

LSHANews

THE LSHA TENANTS' NEWSLETTER **SUMMER 2021**



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hello!

Welcome to the Summer 2021 Edition of LSHA's 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, please tell us about it.

CONTACT LSHA



call: 020 7735 3935
email: info@lsha.org.uk
web: www.lsha.org.uk



**OUT OF HOURS
EMERGENCY
REPAIRS**

For emergency repairs, including Electrical, Plumbing and Heating repairs, contact:
One Stop Contractors
07946 314 749

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

COVID-19 Update

In line with government guidance, our office has not been able to operate normally in the usual way for over 15 months, but this has not prevented us from working hard and being committed to our tenants to ensure a smooth running service during these challenging times.

We hope to be able to open the office to casual visitors after the 19th July. Until then we need to restrict visits to scheduled appointments only.

In the meantime contact continues to be via email and/or phone. In addition to the general phone number and email you can also contact your Housing Officer directly via their mobile number.

Do please be patient if you do not get an immediate response to any left message or email. We do look to prioritise messages and always look to respond within our agreed Service Standards (available on our website).

great news!

We are looking forward to the ease of restrictions from July 19th.
Until then, keep safe and well.

welcome to the team

Kevin is an experienced & proficient Surveyor, used to all the challenges that construction, maintenance and repairs can bring. He joins LSHA with an ambition to make a difference and a passion to help improve our services along with our contractors.

We would like to give a very warm welcome and lots of good wishes to Kevin on becoming part of our growing team.

**Kevin Donaldson,
Surveyor**



LSHA Tenants Group helps update the Associations new Service Standards

We are continually trying to be a better landlord and want to know what you think about the services we provide and how we can improve.

As reported in previous newsletters we have set up the Lambeth and Southwark Housing Association Tenants Group to help provide feedback from the people who matter most, our tenants.

This Group, which is made up of tenants from across our stock (those tenants who gave their details in the recent survey) have been working with us over the last eight months, reviewing our policies and how we monitor them.

This has ranged from our service standards, tenant engagement strategies to codes of conduct for our contractors. The Tenants Group have really helped to give us useful information on how our services are being delivered on the ground

Why not get involved?

It's not difficult, you can be a part of the LSHA Tenants Group. It would only take one hour a month to be involved and give your views.

Our aim is to have a tenant representative from each block or estate across all our properties. **This is not a way of reporting your repairs** – you should do that through the normal channels. However, if you're interested in your local area and how LSHA operates then please get in contact.

Unfortunately the Coronavirus pandemic, which forced London into lock down, means that it is impossible to set up physical meetings with tenants, so instead the group have been meeting virtually through monthly online video conferencing since late last year. We hope that come Autumn it might be possible to meet up.

LSHA have employed an independent consultant Ciarán Quigley to set up and administer the LSHA Tenants Group. If you would like more information on /or would like to be involved with the Tenants Group please contact Ciarán at: cj_quigley@yahoo.co.uk or LSHA directly at: info@lsha.org.uk

So far...

We have heard from tenants in all the three boroughs, we have properties in (Lewisham, Southwark and Lambeth) which has enabled us to update and improve our Service Standards and more importantly how our services are monitored. The updated LSHA Service Standards document can be viewed on our website at Tenant Services – Lambeth and Southwark Housing Association (lsha.org.uk) and then clicking on the Service Standards link.

The Tenants Group have recently reviewed and made suggestions to improve the LSHA Contractors Code of Conduct which sets out how we expect contractors to operate when dealing with our tenants.

We will update and publish this Code on our website so tenants can see the high standards we expect from any contractor working in your home



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

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

LSHA Annual Rent Changes

Annual rent increase - your questions answered



Here is information about the 2021 annual rent increase for Lambeth & Southwark Housing Association with effect for most tenants on the 4th October 2021.

Why is LSHA increasing my rent?

Since 1 April 2020, the government's Regulator for Social Housing has allowed housing associations to increase rents in line with its 2020 rent standard. This standard allows for a Consumer Price Index (cost of living) increase which is currently 0.5% plus an additional 1%.

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 4th October 2021 for weekly tenancies, and for monthly tenants at Vaughan Road from the 1st October 2021. (Butler House tenants 1st November 2021) so you will need to adjust your usual payment unless you pay by direct debit in which case no action is required. We will make this adjustment for you.

We will send you a letter and notice of rent increase 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. This is your responsibility to advise housing Benefit or 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 up by? Like all social landlords, we have to follow the government's guidelines relating to social housing rent. All UK social landlords will be increasing the rent by 1.5% for 2021.

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

Universal Credit To make sure you get the right amount of benefits, you need to report any changes to your circumstances to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Your claim might be reduced or stopped if you don't report a change straight away or you give incorrect information. To inform the DWP about changes to your rent sign in to your Universal Credit online account or by telephoning the Universal Credit Service Centre.

If you are having problems paying your rent, always contact us immediately so we can help you.

Paying Your Rent

Making payments for your rent and service charges is important and should always be your first priority.

The consequences of not paying your rent are serious and in the worst case could result in you losing your home.

There are things you can do to avoid going into arrears and we are here to help you.

What should I do if I have problems making a payment?

- Don't ignore the problem
- Talk to us as we can arrange for your housing officer to talk to you to advise on benefits you might be able to claim.
- We can talk through your budget with you and make a fair repayment agreement that you can afford.
- Don't promise payments you are unable to make.
- Make every effort to pay on time. If you have problems keeping to the payment agreement, please let us know straight away and tell us if your circumstances change.



If you're concerned about the rent increase and would like some advice on claiming benefits or managing your money, call us on 0207 735 3935.

To find out more about the government's rent standard, go to www.gov.uk/government/publications/direction-on-the-rent-standard-from-1-april-2020

We are here to help, and our aim is always for you to stay in your home and to help you find ways to pay your rent. If you have a problem, we just need to know about it.

What happens if I do get into arrears?

- We now use our texting system to send messages for rent reminders and balances.
- We will contact you if you miss a rent payment to tell you the amount you owe. If you receive a letter, please read it carefully, don't ignore it.
- Contact us straight away to arrange to pay the arrears. If we don't hear from you and you don't make a payment, we'll move through the stages of our arrears policy. This could mean we take you to court and you could even be evicted from your home.

How to Pay your Rent

Direct Debit is the 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, e.g. through Allay, standing order or directly to 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.

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS



It is important that you provide up to date contact details for yourself and your next of kin in case of an emergency. Please telephone LSHA on 020 7735 3935 to advise of any amendments.

MyTenancy a reminder

MyTenancy is a secure web based system that provides tenants with internet access to their rent account. Information such as account transactions, outstanding repairs and personal information is readily available online, controlled with multi-level password access.

Tenants can also view and print their rent statement, place a maintenance request or inform us of any changes in your circumstances.

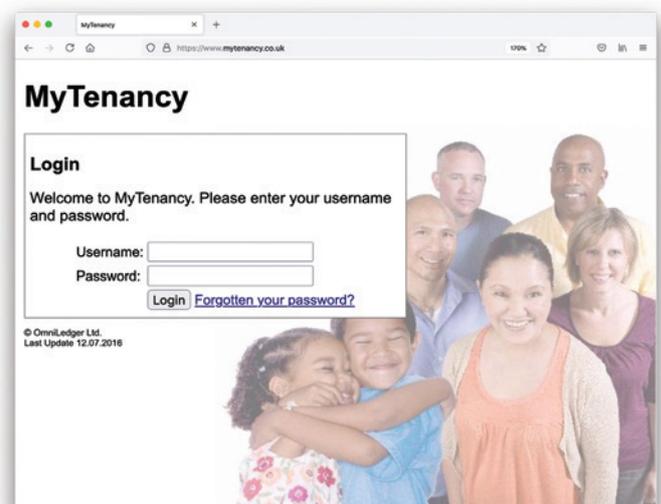
You will need to have access to a computer, either at home or at your local library. All tenants have their own individual login and password which you should not pass to anyone else as this gives you access to your rent account which is confidential to you.

First time tenant login details will be issued by the Association. It is then the tenant's responsibility to change these details to suit their own preferences.

To log into My Tenancy you will need to log on to our website which is www.lsha.org.uk/tenant-services and click on **My Tenancy**

My Tenancy

- Username and passwords are now case sensitive
- New "Forgotten your password?" hyperlink that will allow user to recover their account



Repairs & Maintenance

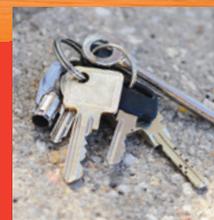
We expect a professional level of service and standard from all of our contractors, this is to ensure positive customer satisfaction and a high level of service.

You should be able to expect the following:

- A confirmation text when an appointment has been booked
- Receiving a call from the contractor to once the appointment has been booked
- Having repairs completed to a high standard
- Receiving a service that complies with the current Covid-19 health and safety regulations
- Ensuring that our tenants are satisfied on completion

Lost Your Keys?

LSHA do not keep spare keys for your flat or house front or back door. You will need to arrange for a locksmith to force entry and change your locks. If you require a new fob or key for the communal door, you will have to pay for a replacement. You may be recharged for a contractor to attend to change your lock if you have lost your key.



No Electrics?

Please check your consumer unit to ensure all the switches are up. If a switch is down, push the switch up. If the switch will not stay up, check your appliances i.e. kettle. A defective appliance will cause the electrics to shut off. Your consumer unit might look like this image below and be situated inside your property, e.g. under the stairs.



Gas Safety Inspections

As of May 2021, LSHA has 269 properties with a gas supply; the target for gas safety compliance is 100%.



We have 54 properties due to expire in the next 3 months (July, August, and September 2021); repair orders have been raised to carry out inspections and issue certificates.

We are 100% compliant as of May 2021.

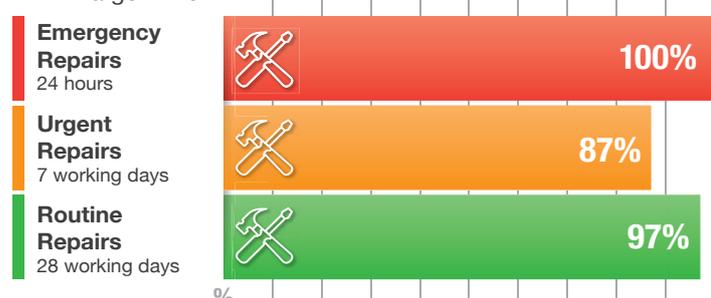
You could be a winner too! Please take part, this will help us improve our repair services to you.

Congratulations to Mrs Aneeta Sara Abraham, Camberwell, our Prize Draw Winner, who received £50 for taking part in the repairs survey by text or letter.

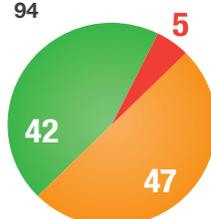


Repair Completion Times April-May 2021

Percentage of repairs completed within target time



Total number of repairs carried out: 94



TRANSFER REQUESTS

If you would like a transfer, you will need to complete a transfer form and return it to LSHA. Most of our properties are based in Lambeth, Southwark and we have one block in Lewisham. Please note that you must not have any arrears before you can be considered for a transfer.



Your Mental Health matters to us

If the thought of entering into the world after lockdown has filled you with anxiety, you are not the only one!

www.nhs.uk/mental-health
www.mind.org.uk
www.mindful.org
www.healthline.com
www.helpguide.org

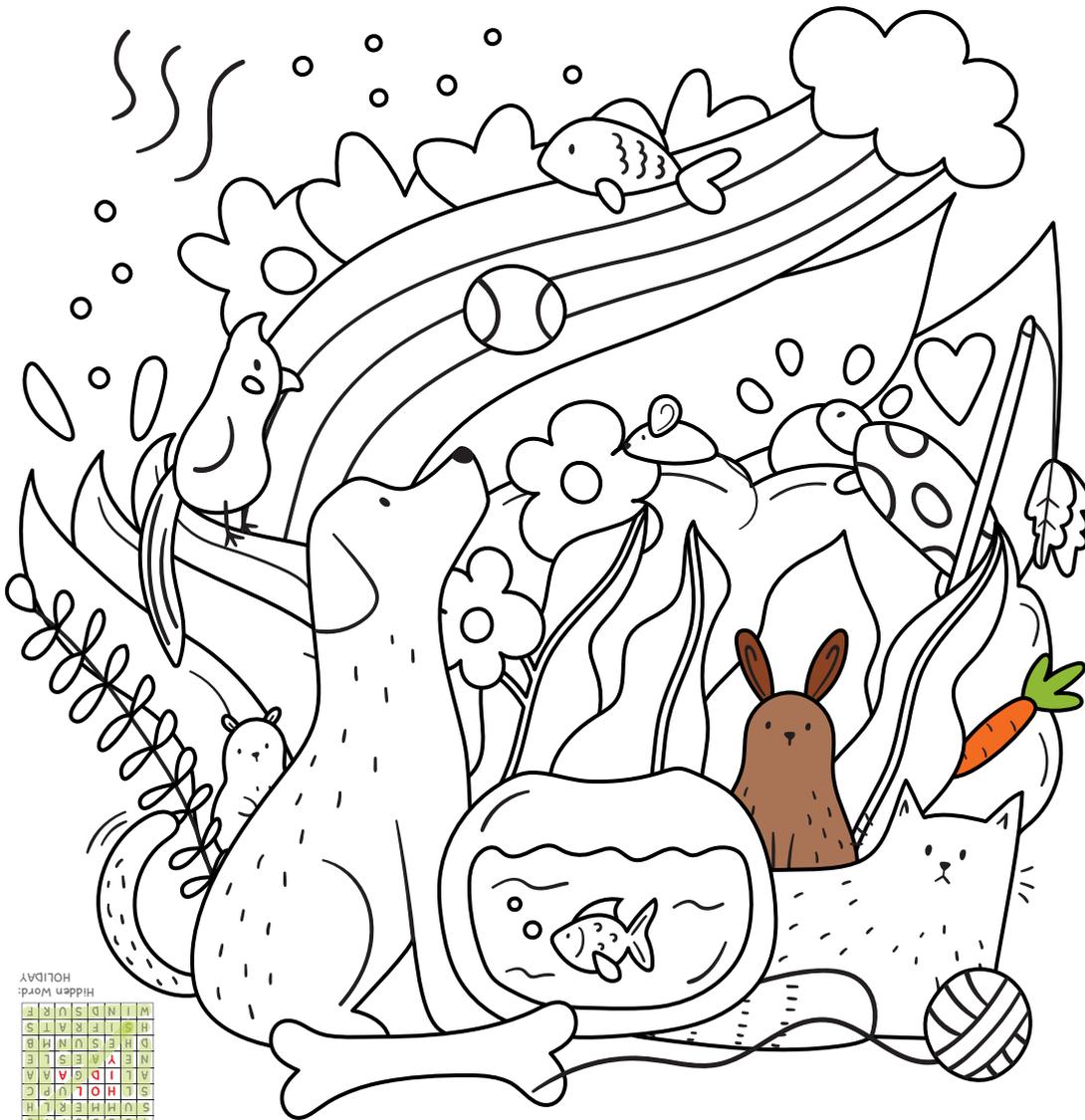
The following organisations have helpful information on a range of practices including anxiety and depression:

There is an immense amount of help available if you are struggling with your mental health so take the time to prioritise your mental and emotional wellbeing, and prepare for a great summer!



Colourful Critters

enjoy colouring in our animal friends...



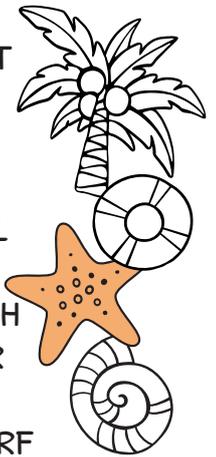
SUMMER WORDSEARCH

Can you find all the words listed? Remember, they can go up, down, forwards, backwards, diagonally or back-to-front. When you have found all the words, the remaining letters will spell a hidden word.



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

- BEACH
- LIFEBELT
- PALM
- SAND
- SEA
- SEAGULL
- SHELL
- STARFISH
- SUMMER
- SUN
- WINDSURF



Hidden Word:

Office opening hours

Our office opening hours are 9.30am-5pm. We close between 1-2pm for lunch. If you would like to see someone in person, please telephone for an appointment on 020 7735 3935 or email: info@lsha.org.uk



Lambeth & Southwark
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

21 Claylands Place, Oval, London SW8 1NL

tel: 020 7735 3935 email: info@lsha.org.uk web: www.lsha.org.uk

Working for Better Housing

