

# LSHANews

THE LSHA TENANTS' NEWSLETTER **SUMMER 2017**



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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, please tell us about it.

#### CONTACT LSHA



call: 020 7735 3935

email: [info@lsha.org.uk](mailto:info@lsha.org.uk)

web: [www.lsha.org.uk](http://www.lsha.org.uk)



**OUT OF HOURS  
EMERGENCY  
REPAIRS**

For emergency repairs:  
X-Bild Limited  
07950 144891

For central heating repairs:  
One Stop Gas &  
Plumbing Limited  
07946 314749

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

## LSHA is 90 Years old!

*"Faith, hope and a capital of seven pounds"*



**90<sup>th</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY



Maude Burke celebrating with us again 30 years on!

## Summer BBQ

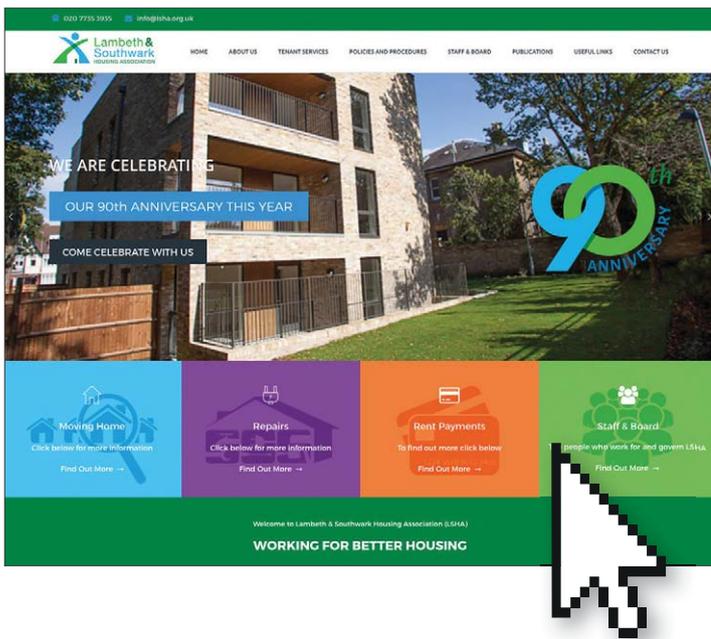
The sun might not have shone so brightly this year but that didn't prevent us from holding our annual 'BBQ in the Park'. It was lovely to meet old friends and meet new faces so thank you to everyone who came to help us celebrate our 90th Anniversary. A particular thank you to Maude Burke who also helped us celebrate our Golden Jubilee way back in 1987. The eagle eyed amongst you might be able to spot Maude in the video we have uploaded to the new website of the 1987 celebrations.

# WELCOME<sup>2</sup>

YOUR LSHA

## Our New Website

We are pleased to be able to launch our new, updated website at [www.lsha.org.uk](http://www.lsha.org.uk). As well as being easier to navigate than the old version the website is now configured to work on phones and tablets. Do pay it a visit and let us know what you think about it at [info@lsha.org.uk](mailto:info@lsha.org.uk). Is there anything missing? What works for you and what doesn't?



## Customer Care

LSHA has a customer care policy which all employees apply in their daily interaction with tenants. We know that sometimes tenants may be unhappy about a particular problem or service or in general might be having a bad day.

We recognize that we cannot always give someone what they feel they may be entitled to and we are only human and on occasions we do make mistakes. If we have made a mistake we will apologise and explain what we can do to make amends. Even when this does happen we cannot accept being shouted at and abused. LSHA operate a zero tolerance to any aggressive, rude, threatening behavior, this includes shouting and swearing. If necessary we will call the police or take legal action to protect staff.

*We are here to help, being polite will help in getting your problem resolved!*

## 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](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)

You can also contact the office to be apply for LSHA internal transfer waiting list at:

[info@lsha.org.uk](mailto: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](http://www.council exchangesite.co.uk)

## WORKS UPDATE

# Programmed Works for 2017

We are happy to advise that our programmed works for 2017 has already begun as of June and we are making good progress. We hope that you will be happy with the works and not unduly inconvenienced during this period. Please do let us know if you experience any problems.

**Cyclical decorations** - The programme will consist of external works and external painting to the building and includes repairs to rain water goods, double glazing drains and minor repairs. The schemes included in this year's programme are Cator Street, Commercial Way, Albert Way and Garden House.

**Kitchen, bathroom and minor electrical upgrade works** - The programme will consist of upgrading some kitchens and bathrooms and in some cases a total refurbishment for both. We will also decorate kitchens and bathrooms as well as carrying out minor electrical repairs. The schemes included in this year's programme are: Stockwell Park Road, Butler Court, and Kennington Park Road.



## Texting another way to communicate with you

We can now send you a text message to let you know when we have raised a works order for your repair.

We will send you the repairs satisfaction questionnaire by this method too. Please ensure you respond as your views are important to us and helps us improve our services. You will be entered into our prize draw to win £50.00!

LSHA's text number is **07826 826823**.

Let us know what you think of the service and please ensure that we have your most up to date mobile number by using the text messaging service.



TEXT  
TO WIN  
**£50**  
in our Prize  
Draw!

## MONEY MATTERS

# About Your Rent

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 requires registered providers of social housing in England to reduce social housing rents by 1% a year for 4 years from a frozen 2015 to 2016 baseline and to comply with maximum rent requirements for new tenancies.

### How the reduction applies

The policy applies from 1 April 2016. In each of 4 'relevant years' registered providers of social housing must reduce the total rent payable by a tenant in a year by 1% (though the Act is not prescriptive regarding how this 1% rent reduction is implemented, it could be by a 1% reduction from the beginning of a year, or a larger reduction later in the year). If a tenancy starts or ends during the year, the reduction would be on a pro-rata basis.

For social rent properties, the reduction applies to the rent element and not to service charges. For most Affordable Rent properties, the reduction applies to the total amount, inclusive of service charges. Where the social rent is used as a rent 'floor' for an Affordable Rent property, the reduction applies to the rent element only.

### LSHA Rent Reduction 2017

#### Annual rent reduction – your questions answered

Here is information about the 2017 annual rent reduction for Lambeth & Southwark Housing Association with effect for most tenants on the 2nd October 2017.

We explain:

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

### Why is LSHA reducing my rent?

Your rent is being reduced by 1% every year for 4 years which commences in 2016. The Government has made these changes for all social landlords to reduce the rents for the next 4 years and this is mandatory.

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 2nd October 2017 (or Butler House tenant's is 30th October 2017) 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 reduction at least one month before your rent is decreased. If you are claiming housing benefit or universal credit please take a copy of the rent letter to housing benefit this is your responsibility to advise housing benefit of this change immediately so the correct rent is paid.

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

Like all social landlords, we have to follow the government's guidelines relating to social housing rent. All UK social landlords will be reducing their rent by 1% over 4 years.

# 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. Unfortunately, this year we have 3 evictions that is likely to proceed due to non-payment of rent.

Remember, paying the rent is your responsibility your home is at risk if you fail to make weekly or monthly payments for rent that is owed.

All tenants need to ensure that their rent account is in credit by either 1 week if they are paying weekly or 1 month in advance if they are paying monthly. This applies to all tenants regardless of them claiming benefits.

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 debits 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.

### Make sure you're getting the help you need.

We know that rent reduction will benefit all tenants currently struggling 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/browse/benefits/entitlement](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement)



## REPAIRS AND SAFETY

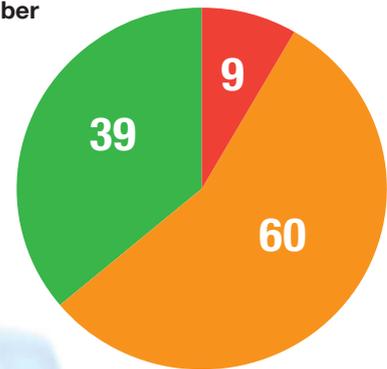
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# Repair Completion January - March 2017

Percentage of repairs completed within target time



Total number of repairs carried out: 108



## Gas Safety

At 30th May 2017 LSHA have 257 properties with a gas supply; the target for gas safety compliance is 100%. We had one outstanding gas inspection due to the tenant not providing access despite writing and visits.

LSHA recognises people lead busy lives and have demands such as school runs and part-time jobs to work around. In recognition of this we now operate an appointment system for all non urgent repairs i.e. repairs with a target date of more than seven days.

Do let us know if you would like to take advantage of this when reporting a non urgent repair.

LSHA does not employ it's own repair staff. We rely on approved contractors to undertake repairs on our behalf. In most cases contractors perform there work diligently and respectfully. If however you are not happy with a contractor's behaviour whilst they are in your home then do please let us know giving as much detail as possible so we can investigate.

## Sub-letting is a Crime

The act has seen tenancy fraud become a criminal matter and social landlords have the power to prosecute those who unlawfully sub-let their social housing home.

### Two new criminal offences

The act applies to social housing tenants and introduces two new criminal offences. Firstly, where the tenant sublets or parts with possession of a property or ceases to occupy knowing that it is a breach of tenancy. The second, more serious offence, is where a tenant dishonestly, in breach of tenancy, sublets without consent and ceases to occupy the property as their only or principal home.

The first offence only requires knowledge that the tenant sublet their home in breach of their tenancy agreement, the second requires proof this was done dishonestly.



### The punishments

The maximum penalty for the first offence is a fine of £5,000. The second, more serious, offence is punishable by a two-year jail sentence and/or a fine of up to £50,000. The court will also have the power to make "unlawful profit orders" that require the tenant to pay back any profits "the court considers appropriate".

**If you know someone who is illegally sub-letting, please contact us to let us know we will investigate it and if it is proven we will take legal action against that tenant.**

## NOISE AND NUISANCE

## Dealing with Noise & Nuisance

We are approaching the summer months with longer days, and it is time to remember that excessive noise from neighbours can be frustrating and can cause a lot of stress and worry. We are giving you advice on dealing with loud music, building work, car and house alarms, and general domestic noise.

### First, speak to your Neighbours

In many cases, the person making the noise is unaware that they are causing a problem. If you are able to speak to your neighbours, the problem can often be sorted out quite quickly. However if you are unable to speak to them informally, contact the noise nuisance teams in the borough that you live in. You can also speak to your Housing Officer who will also investigate and take legal action if appropriate if the noise/nuisance continues and there is sufficient evidence, however normal household domestic noises will not be investigated.

### Noise Teams by Borough

#### Southwark Noise Team

Phone 020 7525 5777 or 020 7525 2000 and press Option 1.

The service is available between the following hours:

Day	From	To
<b>Monday to Thursday</b>	<b>7am</b>	<b>2.30am next day</b>
<b>Friday to Saturday</b>	<b>7am to 5pm</b>	<b>6.30pm to 4am</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>8am</b>	<b>2.30am</b>

#### Lambeth

##### Report noise nuisance

To report noise disturbances during normal office hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, phone 020 7926 6111.

##### Report noise at night

We provide a rapid response night service. You can call 020 7926 5999, Wednesday night to Sunday night, 8pm to 4am.

#### Lewisham

##### Environmental Enforcement

Phone 020 8314 2170 or email [environmentalhealth@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@lewisham.gov.uk)

##### Environment Protection Team

Phone 020 8314 2170 or email [environmentalprotection@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalprotection@lewisham.gov.uk)

## NUISANCES THEY CAN DEAL WITH

### WE CAN DEAL WITH:

- Amplified music
- TV
- Parties
- Nightclubs and pubs including people outside making noise
- DIY home renovation
- Construction sites
- Barking dogs
- Alarms
- Odours and fumes from commercial properties
- Smoke
- Emissions and noise from works and equipment in the street

### WE CAN'T DEAL WITH:

- Traffic, trains and planes
- Some domestic noises
- Footsteps within homes

## REPORT FLY-TIPPING

Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of waste. You can report fly-tipping to the local council and report this to your Housing Officer as the cost of removing the items will effect your service charge.

## REPORT MAJOR FLY-TIPPING

You can report major incidents of the dumping of waste to the Environment Agency incident hotline, eg lorries dumping waste.

### Environment Agency incident hotline

Telephone 0800 80 70 60  
24-hour service



**Lambeth & Southwark**  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

7a St Agnes Place, London SE11 4AU

tel: 020 7735 3935 email: [info@lsha.org.uk](mailto:info@lsha.org.uk) web: [www.lsha.org.uk](http://www.lsha.org.uk)

*Working for Better Housing*