

SUMMER 2020

HOME NEWS

Hexagon



07

Help For Victims Of Domestic Abuse



12

Give Yourself A Kickstart!



21

Resident Spotlight – Top Tips From A Digital Champion

WIN
VOUCHERS
£10 & £20
NEW COMPETITIONS
INSIDE!

03 WHO IS YOUR
NEIGHBOURHOOD
OFFICER?

04 REPAIRS



06 ANTI-SOCIAL
BEHAVIOUR /
DOMESTIC ABUSE?

08 REDUCE REFUSE
CLEARANCE COSTS

09 COVER PHOTO
COMPETITION



10 EMPLOYMENT
SUPPORT /
WELLBEING CALLS

11 ONLINE LEARNING

12 KICKSTART
PROGRAMME

13 BEING CONFIDENT
ONLINE

14 HELP WITH DEBT
AND BENEFIT
APPLICATIONS

15 A WORLD OF FREE
'HOW-TO' VIDEOS



16 DENNY'S DIGS

17 SUMMER FIRES

18 AIDS &
ADAPTATIONS

20 WINNER:
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
COMPETITION

21 TOP TIPS FROM A
DIGITAL CHAMPION



22 KIDS' ZONE
WORD SEARCH

23 RECIPE

24 COMPETITION TIME

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

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TOM'S WELCOME



As you will see in this edition, we are working hard to deliver our services to you despite some of the challenges presented by Coronavirus.

Government guidance meant that we had to limit our repairs service to emergency and urgent repairs only from 23rd March for around 2 months. We were grateful to everyone for their understanding.

We were pleased that from 26th May, when Government guidance allowed, we were able to resume with normal/routine repairs. Key to this has been implementing new protocols to ensure we keep you and our workers safe, including maintaining social distancing when carrying out any repairs.

In keeping with Government guidance, our office remains closed. However, Hexagon staff who can work from home, continue to do so.

We are very aware that lockdown has raised a number of challenges for our residents. Some of these are outlined on pages 6 and 7, alongside some guidance about how we and others can help if you are adversely affected.

Our employment assistance offer is re-iterated on pages 10 and 12. Our employment support work continues, so please contact us as we are here to help, especially if your work status has changed as a result of the pandemic.

On a similar note, some of you may be experiencing challenges in paying your rent if your employment situation has changed, so please see our financial assistance offer on page 14. We can advise you on how to access benefits if you have not done so before, or if your circumstances have changed.

WHO IS YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER?

There have been a few changes in our Neighbourhood Services Team, so your Neighbourhood Officer may have changed.

Below is a list of our current Neighbourhood Officers including the postcodes that they cover, and a contact email.

Neighbourhood Service

Officers look after estate and tenancy issues, including providing an initial response to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). They also play a key role in following up on fire risk actions and reviewing Fire Risk Assessments.

For any urgent communications first call our Customer Services Centre on 020 8778 6699.

If you email your Neighbourhood Officer directly, please remember that emails sent to individual staff inboxes may take approximately 5 working days for a response.

| Neighbourhood Officer | Postcodes covered |
|--|--|
| Byron Evans bevans@hexagon.org.uk | All Croydon postcodes SE6 SE19 SE26 |
| Christopher Alexander calexander@hexagon.org.uk | SE2 SE3 SE12 SE13 SE18 |
| Desmond Adekunle dadekunle@hexagon.org.uk | SE1 (except for SE1 5EN) SE15 |
| Joan Harris jharris@hexagon.org.uk | All DA postcodes SE28 |
| Patience Ohabuiro pohabuiro@hexagon.org.uk | SE16 SE1 5EN SE4 SE8 SE14 |
| Segun Kenku skenku@hexagon.org.uk | SE22 SE23 SE5 |
| Lisa Cole Leasehold Officer lcoble@hexagon.org.uk | Deals with all our 100% Leasehold and Shared-ownership blocks/schemes Social Homebuy Right to Acquire For enquiries about buying your home email: buymyhome@hexagon.org.uk |

REPAIRS AND COMPLIANCE WORK

Hexagon Maintains Residents' Safety During Covid-19 Lockdown

Hexagon places our residents at the heart of all we do. This is never more so than in areas where safety is involved. The lockdown has presented the Association with many interesting challenges around maintaining our services to you during this time.

With the office now empty how have our Repairs Surveyors and Compliance Team been working? The information below is correct at time of writing, future changes are likely in the event of changes to government advice.

Here are five things the team have been doing that you might not have noticed during the recent lockdown period.

1. Voids (Empty properties)

Following the government guidelines and request to make homes available wherever possible, our voids surveyor has continued to work closely with our contractors to get the voids completed. This includes:

- advising where to source materials
- determining which suppliers are still trading
- enabling as many properties as possible to be made ready for new tenants
- ensuring that the specific needs of people being offered a new home are addressed
- extra advice and support to colleagues to support the smooth flow of new homes for residents

2. Health and safety inspections

During the current lockdown period our team of Area Surveyors are still carrying out their duties including their regular Estate Inspections to identify any Health & Safety issues and communal repairs. Our appointed contractors continue to carry out the identified works whilst still observing social distancing guidelines. Where works require access to a resident's home, special attention is paid to ensure we do not put the resident or the operative at additional risk.



With the office empty how have our Hexagon Repairs Surveyors and Compliance Team been working? The lockdown has presented many challenges around maintaining our services to you during this time. Future changes are likely in response to the latest government advice.





3. Repairs

The Responsive Repairs Team and Customer Services Team have continued to issue emergency and urgent works orders where needed. Visits have been made to estates and properties to monitor the work done, and to help ensure the safety of all our residents, staff and operatives. To meet government guidance which advised refraining from works which could be held over until after lockdown, we did temporarily stop all non-emergency repairs. Now, with the change in government advice, non-emergency repairs have been resumed and our contractors are busy catching up on their programme of jobs.

4. Essential gas & fire safety checks and works

The Compliance Team along with our contractor have continued to progress gas safety checks through our annual inspections of gas boilers. Repairs have continued through our contractor BSW. Fire Risk Assessment works which are required have been executed in accordance with government guidance ensuring that the safety of residents remains a high priority.

5. Lifts

We have changed contractor for maintenance and works carried out to lifts during the lockdown period. Amalgamated Lifts are now carrying out inspections and lift repairs – although it has been difficult to locate and obtain the parts required for some lifts. This is due to some manufacturers closing down during lockdown, or where parts come in from manufacturers abroad. We have on the whole managed to keep most lifts moving, however there are a few lifts and entry phone systems for which we are still waiting for parts to complete the repair – we share the frustration of residents that during the pandemic we are not always able to provide the service we would usually offer.

6. Please grant access

We may need to access your property to undertake fire safety and other health and safety-related works. The government has emphasised this critical work needs to be done during the pandemic lockdown in order to protect you. The contractors' operatives and Hexagon staff will follow relevant government advice at all times regarding keeping you safe from the virus risk. This can include determining when to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and what level of PPE is needed in each particular situation.



ARE YOU A VICTIM OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR OR DOMESTIC ABUSE?

Noise

One of the effects of the coronavirus pandemic is that more people are spending extended time at home. This means that we may be more aware of noise from our neighbours who are also home for longer periods and at different times.

Along with other social landlords we have experienced an increase in reports of noise nuisance. Whilst we can take action against those who repeatedly make unreasonable noise that has an impact on their neighbours' enjoyment of their homes, there are some day to day noises that are heard due to people living in close proximity to one another.

Examples include footsteps, children playing, exercising, loud voices and doors slamming. We cannot take formal action in these instances as they are not a statutory nuisance so they require more understanding and patience. Noise from washing machines or other domestic appliances, DIY, instruments, music, TV or radio can be irritating but will not constitute a nuisance unless they are excessive or are happening during unsociable hours.

Along with other social landlords, Hexagon have experienced an increase in reports of noise nuisance. One of the effects of the coronavirus pandemic is that more people are spending extended time at home. This means that we may be more aware of noise from our neighbours who are also home for longer periods and at different times. We ask for all Hexagon residents to be considerate to other tenants' needs in particular during lockdown.

If you think you are experiencing statutory noise nuisance, contact your Local Authority who have the powers to issue noise abatement notices if they witness these types of noise. You can also contact your Neighbourhood Officer – see Page 3 – who can give you details of the specific NoiseApp that can help you gather evidence (other noise monitoring apps cannot be used as evidence).

You should also consider how your activities may impact on neighbours who may be working or studying from home, furloughed, shielding or self-isolating.

Hexagon cannot get involved if relationships break down between neighbours, unless there is evidence of threatening behaviour, victimisation or harassment. We can refer residents to an independent mediation service if all parties are willing to take this route.





Domestic abuse can be suffered by men as well as women. Men's Advice Line, a call up service for male victims of domestic abuse, noted a 35% rise in calls during the first week of the lockdown alone. Victims can contact the Men's Advice Line Freephone on 0808 801 0327 from landlines, mobile phones, and BT pay phones. Your call will not appear on itemised bills.

Photo modelled by Hexagon resident Sage (SE23)

Covid-19 Abuse – Deliberate Spitting and Coughing is an Assault

Since the start of the lockdown there have been disturbing reports of members of the public deliberately spitting and coughing at key workers. Assault of this kind on any member of the public is abhorrent but sadly we have had reports of residents threatening to spread covid-19 against their neighbours and contractors. This is a criminal offence. As a result, we have already successfully taken legal action and will continue to do so to protect our residents and anyone working on Hexagon's behalf.

Domestic Abuse During Lockdown

Many victims of domestic abuse have been facing a desperate situation when isolating with perpetrators during lockdown.

The domestic abuse charity *Refuge* has reported that over three consecutive weeks it recorded a 66% increase in calls to its helpline and recorded a 957% increase in web traffic over two weeks.

The government is providing additional funding for helplines and online support, and is helping charities access some of the £750m aid announced by the Chancellor in April.

Last year, *The Silent Solution* system was launched. This enables a 999 mobile caller who is unable to make a noise or speak, to press 55 when prompted and respond to questions and instructions by coughing, or tapping the handset. Police will do their best to respond.

Victims of domestic abuse can now access safe spaces at Boots pharmacy consultation rooms, where they can contact specialist domestic abuse services for support and advice.

Bright Sky is a free app that has been launched by the charity Hestia. It provides a directory of specialist domestic abuse support services with: contact details; a secure My Journal tool to record incidents of abuse via text, audio, video or photo form – without any of the content being saved on the device; questionnaires to assess the safety of a relationship; a section on dispelling myths around domestic and sexual abuse, and links to further resources and information on topics around domestic abuse. The app can be downloaded at the App Store or Google Play. <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>

National Domestic Abuse/ Refuge: 24-hour Freephone Helpline **0808 2000 247**

HELP US TO REDUCE REFUSE CLEARANCE COSTS

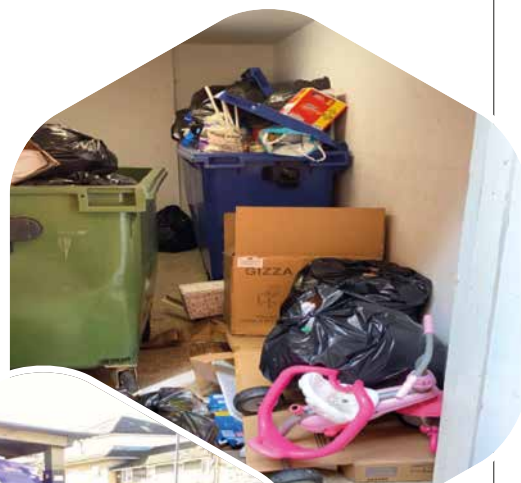
We need your help to reduce the amount that we spend each month on emptying bins and clearing bin stores of dumped rubbish. The costs for arranging rubbish clearance are rising and have gone up considerably during lockdown.

We are spending increasing amounts of money each week on emptying bins that have not been collected, often because the wrong type of rubbish has been placed in the bin. Typically each removal we arrange costs a minimum of £110 but costs will vary depending on the amount of rubbish that needs to be cleared; one recent quote was for over £700. We are closely monitoring these costs and currently reviewing arrangements for the rubbish clearance from our properties.

Please help to reduce the amount that we spend on rubbish disposal by ensuring that the correct items are placed in the correct bins to avoid them becoming contaminated. Please observe the rules around your local authority colour coded bins and remember, black bags should not be placed in recycling bins even if all the material in the bag is recyclable. Also, do not send children to dispose of rubbish as often they will not be able to reach the bins. All too often we're finding that black bags are left on the floor of the bin store.

During lockdown we have all been producing more rubbish than usual and also clearing our homes of unwanted items. Please do not dump bulky items of rubbish in the bin store but instead store the items within your home until council bulky refuse collections resume and waste disposal facilities re-open.

You will find information about recycling and domestic waste disposal on your local council website including when their services will restart.



The costs of clearing dumped items and the incorrect use of bin stores is added to the service charge, so is shared by all residents on the estate. Please do the right thing to prevent creating an eyesore, contamination, and mounting costs for all.

Photos supplied by Housing Services Team

If you have any concerns about refuse storage/disposal where you live, please contact our Customer Services Team. Freephone **0800 393 338** or email **customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk**

COVER PHOTO SUSTAINABLE LIVING COMPETITION

Do you fancy you have the eye
to take a great cover photo?

**Here at Home News we are always looking
for ways to inspire residents to get involved!**

This competition invites you to submit your photos for a chance to see your image on the front page of Home News. Each entrant may submit up to three photos each, though only one lucky entry will be chosen as a winner.

Front cover photos need to be a good quality resolution (of approximately 2500 pixels wide by 3500 pixels high). For this reason, only photos taken with a good quality camera or one of the better mobile phone lenses can be considered as a winner. For this reason we are also holding a Social Media Photo Competition, where the resolution is less important. See page 19 for details.

What makes a good cover photo for Home News?

Cover photos for Home News feature our residents. So make sure the photo you submit features at least one Hexagon resident. For this competition your image must also have a Sustainable Living theme – examples might include greener home energy, home waste recycling bins, home grown food, restoring an old item into something new (rather than throwing it away) and so on.

The winning entry will be published as the cover for the Autumn 2020 edition of Home News, and receive £20 in online shopping vouchers.

ONLY ENTRIES SENT IN TO THE EMAIL BELOW CAN BE CONSIDERED. Your entry must be a photo on a Sustainable Living theme and will need to include permission from anyone in the photo to appear on the front cover of the magazine. Make sure we receive this person's name and contact details so we can verify their permission. If the subject is a child, please ensure you have the parent's permission and that we can verify this.

Email your entry, along with your full name, address and postcode, to homenews@hexagon.org.uk by **Friday, 21st August, 2020.**

COMPETITION



ABOVE: The previous four Home News covers.

BELOW: Would either of these images be a suitable cover for Home News? What is missing? Remember, your entry should probably feature at least one Hexagon resident, and this competition has a Sustainable Living theme.



A vegetable patch growing in a resident's garden promotes the theme of sustainable living, as might a pot growing herbs, but is a sunset a 'sustainable living' theme? What else can you think of?

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

At time of writing, since the lockdown 121 residents have engaged with the service in some way. 54 of those residents have been given access to online training, 67 have accessed employment support advice and 24 have registered onto our employment services.

Our most popular requests have been access to vacancies and CV support. Residents that have registered with our employment support services have benefitted from regular job vacancy emails, including NHS administration and customer service roles. We've also linked residents into large recruitment drives such as the Financial Ombudsman's recruitment for D67 investigators and the MET Police's apprenticeships recruitment. We also provide you with 1-1 support to help you apply for roles you are interested in should you need it.

Since the lockdown 16 CVs have been reviewed. Hexagon provides detailed feedback on your CV, and guidance to ensure you have the tools to improve or update your CV. We also do a final edit of your CV so you can feel confident you have the best possible CV to use to search for work. We've helped residents to ensure their CV is tailored to the sectors they

are applying for, and to better sell their skills, experience and achievements to employers.

In addition, we've also emailed information on online health and wellbeing resources and budget recipes because we understand the importance of feeling well when looking for work.



If you would like to access this support contact Martyne Callender on **020 8768 7915** or **07799 880 675** or email mcallender@hexagon.org.uk to register with our employment support services.

WELLBEING CALLS

We have set up a new Telephone Wellbeing Service for residents aged 70 and over, and those we identified as vulnerable.

We have spoken to 514 residents, checking on their wellbeing, offering a friendly voice, ensuring they had access to food and essentials, and checking if there is anything we could help them with.

Over 100 residents are now receiving regular wellbeing calls. If you are feeling lonely and would welcome a regular wellbeing call from a member of our friendly team, please get in touch with us by contacting Michelle, tel **020 8768 7954**, or text **07770 682 768** to request call back or email mwallwood@hexagon.org.uk

ONLINE LEARNING

Covid-19 has greatly impacted a variety of sectors. You may be furloughed or have lost your job as a result of the lockdown. Maybe you're thinking about your next career move and you may be considering doing something different. With most of us spending more time at home it might be worth using some of this time to learn something new, which better prepares you for the future.

There are currently a large range of online courses available. See below a list of providers offering free online courses, some of which are accredited. If you are unsure where to start, get in touch, we are happy to discuss options with you and find the best course for you.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| My Learning Curve | www.mylearningcurve.co.uk |
| Open University | www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses |
| Vision 2 Learn | www.vision2learn.com/ |
| The Skills Network | www.theskillsnetwork.com/learners/courses |
| Discover CT | www.discoverct.co.uk/ |
| Future learn | www.futurelearn.com/courses |
| BBC online Learning | www.bbc.co.uk/learning/onlinecourses/ |
| Shaw Academy | www.shawacademy.com/ |
| Alison | www.alison.com/ |

Security Training

Interested in attending a free SIA Door Supervisor course which includes online accredited training for 4 weeks (Employability, Retail Knowledge, Team Leading and Customer Service)? After lockdown you will complete the SIA element of the course in the classroom over a 5 day period and the cost of your SIA licence will be covered if you pass the course. (We are also exploring how we can offer this element online)

Thinking of a career as a labourer?

Wanting to work in construction?

We can help. We are offering FREE Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) training. We will even pay for the card when you qualify. That's not all. When you get your card we will help you secure work experience and employment to get you started!

Contact Martyne Callender on **020 8768 7915** or **07799 880 675** or email mcallender@hexagon.org.uk



Why not search online for a course that interests you?

KICKSTART PROGRAMME

Have you experienced changes to your employment situation? Increased difficulties in accessing work? Poor mental health? Struggling to get motivated? Unclear on the way forward or unsure of your next steps? ...YES, then read on, we can help.

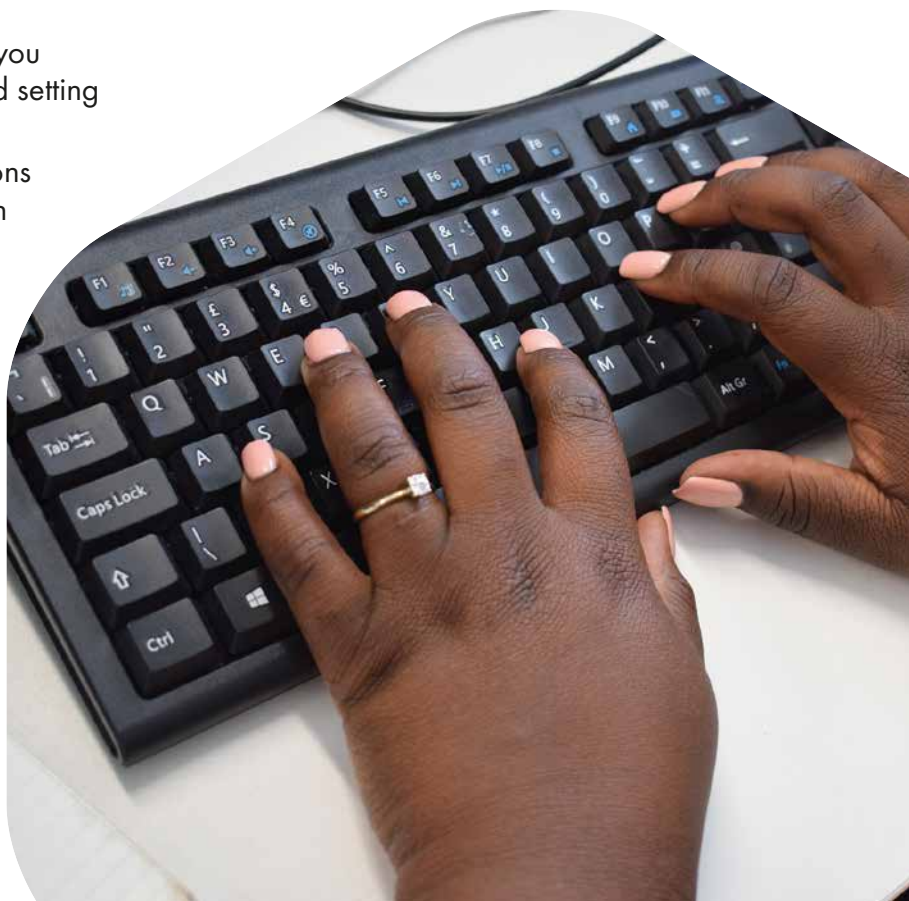
Hexagon will be launching a new programme of support to help you refresh your employability skills and refocus your mindset in order to be better prepared to look for, or return to, work. The Kickstart programme will include five sessions delivered over five weeks.

1. Coming out of lockdown – Discussion on where you are at now and what's important to you
2. Improving your confidence and wellbeing – Understanding what confidence is. The impact of your thoughts, language and actions on your life. Strategies to improve confidence and wellbeing
3. Practicing mindfulness – Learn techniques to better manage stress, worry and improve focus
4. Goal setting – Clarifying what you want in life and your career and setting realistic goals
5. CV development, job applications and interviews refresher – Learn how to improve your CV and use the STAR method to complete job applications and interviews

The programme will be delivered through a combination of group sessions delivered via Zoom and 1-1 support via telephone or video calls.

If you are interested in participating in this programme, you will first need to register onto one of our employment projects, Love London Working for unemployed residents and In Work Progression for residents that are employed. You can do this by contacting Martyne Callender on **020 8768 7915** or **07799 880 675** or email mcallender@hexagon.org.uk

Contact us to find out more about what the Kickstart programme can do for you!



BEING CONFIDENT ONLINE

The recent covid-19 pandemic has shown the importance and benefits of basic digital skills with the increase in the need for online food shopping, online banking, searching for online interests/hobbies, online exercises/meditation – and most importantly staying in touch with family and friends visually, aka ‘virtual visiting’.

There are no barriers to becoming digitally skilled as here at Hexagon we provide training to your required wants and needs **for free**. We can:

- Assist you in obtaining the most affordable internet package
- Assist in loaning you a laptop to practise on
- Provide you with one-to-one training to build your confidence in the use of IT
- Provide you with online links to training tailored to your requirements to practise on

Do you want to gain the confidence and skills that help you use the internet?

If the answer is yes then Hexagon have a number of residents working as Digital Champions that we can connect you with remotely. They will provide you with the necessary training to help build your confidence and knowledge around the internet.

Below is feedback from Ms R. Donkor at Parkspring Court (DA8) who recently completed her training:

“Kam is such a wonderful tutor who has a good sense of humour. She is a great lady to work with and at the same time patient, understanding and helpful.

“For instance on 15th November she helped me to sort my phone whereby she went the extra mile to speak with the adviser of the network provider and also spoke to the manufacturer of my phone, which made me feel overwhelmed.

“Kam spent a lot of time with me as well as helping me upload all my files and photos to one drive.

“She has also given me the confidence in my digital learning and I would love to recommend her to others or residents in a similar position. She is fantastic fun and energetic to work with and will make sure to get to the bottom of things!”

If interested contact your Community Investment Officer Michelle West-Allwood by calling:

020 8768 7954 or via email **mwallwood@hexagon.org.uk**

You can hear directly from Digital Champions on Pages 15 (Kam) and 21 (Linda).

Using
search
engines

Sending
emails

Social media/
Video calling

Completing
Online
forms

Keeping
safe online



FREE HELP WITH DEBT PROBLEMS AND BENEFIT APPLICATIONS

The coronavirus crisis has seen unprecedented changes in how our economy works.

Millions of people have seen their work impacted. And many of those have seen their workplaces temporarily close down altogether.

The government has introduced a number of schemes to assist people maintain as much of their income as possible. But many people are still finding themselves needing to make a benefit application, often for the first time. Others might also need to make an application in the coming months as things continue to evolve throughout the current difficulties.

We are pleased to remind residents that our well established Financial Inclusion Team is available to assist residents with issues relating to social security benefits. Whether you are unsure if you qualify, need to understand your options, or want help with a claim, our service can help. We have helped hundreds of residents with benefit issues, often increasing their income as a result.

The Financial Inclusion Team is a well-established service, and can assist residents whether the issue relates to coronavirus, or if you have a more general need to claim benefits. We can help with anything from assisting to address an issue with an existing Housing Benefit claim, to helping make a claim for disability benefits. We can even give advice regarding a possible appeal against a benefit decision.

If you need any assistance with benefit issues, please feel free to contact our Financial Inclusion Team on **020 8768 7925**, or by email to Jherbert@Hexagon.org.uk. We will be happy to assist with any queries you have, and look forward to hearing from you.

Dealing with debt – help is at hand

Debt is a problem that can affect anyone, and it can happen for a whole variety of reasons. An unexpected bill, loss of income, or changes in household circumstances can all create

financial pressures. And while debt can become a problem at any time, we know that more and more people are at risk of falling into debt due to the impact of coronavirus. We are also aware that many people will find themselves struggling to deal with a number of financial issues as things move toward a “new normal”.

The good news is that our Financial Inclusion Team is here to help. We can provide advice in a wide variety of ways. Whether you need help preparing a budget, or are feeling completely overwhelmed by your debts and feel that there is no way out (or anything in between!), we will be able to suggest a solution. The solution may be provided directly by us, or in other cases we can help you access specialist support if that is what you need.

The most important thing is to get help as early as you can if you are worried about debt. Like many problems, the sooner you tackle a debt issue, the easier it is to resolve.

It shouldn't cost you money to get help with debt. There are a number of free providers (some of whom we work with) who can help with even the most complex debt problems. The only fees that you should ever be paying in relation to debt are court fees, or insolvency service fees in the event that a regulated debt adviser suggests that insolvency is the best way forward. Indeed, if you are currently paying a fee to a company to manage debts on your behalf, please get in touch with us so that we can let you know about free alternatives.

Almost all debt problems can be solved, so if you are already struggling with debt – or are worried that you might fall into debt soon – please contact our Financial Inclusion Team on **020 8768 7925**, or by email at Jherbert@Hexagon.org.uk

We will be happy to assist with any queries you have, and look forward to hearing from you.

YOUTUBE OFFERS A WORLD OF FREE 'HOW-TO' VIDEOS



Digital Champion Kam Newman offers some personal testimony on using YouTube.

YouTube brings a whole world to you. Think of anything you want to do and you will find you can do it in the comfort of your own home using YouTube.

I wanted to learn how to speak Portuguese for a holiday I was going on. I went onto the internet and typed in 'Learn Portuguese for Free.' The free is important!

Scrolling through the many links, I found a subheading which said: 'Learn Portuguese For Free - Video Results.' I soon noticed all the videos had YouTube.com written under them.

I clicked and found numerous videos which helped me learn some basic phrases. So on my next holiday, I wowed everyone with my knowledge of Portuguese!

At the birth of my grandnephew, I wanted to give him something unique. A knitted toy would be nice I thought, because it involved making something myself.

So I searched, 'Knitted Toys pattern, free.'

I discovered video tutorials, again on YouTube, that showed me step by step what to do. I found a pattern for an elephant and knitted one.

Now I had discovered YouTube, there was nothing I couldn't do!

I found exercise videos to get fit with.

I found videos on how to garden.

My recent love is going on virtual garden tours. While in lockdown, we can't physically visit – but thanks to YouTube we can see places online, and there is no entrance fee!

So, I get myself a cream scone, make a pot of tea and walk with my eyes through a beautiful English garden.

I have discovered that during lockdown, rather than letting the walls come in on you, it is much more positive to go beyond your home through sites like YouTube.



FROM THE EDITOR: You can find examples of other online training providers on Page 11 – many are accredited.

Digital Champion Kam Newman
Photo supplied by Kam Newman

DENNY'S DIGS

GARDEN IN A POT

In the last few months, lockdown has thrown many unhappy and difficult challenges our way. On a positive note many of us now appreciate even more our own gardens, containers, parks or allotments.

Perhaps you have grown-your-own for the first time and used the plants you have grown to cook new dishes?

Lockdown has provided many people with more opportunities to spend quality time enjoying being outside, watching the insects and birds who have flocked to our trees, plants and flowers. Cleaner air and quieter streets have been a bonus for many of us, and made us think about nature a little more.

So going forward, let's embrace this positive side of lockdown by planting a colourful summer garden or container with feel-good scents that can help boost our mood. Why not include some herbs which build on all those extra culinary skills we've gained!



Denny Senner at the Eden Project in Cornwall.

Doing so will also encourage beneficial insects, which help pollinate our plants.

As a centre piece for your garden or container, I suggest a lavender plant with its choice of either blue, pink or white flowers. The scent and colour will lift the senses and attract bees. The aromatic leaves of lavender can be used to flavour cakes and biscuits – a great way to introduce children to the cycle of how plants you grow can end up in the cooking! This is healthy too because the added flavour of lavender leaves is a good way to disguise the fact you have used less sugar!

Next, choose a growing herb pot from the supermarket, split gently into three smaller plants and place at equal distances around the lavender. Picked regularly, these will keep growing, giving you herbs for your cooking dishes.

For balance and good looks use a trailing plant in blue or white to complement your lavender such as Bacopa or Lobelia, spacing three plants between the herbs.

Don't let your container dry out but don't over water, and you will have a garden in a pot that looks, smells and tastes great!



Herbs growing in an urn.

SUMMER FIRES

The summer months are a time when people often head outdoors for a barbeque or to have a garden fire. Consider fire safety first.

Outdoor Fire Safety Tips

- Ensure that **no combustible or flammable material is kept on your balcony**.
- Avoid plastic or wood based tables and chairs, plant pots, artificial grass, and paint tins as these increase the risk of fire spread.
- Metal tables, chairs and non-combustible items are acceptable.
- **Candles** and tea lights must not be used on balconies as they greatly increase the risk of fire spread. Why not use solar powered or LED flameless candles to create the same ambient effect without the fire risk?

If your home has a balcony, then if any of the above combustible materials are identified on your balcony we will write to you, giving you five days to remove the items or we will have to remove them for you. This is in consideration for the fire safety of yourself and other residents.

GARDEN BARBEQUES

Should you be considering having a barbeque in your garden, ensure that the barbeque is a safe distance from the building and from any timber fencing or sheds. **Hexagon recommends you position the barbeque on the far side of the garden away from any building, shed or fencing.**

Garden BBQ Safety Tips:

- Never leave a BBQ unattended.
- Keep a bucket of water or sand nearby for emergencies.
- Ensure the BBQ stand is cool before attempting to move or dispose of it.

London Fire Brigade can provide a FREE home fire safety visit:

Go to <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/book-a-home-fire-safety-visit/>

Or phone **0800 028 4428** or text **07860 021 319** to request a Fire Safety visit.



Hexagon resident Kai (age 7) is with his family enjoying a beach fire. If you are planning on holding some 'Summer Sizzlers' this season, make sure you follow fire safety guidelines.



AIDS & ADAPTATIONS CASE STUDY

Our Readers' Panel requested a case study of how Hexagon handles 'aids and adaptations' requests. Aids and Adaptations are tailored to meet the specific needs of a resident to help make their home a more safe and comfortable living environment.

To find out more, we spoke to resident Darren Parke. Darren's experience of learning to cope with life as a person with severe visual impairment featured in our Resident Spotlight in last winter's edition of Home News.

I am registered as Severely Sight Impaired. This term is what used to be called 'blind'.

When people hear the word 'blind', they usually think that the person lives in complete darkness. In truth, the vast majority of 'blind' people can see different degrees of light or shadow.

The charity Croydon Vision helped me secure a Hexagon flat in 2018. My new flat was nice, but initially quite poorly designed for my specific needs. For example, my designated disabled parking bay was situated at the bottom of a long slope, whilst two standard parking spaces are right by the building's entrance. It also did not help that the interior lighting in communal areas, especially for the

communal stairs and hallways, was below proper standards.

The interior of the flat was painted white (or off-white). As a new build this was standard. Sighted people said it looked nice and bright, but for me it caused the light from the bulbs and the sun to reflect and glare.

Due to the all-white décor, I had a lot of difficulty finding doors, especially in the bathroom. My problems with depth perception meant I would often go to leave the bathroom and bang straight into the open door.

The light bulbs were standard low-energy bulbs, which give off a dull yellow light. For me, this made everything that bit more dull and harder to see.



Darren Parke

Photo supplied by
Darren Parke





And so with the support and advice of my Rehabilitation Officer Visual Impairment (ROVI), I asked Hexagon to make the following 'reasonable adjustments':

- Paint contrasting borders around door frames, light switches and plug sockets
- Install 'under-cupboard' lighting
- Install a florescent strip light in the kitchen to replace the strip of single LED spotlights
- Change the light fittings in the front room and bedroom
- Install a brighter light in the bathroom
- Paint the shelf in the bathroom a contrasting colour
- Install 'grip rails' over the bath
- Install dimmer switches in the front room and bedroom
- Improve poor lighting in the common hallway
- Make communal stairs safer

All these jobs have been completed, with the exception of moving the disabled parking bay. But the external lighting has made a significant difference, and the communal stairs now contrast much more clearly with the walls and handrail.

Overall I feel that Hexagon has done a very good job in meeting my needs.



Aids & Adaptations to improve safety for Darren in his home included painting contrasting borders around door frames, light switches and plug sockets, installing 'under-cupboard' lighting and a contrasting grip rail over the bath.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMPETITION WINNERS



Darren Parke (SE19) took part in our social media competition, and is one of our lucky winners, alongside Adrian Ingram (SE4) and Hattice Okudan (SE18). Congratulations! They each receive a £20 shopping voucher.

NEW SOCIAL MEDIA COMPETITION



We invite you to post photos on our social media sites (listed below) for the chance to win £20 in shopping vouchers. To win you can enter as many times as you wish, but each post must be of one photo only with a short caption describing it.

Photos must have a **sustainable living** theme of some kind, and may stand a stronger chance of winning if they feature a Hexagon resident. Examples of sustainable living themes could include greener home energy, home waste recycling bins, home grown food, restoring an old item into something new (rather than throwing it away) and so on.

One winning entry will be announced in the Autumn 2020 edition of Home News, and receive **£20** in shopping vouchers. Submit your entry by Friday 21st August.

Follow us on social media for more unique competition opportunities and to stay up to date with all our latest Hexagon Housing Association posts.

To find us on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/HexagonHousingAssociation/>

To find us on Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/HousingHexagon>

Have you seen the Front Cover Photo Competition on Page 9?



WINNER: SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMPETITION

Christine Matthews (SE26) receives £20 in shopping vouchers for her list below explaining different sustainable energy sources.

Hydroelectricity Water is collected in a reservoir and when water is released from the reservoir its force pushes water down pipes to a turbine which makes a generator turn and make electricity.

Solar Sunlight converts into electricity, either directly using 'photovoltaics' or indirectly using concentrated solar power or a combination of the two.

Wind Wind provides the mechanical power through wind turbines to turn electrical generators.

Biogas The breakdown of organic matter such as raw materials from agricultural and municipal waste produces gas that can be used as fuel for heating, or to fuel a gas engine.

Biomass Plant or animal materials are directly converted to electric energy via electrochemical oxidation.

Landfill Gas A complex mix of gases created by the action of microorganisms within a landfill, from which electricity can be generated.

Biodegradable Waste is turned into electricity or heat from the primary treatment of waste, or the processing of waste into a fuel source.



Sustainable Energy can operate on many levels. This radio (bottom right) is run on solar power – the top of the radio has small solar cells to provide energy. Lightweight solar panels such as the one pictured can be used to charge a solar battery capable of running a variety of appliances from charging mobile phones to small televisions.



COMPETITION

To have your chance to win £10 in shopping vouchers, simply send us an explanation in under 50 words explaining what 'photovoltaic' means and how this works.

Email your entry along with your name and postcode to homenews@hexagon.org.uk by **Friday 21st August** for your chance to win.

Interested in switching to a sustainable energy provider?

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



SMALL SEEDS COMPETITION

Mark Banham (SE6) wins £20 in shopping vouchers for sending in his Small Seeds business idea. **Mark Banham**



Idea: Online writing competition

Research which websites run writing competitions. Work out the general entry fee, based on the number of entrants who might normally apply, and the amount of prize money. Set up a limited company with Companies House. Build a basic website so applicants have a reference and can register and pay the fee. Charge an entry per poem or story. Register the competition with an online writing competition website. Arrange for a friend or three to read lots of stories and together choose a winner!

Mark Banham's Small Seeds Competition entry. Mark made the only entry to this competition. Why not try your luck on our future competitions?

Welcome to Resident Spotlight, where we celebrate the diverse interests of Hexagon residents. If you would like to feature in a Resident Spotlight, please email homenews@hexagon.org.uk

TOP TIPS FROM A DIGITAL CHAMPION

Linda McMahon talks about her role as a Digital Champion.

I had been teaching yoga for many years and truly loved being a yoga teacher, but sought something new to add variety to my working life. What could fit in around my existing work week?

I have always read Home News, and when I saw the advert for the Digital Champions job, it was a mighty eureka moment. Digital Champions support other residents to learn basic digital skills such as how to set up an email or Facebook account, do online shopping or banking, or fill in online forms that are typically found on websites relating to Universal Credit or Homeswapper.

I like the community aspect of being a Digital Champion. As a yoga teacher I am always working on my own, but as a Digital Champion I am part of a team. The Community Investment Team encourages me to keep learning. Digital Champions and the people we help all have something in common – we are all Hexagon residents.

As Digital Champions the everyday digital skills we teach other residents can make a big difference to their lives. Seeing people's joy when they learn something new, or when they realise they can do it – that's a great moment! Being a Digital Champion has helped my confidence grow with digital technology too. I always used to turn to my boyfriend for help, but now he asks me when he can't work out his phone!

Need help with computing skills? Or would you like to consider being a Digital Champion?

Freephone **0800 393 338** and ask for the Community Investment Team, or email cit@hexagon.org.uk

Photo supplied by
Linda McMahon



MY TOP TIPS

1. So much of our world is online now, that anyone lacking the digital skills can be missing out on loads of great opportunities. Using computers and smartphones is so easy now, and everyone can do it.
2. Just give the digital world a try – if you don't try you will never know what you are missing. Don't worry if it takes a while to learn things, that is just what learning new things is like. It is the same for all of us, we just keep pressing the different buttons until we get it right.
3. Pick something online that interests you like speaking with a friend or family member through a video link, so you can hear them and see their faces. If you learn things you are interested in and benefit from you will find that you will be more motivated to learn.
4. Practise what you are trying to learn – do it every day. If you keep at it you take in the information and in time you will remember it. If you only go online once a week it is likely you will forget and have to learn it again.
5. Don't worry if you have absolutely no experience/knowledge of the digital world, it is never too late to learn. Just take that first step, and then you are on your way.
6. Learn one thing at a time, let your confidence grow and then learn something else new.
7. Focus on how the digital world can benefit you. Don't worry about the learning this will come in time.

To find out more about Linda's yoga classes – currently via Zoom online – email Linda at: lindilu@btinternet.com

KIDS' ZONE

COMPETITION

BANANA SPLIT, ICE CREAM CAKE, ICE CREAM CONE, MILKSHAKE, POPSICLE, DRUMSTICK, SHERBET, FREEZIE, SLUSHEE, FUDGE, FROZEN YOGURT, SNOW CONE, SORBET, GELATO, SUNDAE

Three correct entries drawn at random will receive a £10 shopping voucher.

ONLY ENTRIES SENT BY EMAIL WHICH INCLUDE THE CHILD'S NAME, AGE, AND POSTCODE CAN BE COUNTED FOR THE WINNING DRAW. ENSURE THESE DETAILS ARE INCLUDED IN YOUR ENTRY.

Find the words in the puzzle grid. Words may go forwards, backwards, diagonally, up or down.

If you think you've found all the correct words in the wordsearch, send your completed puzzle by email to homenews@hexagon.org.uk

Deadline for entries is Friday 21st August.

SUMMER Search

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

WINNER

Congratulations to our three winners from the Spring Wordsearch

Congratulations to our winners from the Spring Wordsearch edition: **Alexis Adaja** (SE13), **Neo Nemi** (DA16), and **Naiyemah Clinkett** (SE1) who each receive a £10 shopping voucher.

Due to lockdown we remain unable to access the Hexagon HQ to announce the winners of the Winter Wordsearch, the results will be announced as soon as possible.

SUMMER HOLIDAY JOKES

Where do cows go on their holidays?

A: Moo York.

What do you call a cat at the beach?

A: Sandy claws.

What do frogs like to drink on a hot summer day?

A: Croak-o-cola.

Kidz Joke Competition

Hey Kidz. If you are aged 7 - 12 years old, why not send us in a funny joke with a summer theme? We will print our favourite in Home News Autumn 2020 and send the lucky winner a £10 shopping voucher.

Email to homenews@hexagon.org.uk by 21st August, including your name, age and postcode.

COMPETITION



Resident's Recipe

ALL RECIPES IN HOME NEWS ARE INTENDED TO BE EASY ENOUGH FOR OLDER CHILDREN TO PREPARE WITH THE HELP OF AN ADULT. ENSURE YOUR CHILD RECEIVES THE NECESSARY HELP TO LEARN HOW TO COOK SAFELY.

Ham & Quinoa Vegetable Salad

"I suffer from Type 2 diabetes so I was looking at recipes suitable for my specific dietary needs. I like this one because I like gammon and this seems healthy as well. You can probably use rice if you haven't got quinoa." Resident 'GB'. (SE12)

INGREDIENTS:

2tbs Olive oil
400g sweet potato (cut into chunks)
1 red pepper (deseeded cut into chunks)
1 red onion (Sliced)
250g ready-cooked quinoa
150g cooked gammon (shredded or chopped)
80g young spinach

DRESSING:

2tbsp olive oil
1tbsp vinegar
1tbsp mustard
salt and freshly ground pepper

METHOD:

- 1 Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius.
- 2 Pour olive oil into cooking tin.
- 3 Add sweet potato, pepper and onion
- 4 Roast for 18-20 minutes.
- 5 Heat quinoa by instructions on pack.
- 6 Add to roasting tin with gammon stirring gently into veg.
- 7 Combine raw spinach with mixture and share between two people. Mix dressing ingredients together and sprinkle over salad.

IF YOU HAVE A RECIPE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT TO HOME NEWS, please email it to homenews@hexagon.org.uk along with your name and postcode.

Have you noticed we have moved away from sweet sugary foods in the Kids' Zone Resident Recipe, and moved to much healthier options? This was at the request of our Readers' Panel of residents. After all 'We are what we eat!' Pictured are the ingredients for this edition's recipe. Make sure a grown up is on hand to help.



To enter this edition's Competition Time,
simply answer the following by Friday 21st August.
Email your entries to homenews@hexagon.org.uk.

ONLY EMAILED ENTRIES CAN BE RECEIVED AT THIS TIME.

1. During lockdown, have the Hexagon team of Area Surveyors still carried out their duties such as regular Estate Inspections to identify Health & Safety issues?
2. List five different types of noises that do NOT constitute a statutory noise nuisance, but are rather examples of day to day noises.
3. When can Hexagon get involved if relationships break down between neighbours?
4. What are the only fees an individual should be paying in relation to help with debts?
5. What response will a resident receive from Hexagon if we identify they have a barbeque positioned on their balcony, and why is this?

Congratulations to our last edition's winners:

C. Fashina (SE18), B. Githendu (SE1), and S. Nduka (SE1)
who each receive a £20 shopping voucher.

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

1. Learning Curve courses can be studied from your own home.
2. The key purpose of The Equality Act 2010 is to protect the rights of individuals against unfair treatment, and to advance a fair and equal society.
3. The greatest obstacle Hexagon faces during essential fire safety works is often access into a resident's property.
4. Albert Einstein is the famous scientist often quoted as making a link between human beings and bees. The quote reads, "If the bee disappeared off the face of the Earth, man would only have four years left to live."
5. Five different retail stores which accept the shopping vouchers One4All (previously awarded for winning Home News competitions) include Waterstones, Toby Carvery, Boots, New Look, and PC World for example.

Please note that the Readers' Panel requested we change these vouchers to an option which includes at least one supermarket food retailer. We have now changed to GiftPay vouchers to satisfy this request.

HOW TO ENTER?

WE ARE ONLY ACCEPTING
ENTRIES BY EMAIL AT PRESENT.

Email to: homenews@hexagon.org.uk
Include your name and postcode.

Three correct entries received by Friday 21st
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
"ንክብርታዊና ልማት ከሌሎች ሕግ-ሳት 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.