



Welcome to the LSHA Summer 2015 newsletter...

With Summer 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.

2

LSHA's New Chair
What's New at LSHA?
Tenants' Survey Results

3

2015 Rent Increase
Rent Arrears

4

Repair Target & Tenants
Satisfaction, Gas Safety,
Maintenance Satisfaction
Prize Draw

5

Money Advice
Scrutiny Panel

6

Homeswapper Information
House Exchange Information
Carbon Monoxide: Warning

Summer BBQ Party!

Join us for *LSHA's Party in the Park* for our residents on Thursday, 30th July 2015. Come and mingle, have fun and have a bite to eat...

There will a BBQ and light refreshments for everyone to enjoy and light entertainment for you and your family and it is all **FREE**

Come and join us from
4.00pm to 7.00pm



Venue:
Kennington Park Café
4 St Agnes Place
Kennington
London SE11 4BE

Please RSVP with your number of guests (adults and children) by email: info@lsha.org.uk or call our office: **020 7735 3935**



Lambeth & Southwark
Housing Association
tel: 020 7735 3935
email: info@lsha.org.uk
web: lsha.org.uk

OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS

For Emergency Repairs:
X-Bild Limited
07950 144 891

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.

2

To introduce myself...

I am hugely pleased and proud to be the new Chair of Lambeth and Southwark Housing Association.

High quality, well maintained housing is a basic right, just as good education and healthcare are. They are key ingredients of a decent life. But though governments have accepted this ever since 1945, they have not cracked the question how to do it. I believe that despite all the difficulties housing providers face (particularly serious in London), LSHA is well placed to provide the sort of excellent service that its tenants deserve and need.

I used to be on the Board of a large housing association, with homes over much of England. Board and staff did their best, but with 30,000 homes and hundreds of staff, it was tough to build a relationship between the organisation and the people it served. Things can and should be different at LSHA. Mark and his team should know you and you should know them. If something has gone wrong, you should be clear who to get in touch with, and should be



confident that the problem will be put right quickly and well. If you have ideas for improving LSHA, you should be listened to, and if the ideas are good and practical, they should be acted on.

That's why Mark and his team, and I and my Board colleagues, hope to meet many of you at the LSHA

barbecue in Kennington Park on Thursday 30 July. It will be a chance for LSHA tenants, staff and Board to get to know and learn from each other – a step on the way to proving that at LSHA, small can be beautiful.

Howard Webber

Chair of LSHA

**New
at LSHA...**

We are delighted to advise that we are introducing the Chief Executive Surgery, to be held at our offices by appointment. These surgeries will be held monthly and commences on the 1st Wednesday of every month from 4.00pm to 7.00pm.

The first surgery will be held on 2nd September 2015 and the purposes of these surgeries are for tenants to have the opportunity to meet with the Chief Executive to discuss issues around housing and how you feel we can shape the organisation.

If you would like to book a 20 minute slot, please contact us on: 020 7735 3935.

Results of the Tenants' Survey: What you said...

Acuity Research & Practice carried out a survey of all tenants on behalf of LSHA between October and December 2014. 40% of tenants responded by saying the following:-

- **Overall Services - 75% were satisfied** with the overall services provided by LSHA
- **Quality of Home – 82% were satisfied** with the overall quality of their home
- **Neighbourhood – 84% were satisfied** with the neighbourhood in which they live
- **Value for Money – 70% were satisfied** with value for money of their rent
- **Customer Services – 77%** who had contacted LSHA within the last 12 months **were satisfied** with the overall experience
- **Repairs & Maintenance – 78% were satisfied** with the repairs and maintenance service
- **Last Repair – 83% were satisfied** with their last repairs experience
- **Estate Services – 57% were satisfied** with the overall services provided by LSHA
- **Service charges – 57% were satisfied** with value for money of their service charges

We would like to thank all residents who took part and provided useful feedback on our services. We know by the results that we need to improve aspects of our services.

We aim to be working with you the tenants to improve our overall services to you, please contact us at info@lsha.org.uk if you would like to get involved in shaping our services.

LSHA Annual Rent Increase 2015

ABOUT YOUR RENT

Annual rent increases – your questions answered

Here is information about the 2015 annual rent increases for Lambeth & Southwark Housing Association with effect for most tenants on the 28th September 2015.

We explain:

- Why rent is going up.
- How and when the rise will take effect.
- How you can access financial advice and support if needed.

Why is LSHA putting up my rent?

Your rent is used to manage and maintain your home and where you live. Those costs have gone up in the last twelve months and we need to increase the rent to tenants so we can carry on doing repairs and making improvements such as fitting new kitchens and bathrooms. Some of the rent you pay goes towards buying new homes, and running our office. But LSHA is a not-for-profit housing association. All surpluses are re-invested in homes and services.

When does the new rent payment come into effect?

The new charges apply from 28th September 2015 (or Butler House tenant's is 2nd November 2015) so you will need to adjust your usual payment unless you pay by direct debit in which case no action is required.

We will send you a letter and notice of rent increase at least one month before your rent is increased. If you are claiming housing benefit, please take a copy of the rent increase letter to housing benefit, this is your responsibility to advise housing benefit of this increase immediately so the correct rent is paid.

How do you work out how much to put my rent up by?

Like all social landlords, we have to follow the government's guidelines relating to social housing rent increases. All UK social landlords will be putting up their rent in line with the formula below.

CPI (Consumer Price Index) from September 2014 plus 1.2%

LSHA's rent increase for 2015 is calculated as follows:
CPI in September 2014 = 1.2% + 1%
= **2.2% increase to LSHA rents.**

Make sure you're getting the help you need

We know that rent increases are not welcome in these tough economic times. You might find this free benefits advice website helpful in making sure you're receiving all that you're entitled to: www.gov.uk/benefits-adviser



Rent Arrears

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.

Direct Debit - Paying your rent

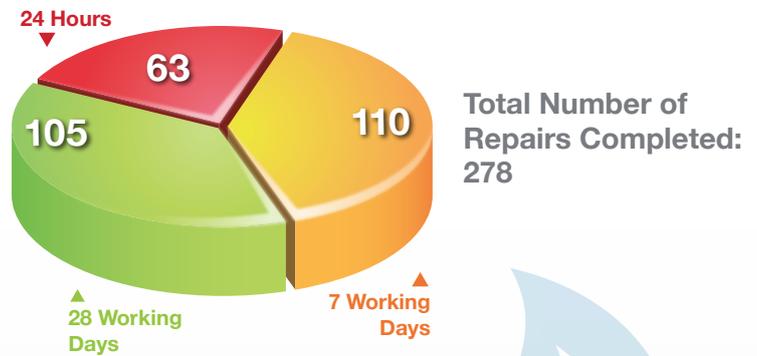
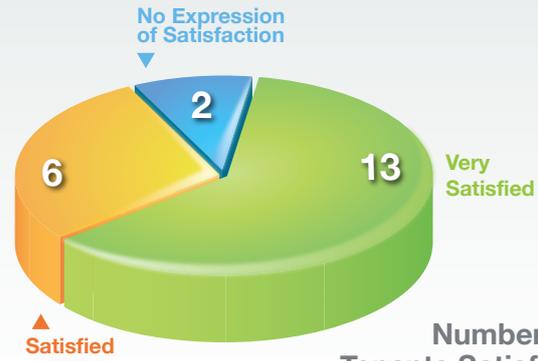
Direct debit is an easy way of paying your rent, please contact your Housing Officer to set up a convenient date to pay your rent, it is flexible and hassle free.



Repair Completion

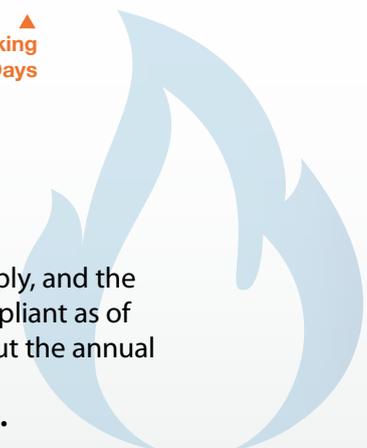
& Tenants' Satisfaction

The following figures are for January to March 2015 .



Gas Safety & Gas Audit

At 31st May 2015, LSHA have 251 properties with a gas supply, and the target for gas safety compliance is 100%. We are 99 % compliant as of 31st May 2015. Please ensure that access is given to carry out the annual gas safety. **Contact One Stop Heating and Plumbing on Tel: 01689 601611 if you have a inspection outstanding.**



Maintenance Satisfaction Survey Prize Draw



Congratulations to:
Mrs. Evans, Stockwell
 who received **£50**

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**



Credit Unions

Credit unions are small non-profit financial organisations set up by members with something in common to benefit their community. You can open a bank account, get financial help etc with our local credit union.

Who are they for?

Credit unions will help members to manage their finances and many work in partnerships with local money advice agencies or other bodies to make sure people get the information and guidance they need. You can find your local credit union at www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk

There are many other free sources of information and advice to help you to manage your money.



London Mutual
Credit Union

Creating a Credit Union Current Account will allow you to access your money via the Link ATM facility, with over 30,000 Link cash machines across the country.

Furthermore, you can have your benefits, wages, salary or pension paid directly into your Current Account.

To find your local branch visit:
www.creditunion.co.uk/index
for more information

If you live in the boroughs of Lambeth or Southwark contact London & Mutual
on: 020 7787 0770

or live in the Lewisham borough contact
Lewisham Plus Credit Union
on: 020 8778 4738

Want to get involved and take part in the tenant scrutiny panel? Want to give your views on shaping our services? Would you like meet other SoLFed tenants?

Please contact us at info@lsha.org.uk

**or visit: www.solfed.co.uk
for more details**



The Money Advice Service

The Money Advice Service is an independent advice organisation, which exists to help everyone understand and manage their money better. Or visit the website of the Money Advice Service at www.moneyadvice.org.uk

Free Debt Advice

If you need advice on managing debt, there are a number of free sources of assistance available, you do not need to pay for these services.

Free advice organisations include:

Citizens Advice Bureau - you can access online information and find details of your local Bureau here – www.citizensadvice.org.uk/getadvice.htm

Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS) – debt help charity offering free advice, debt management plans and an online counselling service – CCCS Debt Remedy.

National Debtline – www.nationaldebtline.co.uk/
0808 808 4000

Credit Action has produced a Money Advice Map with a postcode search for local advice services. This can be accessed at www.moneyadvice.com

SoLFed 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 works to ensure that resident voice - in terms of views, needs 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

SoLFed

Transfers and Exchanges: Information for Tenants 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.

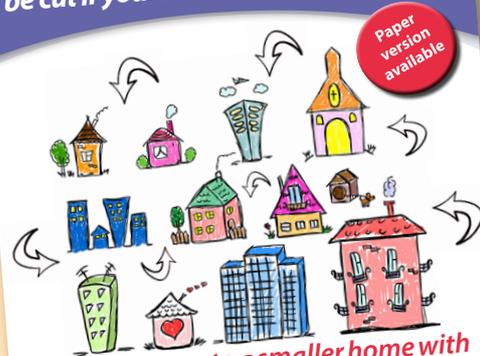
You can also contact the office to be apply for LSHA internal transfer waiting list at: info@lsha.org.uk

Council House Exchange

Community Council House Exchange website for tenants to find a mutual exchange online.

This council exchange site is a community website for tenants looking to exchange. If you live in a council or housing association property you can add your Exchange advert to this website. If you would like to register onto the site, then visit www.council exchangesite.co.uk

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



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

House Exchange

Another alternative site to check out if you are interested in moving to another area or property is House exchange at www.houseexchange.org.uk

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING – WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

You can't see it, taste it or smell it but it can kill quickly and with no warning.

Unsafe gas appliances produce a highly poisonous gas called carbon monoxide (CO). It can cause death as well as serious long term health problems such as brain damage.

Remember the six main symptoms to look out for: Headaches, Dizziness, Nausea, Breathlessness, Collapse, Loss of consciousness.

Being aware of the symptoms could save your life!

Carbon monoxide symptoms are similar to flu, food poisoning, viral infections and simply tiredness.

That's why it's quite common for people to mistake this very dangerous poisoning for something else.

What should I do if I experience any symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

- If you think there is immediate danger, call the National Gas Emergency number: **0800 111 999**.
- Call One Stop Heating and Plumbing on **01689 601611 or after 5pm on 07946 314749**.



**Lambeth & Southwark
Housing Association**

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