

LSHANews

THE LSHA TENANTS' NEWSLETTER **MAY 2022**



INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Rising Fuel Costs

& Some Useful Energy Saving Tips

SEE PAGE 2 ►

Make sure you're getting the help you need

Benefits Advice

SEE PAGE 3 ►

Customer Survey Results

How are we doing?

SEE PAGE 6 ►

With Summer on the way, 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**

If you have an **EMERGENCY** Electrical, Plumbing or Heating repair out of office hours, which cannot wait until the office is open, contact: **One Stop Contractors on 07946 314 749**

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

Antony & Roderick House UPDATE 30 additional homes are due to be ready by Summer 2022



The rent for a one bedroom flat will be £161.71. The rent for a two bedroom flat is £171.20.

Tenants on the transfer list for a one or two bedroom flat who have a clear rent account and have indicated that they would consider Antony & Roderick house, will be shortlisted to view one of the properties.

Of the 30 flats being built a number will be available for transfers of those households on the waiting list.

With energy prices continuing to rise, see if you are eligible for a rebate

As you may already be aware, the price of gas and electricity has risen dramatically since April 2022. A squeeze on energy supply is the reason for this massive hike.

For those of you who pay these utilities by Direct Debit, you will see an increase of around £693 those on prepayment face an increase of £708

Unfortunately prices are expected to rise again from October 2022 with bills possibly topping £3,000

Council Tax Rebate

The government recently announced a Council tax rebate of £150.00 to assist with the cost of living, this is in response to the recent energy increase.

The criteria for the rebate to qualify are if you are in a home valued in Council tax bands A to D.

There is no requirement to apply for the rebate as your local Authority will contact you if you are eligible.

If you pay your Council tax by Direct Debit then this one off payment will be automatically credited to your account.

If you pay by alternative means and are eligible, your Local Authority will be in touch.

We know it's not always easy to pay your bills and that everyone's circumstances are different. Don't suffer in silence, speak to us and seek additional support if needed.

Additional Support

Money Advice Service telephone: 0800 138 7777

National Debtline telephone: 0808 808 4000

Citizens Advice telephone: 0808 223 1133

My Money Steps telephone: 0808 808 4000

StepChange Debt Charity telephone: 0800 138 1111

Some Energy Saving Tips

Reduce Your Light Usage

Turn your lights off when you're not using them. If you switch a light off for just a few seconds, you will save more energy than it takes for the light to start up again, regardless of the type of light. This will save you around £15 a year on your annual energy bills.

Use LED Lightbulbs



Kitchen Cut Backs

Save £39 a year on your energy bill by using your kitchen appliances more carefully:

Use a bowl to wash up rather than a running tap and save £25 a year

Reduce your washing machine use by just one cycle per week and save £8 a year

Only fill the kettle with the amount of water that you need and save around £6 a year



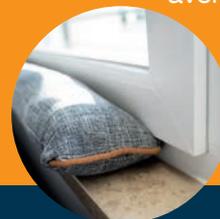
Switch Off From Standby

You can save around £35 a year by turning your appliances off standby mode



Turn Down Your Central Heating By 1 Degree

Turning your central heating thermostat down by 1 degree could save you £60 a year (based on turning down a room thermostat from 22° C to 21° C in the main living areas of an average 3 bed house)



Draught Proof
your home

You might find this free benefits advice website helpful in making sure you're receiving all that you are entitled to:
www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement

Make sure you're getting the help you need

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.

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.

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. So please let us know straight away.

How to Pay your Rent

Direct Debit 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, 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.



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

LSHA CONTRACTOR CODE OF CONDUCT

In our Summer 2021 Newsletter we reported that we have been working with our tenants group, staff and contractors on an updated Contractor Code of Conduct. The final version was agreed at the end of 2021 and we would like to thank all those tenants who helped in its production.

The Code covers what tenants can expect from any contractor working on their home from an LSHA contractor.

It covers a number of key headings including:

ACCESS

Access arrangements
 Broken promises
 Use of ID cards

BEHAVIOURS

The standards of behaviour tenants can expect from contractors

HOME STANDARDS

RESIDENTS EFFECTS
 Protection of furniture and possessions etc.

OTHER PROBLEMS THAT CAN OCCUR

COMPLETING THE WORKS

The code has been prepared to assist contractors and trade operatives in their working procedures and to ensure that all concerned are aware of the standards which are required. It is a condition of all contracts that contractors ensure their operatives are familiar with and conform to this code. A full copy of the code can be found on the LSHA Website.

LSHA Community Investment Fund Grants

4

Do you have an idea for a project in your block or estate that would help improve the lives of you and your neighbours? If so, LSHA would like to offer you the opportunity to apply for a Community Investment Fund Grant of up to £500. This could range from improving your communal garden by purchasing tools and plants to hiring a minibus to take the older tenants in your block/estate on a day trip or maybe funding a trip for the children during the summer holidays or it could be as simple as purchasing a notice board for your block for all tenants to use. Of course, these are only suggestions. We want to hear your ideas!

We have set up a simple application process so it is easy to apply. Detailed guidance on how to complete a Grant application form can be found on our website at www.lsha.org.uk

However here is a brief explanation of the information we need from you to complete the form:

1 Give a **brief description** of your idea and how it will **benefit the tenants** of your block/estate

2 Show **how you have got the support** of your neighbours to apply for the grant – this could be as simple as posting a letter through your neighbour's door explaining your idea and asking if they support it. A suggested letter is also available on the website at www.lsha.org.uk

3 How much will the **project cost** – You need to research the cost of each item and supply the details. This could be from a website or the shop you have researched together with the price. Obviously, you will have to keep the receipts and give these back to LSHA to show how the money was spent

4 How will the project be carried out and when? – Who will help and are there any **Health and Safety risks** and how any risks will be managed? E.g., if it's a trip for children – how many parents will be there to ensure children safety or if it's a gardening project – will there be machinery used and how will safety be ensured

5 Finally, how will you assess the **success of the project** – This could be how many tenants took part, photographs are always a good way to show how the day out went or how the garden has been improved.

We appreciate that the Pandemic was a terrible time for our tenants so we think this is a great opportunity to try to improve our tenants' lives. No ideas are too big or small! As long as it benefits the tenants in your block or estate, we want to hear from you.

If you'd like to talk to someone about your idea and help applying then please e-mail info@lsha.org.uk

The application form and guidance notes on how to complete the form can be found on our website at www.lsha.org.uk

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.

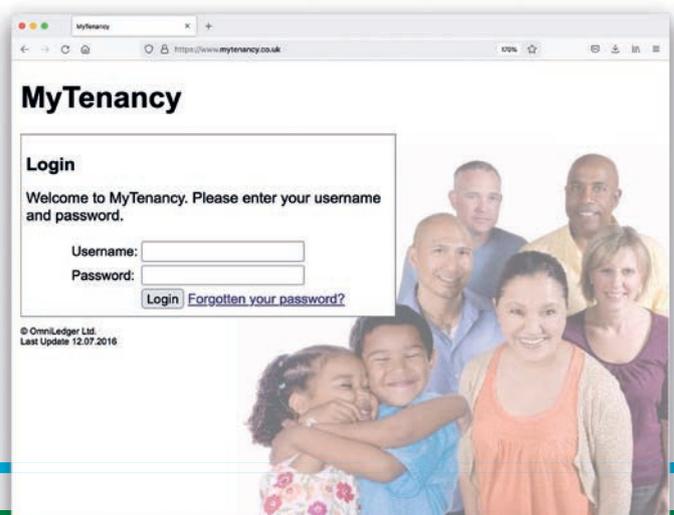
You will need to have access to a computer, either at home or at your local library. All tenants have their own individual login and password which you should not pass to anyone else as this gives you access to your rent account which is confidential to you.

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



Missed Appointments!

There has been a high number of appointments being missed, this means that other tenants who are waiting for their repairs to be completed could have had theirs done on one of those missed occasions.

We completely understand that there are genuine reasons as to why our tenants are unable to keep appointments; all we ask is that tenants notify us ahead of time so that we can give the appointment to another tenant who may need it. **If tenants do need to make amendments to their appointment, please call us on 020 7735 3935.**



LSHA may charge you for the cost incurred if tenants do not notify contractors of a change of appointment date!



Also, there is a messaging reminder system in place once a tenant has booked an appointment for our contractor to come and fix the problem, they will receive a text message confirming the details. We hope this will mean that tenants will not forget their upcoming scheduled appointments.

Periodic Electrical Inspections

At LSHA, we are required to carry out periodic inspections and associated testing to check whether an electrical installation is in a satisfactory condition for continued service.

The Regulations require landlords to have the electrical installations in their properties inspected and tested by our contractors every five years.

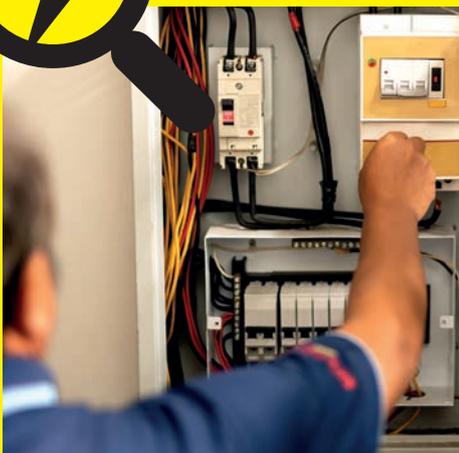
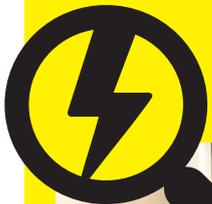
On completion of the necessary inspection and testing, an Electrical Installation Condition Report will be issued detailing any observed damage, deterioration, defects, dangerous conditions and any non-compliance with the present-day safety standard which might give rise to danger.

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, iron, hairdryer etc.

A defective appliance will cause the electrics to shut off. Your consumer unit might look like this image above and be situated inside your property, e.g. under the stairs.



Customer Survey Results

In the Autumn of 2021 we undertook a telephone based customer satisfaction survey. The response rate of 54% is very high for such surveys and we very grateful to the 174 residents who were good enough to give up their time to let us know what they think of LSHA and the services we provide.

These days we seem to be inundated by survey requests in all aspects of our lives so the fact that residents did make time for us is really appreciated. So again thank you to those who took part!

Some aspects of the survey are encouraging but also we clearly still have a way to go on certain services we offer. Some of the good is that overall levels of satisfaction have remained very consistent. This is at a time when across the social housing sector, and after nearly two years of pandemic services, overall levels of satisfaction have fallen by up to 20%. Research needs to be done on why this might

be the case but it's very likely to have been affected by the ability of landlords to maintain service levels over three lockdowns and various different tiers. For example with more people forced to stay at home levels of anti social behaviour have increased.

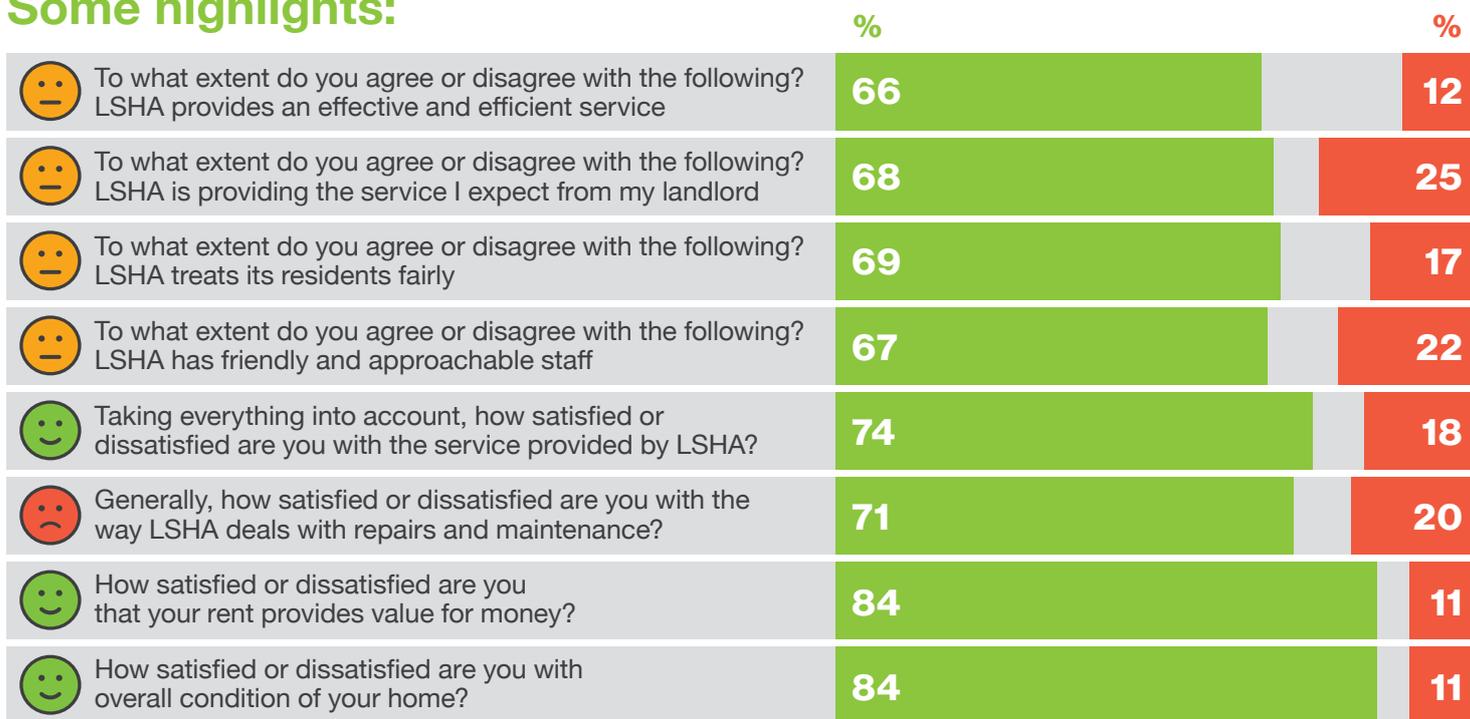
We were extremely pleased to see the very high levels of satisfaction in response to whether the rents offer value for money. As we all face increasing costs, not least around gas and electricity costs it is reassuring to see that most tenants do consider that rent levels are not unreasonable.

On the less positive side, we still have a way to go with satisfaction on aspects of the repair service. That said, since we last surveyed residents in late 2019 the world has been pretty much turned upside down for many of our contractors.

We have all heard about supply problems with labour and materials post Brexit. These have only been compounded by the affects of the pandemic. This is something that is having a very real consequence for residents in Antony & Roderick House who are experiencing delays in the contractors ability to complete the addition of thirty new homes for local residents and installation of a first lift.

One area that we will be exploring with our residents group is the response to the question on whether we providing the services tenants expect from us. A total of 25% disagree - something we need to explore and understand why.

Some highlights:



Lambeth & Southwark
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

21 Claylands Place, Oval, London SW8 1NL web: www.lsha.org.uk
tel: 020 7735 3935 text: 07826 826823 email: info@lsha.org.uk
Working for Better Housing

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
Please always allow 10 working days for a response to your email queries.