

# LSHANews

THE LSHA TENANTS' NEWSLETTER **SUMMER 2018**



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

### Money Matters

About your rent:  
Payments &  
tenancy fraud

SEE PAGES 2-3 ►

### Programmed Works

Cyclical decorations  
& upgrade works

SEE PAGE 4 ►

### Anti-Social Behaviour

What to expect

SEE PAGE 5 ►

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:  
A&E Elkins Ltd 07788 239707  
or **07946 220827**

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.

## Community Investment Strategy

At LSHA we recognise that our long history in the areas in which we operate gives us an important connection to the local community. Both the staff and Board are committed to ensuring that we are able to have a positive impact on the broader community.



LSHA: LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

To help us understand what is important to you and how you feel about your local community, we are looking to recruit some LSHA tenants who would be interested in undertaking some training to help them interview other tenants. These volunteers will be rewarded for their time. It will also be an opportunity to develop additional skills to add to their CV.

You will have received a flyer along with your most recent rent statement with more details. If you want to read this again, there is a copy on the website. If you think you might be interested, please contact Paul Bagman (07887 721 825). Paul has been employed by LSHA to help us with this important piece of work. He is a professional independent community consultant.

Even if the role does not interest you then it would be great if you were able to share your thoughts if you are contacted by one of our interviewers.

## MONEY MATTERS: IMPORTANT INFORMATION

# 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 1st April 2016. In each of 4 'relevant years' registered providers of social housing must reduce the total rent payable by a tenant yearly 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 2018

#### Annual rent reduction – your questions answered

Here is information about the 2018 annual rent reduction for Lambeth & Southwark Housing Association with effect for most tenants on the 1st October 2018.

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 will be reduced by 1% every year, for 4 years, which commenced 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. 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 1st October 2018 (Butler House tenants 5th November 2018) 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 changed. If you are claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit please take a copy of the rent letter to Housing Benefit or to the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), if you are claiming Universal Credit. It is your responsibility to follow up on the claim by advising Housing Benefit or the DWP of any changes to your rent or service charges 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.

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

We know that rent reduction will benefit all tenants on low incomes. You might find this free benefits advice website helpful in making sure you're receiving all that you are entitled to. Here is a useful link: [www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement)

#### Rent Payments

We understand that it can be difficult to manage budgets when your income is low.

Our rents are significantly lower than those of private landlords and some other social landlords.



By collecting the rent this enables LSHA to continue to provide homes, as well as carry out repairs and improvements to your home. It's important to remember to do the following: -

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 whether or not you claim benefits.

If you have difficulty paying rent or are affected by the changes in welfare benefits, please contact your Housing Officer for advice and support on 0207 735 3935 or email us at [info@lsha.org.uk](mailto:info@lsha.org.uk). We want to make sure that we support and help where we can, to ensure that you are able to pay your rent.

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

Unfortunately this year, we have carried out 1 eviction and there are 4 other cases that could result in eviction if the arrears are not paid.

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

**A big thank you to those tenants who continue to pay their rent on time and have no rent arrears.**

### **Paying your rent**

**Direct Debit** - This 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.

**Other Payment Methods** - When making other payments, i.e. through Allpay, standing order or directly through our bank account, please ensure that you use your tenant reference number and or property reference to ensure that we are able to allocate your payment to your rent account promptly.



## **SUB-LETTING IS A CRIME**

**The 2013 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, (this also includes Air B & B (this is sub-letting too), please contact us to let us know. We will investigate it and if it is proven we will take legal action against that tenant.*



## PROGRAMMED WORKS

# Programmed Works for 2018

We are happy to advise that our programmed works for 2018 commenced in June 2018. We hope that you will be pleased with the works and that you are not unduly inconvenienced during this period. If you are experiencing any problems, please let us know. By completing our short satisfaction survey this will help us to iron out any service delivery issues.

### Cyclical Decorations

The programme will consist of external works and external painting to the building and includes repairs to rain water goods, roof repairs, clearance of drains and repairs to the windows. The properties included in this year's programme are 1-7 St Agnes Place, 59, 63 & 65 Kennington Park Road, Montgomery House and Salisbury Court.

### 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 properties included in this year's programme are Albert Way and Garden House.

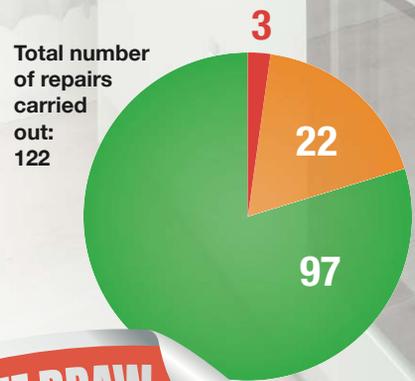
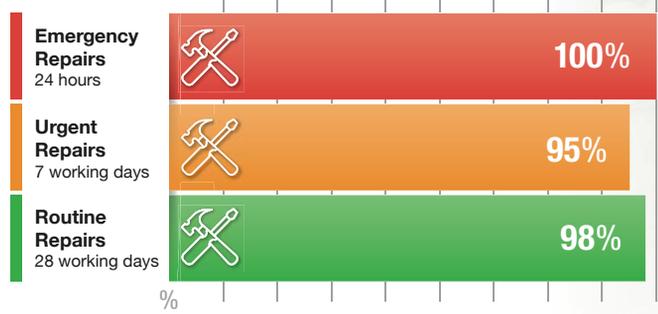


## Gas Safety Inspections

At 30th May 2018 LSHA have 257 properties with a gas supply; the target for gas safety compliance is 100%. We are 100% compliant as of 30th May 2018.

## Repair Completion Times

Percentage of repairs completed within target time



**Congratulations to Mr. M, of Kennington Park Road who received £50 for taking part in the repairs survey.**





## ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

# Anti-Social Behaviour: What to expect

We take anti-social behaviour very seriously and we promise to use every tool available to solve the problem.

If you have reported an incident of anti-social behaviour to LSHA, we take anti-social behaviour very seriously. We promise to use every tool available to solve the problem. However in certain circumstances LSHA may not, despite our best efforts, be able to achieve the result you see as the solution. This article hopes to explain what you can expect from us and how you can help us deal with anti-social behaviour more effectively.

### Neighbours causing excessive noise

***It's going to happen!*** Noise is a part of living in London and many of our properties are street conversions and flats where noise will be transferred from one property to another.

### We need a record

In order for LSHA to assess whether or not it is noise nuisance or anti-social behaviour you will be required to keep a record of what type of noise you can hear, the times and how it affects you. We need tenants to keep us regularly updated of all disturbances to assist us in assessing the case.

### Your word against theirs

In situations where one tenant is complaining about another and the other tenant denies the allegations, there is little more that we can do without someone independent verifying that the noise is excessive.

### What action?

When excessive noise has been identified, this does not mean that LSHA can simply evict a tenant. Generally noise cases can take months before all possible solutions have been explored.

### Neighbour disputes

It is very difficult for LSHA to resolve incidents of anti-social behaviour where it is one tenant's word against another. We will offer mediation as the main way of resolving neighbour disputes because without sufficient evidence, it is very difficult for us to take any action. We need tenants to engage with mediation for it to be effective.

### Other nuisance and illegal activity

Any reports of illegal activity should be reported to and verified by the police before we can take action against a tenant.

### Going to court

Tenants need to liaise with the police, give witness statements and perhaps attend court to support cases of serious anti-social behaviour. The power to evict ultimately lies with the court and we can only apply for an eviction when we have a considerable amount of evidence in support of the case. It's important to note that we cannot evict someone ourselves and will need evidence and support from tenants to build cases.

### Noise Teams by Borough

**Southwark:** Southwark Council's Regulatory Services 020 7525 5777 or report it on line: [www.southwark.gov.uk/noise-and-antisocial-behaviour/how-to-report-a-noise-problem](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/noise-and-antisocial-behaviour/how-to-report-a-noise-problem)

**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: This is a rapid response night service. You can call 020 7926 5999, Wednesday night to Sunday night, 8pm to 4am.

**Lewisham:** Environmental Enforcement  
Tel: 020 8314 2170

Email: [environmentalhealth@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@lewisham.gov.uk)

*Continued on  
page 6 ▶*



**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.



## KEEP IN TOUCH

by text: **07826 826823**

by phone: **020 7735 3935**

in person at: **7a St Agnes Place**

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

## Anti-Social Behaviour: *continued*

### Environment Protection Team:

Tel: 020 8314 2170

Email: [environmentalprotection@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalprotection@lewisham.gov.uk)

### Nuisances they 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

### Nuisances they can not 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.

## 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. However, LSHA have zero tolerance to any aggressive, rude, threatening behaviour, this includes shouting and swearing.

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



**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***