

Hexagon

# HOME NEWS

SPRING  
2019

FEATURED

**APPRENTICESHIP  
OPPORTUNITY** /p13

Win  
**£20**  
Shopping  
Vouchers

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



PICTURED

**Digital  
Champions** /p10

**Estate  
Grading** /p03

**Apprenticeship  
Opportunity** /p13

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Cover: Linda McMahon is a Hexagon Digital Champion (see page 10).



## Welcome...

to another edition of Home News.

Hexagon recently changed its allocation policy for existing residents wishing to transfer. The current system wasn't really working for residents and the rationale for the changes are explained on Pages 4 and 5. The reality of the situation is that there are far too few social homes for the very many people who need them which is why we are working as hard as we can to maximise the number of new homes that we provide each year. It is clear from the small numbers of lettings available for transfers mentioned in the article, that we still have a long way to go, if as a nation we're going to meet the needs of both existing and prospective new residents. We believe, however, that the changes made will create a more sensible system for everyone.

Our Community Investment team continues to work really hard in supporting people to get into employment and to get online. Their good work is described on Pages 10 and 11. There is also an article on Page 12 that describes one of our resident's personal journey into employment, which was great for me to read. I hope you enjoy it as well.

Lastly, Hexagon reserves four of its 12 Board member places for residents. Hexagon is at its best when residents' voices are heard and acted upon, including at our Board table. You will have already received a letter from our Chair, Roy Coulter, inviting you to step forward, but there is a reminder on Page 06 for any of you who are interested.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Home News.

**Tom McCormack**  
Chief Executive



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

See page 10 for the benefits of going digital.

# Estate Grading Results

In October 2018 a small group of residents took the lead in completing the annual round of this successful project.

The Estate grading project has been running for seven years, and involves residents visiting and inspecting our estates against set criteria.

This hands-on activity involves residents inspecting estates which are selected by the Resident Involvement Team to enable the process to be completely impartial and awarding these estates a score.

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

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

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

As part of this project the grading team make recommendations for improvement based on what they have seen. The recommendations form an action plan for Hexagon departments to resolve these issues within a specified timescale. The collaborative work between residents, Housing Services and Repairs teams at Hexagon has seen the standard of Hexagon estates improve. With only one Bronze estate identified by graders it shows that our estates in the main are being well looked after and maintained to a good standard. This is a great achievement for everyone involved and an excellent example of how resident involvement activities can lead to improvement.

## The results following the recent round of Estate Grading are as follows:

Algernon Road	<b>GOLD</b>	Isabella Apartments	<b>GOLD</b>
Atrium Court	<b>GOLD</b>	Orchard Mews	<b>SILVER</b>
Bonding Yard Walk	<b>GOLD</b>	Sandpiper Close	<b>SILVER</b>
Corinthian Road	<b>GOLD</b>	Saravia Court	<b>GOLD</b>
Desmond Tutu Drive	<b>SILVER</b>	Shermanbury Close	<b>GOLD</b>
Eastdown Park	<b>SILVER</b>	Wharfside Close	<b>GOLD</b>
Elgar Street	<b>GOLD</b>	355 Rotherhithe Street	<b>GOLD</b>
Mildred Road	<b>GOLD</b>	Alfred Court	<b>BRONZE</b>
Nova House	<b>SILVER</b>		

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

Results are on the Hexagon website at [www.hexagon.org.uk](http://www.hexagon.org.uk)

# Changes to How Hexagon Allocates Homes

Hexagon has changed the transfer system for allocating new homes. We needed to change the system because our waiting list was not working for many of our residents.

## The waiting list

At the end of February 2019, there were 486 Hexagon residents on our waiting list:



## How many residents move by transfer?

In the last year, **25** residents transferred within Hexagon – 21 of them either “management transfers” or Band A applicants, and four applicants in Band C.

Band A applicants include:

- residents with a need to move because of very high medical needs
- residents affected by threats of violence (including domestic abuse, harassment or hate crime) for whom a move will make a difference
- under-occupiers affected by welfare reform
- residents overcrowded by more than one bedroom
- decants (moves to allow major works to take place)

A management transfer is where the need for the resident to move is so urgent that a senior member of staff authorizes the offer of a home to meet the urgent need.

We are changing our transfer system so that, from now on, we will not be accepting new applicants onto the Band B, C and D waiting list. (If you are already on our waiting list, then your name will stay on it, but you may wait a long time and may prefer to try other options described on the next page.)

## Looking to move?

There are times when you may want to move – your family has got bigger, or your children have grown up and moved out, or you would like to move to another area, perhaps for work. Until now Hexagon has had a transfer system: you told us what size home you need, we agreed your changed needs with you, and then put you on the waiting list for a home of that size.

Many of you will know that Hexagon does not have a free hand in who we allocate homes to: we have nominations agreements with all the boroughs we work in, requiring us to let between 50% and 100% of empty homes to applicants nominated by the local authority. Therefore, the number of homes available to let to current Hexagon residents is very small, which means that many residents are waiting a very long time for a transfer to happen.

This means that many of our residents who ask us for a transfer will wait a number of years before we can offer them a move. Allowing them to register for a move with Hexagon tends to give them false hope that we will be able to help them.



## A new Allocations Policy

Hexagon regularly reviews its policies and procedures to ensure that they are fit for purpose; that they conform to the law and that they reflect our values. In 2018 we looked at our Allocations Policy again in view of legal changes as well as the increasing demand for limited housing in London.

We've looked at what other London Housing Associations (e.g. Peabody, Optivo, Hyde) do, and we've consulted with Hexagon residents (at the Resident Forum and at a residents focus group) about ways of finding a move which are most likely to work. As a result of our consultations we are no longer going to accept new applicants onto the transfer list, except for urgent "Band A" applicants.

The Band A list is reviewed at regular intervals, and those who no longer need to be on it are removed.

## How can you move if you are not in Band A?

- The Local Authority housing register – all Hexagon residents can register on the housing register in your borough. Once registered you can take part in Choice Based Letting Schemes where this system is used.
- Mutual exchange – you can use one of two websites that Hexagon subscribes to **[www.houseexchange.org.uk](http://www.houseexchange.org.uk)** and **[www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)**

Last year **24** Hexagon residents moved this way; 8 were downsizing, 4 moving to bigger homes, 4 for health reasons and the others for a new area or fresh start.

The Mutual Exchange websites are straight forward to use, however if you don't feel confident of your IT skills, we can offer help: our Community Investment team are currently running the Digital Champions Programme. This is a project that can connect you with a tutor who can support you in developing the right skills to help you search for a new home and more.

If you contact Hexagon to ask for a transfer, our Customer Service Centre will take you through a short questionnaire to see if you may fit the Band A criteria, and if you do satisfy the Band A requirements you can apply for a transfer as is currently the case.

**If you do not satisfy the requirements for a Band A transfer, our Customer Service Centre will provide you with information on how to look for a Mutual Exchange and how to register with the local authority in your borough.**

We have had to change our transfer system in order to give Hexagon residents a realistic expectation that they will eventually be allocated a new home. We've found that the people who use the routes above (Mutual Exchanges and the local authority register) are usually the ones who get what they need in the end.



# Come On Board!

**Hexagon is looking for two residents to join the Board. Could this be you?**

**Help shape  
Hexagon's  
future direction**

**Training  
& support  
provided**

**Salaried  
position at  
£ 3,750 per  
annum**

Recently you will have received a letter from Roy Coulter the Chair of the Hexagon Board. In the letter, Roy outlines why it is important for residents to play a prominent and active role on the Board.

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

## **Who can be a Resident Board Member?**

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



## **What does being a Resident Board Member mean?**

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

## **How do I get on to the Board?**

If you are interested in being on the Hexagon Board simply send your name, address, phone number and email address using the contact details to the right. We will then send you an Application Pack which gives you the chance to tell us about your skills and your interest in standing for the Board. We will also invite you to an interview with a small panel to discuss your application further. Following the meeting with the panel, you may be invited to go forward for election on to the Board. The election will be carried out amongst all Hexagon residents and the majority vote determines the two residents who will fill the vacancies on the Board.

# Interested?

## Want to find out more?

An Information Session has been arranged for you to find out more about what it means to be a Resident Board Member. This will take place on **Wednesday 24th April** at the Hexagon office. If you wish to come to the session please let us know by filling in and returning the information slip below. If you cannot attend but still wish to put your name forward please indicate below and we will be happy to send you the relevant information.



Name .....

Address .....

Telephone .....

Email address .....

I wish to attend the Information Session on Wednesday 24th April, 6.30pm–8pm at the Hexagon Head Office, 130–136 Sydenham Road

I cannot attend the information session but would like to stand for election on to the Board. Please send the relevant information.

Please return to Hexagon by **Monday 22nd April** or email your interest to **[getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)**

# Residents Give Their Feedback

Hexagon Care Services conducted the annual Residents' Survey in December 2018 in order to receive feedback from residents on the service provided by Hexagon. Feedback from the survey helps us to focus our attention to any key areas of improvement our residents would like us to make.

We would like to thank all the residents who took the time to complete our survey. The survey was completed by over 66% of residents compared to 47% completed in 2017; which itself demonstrates the increase in residents engaging to give their views of our service.

The total Overall Satisfaction is arrived at by adding residents rating us 'Very Good' and 'Good', therefore giving us a great 79% satisfaction compared to 70% in 2017.

The increase has been mainly due to a lot of residents being involved in the decision making process and taking more responsibility, along with the great work done by our Care and Support staff in the resident's recovery journey.

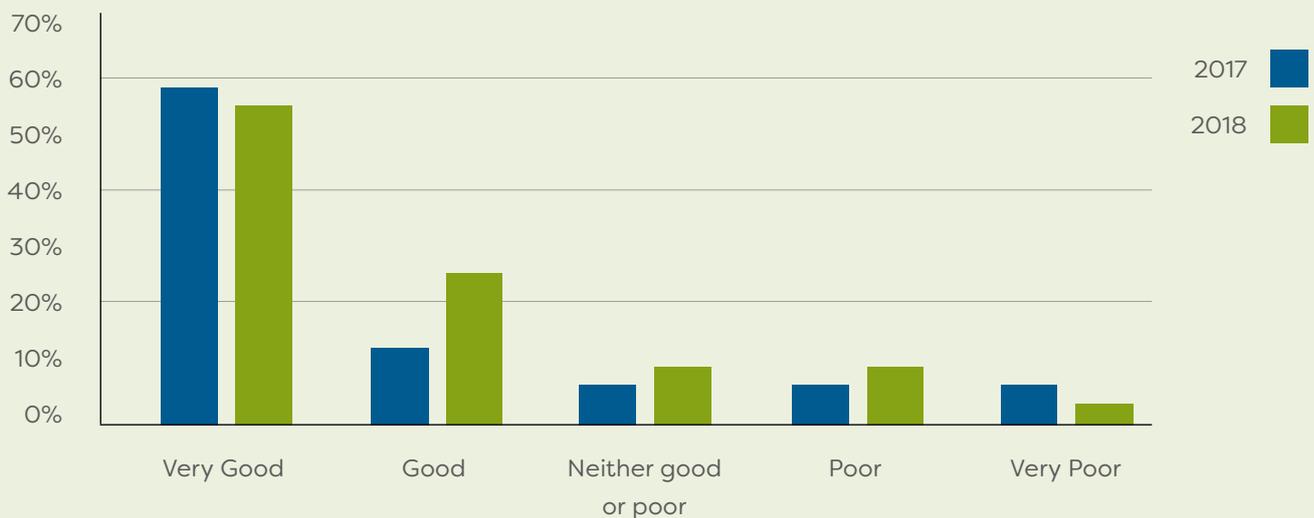
There is more work to be done to achieve an even better service for our residents and, responding to the findings from the survey, we will provide more focused work in making sure that residents

'feel safer' and 'feel more positive about their future'.

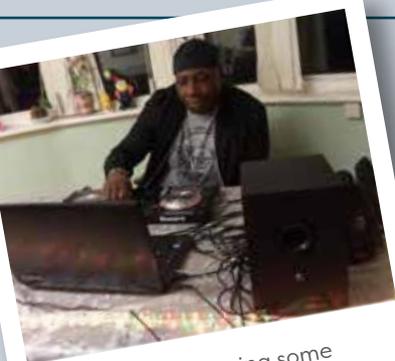
In addition, we will work to encourage and support residents to feel able to make decisions, which can be very challenging due to the nature of their complex needs; however this is very rewarding to the individual once achieved.

**79%**  
satisfaction

## Care & Support residents' feedback 2017 vs. 2018



# Residents Have Their Say



Resident Peter, playing some romantic tunes for the party



Resident Melvyn, enjoying the buffet



Staff prepared some snacks, including these healthy fruit kebabs

**“I haven’t had to raise any issues yet but I find the forum very helpful and interesting.”**

Glenora, resident

**“This was the first forum I have attended. I found it very useful and raised a few points about the heating, storage and a problem with my window.”**

Peter, resident

Our supported housing projects for people with mental health issues, based in Lewisham, Southwark and Sutton, hold a resident’s Feedback Forum every three months.

Residents from the three projects gather together where they are given the opportunity to comment and voice their opinions about where they live, the service they receive and to discuss any issues that are concerning them. These are hosted by Hexagon’s Resident Involvement Manager, Brian Hughes. He is there to listen and take on board all comments and to direct any problems or queries to the appropriate manager to resolve.

As an example, Peter raised an ongoing problem with his window lock. This has since been looked into and is now completely fixed.

The latest meeting was held on Wednesday 13th February at Newstead Road where staff arranged a Valentine’s Day Party before the meeting.

Residents gathered in the communal area and staff laid on a buffet lunch of hot dogs, sandwiches, fruit kebabs and other snacks. The party was accompanied by Peter (one of the residents) playing a love-themed DJ set. Staff also hosted a Valentine’s Day quiz with general questions, a picture round and a music round.

Once the residents had enjoyed the celebrations they assembled in the lounge to get down to the serious business of the Forum.

## Volunteering with us!

Our supported housing projects are always looking for willing volunteers or paid ‘mytime’ workers to spend time with our residents. So if you would like to gain knowledge and skills to help towards a career in mental health or social care then we have some great opportunities for you to join our team.

If you think you are able to support any of our residents with outings and activities please contact Gala Doherty at [gdoherthy@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:gdoherthy@hexagon.org.uk) or call Newstead Road on **020 8857 3648**.

# FULLY FUNDED LEVEL 2 COURSES



- Adult Social Care
- Behaviour that Challenges
- Business Administration
- Care Planning
- Caring for Children & Young People
- Children & Young People's Mental Health
- Cleaning Principles
- Common Health Conditions
- Customer Service
- Common Childhood Illnesses
- Data Protection & Security
- Dementia Care
- Diabetes
- End of Life Care
- English / Mathematics
- Equality & Diversity
- Falls Prevention Awareness
- Health & Social Care Professions
- Infection Control
- Information, Advice or Guidance
- Learning Disabilities
- Mental Health Awareness
- Nutrition & Health
- Personal Exercise, Health & Nutrition
- Retail Knowledge
- Safeguarding & Prevent
- Safe Handling of Medication
- Specific Learning Difficulties
- Understanding Autism
- Warehousing & Storage

To book your enrolment slot, please contact Lionne Whitfield on **020 8768 7915**

## HEXAGON'S NEW DIGITAL AT HOME SERVICE

At Hexagon we are currently running the Digital Champions programme, with the aim of supporting residents with honing their digital literacy skills by way of matching them up with Digital Champions that can provide 1-2-1 and small group support.

We acknowledge that a number of residents are not able, or find it difficult, to leave their homes for an array of different reasons. Therefore, in response to this, we are now launching the Digital At Home Support Service.

Hexagon's Digital At Home Support Service is able to help residents to develop their online skills using email, online shopping, social media, safety online and so much more.

Residents can access the service by completing a short application form that you are able to request from the Customer Services team who will send the form out to you in the post. Alternately, you can phone the Community Investment Officer on **020 8768 7954** or **07708 270098** to speak directly to us about the service and to see how we will be able to help you improve your digital skills.

**Together, we can discover what the world of the internet has to offer!**

## “I AM NEVER GOING TO USE COMPUTERS!”

*“I am never going to use computers!”*

*That’s what I said when computers first appeared on the scene. At the time I was suffering from depression and especially social anxiety. Going out and being with people was so hard for me, so I was shut away from the outside, scary world.*

*It was easy to learn how to use a computer and it brought a whole world to me without having to move an inch from my comfortable sofa and the safety of my home.*

*So, I started connecting with friends through Facebook and writing letters using email. I progressed to having conversations by Skype. I did some online courses to learn skills that would put me in a position to take on employment, if I ever got better.*

*I accessed forums for mental health and found a range of support. Then, I took up crocheting and knitting. I used the online video guides to teach me step by step.*

*This digital technology was amazing.*

*I joined the National Trust and started visiting beautiful gardens. With familiarity with using computers, I was able to access all the information about the places and how to get there online.*

*Did I say I would never use a computer? I meant, “I never want to be without one!”*



## LOVE LONDON WORKING



You may have read in previous editions of Home News that Hexagon runs a project called Love London Working (LLW). This programme is specifically targeted at assisting unemployed residents into work. The scheme is a partnership of 13 Housing Associations including Hexagon and is funded by the European Social Fund.

Over the past three years that the project has been running, our Employment Advisor has helped hundreds of participants with sourcing training and obtaining paid and unpaid employment.

We are excited to announce that the project has received a 6 month funding extension to September 2019!

If you would like a helping hand finding a suitable job, we can provide a well-coordinated support system to help you develop your skills, find training and land a job.

**Before it’s too late, get in touch today. The only thing missing is you!**

Give our Employment and Skills Team a call on **020 8768 7915**.



# PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF!

Referred from Peckham Jobcentre, Telma arrived for her initial appointment at Hexagon full of enthusiasm and commitment. To work around her two young children, she focused on obtaining a Teaching Assistant position. Telma had a lot to offer a school, but as a lone parent she needed specific hours and location.

Telma had lots to tell about various jobs in her work history. We helped to reformat her CV, making it a more concise read. Additionally, I taught her to complete application forms to a high standard, and to better address the person specifications.

Though confident she could do the job, Telma felt unable to present this verbally to prospective employers. Anxiety about lack of experience expressing herself at interviews was holding her back. I offered Telma some mock interviews to help sharpen her interview technique. We practised what to say - and what not to - until Telma became confident that she could perform well during the interview process.

When interview offers arrived, Telma and I prepared beforehand. We researched the schools - including their Ofsted Report, location and travelling distance. To ensure she got the most of her interview experiences, Telma and I spoke after each interview - analysing what went well, what she could have done differently, and how best to change her approach at the next interview. This helped her track her performance - she saw how she was improving with each interview.

Ultimately, Telma was offered more than one role as a Teaching Assistant! She was in a position to choose which job she wanted. Focus, enthusiasm and a relentless attitude had found Telma the job of her dreams! For Telma this was not just "a job" but a career achievement - the post Telma wanted and can be proud of!



L-R: Rosemarie (Peckham Job Centre), Telma and Lionne

*"I'd lost my job in 2013. My second child was only 1 year old so I claimed Income Support. When my son struggled in school, I decided to volunteer there - not knowing this would begin a career path. After two years volunteering I enrolled for a Teaching Assistance Course, doing a placement for a year at the same school.*

*"I began to apply for jobs as a Teaching Assistant. I hadn't done paid work for nearly 5 years so lacked interview skills. I applied for jobs unsuccessfully. Then I was introduced to Lionne at Hexagon. Lionne helps fill in applications, improve interview techniques, and offers mock interviews. This was my turning point. Lionne urged me to keep going, to see each rejection as a learning experience to improve for the next interview. When invited to more interviews, I successfully received 2 job offers!*

*"Monday 24th September 2018, was the day I officially started my career in education. Inspired by working with children and teachers, I hope to learn and grow as a Teaching Assistant, and then become a Teacher.*

*"I thank Lionne for pushing and supporting me every step of the way. Her invaluable advice has given me skills for life."*

If you're interested in training, voluntary work or obtaining employment - speak to us! You can seize the opportunity just like Telma did! Call on **020 8768 7915**.

*Lionne Whitfield, Senior Employment Adviser*

# APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITY



Bell Group are a national painting and decorating contractor working with Hexagon. The contractor has an opportunity for a Hexagon resident to undertake an apprenticeship in the painting & decorating trade.

## Job outline

To attend college (one day a week at college, four days on site, term time only) and site-based training in Painting and Decorating or Multi Trade over a 2-3 year period. You will then progress to a full-time site based role.

During your apprenticeship you will gain experience in all aspects of the job, including skilled based works, Health & Safety, site procedures, customer liaison etc. and will be provided with on the job training.

The wage is £5.14 p/h for the first year of apprenticeship.

## Knowledge, skills and experience

- Keen and motivated
- Willingness to learn
- Good written and verbal communication skills
- Good attention to detail when completing tasks
- Able to work well as part of a team
- Reliability and good time keeping

If this is for you then register your interest now with Hexagon's Senior Employment Adviser.

Contact Lionne Whitfield on **020 8768 7915** or email **LWhitfield@hexagon.org.uk**

# MINDFULNESS TASTER SESSIONS



- Do you find yourself racing around mentally and physically but not always sure why?
- Do you sometimes or often feel irritated, frustrated, deflated, fatigued, uncertain, unfocused and demotivated?
- Do you want to discover the importance of your emotions and the powerful role they play in governing your life... both in helpful and unhelpful ways?
- Do you want to gain power to change 'your world'... and given the opportunity would you take it?

If you answer yes to one or more of these questions then our new Community Mindfulness programme is definitely for you.

Come along to one of our Taster Sessions. These sessions are a great introduction to Mindfulness. By the end of the session you will have something to take away and use in your daily life; you can also look at what the next steps are for you by looking at the Community Mindfulness programme and other courses we offer.

Interested? To book your place or to find out more contact Remi Oshibanjo, phone **020 8768 7954** or email **roshibanjo@hexagon.org.uk**

**Taster sessions will be held during April and May 2019**

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WORK

For many people with mental health problems, being socially excluded is a real issue which affects their daily lives. Working, whether paid or unpaid, is good for our health and wellbeing. It contributes to our happiness, helps us to build confidence and self-esteem, and rewards us financially.

## Why work?

Being in work:

- Keeps us busy, challenges us and gives us the means to develop ourselves
- Gives us a sense of pride, identity and personal achievement
- Enables us to socialise, build contacts and find support
- Provides us with money to support ourselves and explore our interests

## Health benefits of working

People in work tend to enjoy happier and healthier lives than those who are not in work. Our physical and mental health is generally improved through work – we recover from

sickness quicker and are at less risk of long term illness and incapacity.

Conversely being out of work can have a negative impact on your health and wellbeing.

People who are unemployed tend to:

- Have higher rates of physical and mental health problems
- Take more medication and use more medical services

A full-time paid job isn't the only option. There are other possibilities that may suit you, including part-time work or volunteering.

## Volunteering

Volunteering is a popular way of getting back into work. Helping other people in need is great for your self-esteem and can take your mind off your own worries.

Plus, volunteer work can improve your chances of getting a paid job when you're ready and, until then, you can carry on claiming your benefits.



**We asked Suzie (not her real name), one of our Hexagon volunteers, to share with us what the volunteering experience has meant to her.**

*“I want to share some reasons why volunteering at Hexagon makes such a great difference in my life. The first thing that comes to mind is the experience of being long term unemployed and the feeling of being on the margins of society; this is twofold when one has experienced mental health distress as I have.*

*“It is easy to become invisible if the path that you are on leads too far out of mainstream society. You can pass under the radar. Most of my friends have jobs and in social situations, the conversation often turns to work or people will ask the question ‘what do you do for a living?’*

*“Having had a very full and rewarding career in the past, this question can seem like the key to fitting in or being left out of a whole conversation. Such exclusions can eat at one’s self-esteem. Don’t get me wrong, rest, reflection and rejuvenation are important parts of progress towards the wellbeing of the individual, however you only have to look at how quickly parents are encouraged to return back to work, as well as those recovering from ill health and the increased age of retirement, to know that work is valued as one of the ultimate goals in mainstream society.*

*“The opportunity to contribute and have purposeful activity in this society is one way in which I gain self-esteem and motivation; these attributes are of importance for everyone. Through volunteering I have benefited from developing my resilience; from having to get up at a certain time each morning, plan the week and further develop a sense of humour in what can be testing situations. Volunteering has also added structure to my life after a period of uncertainty.*

*“Meeting different people at work also helps to maintain or develop communication skills, which may otherwise lie dormant and ensures one does not become isolated. Isolation is a common experience for those who are on the margins of*

*society, including those who have experienced mental distress, and interacting with people can be a precursor for staying well.*

*“Another benefit of volunteering within a supportive environment is the opportunity to offer your skills and experience in the work place. Sharing your skills and experience gives additional support to what may be an already stretched workforce and additionally gives one a sense of value. Volunteering may also offer the experience of learning new skills and finding out what one is capable of, without the pressure of taking on full time employment. It also gives me the opportunity to ensure that my CV is up to date, which can give me the choice to pursue any other opportunities that may arise. As well as this, volunteering also means that one can learn about any openings or job opportunities, through the network of work. It is said that it is easier to get a job while already working and this certainly applies to volunteering.*

*“I would encourage anyone who has experienced mental distress to volunteer in an environment which is receptive to your situation and would benefit from your presence. Volunteering can build your self-esteem and confidence and provide opportunities in many of the ways I have mentioned, it also encourages a society that is inclusive, progressive and values those with a range of lived experience.”*

If you would like to explore volunteering options or paid employment, we will work with you to understand what support 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 Lionne Whitfield from the Employment and Skills Team on **020 8768 7915**.

**Whether volunteering at our Head Office or helping out at one of our homes, our brilliant volunteers make a real difference!**

# Pizza in a Pot!

Welcome back to Denny's digs!

In the previous edition of Home News we looked at how planting for scent and colour lifted our spirits and helped us think about sunny days ahead. So now, with temperatures rising and longer, brighter days ahead... let's think about producing something that will look great, be fun to grow and good to eat.

## Pizza in a pot!

To do this, we are going to grow a tomato plant and the herb basil. They are great garden friends. As, like us, plants may have companions which bring out the best in them!

Basil discourages pests from the tomato plant and enhances the flavour of the fruits. As an added benefit, basil discourages house flies and mosquitoes - what a winner!

## What you'll need

Choose any container that suits the space you have. Today I'm choosing a hanging basket. Imagine a lovely basket, bursting with glossy red tomatoes and pungent basil. Imagine the smell of summer wafting in every time you come home... such a joy. Plus the promise of home-made pizza!

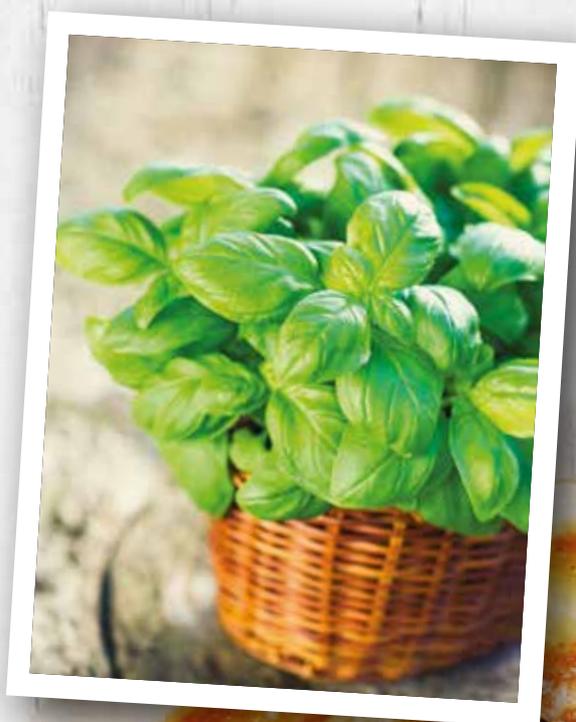
From your local garden centre, choose a tomato plant (only one is needed per container) and some young basil plants. The tomato should be big enough to go outdoors straight away and of a 'tumbling' cherry variety. This will fill your basket and burst out, with all those lovely little gems of gorgeousness nestled in the pungent basil leaves, screaming 'Eat me! Eat me!' every time you pass by!

You'll need to choose a hanging basket - there are many kinds at various prices, but I can recommend looking in the cheaper shops, as bargains are to be had. Choose a basket about 30cm across with a coir/moss lining. This will keep the roots moist and cool, and the soil contained.

## The technique

Use a large pot or bucket to sit your basket on whilst you fill it. A round bottom on a flat surface can be problematic.

Place a clean plastic pot (such as a used takeaway container) in the bottom of your basket. Once filled with soil, it will retain moisture and stop the basket drying out too quickly. Fill the bottom third of the basket with quality compost (that has added nutrients and moisture retaining ingredients), water and allow to drain.



Thinking about the technique we used for planting last time, pop the tomato plant out of its pot by gently upending it and tapping on the bottom. Place it with the soil it's been growing in, into the middle of the basket so that the top of its soil is just below the level of the basket. Add or remove the compost in the basket to get this right. Take your time! Do the same with the basil plants, positioning them around the edge of the basket. You can space these closely as we want a full, leafy look and plenty to pick for our dishes.

Infill between plants with more compost and gently firm down. The final level should leave 2-3cms from the top, so that when you water it, it doesn't all pour out.

Now water gently, allowing the compost to absorb the water fully. You'll see it dripping out the bottom when you have given it enough to drink. Now hang on a sturdy hook - once full and wet, the basket will be quite heavy.

In warm weather, you'll need to water daily. A weekly feed of a basic tomato fertiliser is also good when growing in a container.

Your plants will grow quickly and you'll be able to harvest the basil regularly, pinching off the larger leaves for use in the kitchen even before the tomatoes are ripe.

Once the fruits are red, you're ready to eat as you choose!

## Pizza time!

For a simple pizza - about a cup of fresh tomatoes and a handful of basil will make a wonderful topping for the pizza base. Look up a recipe and go for it!

This is something you can get the kids involved with - they can plant the pot, care for the plants, pick the tomatoes and basil, and then together you can make the pizza!

Let us know how you get on. ENJOY!

**NEXT TIME:** Kale and hearty. Winter veg pots and planting for spring... happy gardening!

### Grow your own pizza in a pot

Want to grow your own pizza in a pot? Then come along to one of our free Hexagon Neighbourhood Event workshops on Saturday 11th May at Claybank Grove, Lewisham SE13. We will be running two sessions; the first starts at 12pm and the second session starts at 1.30pm.

All materials are provided, and all residents who book a place at the workshop get to take home their own pizza in a pot.

To book your place, please contact Remi on **020 8768 7954** or email **roshibanjo@hexagon.org.uk**





# Noise Nuisance

It is important for residents to understand that not all noise that they experience is considered to be anti-social behaviour. For example, children running, jumping, stomping, talking loudly (on mobile phones), shouting and screaming or door slamming are types of sounds that are legally considered normal everyday living sounds.

The law is also clear as to what constitutes a statutory nuisance and there is case law to support this. Therefore normal living noise cannot under any circumstances constitute a statutory nuisance.



However, we want our residents to also understand that noise that hasn't met the threshold for a statutory noise nuisance can still be a breach of their tenancy or lease agreement and we will consider taking action.

Some noise can be irritating and what someone finds to be irritating and the amount of normal living noise each person makes will vary from individual to individual.

Therefore, we would advise residents to communicate with each other for a peaceable resolution and in some instances we will offer mediation. If mediation is refused then Hexagon is limited in what action they can take. In all cases we will ask residents to keep a log of the nuisance they are experiencing.

## PETS

# Pet Ownership

Residents should be aware that they are required to seek permission to keep pets in their property. If their pets cause a nuisance or any other type of anti-social behaviour Hexagon may revoke permission and take legal action against the resident.

If anyone is looking to keep a pet in their home, it is important to be aware that responsible pet ownership requires an investment of money and time. This not only includes appropriate food, water, shelter, health care and companionship, but also ensuring that their pets do not cause anti-social behaviour. If a report has been made, for example about a dog causing a nuisance, to Hexagon or the police we will investigate the reports. In order to do this Hexagon may liaise with the police to resolve anti-social behaviour regarding pets, to ensure compliance with any relevant legislation.



# Meeting our Residents in Lewisham

*Pictured Neighbourhood Event at Southwark, September 2018*

The latest in the series of Neighbourhood Events will be staged for Hexagon residents living in the borough of Lewisham.

The Neighbourhood Event will be held on **Saturday 11th May** at Claybank Grove (SE13 7TD), near Lewisham town centre and will run from 12 noon to 3pm.

This will be an outdoor event and is staged to give you an opportunity to meet Hexagon managers who will be on hand to listen to your feedback on what you think of the service that you get from Hexagon. As well as engaging with Hexagon staff, the event will have a range of fun activities for all of the family. There will also be free food and refreshments available.

So, if you live within the Lewisham borough don't forget to put 11th May in your diary and look out for advertising publicity coming your way. This will tell you everything that you need to know about the event and more!



## SURVEY FEEDBACK

### Readers Survey Feedback



During November 2018 we carried out a reader's survey to get your opinion on the Home News magazine.

We wanted to know how useful the magazine is to you, and the survey asked questions such as what do you think of the overall content? What attracts you to read Home News? And whether you would prefer to receive future editions by post or by email?

The survey was sent out by email and attracted a very encouraging response. Some 71% of respondents replied with a positive view about the magazine. The same numbers, 71%, replied that they read Home News in order to keep up with Hexagon News.

When asked "How would you prefer to receive Home News?" 50% of respondents replied that they wish to continue receiving the magazine by post whilst 38% replied that they would prefer to receive it by email (12% did not express a preference to this question). We have listened to what you have told us and we will continue to deliver Home News to your door except for those of you who have contacted us to say that you no longer wish to receive the magazine by post. To find out more about this, please see the information item on the inside of the front cover.

Thank you to all who took the time to complete the survey. We will use the feedback that you gave in the survey to improve the content of the magazine so that you will continue to enjoy reading Home News.



# Money, Money, Money (advice)

Hexagon has operated its successful financial inclusion service for 6 years. In that time, close to 700 residents have accessed the service, with some being thousands of pounds better off as a result. The success of the service has meant it has now expanded to two advisers and we are delighted to welcome Jack Baxter as our new money support adviser – who better to introduce him than the man himself?

A big hello to all Hexagon residents! My name is Jack Baxter and I am super excited to be your new Money Support Advisor. In the song ABBA said Money was only fun “in a rich man’s world”, but even if that’s true, money should be made manageable for everyone. I work alongside Jason, our Senior Financial Inclusion Adviser. Some of you may have already met me or Jason, or spoken to us on the phone. For myself, I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible.

I am working particularly with those on Universal Credit and providing help around Council Tax and Benefits. If your query involves something other than that, still give us a call and we will look to work through it with you. There is no issue too big or small for us to have a conversation about, and we’ve assisted with everything from helping people make sense of a confusing bill to representing residents at benefit tribunals.

A little about me: I am South London born and raised, having lived here all my life. I think South London is the best place on Earth so want to do all I can to help the people I share it with. I support Leeds United through all the ups and downs (mostly downs) though please don’t hold that against me. In my spare time I like dancing, drama and comedy so please send any recommendations of any new movies, plays and jokes to Home News so I can have a read. Looking forward to hearing from you!

If you need help from the financial inclusion team, please call **020 8768 7925** and we will be happy to help.



# Barbecues

With summer just around the corner many of us are thinking about dusting down the barbecue and digging out the tongs. A barbecue should be a safe and enjoyable experience but it's all too easy to be distracted when you have friends and family around you whilst cooking. To avoid injuries or damage to property, here are our top tips to make sure your barbecue goes off without a hitch:

## General Safety

- Make sure your barbecue equipment is in good working order
- Ensure the barbecue is on a flat site, well away from a shed, trees or shrubs
- Keep children, garden games and pets well away from the cooking area
- Never leave the barbecue unattended
- Keep a bucket of water or sand nearby for emergencies
- Ensure the barbecue is cool before attempting to move it

## Charcoal Barbecues

- Use only enough charcoal to cover the base to a depth of about 50mm (2 inches)
- Only use recognised fire lighters or starter fuel and only on cold coals – use the minimum necessary and never use petrol
- Never put hot ashes straight into a dustbin or wheelie bin – they could melt the plastic and cause a fire

## Gas Barbecues

- Make sure the tap is turned off before changing the gas cylinder
- Change cylinders outdoors if possible or in a well-ventilated area
- If you suspect a leak to the cylinder or pipe work, brush soapy water around the joints and watch for bubbles – tighten to fix but do not over tighten
- After cooking, turn off the gas cylinder before turning off at the controls to ensure any residual gas in the pipe work is used up

Paying attention to these simple health and safety tips leaves you to concentrate on the other essentials of having a great barbecue such as preparation, cleaning equipment and of course the cooking of the food.



# Kids Corner



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

## Spring Word Search

- AZALEA
- CROCUS
- DAFFODIL
- DAISY
- DANDELION
- DIANTHUS
- HYACINTH
- IRIS
- LILAC
- ROSE
- TULIP
- VIOLET

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

If you think you have found all the correct words in the word search, simply cut out and send to the address below by **Friday 10th May**.

Send your word search entry 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.

**Congratulations** to **Tony Odukoya** (SE1), **J. Aslami** (SE13) and **Holly-Ann Githendu** (SE1) who each won the Kids' Corner Competition in the last issue!



## No Cook Mini Rocky Road Bites

Makes: 10 cakes

- 1 mug mini marshmallows
- 1 1/2 mugs chocolate buttons
- 1 mug broken digestive biscuits
- 1 mug sultanas
- 35g butter

## Instructions

Put the chocolate buttons and butter in a microwavable dish and heat in a microwave for 35 seconds (or until melted). Remove from the microwave and mix well.

Place the sultanas, biscuits and mini marshmallows in a bowl with the melted chocolate and butter and mix well, so that everything is coated.

All that's left to do, is to place the mixture in small 'blobs' onto a foil covered baking tray, ready to put into the fridge for about 20 mins (or until set).

## Serving suggestion

You can add cherries and mess around with the amount of each ingredient, to suit your own tastes. There is no right or wrong way to do it – just the way you like it.

## Egg - stroinary Jokes

Why shouldn't you tell an Easter egg a joke?  
**It might crack up!**

Why did the Easter egg hide?  
**He was a little chicken!**



# Competition Time



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

1. What happens if you contact Hexagon to ask for a housing transfer?
2. Name three of the different courses we offer to residents as fully funded training opportunities?
3. What happens at our Neighbourhood Event for Hexagon residents in Lewisham, and when will it be held?
4. What should a Hexagon resident do if they would like to keep a pet at their property?
5. How many places on the Board are for Hexagon residents?

## Congratulations to our last edition's winners:

Brian Fashina (SE18), C.Stanley (CRO) and Annick Kamna (DA8) who each receive a £20 voucher.

## The answers for the previous edition were:

1. 376,000
2. Chapter 3
3. Southwark Neighbourhood Event
4. 3
5. Neighbourhood Services team and the Rents and Revenue team

## How to enter?

Please send your entries, by post, to:

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

Three correct entries received by **Friday 10th May 2019** will be drawn at random and will each receive a £20 shopping voucher. The competition is open to all Hexagon residents. The editor's decision is final.

## Ways you can contact us

### Freephone

☎ 0800 393 338

### Landline

☎ 020 8778 6699

- Option 1 for all gas queries – your call will be automatically transferred to our Gas contractors
- Option 2 for all repairs related queries
- Option 3 for tenancy and rent queries
- Option 4 for general enquires

### Gas Central Heating Contractor

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

### Emergency Out-of-hours Repairs

☎ 020 3701 3518

### Other ways to contact us

@ Customer\_desk@hexagon.org.uk  
for all general enquiries

🔧 Repairs\_reporting@hexagon.org.uk  
to report a repair

🖱 www.hexagon.org.uk

📱 Text: 07537 400 527

✉ 130-136 Sydenham Road,  
London SE26 5JY, UK

## Translate!

Chinese  
永遠樂於翻譯！

Eritrean  
ገንብተርገሎልኤገም ኩሉገዜ ሕገ-ሳብ ሊኖር!

French  
Toujours heureux de traduire!

Portuguese  
Sempre feliz a traduzir!

Vietnamese  
Luôn luôn vui lòng phiên dịch!

Urdu

ترجمے کے لیے ہر دم تیار

## Large print

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

Follow us on Facebook to receive regular updates, event invitations and news: /HexagonHA

