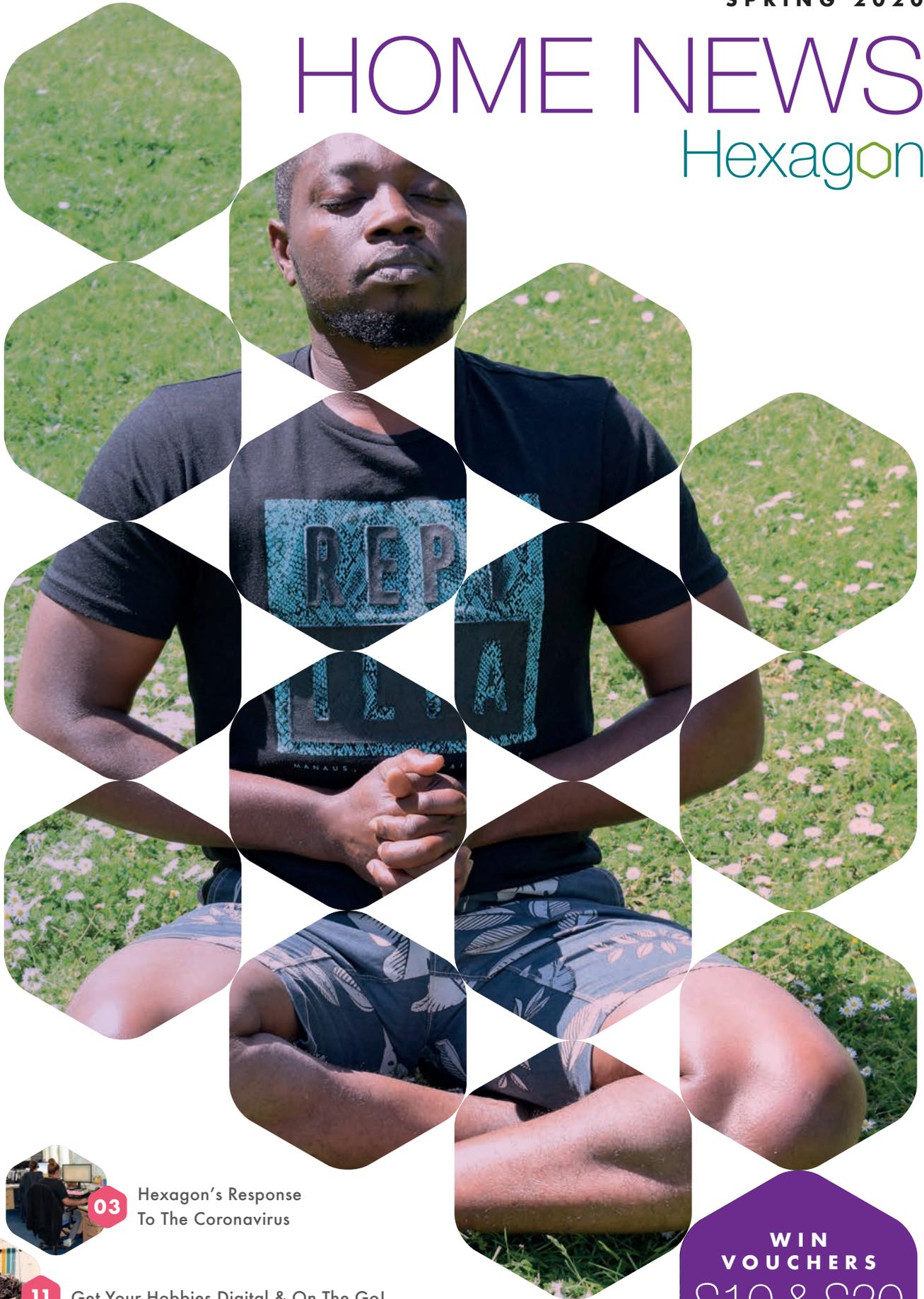


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If you would prefer to receive this magazine digitally instead of by post, simply send your name, address and email address to homenews@hexagon.org.uk

This email address can also be used to write your **Comments To The Editor**.

Follow us online to receive regular updates, event invitations and news:

 /HexagonHA

 @HousingHexagon



READERS' PANEL FEEDBACK

The Readers' Panel are residents who meet quarterly to offer feedback on Home News. Our new editor has worked hard over 12 months, changing the magazine by responding to Readers' Panel feedback. From the comments below, it appears we may be getting it right!

"This is the first issue of its kind. Reading through Home News with a Readers' Panel critical eye, I found throughout perfect grammar, great layout and design, good page sequencing and banners, plus easily readable fonts all with suitable colour backgrounds. All articles are very well written, and genuinely engaging to read. For the first time since becoming involved years ago, I feel redundant as a Readers' Panel member, as I have only praise to offer! I acknowledge what the new editor has done in a relatively short time to make such a dynamic shift to the publication. Absolutely five star journalism, beyond anything I anticipated previously from Home News!" [A. Ingram \(SE4\)](#)

"The change to the cover continues to welcome people to look inside. I agree this is proper journalism, but also very easy to follow with no jargon. More residents will begin reading the magazine now because before it was just the same old thing rehashed. Now it has this new structure and focus, and is genuinely more interesting." [S. Muwanga \(SE13\)](#)

"From start to finish this edition of Home News is nicely laid out and clearly illustrated, people will want to look further." [C. Matthews \(SE26\)](#)

To comment to the editor – or be part of the next Readers' Panel – email homenews@hexagon.org.uk



Home News
Editor Adrian
Beckingham

HEXAGON'S RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS

I hope this finds you well. We have been busy in recent weeks changing our ways of working in response to the Government's guidance on fighting the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

As a result of the Government's advice on social distancing, our work with residents has changed pretty fundamentally and will continue to evolve as the guidance is updated. This will take flexibility from everyone, but I am sure all residents will appreciate the unique situation we are all now facing together.

Below are some key changes we have had to introduce at time of writing.

- **The office is now closed, with staff working remotely from home computers.** Rare exceptions to this only apply where office access is deemed essential for specific, time limited activities.
- In our **two Care homes**, where around 24 staff largely provide 1-1 support, work is progressing in the context of advice around social distancing and we are limiting social interaction in the common areas.
- **The Customer Service Centre is operating as per normal**, with all calls being diverted to home workers.
- Most scheduled Hexagon meetings are continuing using our **tele-conference facilities** and video **conferencing**.
- **All routine repairs are currently postponed.** We will regularly review the position with our responsive repairs contractors re **carrying out emergency and urgent repairs only**.
- Our **planned repair works is winding down**, focusing on 'making safe'. **We will not undertake new planned repairs until the guidance allows us to do so. Many builders merchants originally closed** on Government guidance, limiting access to building materials, but some have now re-opened, easing the availability somewhat.
- Where residents are self-isolating, and require an emergency repair, contractors will only enter your home with the necessary personal protective equipment.
- Estate inspections have reduced in scope to **focus on statutory health and safety matters such as fire safety. All gas inspection work is continuing, as this is deemed essential by the Government's Health and Safety Executive to avoid an increase in carbon monoxide risks to residents.**
- We are **contacting all our over 70s and other vulnerable residents by phone** to ensure they are well and to consider further support where needed. We have established some great partnerships with community groups and agencies who are assisting us in this work.
- Our **rent collection work is carrying on as normal**, though we are mindful that in the current circumstances we need to be flexible where individuals are facing hardship through no fault of their own. The Government has announced some helpful measures in relation to extended welfare support work but the benefits system is overloaded at present so this will take some time to work through. We are on hand to work with everyone experiencing financial challenges and to assist with access to benefits where appropriate. Please contact us if you need assistance.

This article continues on page 5

HEXAGON HAS NO PLACE FOR HATE CRIMES

A new piece of legislation called The Equality Act came into force in 2010.

It brought together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act, designed to uphold the 'protected characteristics' of various social groups within society against prejudice or abuse. The Act provides Britain with a more readily applied legal framework under discrimination law to protect the rights of individuals against unfair treatment, and to advance a fair and equal society.

Hexagon takes pride in having a diverse resident base. So in January 2020 Hexagon won a court case to evict a resident from an estate in Croydon, who was found guilty of racial harassment by a senior judge at the Central London County Court. The case involved the perpetrator and members of their household using racist language and other means to harass and abuse a resident of Muslim heritage over a 5 year period.

The effect of racial harassment on the victim's lifestyle was devastating. The victim and the victim's household were in a permanent state of trauma. They were unable to peacefully enjoy their home as they were constantly racially harassed and abused. This also had a crushing impact on other residents who had to witness the level of abuse and harassment.

The victim repeatedly called the police to report the crimes. Regrettably, the police did not take any action against the perpetrator. However, Hexagon decided to take action. A notice of seeking possession was served and legal proceedings were issued against the perpetrator.

Several residents who had witnessed the racial harassment and abuse over the years were willing to support the victim and Hexagon. They gave written statements to our staff and solicitor. Some even attended court and gave evidence in the witness stand. The witnesses who supported the defendant came from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds, which is

also representative of the estate as a whole. We thank all who had the courage to come forward, and appreciate them as a testament to a multi-cultural society willing to work and live together in peace and mutual support.

Hexagon were in constant communication with all the residents involved to offer reassurance and keep them updated every step of the way with the proceedings. We arranged taxis and lunch vouchers for their court attendance.

We successfully obtained an outright possession order against the resident, on the grounds of their racial harassment against another resident. This means the perpetrator will be evicted. The message is Hexagon will not tolerate these crimes, but strives always to promote healthy and happy living among our very diverse resident community.

Racial harassment/abuse is a hate crime. In 2018/19, there were 103,379 hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales, an increase of 10 per cent compared with 94,121 offences in 2017/18.

We urge residents to be aware of the hidden injuries of racial harassment/abuse. These behaviours can also have a serious impact on communities. We urge any of our residents who may be suffering from prejudice or abuse not suffer in silence. Hate crimes should be reported to the police and to Hexagon. Where we have any evidence we will not hesitate to take action, including legal action against any resident who engages in this type of behaviour. ●

HEXAGON'S RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

- **Void repairs (empty properties) and new lettings are continuing at present**, though we are adapting the way we work to minimise physical contacts.
- Our **employment support work will continue**, but will be more phone based than usual.
- **Gardening services such as grass cutting has been temporarily postponed** where they are not deemed to be essential, but this is being kept under review as time marches on and the good weather arrives. We will continue to ensure any hazards are removed where they compromise resident health and safety and our cleaning service has been ramped up to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in the communal areas.

These are clearly challenging times for everyone, but I want to assure you that we are doing everything in our power to strike the right balance between our desire to provide you with the best service we can, alongside our heightened obligation to keep you, your families, and our staff safe. We hope to return to normal service delivery as soon as Government Guidance allows, but in the meantime, thanks to all our residents for their understanding and patience at this challenging time.

We continue to work on ensuring clear **communications** for residents and others, and this is currently rolling out on our website and elsewhere. Visit our website or go to our social media for regular updates:

Website: www.hexagon.org.uk

Facebook: [HexagonHousingAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/HexagonHousingAssociation)

Twitter: [@HousingHexagon](https://twitter.com/HousingHexagon)

Tom McCormack
Chief Executive

★
SEE THE
SOCIAL MEDIA
COMPETITION
ON PAGE 13



Antisocial Behaviour Officer Melonie Wheatle (pictured left) and Neighbourhood Officer Lisa Cole championed this human rights case, working tirelessly to ensure fair justice was done for the Croydon estate.

If you would like to find more information about The Equality Act please look online here: www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act-2010/what-equality-act

If you are experiencing unfair treatment due to your race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, please contact Melonie Wheatle, our Antisocial Behaviour Officer, by emailing mwheatle@hexagon.org.uk or Lisa Cole, our Leasehold Officer by emailing lcole@hexagon.org.uk

Alternatively, call our switchboard on 020 8778 6699 or contact your Neighbourhood Officer.

HEXAGON'S NEW CORPORATE PLAN

We are currently in the process of working on our new Corporate Plan for 2020-2023, so I thought it might be helpful to outline some of our key priorities going forward.

- Getting our repairs service right will remain a key focus for us. We will also spend more time and energy in ensuring that our service charge processes and communications to you improve.
- An increasing number of our residents are moving onto Universal Credit. It is important that we increase the resource to support these residents in making the transition. This is to ensure both that they sustain their tenancies, and that we sustain our income stream to fund our core services such as repairs.
- We have long been committed to engaging with our residents to ensure that we work with you to improve service delivery. Our aim is to improve on that even further and to ensure that the residents' voice is heard within Hexagon at every level, including at our Board.
- In addition to the telephone service and face-to-face services that we provide, we will be looking to extend choice to our residents who would like to communicate with us using digital means such as email, texting, and social media. We will be working with residents to develop a plan that suits their communication needs.
- Another key priority is to do all that we can do in respect of fire safety, so that all residents feel safe and secure in their homes.
- We will continue to build new homes, both for genuinely affordable rent and shared ownership, but we will need to carefully manage our sales risks to ensure we are successful in building rented homes that are truly affordable.
- We have always been committed to environmental sustainability. In the context of the current climate emergency, we are doubling up on our efforts to reduce carbon emissions in our work.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive



Tom McCormack
Chief Executive.

Jon Fleckney, Hexagon's Fire Safety Project Manager, taking evidence of a fire risk during a Fire Risk Assessment. You can read more about Hexagon's continuing commitment to fire safety on Pages 16 to 17.



CORONAVIRUS AND YOUR MONEY

The coronavirus outbreak has inevitably been the dominant item in the news recently. And quite rightly, most of the focus has been on the immediate health issues and the attempts being made to minimize risks.

But the outbreak also creates uncertainty for many people around their money. Many businesses are severely impacted by the outbreak, and that in turn is having an impact on people's jobs and income.

The Financial Inclusion Team here at Hexagon is available to offer advice and information to residents through the current situation. If your income has been impacted by the outbreak, we can help you better understand your options. This might be particularly important if you are worried about falling into debt, or are finding yourself needing to navigate the benefit system for the first time (or for the first time in a long time).

The government has introduced changes to the benefit system to make it easier for people to access support if they are impacted by the response to the virus (including classing people who are self-isolating based on government advice as having

limited capability for work). There is also a scheme to help businesses to help pay staff wages when they are not working due to the outbreak, to encourage them to retain staff.

At the time of writing, the details of some of the above schemes have yet to be fully worked through, and the situation is continuing to evolve daily. If you need advice and information about how the coronavirus is impacting your finances contact us using the details below.

The Government have announced emergency measures to support businesses and citizens through the financial impact of the outbreak. For guidance contact our financial inclusion team on **0208 768 7925**, or by email to **Jherbert@Hexagon.org.uk**.



FROM SMALL SEEDS, BLOSSOMS GROW

Right now businesses, communities and families across the globe have entered uncharted territory with a host of unprecedented challenges as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

This Competition will be a test for our genius thinkers out there.

Compile a short article of up to 150 words describing a business idea that you would like to build online, outlining five to 10 different steps that would be needed in order to successfully build it from an idea on paper to a viable online business which customers can approach.

The winning entries will be published in Home News, and receive each **£20** in online shopping vouchers.

Email your entries, along with your full name and address, by no later than **Friday 22nd May** to **homenews@hexagon.org.uk**



LOVE LONDON WORKING

Hello, my name is Martyne Callender. I am very excited to be the new Senior Employment Adviser at Hexagon.

There have been some great outcomes since the beginning of the year. Working with one of our partners 'Love London Working' (LLW), seven participants have been offered jobs with the DLR. Another has been offered work as a Customer Service Adviser.

The second phase of LLW has started and I'm keen to ensure residents feel supported to access the many opportunities Hexagon can provide. I'll ensure the support I provide is personalised to your needs, so as residents you can feel I am equipping you to reach a positive outcome that's tailored right for you.



Martyne Callender, Hexagon's new Senior Employment Adviser is here to help with your training and employment needs.

We will be offering the following in the coming months:

- Love London Working inductions – receive an overview of our projects, meet other residents looking for work, and hear about any current vacancies, work placements and training opportunities.
- Sector-based information sessions – hear about working in different sectors, with an overview of what skills, experience and qualifications are needed.
- Employability skills sessions – access training on how to write a stronger CV, how best to complete those 'Personal Statements' on job applications, and sharpening up your interview skills.
- Mock interview sessions – book a 1-1 'mock interview' to help you prepare for an interview you have. From this process you will learn how to strengthen your answers in an interview situation.
- Screening and supported job application sessions – residents will be supported to prepare for available opportunities and apply for these roles.
- In work support programme – an opportunity for employed residents to access mentoring, career coaching and training to help improve their employment situation.

If you are interested in accessing support or just want more information please contact Martyne on 020 8678 7915 or email mcallender@hexagon.org.uk



TRAINING COURSES

Want to learn something new? Need to fit learning around your schedule?

Want to achieve a qualification from the comfort of your own home?

Why not complete a flexible online learning course with Learning Curve?

Adult Social Care
Behaviour That Challenges
Business and Administration Knowledge
Business Improvement Techniques
Business Start-Up
Care Planning
Caring for Children and Young People
Children and Young Peoples Mental Health
Cleaning Principles
Common Childhood Illnesses
Common Health Conditions
Customer Service
Customer Service for Hospitality
Customer Service in Care
Data Protection and Data Security
Dementia Care
Digital Skills
Dignity and Safeguarding
End of Life Care (English Embedded)
Equality and Diversity (English Embedded)
Falls Prevention Awareness
Information Advice or Guidance
Lean Organisation Management Techniques
Learning Disabilities
Management of Diabetes
Mental Health Problems
Nutrition and Health (English & Maths Embedded)
Personal Care Needs
Personal Exercise, Health and Nutrition
Prevention Control of Infection
Retail Operations
Safe Handling of Medication Health
Safeguarding and Prevent
Specific Learning Difficulties
Team Leading Knowledge
Technology Enabled Care
Tenant Support
Understanding Autism
Warehousing
Workplace Violence & Harassment

Please contact us or go onto Learning Curve's website for more information on the courses before booking your place www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk/courses/learners

We hold regular enrolment sessions. Please contact us to book on the next session.

We know it feels good to strengthen your skills with a new course!

London Learning Consortium in partnership with Hexagon are looking to offer residents the courses listed below for free:

Courses on Offer

- 1 Day Teaching Assistant Study Skills
- 2 Day Teaching Assistant Award Course (8 weeks)
- 1 Day Certificate in Employability
- 2 Day Learning Support Practitioner
- 2 Day Dyslexia Course
- Hospitality Level 1
- Functional Skills Maths
- Functional Skills English
- Childcare Level 1 (Non Accredited)
- Childcare Level 2
- Steps into Work (Employability & Work experience)

Course Survey

We'll be sending a survey out to Hexagon residents. Please respond if you're interested. If you can't see a course you want to do, please tell us on the survey, or email mcallender@hexagon.org.uk

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS

Looking for a new career? Now is the time to sign up for an Apprenticeship with the NHS!

NHS Apprenticeship

Have you considered an NHS Apprenticeship?

They are open to all ages from 16 to 66 and no experience is necessary. NHS Apprenticeships offer great career progression routes. Some previous apprentices have progressed into Assistant Service Manager roles. You will work towards a Level 3 in Business.

The location will be London with a salary of £16,300.

Applications open on April 27th

To apply with Hexagon's assistance, email your CV to mcallender@hexagon.org.uk

Interested in working in a Customer Service Centre?

We are receiving a number of vacancies for Customer Service Advisor roles. Skills required:

- Excellent listening, verbal and written communication skills
- Confidence to work individually whilst also having the ability to work collaboratively to provide exceptional customer service
- Computer skills, including Microsoft Office
- Utilise resources available to provide first contact resolution
- Experience of working in a call centre is desirable
- Good time management skills

Do you have the skills and experience?

Want to know more? Contact: Martyne Callender

Tel 020 8768 7915 or
email mcallender@hexagon.org.uk

COMPETITIONS

NEW COMPETITION VOUCHERS

Since our new editor joined us 12 months ago, competition entries have more than doubled! To cut down on our administration and paper usage, the new prizes will be One4All vouchers. These can be emailed to you and spent in a wide range of outlets such as Waterstones, TK Max, New Look, PC World, B&Q, CarpetRight, Halfords, Toby Carvery and many more.

Enter one or more of the Home News competitions now to test your skill or try your luck!

Argos, Boots and Peacocks, seen here on the high street in Catford, are just three of the household name retailers where our new competition vouchers can be used. Which are your closest stores?



GET YOUR HOBBIES DIGITAL AND ON THE GO!

Did you know that for every hobby there is a way to go 'digital' to enjoy it even more?

This article offers some different examples to illustrate how you too can get started on expanding the horizons of your chosen hobby in the digital world.

Gardening

www.rhs.org.uk/plants/search-form

Whether you have plants in a sunny garden, balcony plants or container plants on a windowsill, you can go digital to search for plants which suit your space. Check a 'gardeners' calendar' to learn which gardening tasks need to be done at different times of the year.

Learn a new language with

www.duolingo.com/learn

Duolingo is a great website where you can learn a new language. You can select your own first language, then select which different language you would like to learn plus what kinds of words and sentences you would like to learn first – be this words and phrases for family, shopping, travel or so on. Beginning with the very basics, your knowledge of the language will soon increase through easy-to-use lessons and tests to develop your skill.

Store Photographs with

www.google.com/photos/about/

With Google Photos you can store all your digital photos in one place. It helps you organise your photos, keep them safe, and to share your photos with family and friends if you choose. You can then access your photos from any phone, tablet, or computer on photos.google.com. Your photos will be safe, secure, and always with you.

Restore old photos

Restore old photos – Learn how to restore old photos using digital software.

This link takes you to an article about how to restore your old photographs.

<https://digital-photography-school.com/how-to-restore-old-damaged-photos/>

If you want to make the most of expanding your hobby the digital way, but feel a bit unsure how to go about it, then get in touch with a member of our Community Investment Team, or you can email our editor at homenews@hexagon.org.uk



Revamp your old photos online. What a difference has been made to this 1970s snap of my grandmother Edith Elizabeth Burns (Editor).

RENT INCREASE FROM JULY

Hexagon is a not-for-profit organisation. The rent paid by Hexagon's tenants plays a key role in financing our on-going commitment to provide the best services we can to residents.

Over the last few years we have been decreasing rents, this period has now come to an end.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 ensured that for the past four years, social housing rents have annually decreased by 1%. The government has announced that from 1st April 2020, such rents will increase annually by CPI plus 1%.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is calculated by averaging the price changes for a predetermined basket of goods and services – such as transportation, food, and medical care. Under the government's new formula, rents will be based on the CPI for the previous September plus 1%. This means that your rent this year will increase by 2.7%.

This year's rent increase affects different residents in slightly different ways, depending which type of tenancy you hold:

- For **social rent** properties, the increase applies to the rent element but not to service charges.
- For most **Market Related Rent** properties, the increase applies to the total amount, inclusive of service charges.

We appreciate that in these difficult times, seeing your rent increase could be cause for concern. If you have any concerns or questions regarding our rent and service charge please contact Hexagon on 020 8778 6699 urgently.

Please go to the www.gov.uk website for full information on the rent increase. ●



Please prioritise your rent. If you need help we can be that help. We will be flexible to assist you through this challenging time.
Contact us on
020 8778 6699



FACEBOOK & TWITTER: SOCIAL MEDIA COMPETITION

One of the best ways to stay updated on information from Hexagon is to follow us on social media. Here you will find regular updates on everything from repairs and tenancy information, to new job opportunities or even lifestyle tips to help you stay safe and occupied in the current coronavirus pandemic.

This new world of social distancing and regular quarantining poses everyone with some unexpected challenges. The challenges may appear the same from an outside view, but they will come in different forms to different people – for example someone living on their own will have some different challenges to face to a single parent living in a small flat with a bunch of possibly very frustrated children.

But whatever your individual circumstances, one of the main hurdles to leap will be the challenge of how to keep our mood up and our minds occupied.

To help with this your Home News editor has created a new competition on social media.

To enter this competition all you have to do is one of three things:

- Follow us on Facebook or Twitter, or both. This in itself could win you a £20 online shopping voucher. Three names will be selected at random to win. If you follow us on both, you will have two chances to win.
- Post on our Facebook and/or Twitter page a photo or video of something positive you have done at home, which you may not have had the time to do had it not been for the lockdown.
- While us humans are locked indoors, suddenly surpassing environmental targets set for decades from now, nature itself is blossoming. Post on our Facebook and/or Twitter page a photo or video about a positive change you have noticed in nature.

Three photo and/or video entries posted to our social media following the themes above will each win a £20 online shopping voucher.

The deadline is Friday 22nd May.

All entries must include your surname and the first half of your postcode. Entry is restricted to Hexagon residents of any age.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/HousingHexagon>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HexagonHousingAssociation/>

To enter you can go on either our Twitter page or our new Facebook page.

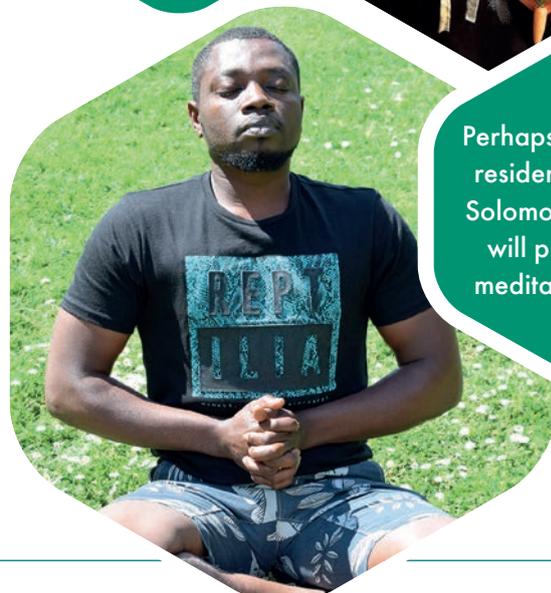
Join both for TWO CHANCES TO WIN!



Some Easter bunting
Hexagon resident Sarah
Alborn (SE23) made
with her sewing kit
during self-isolation.



Perhaps like Hexagon
resident Nii Mansro
Solomon (SE28), you
will practise some
meditation at home.



Energy Providers	Hydroelectricity	Solar	Wind	Biogas	Biomass	Landfill gas	Biodegradable
Haven Power	8.8%	41%	26%		24.2%		
Good Energy	5%	18%	57%		20%		
Bulb	9%	40%	51%				
Ecotricity	0.8%	0.12%	98%				
OVO Energy	1%	32%	18%	49%			
Co-op Energy	0.43%	45.61%	10.67%	3.63%	6.98%	13.32%	19.35%
Octopus	1%	32%	18%		49%		
Pure Planet		19.5%	80.5%				
Tonic		32%	68%				
So Energy	18.88%	29.41%	44.81%		6.9%		
Solarplicity	13%	3%	34%		50%		

This graph supplied by O. Fashina, our competition winner, shows how some different energy companies use a varied mix of sustainable sources to offer environmentally responsible power to your home.

RENEWABLE ENERGY COMPETITION WINNER

What Is Renewable (Sustainable) Energy?

Renewable energy is energy derived from resources such as wind and sunlight. Traditional energy sources rely on nuclear or coal power stations, for example, and significantly damage the planet. Renewable energy sources are far more eco-friendly.

Congratulations to Hexagon resident O. Fashina (SE18), who wins a £20 shopping voucher as winner of our Renewable Energy Competition. Her entry which analyses different sustainable energy providers is above.

Email your entries to homenews@hexagon.org.uk

Due to office closures during the coronavirus pandemic, we are only taking competition entries by email at present.



In less than 300 words total, briefly explain the different types of renewable energy mentioned in the graph (ie Hydroelectricity, Solar, Wind, Biogas etc.). The winning entry will be published in Home News Autumn 2020 and will win £20 in One4All shopping vouchers.

Please send us your entry by Friday 22nd May.

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

Thinking of switching to a sustainable energy provider? You can compare tariffs on green energy providers with these online tools:

MoneySavingExpert.com
www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/cheap-green-energy/

SimplySwitch.com
www.simplyswitch.com/energy/guides/compare-green-energy/

DENNY'S DIGS

Learn more about Denny in this edition's Resident Spotlight on Pages 20 to 21 "We should heed the lessons of the coronavirus pandemic. Humanity sits in a more precarious position than many may have realised. We are a cog in nature's cycle, rather than disconnected from it." Home News Editor.

Bee friendly

Bees are essential to our eco system and to our crops. The famous scientist Albert Einstein is quoted as saying that mankind cannot survive without them. We can all help boost their diminishing numbers by planting bee friendly flowers.

Container, window box or hanging basket?

Any outside space – even window sills – can be filled with attractive containers or hanging baskets. Your container, window box or hanging basket needs to be lightweight. Secure it out of the way of daily activities, so it is not a trip hazard. Containers that catch their own overspill will preserve water and help to prevent a slip hazard.

Flower choices for your containers

Bees search out flowering plants that are rich in nectar, and in the process they pollinate other plants.

- Choose simple, single flowers – that look the way a child draws a flower! For example, Cosmos are easy to grow from seed and flower all season.
- Choose a selection of purple flowers. Bees see purple the clearest, so try the stately *Verbena Bonariensis* for an easy to grow tall flower on square stems! On a smaller scale, try *Scabious* – this has pin cushion flowers in purple-pink, which bloom all summer and into winter. As perennials, they offer fantastic value for money!
- Tubular flowers such as *penstemons* will attract long tongued bumble bees.
- Herbs can give your home an aromatic boost, stimulating your feel-good senses. They add flavour to your cooking and can provide masses of flowers for bees. Herbs such as *Lavender*, *Rosemary* and *Thyme* contain natural chemicals which boost bee health by combating pests and viruses in the hive.

If you can provide a shallow saucer of rain water for your bees to take a Bee-break, then that will help them too! ●

"If the bee disappeared off the face of the Earth, man would only have four years left to live."

Albert Einstein



A wide variety of bees help pollinate a wide variety of flowering plants, such as this little bee enjoying a Dahlia.

POST GRENFELL TOWER: NEW FIRE SAFETY MEASURES

On the night of 14th June 2017, a fire broke out in the 24-storey **Grenfell Tower** block of flats in North Kensington. Largely due to the flammable cladding that covered the building, the fire quickly spread from the fourth floor where it had started from a faulty fridge-freezer. 72 people including small children lost their lives, another 70 were injured. 223 people escaped.

According to The National Housing Federation, the cost of post-Grenfell fire safety work will “easily exceed” £10bn across the housing association sector. Below, our Fire Safety Project Manager Jon Fleckney explains Hexagon’s role.

Hexagon’s new Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) programme runs for three years, which we are currently half way through. A lot of residents will notice things happening in their buildings, for example we are upgrading or replacing many fire doors in communal areas.

For the FRA, a visit by some fire surveyors is the first step. They come in and do a thorough assessment of the building, to evaluate if any remedial measures are required to help make it more secure against fire. These measures can include, for example, ordering in new fire doors.

Installing or replacing fire doors is known as a form of ‘passive fire protection’. Alongside passive protection, the FRA may also include ‘active fire protection’ measures – such as installing new fire alarms, automatic ventilation systems, or emergency lighting.

There is usually a time lag of about three months from the survey to the completion of the job.

Please discourage and report any vandalism of fire alarms, as it places everyone at risk.

Residents should test their own heat/smoke detectors every week.

Since Grenfell, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have released new advice notes on fire safety. They look very closely now at the full external ‘envelope’ of a building – gauging what materials have been used in the construction of balconies for example. In line with the latest advice notes, material used in the construction of any balcony or in the external envelope of any building of 18 metres or above should be of ‘limited combustibility’.

Hexagon has been extremely proactive in this area, making sure we are on top of the new advice notes and any new legislation, and keeping the safety of our residents paramount.



Jon Fleckney,
Hexagon's Fire Safety
Project Manager,
measuring the width of
a door during an on-site
fire risk assessment.

RESIDENTS PLEASE COOPERATE WITH FIRE SAFETY

Access

The greatest obstacle Hexagon faces during these essential fire safety works is access. Hexagon has access to its purpose built blocks – however the works usually require access into flats, to assess or upgrade/replace fire doors, or to install smoke/heat detection. Generally of course our properties can only be accessed with the permission of the residents. It is essential therefore that residents grant access, so that we can carry these works out promptly to provide the safest environment possible.

Damage to fire alarms

Fire alarms are there to give as early a warning to all residents as possible – they do save lives. Residents should test their own heat/smoke detectors every week – but fire alarms in communal areas can be regularly damaged or vandalised, which is why we have regular maintenance programmes in place.

If you are a Hexagon resident and have any questions or comments about fire safety in your home, Jon Fleckney invites you to contact him direct via an email to: jfleckney@hexagon.org.uk

BUILDINGS DEEMED LOW, MEDIUM OR HIGH RISK

Properties regarded as “high risk” receive an annual FRA check. These high risk properties are often supported housing, where less mobile residents are likely to live.

Medium risk properties have an FRA every 2 years. These are generally purpose built blocks of flats (3-5 storeys) and house conversions (3+ storeys).

Low risk buildings are purpose built blocks (1-2 storeys) and conversions (up to 2 floors). These have an FRA every 3 years.

Properties with a private door onto the street don't need an FRA, as the fire safety order is only concerned with properties with a shared means of escape.

DOUBLE GLAZED SATISFACTION

Hexagon resident Eileen Hunt wrote to Home News about her experience as a Hexagon resident living within a housing cooperative.

My name is Eileen Hunt. My husband Barry and I are both 77 years old. We married when we were 20, so have stayed married for 57 years and counting!

We moved to London in 1997. Initially we lived with our eldest son and his family in Brockley, then in 2001 we were fortunate enough to get a Hexagon flat. This made a big difference to our family. It is a one bedroom, ground floor flat and we are very happy living there. Our flat is managed for Hexagon by Brockley Tenants' Co-op (BTC). We are active members of BTC and Barry is the treasurer.

I looked after our younger son's children in Sidcup for 15 years, while Barry did building work. Barry has retired now. I stopped looking after our granddaughters when I had open heart surgery in 2013. Luckily by this time our granddaughters were old enough not to need my help with things so much. Barry loves to watch sport on TV which is a big interest of his. Luckily for me another of Barry's hobbies is cooking. He is a good cook and prepares most of the meals we eat at home. Aren't I the lucky one! We have grandsons too, who we often see on a Sunday when they come for Sunday lunch. It is always a treat to see our family.

Last year Hexagon came to our flat and fitted double glazed windows and a back door. The new double glazed windows and doors were fitted by Nationalcare Windows Ltd. It could feel like an intrusion having workmen in our home, but it all went very smoothly. The workmen were very efficient and fitted each phase in a couple of days per session. They worked hard and were polite and helpful. They also didn't leave any mess.

Three new double glazed exit doors and several windows were fitted to the Hunt's home, adding to the couple's comfort, security, and sense of wellbeing.

This has made such a difference to our lives. I can now sit by the windows without feeling the draught from them, which was so cold in the previous winters. In the past we have had to stuff paper in the windows to try to keep the draughts out. Thanks to the double glazing Hexagon organised for us, this winter has been completely different. We didn't even notice Storm Denis when it was blowing so hard! We are so much more cosy now, and can even keep the heating down a couple of degrees which means our heating bills are less.





Eileen and Barry
Hunt in their
back garden.

Do you have a story about your experience as a Hexagon resident, which you would like us to consider for possible publication in Home News? Then please email our editor at homenews@hexagon.org.uk

Another big change these double glazed windows and doors have added to our home is the heightened security they bring. We were recently the victims of a burglary in our home. Two thieves had broken in through our old sash windows. They were in our flat stealing our personal items while my husband and I slept in our bedroom. The thieves stole our television as well as our pensioner bus passes! They even took my little jewellery box from inside our bedroom, where we slept. Fortunately,

when they realized there was nothing of any real value they left my jewellery on a step outside our home, so I was able to recover it. But this experience was very distressing, so we are very thankful that Hexagon came to our rescue by fitting more secure windows and doors throughout the property. We are grateful to Hexagon for getting these new doors and windows fitted in our flat. They have made our lives very comfortable in more ways than one! ●

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

Welcome to our fourth Resident Spotlight – a feature to celebrate the diverse skills, talents and lifestyles of Hexagon residents. In this issue we hear from Hexagon resident Denny Senner, a professional gardener and a member of the Hexagon Board. This feature is taken from a speech Denny prepared for a Hexagon staff Away Day.

I've been a Hexagon resident for nearly 30 years – firstly in a housing co-op, now in general housing. For the past two years I have also been a Resident Board Member.

My day job is gardening. I've shared that passion with Hexagon by writing 'Denny's Digs' for Home News, and by offering hands-on gardening taster sessions at Hexagon Neighbourhood Events.

Denny Senner is the author of Denny's Digs, our regular Home News gardening feature. (See page 15) Here she is visiting The Eden Project in Cornwall.



Photo supplied by Denny Senner.

To get involved as a Hexagon resident, email getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk

My first-hand experience highlights the benefits that safe, secure, affordable housing brings.

Because our rent is affordable, we have never been in the benefit trap that blights so many poorer families. Living in the same secure home across the years has enabled us to develop local businesses and build lasting links with the local community.

Our two children have never faced changing schools because of moving house. They've made and kept primary school friends. We are able to care for our elderly parents, who live locally. Our family stands stronger because of the simple basic need of having secure, affordable housing. Now we give back by volunteering in our community.

We are well known in our street and our area, yet people assume because we live in a street property, that we are home owners. When they discover we are social housing tenants, some clearly seem to recoil from me in horror!

No one should be made to feel ashamed – or to feel they are one of life's losers – because of living in social housing. I ask you all to consider what we can do as individuals and as an organisation to change negative attitudes towards residents.

Denny Senner giving a talk to Hexagon staff at their annual Away Day.



There are four Resident Board Members. We are there to help scrutinise Hexagon policies and practises. We share the unique perspective of both experiencing Hexagon's services first hand – as Hexagon tenants and leaseholders – whilst also actively scrutinising Hexagon from within to help them improve. Because of this we can 'keep things real' and focus on resident satisfaction during Board meetings. I have found that as Resident Board Members we are treated with respect and we are listened to, even if sometimes we may disagree with other Board members!

As a Resident Board Member, I believe we work together as one team with the other staff – but as a resident I am only able to judge service based on my contact with Customer Services or the repairs teams. In my view, these areas are key to having satisfied residents.

I became a Resident Board Member because I had been increasingly anxious for several years about the security of my own tenancy, given the political atmosphere around social housing. I wanted to play my part in positive change to ensure social housing is protected and promoted, and that Hexagon residents are viewed in a positive light by their neighbours, communities, and Hexagon staff.

I encourage all residents to get more involved. From my experience – volunteering as a housing co-op member for example – direct involvement in Hexagon activities has helped me gain vital skills, as well as build the confidence to find paid work.

Let's all be positive about what Hexagon has to offer. My personal experience of living and working with Hexagon has been very positive overall. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff for your commitment and hard work. It is appreciated by the majority of residents.

Do you have a positive lifestyle you would like to promote in Home News? Resident Spotlight seeks to challenge any stigma against social housing residents, by showing what a great and varied bunch of folks you are out there! Email homenews@hexagon.org.uk with your story idea. ●

KIDS' ZONE

Please send us your entry by Friday 22nd May.

Make sure your entry includes your name, age, and full address with postcode. Entries missing any of this information cannot be counted.

Email your entries to homenews@hexagon.org.uk

ONLY EMAILED ENTRIES CAN BE ACCEPTED AT PRESENT

Drawing by Victoria Age 10

Hexagon's very own resident storyteller dressed as a pirate for an author event on World Book Day.



WORLD BOOK DAY

Hey kids, hands up who had a great time on this year's World Book Day? Did your school or family dress up as favourite book characters? We would love to see your pictures, and will even offer prizes!

We spent our World Book Day 2020 judging the entries from last edition's Art & Poetry Competition for Kids' Zone. The theme for the last edition was: **WHEN I GROW UP I WANT TO...**

Congratulations to our winner Victoria (SE18), aged 10, for the positive role she hopes to play in the future world, and such careful artwork!

Here at Hexagon we know that although World Book Day is just one day, reading books can help to inspire young imaginations every day of the year! That is why the theme for this edition's Kids Zone Competition is:

MY FAVOURITE BOOK CHARACTER.





To enter this edition's Competition Time, simply answer the following by Friday 22nd May. Email your entries in to homenews@hexagon.org.uk.

ONLY EMAILED ENTRIES CAN BE RECEIVED AT THIS TIME.

1. Can you study with Learning Curve from your own home, and mention one course which might be of interest to you or a family member – explaining why?
2. What is the key purpose of The Equality Act 2010?
3. What is often the greatest obstacle Hexagon faces during essential fire safety works?
4. Which famous scientist is quoted as making a link between human beings and bees, and what was that quote?
5. List 5 different retail stores which accept the shopping vouchers won by taking part in Home News competitions.

Congratulations to our last edition's winners:

O. Fashina (SE18), B. Githendu (SE1), and D. Mills (SE23) who each receive a £20 shopping voucher.

The answers to last edition's questions are as follows:

1. Three ways to be actively involved as a Hexagon resident could be the Repairs Group, Estate Graders or the Readers' Panel (or any other groups mentioned on pages 12 – 13 of the Winter edition)
2. Hexagon assigns at least 30 properties to the Rough Sleepers' Initiative.
3. A special refuse collection when rubbish is dumped incorrectly in communal areas is paid by all residents in the block.
4. Five signs to suggest someone may be committing tenancy fraud include:
 - A neighbour being vague about who is living there
 - An increase in anti-social behaviour
 - Regular changes of people occupying a property
 - The property appears to have been abandoned
 - When friends or family appear to move in after a resident has passed away
5. Things you could do to combat loneliness include: Join an online community of people who share a hobby or interest; Develop a new skill such as a new language or instrument; Invite that Facebook friend from a lifetime ago to catch up in an email or a video call.

HOW TO ENTER?

WE ARE ONLY ACCEPTING ENTRIES BY EMAIL AT PRESENT.

Email to:
homenews@hexagon.org.uk

Three correct entries received by Friday 22nd May 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

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HexagonHousingAssociation
@HexagonHousing

TRANSLATE!

Always happy to translate!

Chinese
 永遠樂於翻譯！

Eritrean
 "ንክኑተርጉመልኩም 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.