Bexley or Greenwich. For residents interested in participating in activities in these boroughs, please check www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk for event listings.

Hexagon would like to wish a happy Black History Month to our residents!

SOUTHWARK

'Not Bound Within'

Wednesday 11th October • Canada Water Cultural Space, 21 Surrey Quays Road, London, SE16 7AR

A reading exploring identity and self-esteem based on the history of Saartjie Baartman, known as 'the Hottentot Venus' in 19th century Europe.

'Political Bodies'

Friday 13th October • Canada Water Cultural Space, 21 Surrey Quays Road, London, SE16 7AR

Dance and theatre are fused together to explore The Windrush era and even Brexit.

'Freeman'

Wednesday 18th October • Canada Water Cultural Space, 21 Surrey Quays Road, London, SE16 7AR

A play exploring the true story of William Freeman who faced a criminal trial in 19th century New York.

Prospect

Wednesday 11th October • 5-7pm • Prospect, 8 Leake Street, London, SE1 7NN

A workers union is holding a networking opportunity supporting equality, celebrating diversity.

This seminar is free, but you must register. See: www.prospect.org.uk

MONTHLY BLACK HISTORY

CROYDON

African Performing Arts School

Monday 9th October • 20 C South End,
South Croydon, London, CR0 1DN

An event for young people, if aged 8-18, this could be for you. Why not participate in dance and drama based on African culture and inspiration.

See: theafricanperformingartsschool.myfreesites.net for more information and to book.

‘Destination Africa’: Cultural Workshop

Saturday 21st October • Forest Hill Pools,
Dartmouth Road, London, SE23 3HZ

A Saturday workshop offered to parents/carers with children between the ages of 3-16 to enjoy the many facets of the African culture.

See: www.destination-africa.uk for more information.

LEWISHAM

R&B Soul Stepping Dance Class

Monday 23rd October • 7-8pm • Goldsmiths
Community Centre, Castillon Road,
London, SE6 1QD

If you fancy dancing yourself fit to music derived from black music for the cost of £5 this is the class for you.

Women of Ghana Photography Exhibition

Tuesday 24th October • 8am-10pm •
Deptford Lounge, Front Foyer, 9, Giffin
Street, London, SE8 4RJ

This free photography and film exhibition depicts the stories of a selection of strong and inspirational women, mostly from the Northern Region of Ghana. If you're captivated by the images, there will be a follow-up talk about the exhibition with the photographer herself Anisha Patel on Thursday 26th October.

See all information here:
deptfordlounge.org.uk/event



IT'S NATIONAL HOME SECURITY MONTH

For many the arrival of October is synonymous with Halloween, darker nights, fireworks and the onset of winter, but did you know it is also National Home Security month? Across each of the five weeks the campaign has a different theme to help home owners and residents become more mindful of how they can keep their homes safe and become more robust against theft. As we all prepare for a change of season, here are a few tips and how you can get involved:

WEEK

1

TESTING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Campaign organisers will be offering an array of incentives, social media competitions and offers intended to protect your home.

WEEK

2

TRADITIONAL HOME SECURITY

The campaign focusses on typical securing methods and tools such as padlocks and window locks. Organisers will offer advice on how you can strengthen security with devices you might not have previously considered.



WEEK

3

SMART SECURITY

The third week centres on new technology and devices that can secure your home. If you're enthusiastic about gadgets and tech, then this particular week might just be for you.

WEEK

4

OUTDOOR SECURITY

As we start to get less daylight hours and the clocks go back, illumination and clear vision become increasingly paramount. Data shows that burglaries spike at 38%, and thieves become increasingly opportunistic with attempts at break-ins. Find out how you can deter them.

WEEK

5

SEASONAL ADVICE

The final week focuses on prevention of burglaries. It is reported that Halloween night and bonfire night typically present opportune times for thieves to target homes. What can you do to prevent burglaries if you're out with the kids trick or treating or enjoying a firework display?

For further information and resources, please visit the website at: www.homesecuritymonth.com or follow [@SecurityMonth](https://twitter.com/SecurityMonth) on Twitter, or find them on Facebook throughout the campaign.

We urge you to be mindful about the safety and security of your home throughout the year.

STAY CLEAR OF THE SHARKS THIS CHRISTMAS

Christmas is once again close at hand, and along with all of the other preparations, it's important to think about the financial aspects of the festivities. Ideally, this will be planned for in advance, and savings will cover the cost. But sometimes, things don't go to plan, and there's a need to find other ways of covering the cost of Christmas.

If possible, it's always best to avoid borrowing to cover the cost of Christmas. Borrowing nearly always incurs interest charges, meaning that things bought with borrowed money nearly always cost more in the long run.

But if you do feel that you have no option but to borrow, it is important to think about where you borrow from. The best rates are often available from the major high street banks or through some of the best major internet based lenders, and you should always shop around to try and get the best deal you can.

The information in this article is for information purposes only. It should not be considered as advice, and you are responsible for any decisions that you take around your money. If in doubt, seek independent advice before making any financial decision.

CREDIT OPTIONS:

If you can't access the cheapest sources of borrowing, and feel that you have no choice but to borrow, then what? Companies who enable you to make payments to an agent who collects from your home might seem attractive, as can companies offering short term "payday" loans. But the interest charges for these types of loans can be eye watering. For example, the typical interest rate (APR) for one leading home Credit Company is 299.3% !!!!!

This means that £500 borrowed over a year would cost a whopping £436 in interest.

Payday Loans

For "payday loans", things are even worse, with interest rates higher than 1000% APR being very common. Because of the very high interest charges, these types of loans are best avoided.

Credit Unions

Credit Unions provide one possible alternative to these types of lenders. Credit Unions are owned and run by their members, and offer savings, loans and (sometimes) basic banking services to members. Credit Unions require members to have certain things in common, such as living or working in a certain area. All of the borough's that Hexagon works in have Credit Union services with different services available in each. All Hexagon residents will be able to join the Credit Union that covers the borough in which they live.

In addition to this, to ensure that residents have access to a consistent service wherever they live, Hexagon has its well established partnership with London Plus Credit Union. With membership open to all of our residents, London Plus offers affordable loans to residents (subject to underwriting and acceptance), with a maximum interest rate of 42.6% APR. This means that a £500 loan for a year would cost £107.59 in interest, a saving of over £325 compared to a "home credit" loan.

Better still, London Plus also encourage their members to save while they pay off their loans. This can help you get away from the need to borrow altogether, or at least help you access future loans at better interest rates, saving you money in the process.

If you want to find out more about what London Plus can offer you, please call **0207 471 2620** or visit **www.londonpluscu.co.uk**

Alternatively, if you wish to discuss money matters more generally, please call our Financial Inclusion Adviser, Jason Herbert, on **0208 768 7925**



PREVENTING CONDENSATION

As the winter months approach us, we may be tempted to keep as warm as possible by turning up our heating or keeping our windows closed to retain warmth and keep the cold out. Whilst these measures might help us feel cosier in our homes, condensation becomes a risk.

Condensation is by far the most common cause of dampness in buildings, probably accounting for the majority of the damp problems reported.



What is condensation?

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

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

What are the causes?

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

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

How can you cut down condensation in your home?

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

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

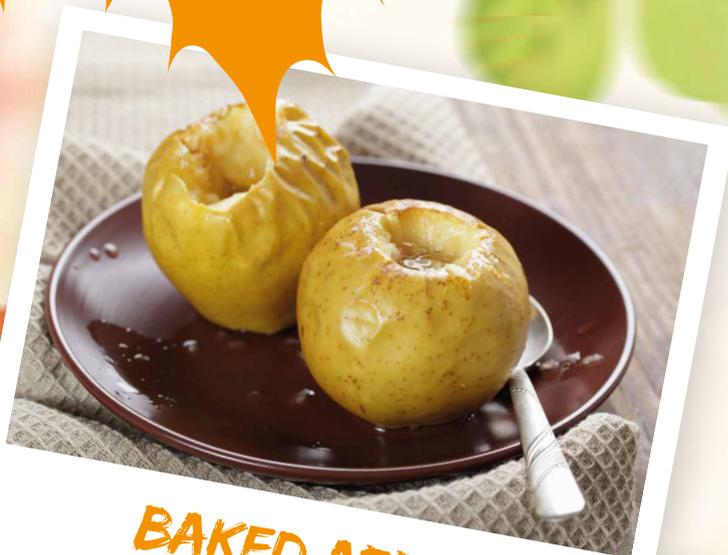
While we are sleeping we produce about a litre of water vapour, so it really helps if you leave your window vents open or if you don't have vents then leave your windows slightly open at night.

SEE MORE:
bit.ly/2hmUh9r

KIDS CORNER

AUTUMN SUDOKU

Every row, column and mini-grid must contain the letters A C O R N S.
Don't guess, use logic!



BAKED APPLES

Ingredients

- + 4 eating apples
- + Handful of sultanas
- + 2 tsp light muscovado sugar
- + 1 tsp cinnamon
- + A knob of butter
- + 2 tsp demerara sugar

Method

1. **Ask a grown-up** to turn the oven on to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Sit each apple on the worktop and push an apple corer into the centre of each one (or ask a grown-up to do this for you).
2. Mix the sultanas, muscovado sugar and cinnamon together in a bowl.
3. Stand up the apples, side by side, in a baking dish. Using your fingers, push a little bit of the sultana mixture into each apple, using up all the mixture between them.
4. Add a blob of butter to the top of each and sprinkle over the demerara sugar. **Ask a grown-up** to put the dish in the oven for 20 mins or until the apples are cooked through.

S					O
		O	N		
	S	A	O	R	
	O	R	S	N	
		N	C		
R					N

Solve the Sudoku puzzle above and once completed send in your entry by **Friday 27th October** to:
Resident Involvement Admin,
Hexagon Housing Association,
130-136 Sydenham Road,
London SE26 5JY.

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

WINNERS

Congratulations to Alexis Adaja (SE13), Robin Berry (SE5) & Beatrice Githendu (SE1) who submitted correct entries to the last edition's competition.

JOKE TIME

Q: Why did the scarecrow win a medal?

A: He was outstanding in his field

Q: How do you mend a broken pumpkin?

A: With a pumpkin patch

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

"ንክብርታዎን ለኩሉ ክብርታዎን ለኩሉ!"

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 Mr D Cripps (SE23), C. Matthews (SE26) and Mrs J. Calverley (SE23) who each receive a £20 voucher for their correct entries.

The answers to the last Competition Time were:

- | | |
|--------|--------------------|
| 1. 9 | 4. Defects process |
| 2. £10 | 5. V1 Rating |
| 3. 240 | |

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

1. How many ballot papers did Hexagon receive back in the Resident Board member election?
2. What poisonous gas has no smell or taste?
3. How many people did Hexagon's Employment Support Service help in 2016/2017?
4. What year will Hexagon's Asset Management strategy end?
5. What job role has Beverley Duhaney secured?

Please send your entries, by post, to: **Resident Involvement Team, Hexagon Housing Association, 130-136 Sydenham Road, London, SE26 5JY**
Or by email to: getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk Three correct entries received by **Friday 27th October** 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