

SUMMER 2019

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Hexagon



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WELCOME...

TO ANOTHER EDITION OF HOME NEWS.

In this edition, we bring you some changes to the layout, design and content of Home News and we hope that they meet with your approval. We have recently employed a Hexagon resident to help us ensure that Home News is as resident-focused as possible and you can read about the new Home News Editor on page 3.

Hexagon has a major programme of carrying out Aids & Adaptations in peoples' homes. This ensures that people can stay in their properties as their mobility decreases. This can be as simple as ensuring there are grab rails in the bath tub or as complex as changing a bath to a walk-in shower or installing a stair lift. To ensure that our Aids & Adaptations service is as good as it can be, we recently subjected it to a resident-led inspection. Hexagon is at its best when Hexagon residents are driving forward the improvements needed, so I'm particularly grateful to all the Resident Inspectors who helped us with this. You can read more on page 8.

Lastly, over recent weeks, I have spent two Saturday afternoons meeting with and talking to Hexagon residents - first, at Claybank Grove in Lewisham and second at Brickfield Cottages in Plumstead. These events are covered on pages 4 and 12 respectively. Many thanks to all the residents who came out to meet us. It was good to get a lot of feedback from our Lewisham residents on things that we could do to improve further, and it was also pleasing to speak to the many residents at Brickfield Cottages who had returned to their homes following the successful completion of this project.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Home News.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive

MEET YOUR NEW EDITOR

DEAR READERS,

It is my pleasure to write you this page of welcome as your new editor. I am a Hexagon resident who has lived with my growing family in social housing for over 20 years.

For the past 20+ years I have worked as a freelance writer, alongside running my own small business as a community storyteller. I have always worked to enhance community cohesion and sustainability, for example with the charities Mind, Survival International, The National Trust and Greenpeace. In the year 2000 my work won the national Help The Aged Millennium Award. I also helped establish a charity called The Siddhartha Foundation, which has now built a residential school for over 450 homeless orphans in Nepal. I have written several published books, and am hired as a Master Storyteller at every Glastonbury Festival since 1993!

One day after reading Home News, I emailed Lionne Whitfield (Senior Employment Adviser) offering to volunteer on the magazine. I let her know I hold a diploma in photo journalism plus qualifications as a Youth & Community Leader, and have recently completed an Open Degree with the Open University.

Lionne invited me into Hexagon headquarters to meet with Brian Hughes, Resident Involvement Manager. She had informed me that there was a vacant position as Communications Officer at Hexagon. Lionne encouraged me to apply for the post of Communications Officer, as it fitted in perfectly with my desire to re-enter journalism as a part time profession.

I recognised my strengths as an experienced housing association tenant with a background in freelance journalism and community work, but I had no background in housing as a career path. Lionne encouraged me to sign up for a Level II Certificate in Housing Practice course run by London Learning Consortium. I am now close to completing this course. (See student feedback as well as a list of other courses on page 13).

I was delighted when I was appointed to the Communications Officer post. Hexagon were looking for someone to shake the magazine around a bit and bring in some fresh ideas, so I hope you like the changes I have brought to this first issue under my watch.



Adrian Beckingham
Communications Officer



Happy reading! I would love to hear your feedback. Contact me at homenews@hexagon.org.uk or call 020 8778 6699

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW LOOK HOME NEWS. NEW FEATURES INCLUDE:

- A new design for the cover and the Contents page.
- 'Resident Spotlight' which focuses on a resident's hobby, interest or lifestyle (if you would like to be featured please contact me using the details above).
- Environmental issues, including easy ways to make your home more environmentally friendly.
- Articles about Mindfulness and well being.
- A new Kids' Zone including a new art/poetry competition for younger readers.
- A new writing and photography competition for adult readers.
- A healthy, tasty Resident's Recipe (why not send yours in?).
- Original, in-house photography.
- More chances for you to get involved and to win in competitions.
- Home News is now printed on forest friendly paper.
- A new email so residents can contact the editor direct: homenews@hexagon.org.uk

What do you think of your new Home News?

We want to hear your views. Let us know what you think at

homenews@hexagon.org.uk

MEETING OUR RESIDENTS IN LEWISHAM

Saturday 11th May saw another successful Neighbourhood Event take place, this time at Claybank Grove in Lewisham.

DESPITE A DAY OF HIGHLY UNPREDICTABLE WEATHER, marked by sunshine with intermittent downpours of rain, residents and visitors from further afield made sure the event was well attended.

Hexagon residents from across Lewisham came and spoke with staff on issues that they wanted to raise. Residents also got busy with the two workshops that were on offer. Both workshops were run by Hexagon residents.

Denny Senner delivered a practical workshop in planting hanging pots with the ingredients needed to grow and then top a pizza. Adults and children alike crowded round to dig in and make a hanging basket of healthy plants to enjoy in their own homes.

Helen Raphael of Habits London offered two sessions under a crowded gazebo to give participants a 'Mindfulness of Sound' group exercise which was enjoyed by adults and children alike.

●● It's like falling into my inner self and finding my true self. ●● SIAN

One child Sian said, "It's like falling into my inner self and finding my true self." Another, Samuel, added "It's as if I can hear the whole world." Both were experiencing Mindfulness for the first time.

Said Mindfulness coach Helen Raphael, "This was my first time delivering Mindfulness to children and though I know the power of Mindfulness practice, I was astounded and deeply moved by their responses. Mindfulness is for everyone and a life-long goal is to deliver it to all... starting with Hexagon!"

Carol Sloane of Sparkles Face Painting was kept busy, doing a fantastic job decorating the faces of a long line of excited children.

The day also served as a 30 year anniversary since the opening of Claybank Grove as new homes for Hexagon residents. A large cake was cut and shared between all those who attended. ●



Face painting proves a hit with local residents



Residents get stuck in at the hanging baskets workshop

Hexagon residents from across Lewisham gathered for the Neighbourhood Event at Claybank Grove. Activities provided included a Mindfulness taster session, planting a hanging basket to take home, and face painting. Hexagon staff were present to talk with residents and answer any housing queries.



Spinning a web of delight!

OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM **ACHIEVEMENTS**



The Hexagon Customer Service team hard at work.

During 2018/19 we were presented with a total of **65,866** calls (1,504 fewer than last year). Of this number we answered **61,679** calls (1,057 fewer than last year) – so overall a higher percentage were answered.

This breaks down as:

24,418 repairs calls (2,327 more than last year)

16,971 tenancy calls (1,448 fewer than last year)

20,071 switchboard calls (1,951 more than last year)

219 defect calls (15 more than last year)

SERVICE LEVEL:

This is a measure which is widely used in customer contact environments and is linked to our promise to all of our customers that we strive to answer 80% of your calls within 30 seconds. This target is set over a rolling year, which starts in April and ends at the end of March. For 2018/19 we achieved a service level of 82%, exceeding the target by 2%.

ABANDONED CALLS:

During our working day there are some periods where we receive an influx of calls, known as a call spike; which causes some of our customers to wait for their call to be connected. We all lead busy lives, so at times these customers can't wait for an extended period and they put the phone down. These types of calls we class as being abandoned, because through no fault of the customer, our team were busy when the call was made and we were not able to get to that call.

There are times when we all pick up the phone and dial the wrong number, or call a company in error. This information can easily be seen from our report, so these types of abandoned calls are not counted. Our target for abandoned calls is set at 7.5%. For 2018/19 we achieved 6.35% exceeding this target.

SO WHAT ARE THE BEST TIMES TO CALL?

We tend to find we get quieter periods from Tuesday afternoon through to Thursday afternoon. We tend to be busy throughout most of Mondays and Fridays, also during lunchtime between 12pm-2pm. ●

We achieved a Service level of **82%** against our target of 80% and an abandoned call rate of **6.35%** against our target of 7.5%.

We achieved a Service level of **100%** for repair emails dealing with all **6,346** (761 more than last year) within 1 working day against our target of 3 working days.

INVITATION TO JOIN NEW RESIDENTS' GROUP

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Hexagon are looking for new ways where residents can play a part in our strategy and policy agenda. Our current and future work is guided by our strategies and policies and we want these to be scrutinised by residents to make sure that these are fit for purpose. To achieve that, we are setting up a new group called the Residents Strategy and Policy Scrutiny Group.

This new group will look over major policies, such as the Development Strategy or the Repairs Policy, to make sure that these reflect the needs of all residents. Residents on the new group will be able to challenge areas where the strategy or policy may look flimsy, and also suggest ideas for strengthening the policy. In this way, with Hexagon and residents working together, Hexagon will be guided by strategies and policies which will be resident-focused and which will meet the varied needs of all residents.

The new Residents Strategy and Policy Scrutiny Group will be made up of 8 to 12 residents amongst which there will be places reserved for at least one supported housing resident, one Co-op resident, and one leaseholder. It is expected that the new group would meet between six and eight times a year.

There will be training opportunities made available which will help residents to play a full and active part in the new group.

WHERE YOU COME IN?

This is where you come in. We are looking for residents who are willing to join the new group and who are willing to work together to help shape Hexagon's policies and strategies.

You'll be working alongside other residents on the group helping to comment on and make suggestions on key policy areas. In this way you will have an influence in the service that Hexagon provides.

There are no particular skills or knowledge necessary, just your enthusiasm and a commitment to the time required to take part in the new group.

HOW TO JOIN?

If you would like to be part of the Residents Strategy and Policy Scrutiny Group please send a brief statement (no more than 150 words) on why you would like to join the new group, along with your name, address and contact details. Then send to getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk by Friday 9th August.

We will contact you after that date to let you know the next steps. ●



RESIDENTS INSPECT AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

The latest service our inspection team reviewed was the Aids and Adaptations process.

AN AID AND ADAPTATION IS WHERE HEXAGON WILL MAKE CHANGES TO A HOME

to help a resident or a member of the household to live independently. Examples of this include making it easier to get in and out of the home, assistance with getting up and down stairs or to make the use of the bathroom easier. The Residents Inspection team looked at larger, high value aids and adaptation works - like changing a bath to a walk in shower - which are managed by Hexagon's Stock Improvement Team.

The inspection team looked at 10 separate adaptations to see if Hexagon were meeting our published service standard. This was done by looking at records about the adaptation, speaking to residents who had an adaptation completed and interviewing the Service Manager. Following this in-depth assessment of the service, the team came up with seven recommendations about where they felt Hexagon could improve the service to residents.

Some of the recommendations made by the Residents Inspectors team were as follows:

- Better record keeping and communication were needed for residents who request an aid and adaptation to be done. The inspection team found examples of residents being told that they were due to have an adaptation which then didn't get completed within expected timescales.
- Inspectors recommended that proper checks must be made on how the work is progressing, and then inspect the work on completion. Inspectors found real inconsistency between the inspected cases once the work was checked and very few checks were made by Hexagon staff on completion of the aid and adaptation works. The inspectors felt that all adaptations should be inspected on completion.
- The inspection team found that no customer satisfaction data was collected once the works had been completed. The inspectors recommended that to ensure that tenants are happy with the adaptation and to look for areas of improvement, that satisfaction surveys must be done for all aid and adaptations in the future.



Aids and Adaptations enable elderly or disabled residents to remain in their homes.

Images supplied by Hexagon staff

Aids and Adaptations is a really important service to enable elderly or disabled residents to remain in their homes. The inspection team are pleased that all seven recommendations have been accepted by the Stock Improvement Team and are now being acted upon.

By working together in partnership, residents are helping Hexagon to ensure that people who wish to remain in their home are having the vital changes made to allow this to happen. With better monitoring and checks now put in place the service received by residents will be improved. ●

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SUPPORT SERVICE

Sometimes it can be hard to know where to start when planning your future.

BECAUSE WE UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT WORK IS TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY, WE HAVE A DEDICATED EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING TEAM.

Our team offer personalised support, information, advice and guidance to our residents and their families, including those on Universal Credit. You can also find out about future job, training and work experience opportunities.

If you'd like an informal chat about how we can help you, simply call us on 020 8768 7915 or email us on llw@hexagon.org.uk

NOT IN WORK?

Whatever your situation, the team can help you by offering support with:

- career planning, job searching, CV writing and interview techniques
- volunteering
- getting back to work
- advising you on how to deal with problems in your past, for example if you have a criminal record
- apprenticeships, training, work experience and qualifications
- grants that help with learning or job opportunities
- managing your own business and meeting the Department for Work and Pensions, earning expectations

ALREADY HAVE A JOB BUT WANTING TO FIND BETTER WORK?

The Community Investment team can also work with you to help you find better work or move your career forward. For some residents this can mean:

- increasing their earnings through better pay or more hours
- finding more secure work (for example, moving away from zero hour or fixed-term contracts)



Lionne Whitfield, Hexagon
Senior Employment Advisor.

Contact Lionne
call **020 8768 7915**
or email
llw@hexagon.org.uk

- finding work closer to home to reduce travel costs or to fit around caring for children or family members
- changing to a sector where there are good career progression opportunities for higher paid or higher skilled jobs

WE CAN HELP YOU BY OFFERING SUPPORT WITH:

- Interview skills
- Writing or updating CV
- Confidence building
- 121 support ...and more

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AT NEWSTEAD ROAD

The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, better known as 'Diversity Day' is a United Nations sanctioned holiday, celebrated throughout the world on the 21st May.

THE AIM IS TO HELP COMMUNITIES UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF CULTURAL AND OTHER FORMS OF DIVERSITY

so as to learn how to live together in harmony. This helps to bridge the gap between individuals so they can better identify their role and value in society. The Diversity Day supports individuals to feel included and valued as part of society. Within Mental Health, diversity focuses on respect and social inclusion with the aim to eliminate isolation and address some of the stigma associated with mental illness.

Mental health problems vary across different groups and communities. The cultural context affects the way in which communities talk about mental health and how its members can access services. This has an impact on how Care Services communicate with the people we reach out to, and how we go about ensuring that a diverse range of people take part. It is important for us to acknowledge how cultural backgrounds and differences can impact on a person's identity and their experience of mental health.

●● I liked the way things were done and organised. I liked the type of quizzes though I did not take part myself. I appreciated the opportunity to share the event with others. ●● SM

Newstead Road is one of Hexagon's Care Homes based in Lee, SE13. At Newstead Road we are proud to have the opportunity to work with residents and staff from various cultural backgrounds. We use this as a tool to help fashion the way in which we provide services to residents, putting them at the centre whilst facilitating them to take control of their lives. This helps residents to feel a sense of purpose and self-worth which supports them to rebuild their confidence. Consequently, the barriers and stigmas relating to their experiences can gradually be reduced. Newstead Road aims to provide access to equal opportunities which promotes social inclusion, reduces stigma and improves the mental health and wellbeing for all our residents.

On 13th May Newstead Road held a special Diversity themed bake off competition. The challenge was for the residents to create something that represented their background or culture. ST and GB took part. ST chose to make a sticky gingerbread cake and GB made a Bajan Sweet Bread. Staff had the pleasure of tasting the finished cakes and the difficult task of voting for their favourite. It was very close. The winner was ST with only one point in it!

On the 21st May staff arranged a party and prepared a wide variety of cultural dishes from the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the UK. Our eclectic dishes this year included Sushi, Lamb Curry, Jollof Rice, Plantain, Jerk Chicken, Jellied Eels, Banana Flapjacks and a Victoria Sponge. Staff and residents came together to try different dishes. Food is a fantastic way to come together and relate to one another. In trying food from different places we can gain an insight into one another's culture and traditions. We certainly did this. Everything was polished off - even, would you believe it, the jellied eels!

A member of the support staff, Iasia, opened the party with a beautiful poem called 'Harmony is the Key' and then gave a talk on the meaning of Diversity. Music Therapist Melissa worked with residents to choose and practice a song to perform. Residents chose 'If I Had a Hammer' which MS rewrote to reflect diversity. Melissa played the keyboard, MS played the drums and other residents and staff were given a variety of instruments and the lyrics to join in. It was a lot of fun!

The recovery staff member, Jessica, ended the party with diversity themed quizzes. There was a guess-the-food round with dishes such as Cou Cou and Flying Fish, Haggis and Masala Dosa. Music round included music from artists such as Nena, Sugarhill Gang, Lady Saw, The Dubliners, The Clash and a great track from a Hindi romance film. Residents from Kirkwood Rd joined in for food and games.

This year was another great year and it was a real pleasure to see everyone working together to share experiences and aspects of their culture. ●



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT:
MS on the bongos, Newstead Rd staff and
resident MS with dishes from around the world.

Photos supplied by Newstead Road

●● I never knew about Diversity Day until I came to Newstead Road. It is an important day. It's nice to have all different cultures coming together and sharing their opinions and it was beautiful to actually take part. I've participated in the last two events by cooking food and playing music. Performing this year was very uplifting; I composed the music and played the drums with Melissa on the keyboard. ●● MS



BELOW: A selection of
instruments and dishes for
staff and residents to try



HARMONY IS THE KEY

When voices blend together
They make the sweetest noise
Different races united
Would be a sight for sore eyes
Harmony then is the key
To the door of peace, and unity

For a ship's smooth crossing
Oceans must be calm
To gain respect and friendship
Wish not your neighbour harm
Harmony then is the key
The way to a friendly community

People's skin colour may graduate
Now that's no reason to foster hate
From pallid White, to darkest Black
Neither should foster racial attack
Below the skin, try to discover
Show the will, get to know each other
Harmony then is the key
For the co-existence of you and me

Ainsley McKenzie

●● I enjoyed baking the cake and winning! Joining in with the music and trying all of the different food was fun. I also enjoyed taking part in the quizzes. ●● ST

Check out our new
Poetry, Prose and Photo
Competition on page 21

A SUMMER BIG LUNCH OF BIG SMILES

One Bank Holiday Monday in 2016 a newly built housing estate of approximately 40 properties, based in Plumstead, suffered a ground collapse in the driveway to a resident's home.

AS A RESULT HEXAGON LOGISTICALLY AND FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED A MASS EVACUATION

of all residents – all of whom had only recently moved into their brand new homes at Brickfield Cottages (SE18) – whilst a long process of essential engineering work was undertaken.

On Saturday 8th June this year residents came together for an event called Summer Big Lunch at Brickfield Cottages. This was a celebration marking the return of residents to their homes, apart from a handful of residents who opted to stay in their replacement properties.

The celebration included a tasty buffet of food prepared by Hexagon resident Hatice Okudan, who says, "My house was the last to move out – and of the many who returned, I was the last to come back. I have to say Hexagon have been really good the way they dealt with it all."



ABOVE: Resident Hatice Okudan and her daughter (left) with resident Shakhira Cosshall (right). All the food (below left) was prepared by Hatice. LEFT: Hexagon resident George Nalbant whipped up free ice creams from his van all afternoon.



Another resident Shakhira Cosshall said, "The hole appeared in a neighbour's driveway a day or so before my due date for my new baby! Our home was not in the immediate vicinity so it was about seven months before we moved to another two bedroom house. The temporary home was smaller than my home at Brickfield Cottages, and was on a busy road with traffic rather than the quiet cul-de-sac that we have here. We have built in cupboards here too which makes a difference when you need the space for a growing family. So we felt a bit cramped in the other house but are overall very happy with all Hexagon's efforts. I am very glad to be back in our original house again. This challenge helped bring our community together."

The celebration also included a face painter. Another big hit was the free ice cream van run by ice cream man and Hexagon resident George Nalbant, serving throughout the afternoon among a sea of smiles. ●

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE

Housing Management Course

Here we present feedback from two Hexagon residents who are currently studying the Level II Certificate in Housing Practice run by London Learning Consortium.

SHONA MUWANGA says, "I first became involved with Hexagon early in 2015. After 15 years as a Civil Servant I was going through a process of redundancy from my job with central government, so I began volunteering with Hexagon to keep my mind occupied. I have been involved in a variety of roles such as being on the Readers' Panel for Home News, as Secretary to the Residents' Forum, plus involvement in Estate Gradings. In addition, and in order to gain some wider work experience, I volunteered my time helping out on the Customer Service desk.

"I enjoyed all of my involvement roles with Hexagon and it gave me an insight into how the world of housing works. I wanted to build on my voluntary experience, so I decided to enrol onto the Housing course which I am currently studying in order to obtain the knowledge and qualifications that will help move me forward.

"I am glad to say the course has reached all my expectations and beyond. One of the biggest things I have learnt on the course is why and how housing associations work with agencies (such as Local Authorities) to meet all the needs of their diverse residents. It has been interesting also to learn the legalities around housing provision and how complex this can be - and this has given me a greater understanding of how housing works! The course has certainly put areas, such as allocating accommodation for a particular housing need, into perspective - for instance, understanding the range of housing options that are available for people with different housing needs. The course has also helped me to practice writing reports, which is a skill that is helpful in so many fields of life. On top of that I have come to better understand the different types of job opportunities that exist in housing. Using the qualification from this course I would like to apply to become a member of staff at Hexagon. It will happen one day!"

FOLU AJAKAIYE, another student on the same housing course added, "I started the course because I wanted to climb up the ladder to the next level in my life. I want to become a housing officer in the near future. The course was as I expected - I knew it would involve a lot of paper work, writing and research. I have learnt about the different types of tenures - private and public landlords, aspects around social housing, and so on. I can see myself moving forward on completion of the course because gaining a qualification is a great way to develop my career prospects. Qualifications at this level will give me a basic understanding of housing and introduce me to some of the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in professional housing related activities." ●



ABOVE: Hexagon residents from the Certificate in Housing Practice course

Photo by Lionne Whitfield

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 Childhood Illnesses
Common Health Conditions
Customer Service
Customer Service for Hospitality
Customer Service in Care
Data Protection & Security
Dementia Care
Diabetes
Dignity & Safeguarding
End of Life Care
English / Mathematics
Equality & Diversity
Falls Prevention Awareness
Health & Social Care Professions
Infection Control
Information, Advice or Guidance
Lean Organisation Management
Learning Disabilities
Mental Health Awareness
Nutrition & Health
Personal Exercise, Health & Nutrition
Retail Knowledge
Safe Handling of Medication
Safeguarding & Prevent
Specific Learning Difficulties
Team Leading
Understanding Autism
Warehousing & Storage
Wine Services

For more information, please contact **Lionne Whitfield**:

Call: **0208 768 7915** Email: **lwhitfield@hexagon.org.uk**

 **LEARNING CURVE GROUP**

INTERNET SAFETY

Recent research has shown that the majority of people who choose never to go online, resist it because of a fear of being scammed.

HOWEVER WITH THE RISE IN ONLINE ACTIVITY – from social networking with friends and family, to booking a doctor’s appointment, online shopping, watching films, finding employment or contacting your local council – those who do not go online risk being sidelined and therefore isolated from many of modern life’s opportunities.

As the drive to get more residents using computers and the internet continues, here are 8 tips to help make sure that when you are on the internet you are safe. If you follow these tips, then you will be on your way to making sure your internet experience is one that is safe and hopefully enjoyable. ●

If you would like assistance with any of the suggestions in the panel on the right, please contact your Community Investment Officer on 07908 434 805 to arrange to speak with a Hexagon Digital Champion.



STAY SAFE ONLINE

- Use strong passwords – with a combination of letters, numbers and special characters – and change your passwords regularly.
- You would not choose to walk through a dangerous neighbourhood. Be equally choosy about what types of online sites you visit and what you download on to your computer – if it seems strange or not reputable, don’t browse there or download!
- Keep your anti-virus software up to date. Lots of free virus software options are available, such as AVG. These offer important basic protection, plus it will update automatically to help keep you secure.
- Clear your cache and cookies if you are using a public website that involves a password or any details that you wouldn’t want to share with a stranger.
- Keep your computer’s privacy settings “On”.
- When purchasing something online, check that both the product as well as the seller have good references from other buyers. A Customer Review tab should be available to access this information. When in doubt, do not buy.
- Take care who you meet online. Just like in real life, people online can pretend they are someone they are not. Use caution when meeting online strangers, and perhaps choose only to associate online with people you know in real life.
- Self-regulate the information you put about yourself online. If you would not share certain information about yourself with strangers in the street, do not share it with virtual strangers online either!

MINDFULNESS IN EVERYDAY MOMENTS

Mindfulness is not magic, a miracle or mystery...

HOWEVER THE BENEFITS AND OUTCOME CAN FEEL QUITE MIRACULOUS, MYSTERIOUS AND MAGICAL!

Residents and visitors at the Lewisham Neighbourhood Event (see Page 4) experienced the simplistic marvel of Mindfulness through a very brief introduction to theory and a Mindfulness of Sound practice.

Mindfulness enables YOU to discover who YOU truly are... your gift in life... so you're aware of your true potential which YOU can reach once YOU dedicate yourself to routine practice. Mindfulness empowers YOU to master your mind and make decisions to live the life YOU desire.

Adults everywhere operate on 'autopilot' with a constant to-do-list which means often missing out on the joys of the present moment. When you're in present moment awareness your nervous system is in 'rest & digest' mode... the optimum condition for healing and restoration. Mindfulness allows you to pause and become aware of everything you sense around you... and inside you... more importantly your 'habits of mind'. The mind influences everything you think about, feel and do.

When you understand that thoughts drive stress and mental distress, like depression and anxiety, you can make the decision to experience more joy thereby alleviating mental suffering.

The Neighbourhood Event Mindfulness taster session was the first instalment of a holistic health initiative encouraging residents to sign-up for the prospective full programme. I'm also collaborating on another Hexagon project with Love

London Working Senior Employment Advisor Lionne Whitfield 'Mindfulness & Motivation Workshop for Work' preparing people to start or change their career.

"You cannot control the waves... but you can learn to surf!"
- Jon Kabat-Zinn. Mindfulness truly changes lives! ●

To book yourself onto the next workshop, please call Lionne Whitfield at Hexagon on 020 8768 7915.

Helen Raphael BSc, MSc, MBACP
Founder & Managing Director
HABITS of London C.I.C.



●● Mindfulness is for everyone and a life-long goal is to deliver it to all... starting with Hexagon! ●●



The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) gauges how environmentally friendly the actual building is



CO-OP SEMINAR

In April, Hexagon held its annual Co-op Seminar.

Co-op residents live in Hexagon owned properties that are managed by a managing agent called a co-operative.

HEXAGON HAS 293 CO-OP MANAGED PROPERTIES WHICH REPRESENTS 7.5% OF THE HEXAGON STOCK. This annual seminar gives co-op residents and workers the opportunity to get together and to hear from Hexagon staff about key issues that affect the properties they manage.

This year David Collick, Hexagon's Property Service Director, spoke about two key issues. One was about making the co-op managed properties greener, as Hexagon has put plans into place to have all properties at SAP 65 or above.

The 'SAP' (Standard Assessment Procedure) level awarded to homes is similar to the energy ratings given nowadays to domestic appliances such as fridges and washing machines. The SAP gauges how environmentally friendly the actual building is, with 0 being the lowest score and 100 the highest.

On average Hexagon properties received a SAP rating of about 72 out of 100 - this is above the national average of about 68 out of 100. This is a good

achievement especially considering some of our homes are much older properties built without the environment in mind. The SAP rating measures how much energy a property consumes, and as many co-op properties are older style dwellings this is of great importance.

Measures to improve a building's SAP rating can include insulation and draft proofing, and Hexagon has a programme to introduce these measures particularly in our oldest properties.

The second presentation concerned Hexagon's 'Decent Homes Standard'. This is the work Hexagon does to ensure that all kitchens and bathrooms are maintained to the government set 'decent homes standard' which includes co-op managed properties.

Residents at the Seminar raised questions about both topics and a good discussion was held about the impact these issues had on co-op managed properties. The event was really well received by all attendees and the Resident Involvement are already looking forward to planning next year's event. ●

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

Welcome to our first Resident Spotlight – a new feature to celebrate the diversity of Hexagon residents, their hobbies, interests or lifestyles.

OUR FIRST RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT FEATURES

SOLOMON TETTEH. Solomon lives in London but his original hometown was a place called Kpone in the African country of Ghana. Here Solomon explains about the techniques that he uses to achieve a balance in his life.

“Back in my homeland I would go up to young men who had strayed into the misuse of alcohol and other drugs. I would talk with them about life’s potential. I would try to instil in them a sense that a lot of life is about how you take it, and how important it is to choose the right life tools. Happiness is not about technology or your life on screen, nor a life changed by drugs and alcohol. It is about how we are inwardly. This is what defines us as human beings.

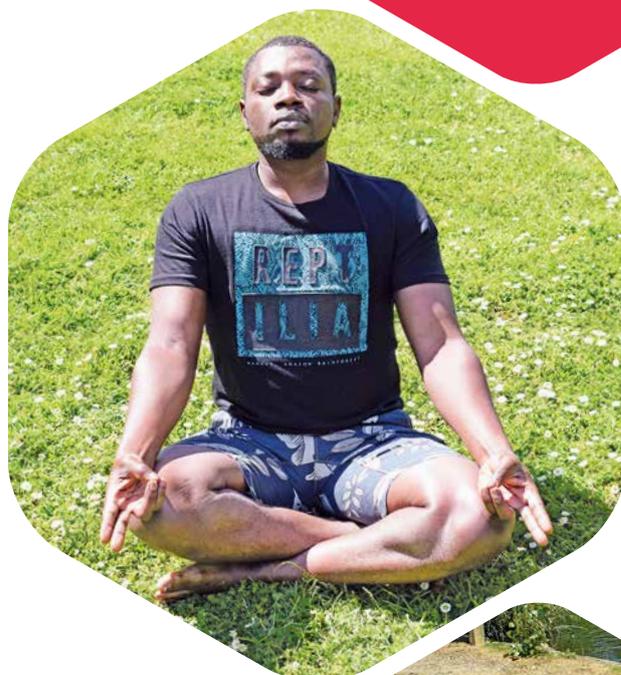
“To help myself and others lead more meaningful lives, I use a system I call ‘the four intelligences’. These are intellect, ego, memories, and something which in my language we name Fenn. Intellect is your brain; ego is a storehouse of your views about yourself and your identity; memories can be stored within our mind and provide us with a framework to live our lives within an explainable context; and fenn is a nothing-ness, free of ego and identity.

“Recognising these four intelligences and how they work can help us build more positive lives. We can become ‘builders’, consciously using our four intelligences to construct more self control over the kind of life we live. I used these four intelligences in street work scenarios to try to give people some tools to work with. I give them a tool you might call a type of meditation, to help them realise all the mind and body is a network. What we feed into the body and mind is crucial.

“The spinal chord plays a vital role in the general health of the body. To help it deliver its force, always sit erect so the back is neither forward nor sloping. If you find your back begins to bend, calmly straighten again. Focusing on your sitting posture and breathing will help centre you.

“Sitting with a straight spine and focusing calmly on an even, deep breath in and out will help release your angers, doubts and frustrations. Some people I have worked with found this exercise ended their dependency on alcohol and other drugs.

“We can’t build super-humans, but I want people to see that being human is super. We have it within us to become our own script writer, director and producer, using our intelligences to forge our own path.” ●



Pictured: Solomon performing his technique.



If you are an artist, musician, crafts person, or have some other topic about yourself which you would like to see featured in Resident Spotlight please email homenews@hexagon.org.uk

TRY IT!

1. Sit on a chair in a comfortable position with an erect back. Close your eyes.
2. With each hand, join the tip of the ring and little finger with tip of the thumb.
3. Apply a gentle pressure on it.
4. Keep the remaining two fingers straight.
5. Place both hands on the knee.
6. Inhale slowly repeating, “I’m not the body,” – then exhale slowly saying, “I’m not even the mind.” Repeat for some minutes.
7. After a while move on to “I acquired the body”, and “I acquired the mind”.

WATER WISE

People of a certain age may be old enough to remember our primary school teachers telling us no other planets had water on them?

I PUT UP MY HAND AND ASKED, "How do we know there is no water on other planets?" Well I got no prizes for asking. But there is a prize up for grabs in this article!

My teacher answered, "Science!" That hardly seemed a suitable answer. How could our human science assume to know everything about other worlds?

Since my school days water has been discovered on other planets. In 2015, NASA confirmed water exists on Mars. Then ice glaciers were discovered on our moon in mountains that never see the light!

It can be easy to forget how special water is, when it is available at the turn of a tap. I remember my travel to mountain villages in the Himalayas, where Nepalese children and elders walked hours to fetch water from the nearest well. Water is heavy when carried a long distance. You can be sure those villagers did not waste a drop!

The average person in the UK uses an astonishing 145 litres of water per day. That is almost 100 full kettles! Water usage is highest in summertime, so it is useful to remember water is not processed and delivered to our taps for free!

An average bath uses 80 litres of water and costs about 17 pence. Flushing the loo uses 7 litres of water and costs your wallet 1.5 pence. A garden sprinkler or hose can use 540 litres of water and costs about £1.14 each hour.

Add these costs up across a month and just imagine how much you could save by being Water Wise! You can reduce your water usage without changing the ways you use it.

Many water companies offer free devices to help you save on your energy bills, as well as reducing your household's water consumption. For example Thames Water offer a range of water saving products for free - all with free delivery too! These include eco-showerheads to save a family of four about £90 on annual bills. The 'Save-A-Flush' device can save the same family up to £18. The kitchen swivel tap could save as much as one litre per minute!

Heather Atkin, of the Water Efficiency team at Thames Water, assures us all devices are easy to install without



Install free water saving devices



Only fill your kettle to the amount of water you really need

ONLINE WATER CALCULATORS

Most water companies now offer online water calculators to help households work out how much water they're using and recommend appropriate water-saving devices.

For example the link at Thames Water is: www.thameswater.co.uk/watercalculator

Here is the link to the water saving devices at Thames Water: www.watersavingdevices.thameswater.co.uk/Product

Or call Thames Water Customer Service to book a home visit on **0800 316 9800** (If you are with a different water provider please follow the link below)

Other water companies run equivalent schemes. If unsure who your provider is, follow this link and type in your postcode: www.water.org.uk/advice-for-customers/find-your-supplier

Get Water Wise. Go to your water provider's website and type 'water saving' in their search bar. Then order some free products and begin saving water and money!

professional help. "All the products are designed to be installed by the general public although I'd suggest that the tap products are slightly more difficult. I'm no plumber and I managed to fit them in my home, but I wouldn't expect my Nan to feel confident installing them in her home!"

If you are a Thames Water customer they may be able to offer you a free Smart Home Visit to help you understand how much water you use and install free water saving products. ●

COMPETITION

We are offering a £20 Love2Shop Voucher to the reader who can list the most uses of water in an average person's everyday life in modern London with suggestions of how to reduce usage.

Deadline for entries is:
Friday 16th August

Email your entries to getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk
or mail it in to:

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

Showers
use less water
than baths

Watering cans
use less water
than garden
sprinklers

The hotter
your water, the
more energy
it is using

Humans are so
reliant on fresh water,
it is about 75% of our
body weight!

Did you know
that over 70% of the
Earth's surface is
covered with water,
but 95% of this
is salt water?

Report
leaks

Switch
off tap while
brushing
your
teeth

Turn off
dripping
taps

SUMMER'S HERE

But it needn't break the bank

THE LONG SUMMER HOLIDAY IS ALMOST UPON US.

And while the holidays are a great opportunity to spend time as a family, there's no escaping that it can also be a stressful time for the family budget.

Of course here in London we have a vast number of choices where a great family day out can be easily accessed. For example many museums such as The British Museum have a dedicated Family Team during school holidays where a wide range of free workshops, performances and other interactive activities are often available. Likewise a walk and picnic in a local park, or a visit to a nearby community theatre or art gallery can often be enough to entertain the whole family while not breaking your bank. Lots of communities hold free fun days in their local parks or halls too.

Technology is increasingly helping families find local activities to keep the kids entertained both in the holidays and throughout the year. A number of apps and websites dedicated to helping parents find fun activities for kids are now available.

One example of this is Hoop. This is available to smartphone users via the Apple App Store and Google Play (you can also access it online at hoop.co.uk). Hoop lists tens of thousands of activities for kids up to 11 years of age. The app is completely free to download and use, and it lets you search for activities based on location, your child's age, and the type of activities you are looking for. You can also filter your search by budget, including an option to just search for free activities. Over 1,000,000 families already use the app.

Another example is accessible.co.uk. This website specialises in identifying activities that are accessible for people with disabilities. The site lists a wide range of activities from playgrounds to cinemas, and can be used to find activities for children and adults alike.

Here at the Financial Inclusion Team we wish you all a great summer, and if you do have money worries in the holiday period, we will be more than happy to help. ●



Hexagon's Financial Inclusion team can be reached on 0208 768 7925 or at jherbert@hexagon.org.uk



POETRY, PROSE & PHOTO COMPETITION

Do you have an eye for a great photograph,
and some words to perfectly define it?
How about your teenager?

WE KNOW THERE IS A VAST VARIETY OF TALENT OUT THERE AMONG OUR HEXAGON COMMUNITY! We at Home News are keen to celebrate this fact by offering Poetry, Prose & Photo Competitions which you can enter to hopefully win a prize and see your work published.

Each edition of Home News will publish the winning entries, and give a theme for the following Poetry, Prose & Photo Competition.

For this first competition the theme is:
My Hexagon Summer.

Please send us your photos (up to three per entrant) accompanied by a poem or written caption of no more than 100 words.

Deadline for entries is:
Friday 16th August

It is essential your entry includes your name, address, and age. Entries missing any of this information cannot be counted.

Email your entries to homenews@hexagon.org.uk or mail it in to:
Competitions, Resident Involvement, Hexagon Housing Association, 130-136 Sydenham Road, London, SE26 5JY.

PRIZE!

We are offering a £10 Love2Shop Voucher to one winner who is a young person (age 13 - 17) and one winning adult (age 18+).

Your words and pictures will also be published (alongside your name) in the next edition of Home News.

KIDS' ZONE



ART competition

An art and/or poetry competition for children (aged up to 12) will now be a regular feature in Home News. The theme for this edition is: **SUMMER**

How many different activities can you think of that your family could do for free during the summer holidays at home and away from home too? Write a list (maybe with help from your grown up) and draw a picture of at least one of these.

Email your entries by Friday 16th August to homenews@hexagon.org.uk or mail it in to: **Competitions, Resident Involvement, Hexagon Housing Association, 130 - 136 Sydenham Road, London SE26 5JY.**

Congratulations to Robin Berry (SE5), Alexis Adaja (SE13) and Tony Odukoya (SE1) who each won the Word Search competition in the last issue

PRIZE!

We are offering a **£10 Love2Shop Voucher** to each of three winning children. Your lists and pictures will also be published (alongside your name) in the next edition of Home News.

SUMMER Search

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| August | July |
| Beach | June |
| Bikini | Lotion |
| Boat | Mosquito |
| Camping | Shorts |
| Fan | Sunburn |
| Fishing | Sun tan |
| Hat | Swimming |
| Hot | Tent |
| Ice Cream | Vacation |

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

If you think you can find all the correct words in the word search, cut it out and send back to us at the address above by **Friday 16th August**. Three entries drawn at random will each **win a £10 Love2Shop voucher**.



What favourite fruits will you choose?

Some people add a tiny dash of a favourite drink like ginger ale or fruit juice to give an extra fizz!



Resident's Recipe

Now that summer has arrived, why not treat yourself to my deliciously, healthy, finger-licking organic fruit salad? It's easy to prepare with your brother or sister who will absolutely love it too!

Ingredients

- Your favourite fruits! I have chosen kiwi, mango, strawberries, blackberries, grapes and passion fruit but you can choose whatever fruits you like best!
- Lemons
- Honey

How To Make It

You may need the help of an adult for any cutting or peeling. Make sure you ask them!

- Finely peel the skin off the fruits then cut them into bite size chunks. Larger fruits like the mango will need more chopping, perhaps into quarters (in half then half again). Smaller fruits like strawberries or grapes can simply be cut in half.
- Very small fruits like soft berries can be added whole.
- Slice the fresh lemons in half.
- Place all the chopped fruits in a large bowl.
- Place 3 or 4 tablespoons of organic honey to 1 fresh lemon (you can ask your adult helper to melt these together in the microwave for 5 seconds to bring the flavours out from the fruit more).
- Add a sprinkle of lemon and honey juice over the fruits.
- Once preparation is complete place all chopped ingredients into one large bowl (as shown in the picture) or container and leave to chill in the fridge until ready to serve.

Warning: Adults are to watch and guide the children who are under age very carefully, when using sharp objects to ensure safety.

Enjoy this tasty, healthy summer fruits treat and why not Think Organic!

By Shona Muwanga

COMPETITION TIME

WIN
a £20 shopping
voucher by entering
this edition's
Competition Time

To enter this edition's
Competition Time, simply
answer the following by
Friday 16th August:

1. What are the best times to call Hexagon?
2. Which two key topics were discussed at this year's annual Co-op Seminar.
3. Which recent Hexagon event included a free ice cream man and van?
4. List five different types of recycling
5. List three measures you can take in your home to help prevent fires.

Congratulations to our last edition's winners:

C. Matthews (SE26), A.Badchkam (SE13) and C. Fashina (SE18) who each receive a £20 voucher.

The answers for the previous edition were:

1. Customer Service will give you a questionnaire to assess whether you fit into Band A.
2. Any three of the courses we offer will pass as answers, eg Adult Social Care, Diabetes etc
3. Opportunity to meet Hexagon managers and staff, plus activities for families, food & drink.
4. Residents must approach Hexagon if they wish to keep a pet at their property.
5. 4

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:

homenews@hexagon.org.uk

Three correct entries received by Friday 16th August will be drawn at random and will each receive a £20 shopping voucher. The competition is open to all Hexagon residents. The editor's decision is final.

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**

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**

Follow us for regular updates,
event invitations and news:

 **HexagonHousingAssociation**

 **@HexagonHousing**

TRANSLATE!

Always happy to translate!

Chinese
永遠樂於翻譯！

Eritrean
"ንስተርጉመልኩም ኩሉጊዜ ሕጉሳት ኢና!"

French
Toujours heureux de traduire!

Portuguese
Sempre feliz a traduzir!

Vietnamese
Luôn luôn vui lòng phiên dịch!

Urdu

ترجمے کے لیے ہر دم تیار

LARGE PRINT

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