

EASTER CLOSURES

Our Offices will be closed:



Good Friday
18th April 2014 and

Easter Monday
21st April 2014



Welcome to the LSHA Spring newsletter...

With Spring now here, we are pleased to send you the latest issue of our newsletter. Please let us know what you think!

Don't forget we are always on the look-out for news. If you have a suggestion for our next newsletter, tell us about it.

Mark Jackson, Chief Executive

Those of you who read our December newsletter will be aware, Tony Withnell has retired after nearly twenty years working with Lambeth and Southwark Housing Association, the last ten as Chief Executive. I am incredibly honoured to be able to take over the reigns of this well respected and long established housing association. I certainly hope to be around for many years to come but (as my picture shows) it may not be the twenty years of service that Tony was able to give!

I was very interested to read something about the long and varied history of LSHA and thought that readers might be interested to know a little about our background so I have included a brief guide which you will find on page 5.

Perhaps a little about my own history? I originate from Scotland but have lived and worked in social housing in a number of posts, either in or around London, since 1987. I did take a career break a few years ago and retrained as a school teacher. Ultimately though, I returned to my first love, small, community based housing associations.

I do have a little experience of running housing organisations, having spent four very happy and successful years as Chief Executive of a small association in Bushey, Hertfordshire. At the other end of the spectrum I was also an Assistant Director with responsibility for all the rental income at Peabody, one of London's largest housing associations, all £80 million per year!



Mark Jackson

I have a particular interest in 'digital' inclusion. As more and more of our lives are led on-line and on the internet – from shopping to social networking – how do we ensure that everyone in our diverse community gets to share in the benefits? Given that the government are keen to move to a 'digital by default' position for all benefit claimants this is especially timely. In effect, this means the government will expect everyone to manage their benefit, from child benefit to tax credits and everything in between, through using the internet. For some members of our community this may be a struggle.

Outside of housing my own particular passion is photography, especially 'street photography'. London is an amazingly vibrant and exciting city and when not at work I love nothing better than to use one of my many cameras to try and capture some of the images that define our great city.

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Lambeth & Southwark
Housing Association

tel: 020 7735 3935

email: info@lsha.org.uk

web: lsha.org.uk

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

If you want to get involved and take part in the tenant scrutiny panel and give your view on shaping our services and meet other SoLFed tenants, Please contact us at: info@lsha.org.uk

For more information and dates of forthcoming meetings visit: www.solfed.co.uk Alternatively contact the office.

Repairs and Who is Responsible

Who should do the repair Repair needed to:	To be done by:		Unless:
	LSHA	tenant	
Drains, gutters, outside pipes	✓		blocked by tenant
Roof and chimneys	✓		
Outside walls and windows	✓		Damaged or broken by tenant
Internal walls, doors, floors, etc	✓		Damage caused by tenant
Decorations to internal walls, doors, floors, etc		✓	
Loose floorboards	✓		
Plaster work	✓		
Repairing and decorating minor plaster cracks		✓	Damaged by LSHA contractor doing a repair
Paths and steps to property	✓		
Our boundary walls and fences	✓		
Electric wiring, socket, switches, fuse board	✓		Caused by misuse or tenants' faulty equipment
Electric plugs, fuses, light bulbs		✓	in shared parts of the building
Gas pipes or appliances	✓		Tenant had them installed
Water pipes and heaters	✓		
Central heating and fitted fires	✓		
Door Bell		✓	
Curtain rails, coat hooks		✓	
Bath and sink plugs and chains		✓	
Changing tap washers (leaking tap)		✓	
Toilet seats and covers		✓	
Inside door handles and catches		✓	
Clothes drying lines		✓	
Extractor fan filters		✓	
Redecorating after condensation /mould		✓	Damp caused by a building defect
Changing lock, cutting new keys		✓	Broken in burglary or harassment of tenant
Adding extra locks or security grilles		✓	
Broken windows		✓	Broken in burglary or harassment of tenant
Redecoration and repairs after plumbing leak or flooding (bath, toilet, washing machine, etc)		✓	
Blocked rubbish chute		✓	
Pest control		✓	Rats, cockroaches, pharaoh ants

SoL Fed Scrutiny Panel

Bridging the tenant-landlord divide through collaboration

Who are SoLFed?

The South London Federation of Small Housing Associations (SoLFed) is made up of five small social housing associations operating across south London. Each association has its strengths and weaknesses. Through SoLFed the landlords work together to improve the way that services are delivered to residents.

What is the Scrutiny Panel?

The Scrutiny Panel is a group of residents and staff drawn across all the members of SoLFed.

The Panel's role is to ensure that resident voice - in terms of needs, concerns and aspirations - is listened to, heard and acted upon by the landlords of the Federation.

The Panel will seek to:

- **Monitor** performance of each landlord against service standards that reflect the needs and priorities of residents
- **Explore** where good practice is across SoLFed and seek to understand how other landlords in the Federation can learn from that
- **Report** on its work in each landlord's Annual Report

Get involved and have your say

Some repairs are necessary and need to be carried out by LSHA as part of our services to our tenants. However, some repairs are the responsibility of the tenant and we have made a list of some of these repairs. In some cases if a repair is made that is the tenant's responsibility, we may re-charge you for the cost of the repair. Please speak to your Housing Officer if you are not sure about the repair to avoid having to repay us for the work.

Please note that that your repair will be raised in order of priority, which are the following.

24 Hours – An emergency is a situation which could put your health or safety at serious risk. We regard

some situations as being more serious if there are elderly, disabled, sick or very young children in the property, for example a total loss of heating and hot water in very cold weather.

Urgent 7 Days – Urgent repair, a repair that needs attention, but can be carried out within 7 days of reporting the repair, this could be general works, i.e. plastering, floor works etc.

Routine 28 days – routine repairs, these repairs can be carried out within 28 days of reporting, these can be carpentry works, easing and adjusting doors, works that require estimates a further investigations.

What are discretionary housing payments (DHP)?

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Each local council is given a pot of money each year to help people who qualify for housing benefit (or similar help under universal credit) but are having trouble:

- paying their rent or
- finding enough money to pay for the start-up costs of a tenancy.

When the money for the year runs out, no more payments can be made. The government has increased the amount of money available to help some people to adjust to cuts to housing benefits in recent years.

The council decides who should be given a discretionary housing payment (DHP), how much and how often the payment is made. It may be paid weekly or can be a lump sum. Payments can also be backdated.

What can discretionary housing payments (DHP) cover?

Discretionary housing payments (DHP) may be granted to pay for a shortfall between your housing benefit and rent. This may include when housing benefit has been reduced due to:

- the 'bedroom tax'
- the benefit cap
- rules restricting rent for single people to a shared accommodation rate
- changes to local housing allowance rules
- a non-dependant deduction being applied (e.g. for grown up sons or daughters living with you).

You could get a DHP to pay for the start up costs of a tenancy such as a rent deposit, rent in advance or removal costs. Your local council may make a payment to help you avoid becoming homeless. In some situations, payments can be made to help with rent arrears.

It is possible to get DHPs on two homes if you are away from home temporarily, for example due to domestic violence.

A DHP cannot be paid if the reason for shortfall is that your housing benefit has been reduced to recover an overpayment or because your other benefits have been suspended or reduced (for example, because you left your last job voluntarily).

How do you claim?

Expect to fill in a claim form for a discretionary housing payment (DHP) – you can get this from your local council.

You may be asked for details of your income and outgoings. You could send copies of relevant bills or bank statements.

Provide as much information as you can about what makes it hard for you to manage paying your rent. Tell the council for example, if:

- you have extra health related expenses or need an extra room because of sickness or disability
- you have extra travel costs because you travel to a hospital or you care for a relative or friend
- your work-related travel costs have increased because you had to move because of housing benefit changes
- you are likely to become homeless if a payment is not made.

How does the council make a decision?

Discretionary housing payments (DHP) are not an entitlement in the way that many benefits are. There isn't a set of clear rules that tell you whether or not you'll get a payment. It's up to the council to decide, but the council has to be fair and reasonable in its approach. The council could ask you to look at what you could do yourself to help your situation. You could be expected to make different choices about how you spend your money. The council may expect you to make some long-term changes such as moving house and may only be willing to fund short-term help to give you time to make alternative arrangements. Provide as much information as you can to help the council make a decision.

How much can you be paid?

The council can decide how much to pay you towards a shortfall in rent or to help with the costs of setting up a tenancy (tenancy deposits, rent in advance and removal costs). You may get enough to cover all the costs or help towards some of the costs.

Help with the on-going costs of rent is likely to be for a limited period of time, and there is a maximum amount that can be paid each week. Please speak to your Housing Officer for more details.

ABOUT YOUR RENT

We understand that under the current economical climate how increasingly difficult it is for some of you in meeting your financial obligations, such as your normal household bills.

However as a LSHA tenant it is essential that you pay your rent as the first priority. If you are having difficulties in paying your rent, please contact your Housing Officer immediately so we can help you.

However, if you fail to contact us and continue to have rent arrears, unfortunately LSHA will take legal action to recover money that is owed. In some cases this can lead to court action and possible eviction, this means you could be made homeless. Please do not let this happen to you or your family.

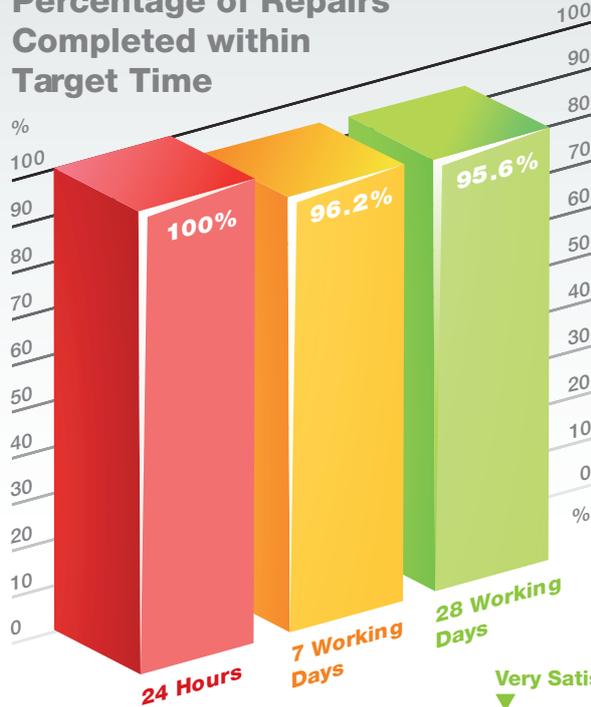
Remember, paying the rent is your responsibility, your home is at risk if you fail to make weekly/monthly payments for rent that is owed. A big thank you to those tenants who continue to pay their rent on time and have no rent arrears.



Repair Completion

& Tenants' Satisfaction

Percentage of Repairs Completed within Target Time



The following figures are for July to September 2013.

There were 11 work orders completed late for the following reasons:-

- 5- lates for ordering of materials,
- 6- lates for access issues

There were 27 (9%) responses out 303 of tenant satisfaction letters sent out. Out of these:

- 1 Dissatisfied – Contractor not turning up on time, however informed the tenant that he would be late.
- 8 With no expression of satisfaction



Number of Tenants Satisfied with Completed Repairs

Total Number of Repairs Completed: 303

Maintenance Satisfaction Survey Prize Draw

REMEMBER: There are three ways to enter the maintenance prize draw:

- 1) post your completed repair order satisfaction slip, **or**
- 2) telephone the office on 020 7735 3935 to discuss completion of the works, **or**
- 3) email your comments about your repair to info@lsha.org.uk

Congratulations to:
Mr. Thwaites, Cooks Road
 who received **£50**



LSHA - Supporting the Community for 87 Years.

Set up as a local housing association whose objective has been to provide affordable housing to working class people chiefly in Kennington, Stockwell and Brixton since 1927.

The Lambeth and Southwark Housing Society Ltd. was formed in 1927 by way of a merger between two existing housing associations: Southwark Housing Association and Lambeth Housing Movement. The latter, which was founded in 1927 by a group of Lambeth Clergy and laymen with an interest in social work, took over two smaller housing associations in the 1930s and 1940s: the National Council of Women London Branch Housing Society Ltd. And the Over Thirty Housing Association. All of these organisations are represented in Lambeth and Southwark HA.

Lambeth Housing Movement sought to assist a particular group within the population of South London, who it was felt had not benefited from the early 20th Century London County Council slum clearance programme because the conditions in which they lived were not considered to be sufficiently poor to warrant alleviating. This low-income group lived in overcrowded accommodation but could not afford the rents in the private sector.

Lambeth Housing Movement set about raising funds to purchase properties, which could be let at affordable rents. They did this by encouraging donations, investments in shares or investments in loan stock.

In 1930 they acquired their first property in Liberty Street, Brixton, which offered 24 three bedroom flats. Over the course of the following 60 years the organisation, in its evolving form, managed to acquire approximately 20 properties with accommodation for several hundred local residents.

This information provides some insight into the working class housing situation in Lambeth for a large part of 20th Century. While documenting the processes involved by a small housing association in making improvements they, at the same time, shed light on some of the problems encountered by working class individuals and families seeking better accommodation.



Rent payments made easy!



On a date that suits you



Through the allpay Payment App
allpay.net/allpay-payment-app



Over the phone, online or by text

0844 557 8321 | allpayments.net
allpayments.net/textpay



With cash over the counter



Choose your way to pay

Payment Changes...

Please note as of the 1st May 2014 the office will no longer accept cash payments for rent, we are sorry that we cannot provide this facility.

If you have a bank account you can pay your rent by direct debit. This ensures that you never forget to pay you rent. There are also other ways to pay, over the telephone, by text or through the allpay payment app, online via a computer or laptop, or at the post office or shops displaying the pay point sign.

If however, you decide to pay by bank transfer, please ensure that you include your tenant reference number and address to ensure that there are no delays posting rent to your rent account.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SPEAK TO YOUR HOUSING OFFICER FOR DETAILS.



Scheme Inspection Schedule 2014

Dates of future scheme inspections to be carried out by the Housing Officer.
All inspections take place between 11am and 1pm.

Wednesday 16 April

- Otha House
- Garden House
- Hibbert Alms Houses

Tuesday 22 April

- Trinity Street
- Salisbury Court
- Roderick House
- Anthony House
- Cator Street
- Richard House
- Albert Way
- 59, 63, 65 Kennington Park Road
- Steedman Street

Wednesday 23 April

- Stockwell Park Road
- Linden Hall
- Durand Gardens
- Liberty Street
- Lorn Road

Wednesday 30 April

- Butler Court
- Montgomey House
- Butler House
- Orchard Court

Tuesday 27 May

- Trinity Street
- Salisbury Court

- Roderick House
- Anthony House
- Richard House
- Albert Way
- 59, 63, 65 Kennington Park Road
- Steedman Street

Tuesday 13 May

- Royal Road
- Cooks Road
- Commercial Way
- 1, 3, 5, 7 St Agnes Place
- Bush Road
- St Faiths Road

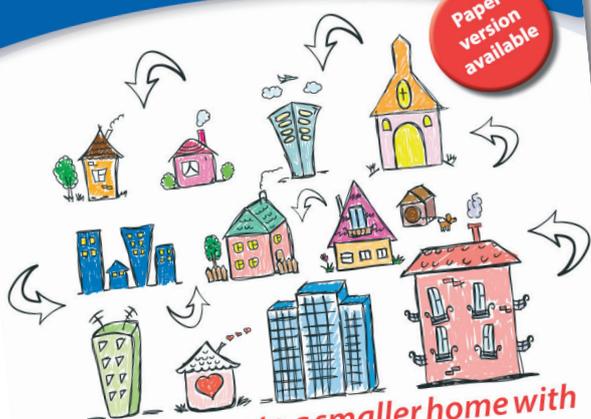


Designed and produced by
Buchanan Dean Design
tel: 01494 677362



Did you know your housing benefit may be cut if your house is too big for you?

Paper version available



Why not swap to a smaller home with HomeSwapper?

Welfare Reform changes will soon mean that if your house is too big for your needs there will be a deduction in the amount of housing benefit you will receive. This means that if you are of working age, you may not be able to afford to continue to live in a house which is too big. HomeSwapper can help you!

Join HomeSwapper today and you can find and swap to a smaller home with the right number of bedrooms for you.

 HomeSwapper
Join today at www.HomeSwapper.co.uk

Looking for a Transfer

Register with Homeswapper, "all LSHA Tenants with a clear rent account can register for free"

Find out more and join online at www.homeswapper.co.uk

Homeswapper – the UK's largest community of social tenants looking to swap homes. Each year they help thousands of tenants change their lives.

You can also contact the office to be apply for LSHA internal transfer waiting list at: info@lsha.org.uk

OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS

For Emergency Repairs:

X-Bild Limited
07529 506262

For Central Heating Repairs:

One Stop Gas & Plumbing Limited
07946 314 749

The out of hours service is for genuine emergencies only, please check your Tenants Handbook to see what constitutes an emergency.



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