

LSHANews

THE LSHA TENANTS' NEWSLETTER **SUMMER-AUTUMN 2022**



goodbye...

After eight years at LSHA
Mark Jackson is retiring as Chief Executive



INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Welcome to the
Summer - Autumn
edition of LSHA's
Newsletter!

Mark readily admits there is much he will miss about the residents, staff and board at LSHA to whom he would like to offer his thanks for the support, challenge and immense satisfaction they have given him in allowing him to lead LSHA through the last eight years of its 95 year history. He does feel though that the time is right to hand over the reins to a new Chief Executive...

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.

The last few years have been a period of tremendous change for both LSHA and the housing world generally. The impact of the Grenfell fire has cast a huge shadow over the sector and fundamentally changed the approach that many social landlords have towards their residents. LSHA have always sought to have existing residents at the centre of what they do. We have never been a development led organisation, only concerned with numbers and growth. That said new homes are important. We need them to continue to do what we do best, provide good quality homes to people in housing need in Lambeth, Southwark and more recently Lewisham.

When asked, Mark confided that the greatest challenge he had faced was guiding the Association through the initial two years of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The ability to move, virtually overnight, from a traditional office based environment to working from home is frankly not something we could not have done 10 years ago and is testament to the investment we have made in IT and support services.

With only three chief executives in thirty years there must be something about LSHA that makes it a great organisation to work for. And that Mark suggests are its residents. Being Chief executive of a small organisation allows Mark to keep in touch with how tenants really feel about the services they receive. As he readily admits, he hears it first hand on a regular basis both the good and the bad.

*...and
welcome*

to Emma Keegan, who we are pleased to welcome to LSHA in August 2022. Emma was at Bexley Community Housing Association's (BECHA) as Chief Executive and has worked for both large and small housing providers, she brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in the housing sector in customer-focused services, resident engagement, risk management, staff leadership and robust governance to name a few.



Antony and Roderick House Updates

In recent years we have built nine new build flats at St. Faith's Road and acquired 11 key worker flats in Camberwell.

We will shortly be taking on 30 new flats at Antony and Roderick House for local people.

The addition of thirty new flats at Antony and Roderick House continues. The project has been hit by a number of delays. The period during which the project has been on site has coincided with an unprecedented set of circumstances that no one could have foreseen.

Firstly the impact of Brexit, compounded by the pandemic and more recently the impact of the Ukraine war on supply chain issues. Things that we would never have expected such as supply of windows and cladding material have delayed subsequent works. The challenge with a construction problem is that there is a critical path that needs to be followed. We cannot afford to allow shortcuts or risks to be taken which would compromise the integrity of the completed project.

On the positive the quality of work completed is good. We have weekly site visits by both our surveyors and the housing officer, Elaine Brown. A further positive is that following the departure of Andre Correia, the tenants liaison officer his successor, Simon Brigden is

someone that many residents are familiar with as Simon was very much part of the project at the planning stage and has already met with many of the tenants.

We are looking to arrange a meeting in early September to explain the causes of the delay and to give reassurance as to when key milestones will be achieved such as bring down the scaffolding; completing the new frontage and rear gardens. As well as LSHA staff we will also have senior people from both Adston and Apex present.

I would like to offer my personal apologies for the delays in getting this project completed. I do appreciate that we have tested the patience of many people at Antony & Roderick House and I can give you my assurance that we have been doing everything feasibly possible to keep the project on track and to keep delays to a minimum.

On a more personal level, I am sorry that I will be retiring before the project is completed. I had delayed my original plans to retire to give enough time to ensure that the new flats would have been handed over and new residents would have moved in. Unfortunately it won't now be the case.

I will however be present at the September meeting along with others involved in the delivery of this project.


Mark Jackson
Chief
Executive

Building works underway at Antony and Roderick House



Making sure
our tenants can
help each other

Grants up to £500
are available to help
you and your
neighbours

Community Investment Fund

Interested? 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.
- hiring a minibus to take older tenants in your block/estate on a day trip.
- 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. Please let us know what you think.

How could this grant be useful to you and your neighbours?

We have set up a simple application process so it is easy to apply.

For more information, or if you'd like to talk to someone about your idea and help applying then please call your housing officer or e-mail info@lsha.org.uk

Here is a brief explanation of the information you have to get to apply for a grant:

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. You will need to let LSHA know that there is support in your block/estate.

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.

It's happening...

One LSHA block has already successfully applied and received a grant. They are now working on improving their communal garden. Their plans are to plant new flowers in the garden, purchase a shed to put their gardening tools in and buy a table and chairs so the whole block can sit and enjoy the garden. We wish them well and look forward to seeing the results.

We appreciate that the Pandemic was a terrible time for our tenants. So, we've launched this grant programme to help those tenants who would like to 'get involved' in their community. 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.

October 2022 energy price increases expected to rise by 64%

New predictions show the average energy bill could shoot up to £3,500 this October! We explain what it means for you...

Every domestic electricity customer across the country will receive a £400 discount off their energy bill from October in a new effort by the UK Government to help millions of households cope with the cost of living crisis. The money does not have to be repaid and energy suppliers will deliver this support over six months from October.

However, not everyone will receive the extra financial help to tackle the next Ofgem price cap rise, which Cornwall Insight now predicts will increase by 64 per cent from October 1, taking the annual cost for a typical user on a standard tariff to £3,245.

The energy analysts also said the price cap could go up by a further £360 in January to £3,364.

Some Energy Saving Tips

1 Turn your thermostat down by just one degree and The Energy Saving Trust say that by could cut your heating bills by a whopping 10%! The extra money spent on heating your home during the colder months can really add up so keep a close eye on how you're using it.

2 Turn down thermostatic valves on your radiators, if you have them, in any rooms you don't use that much. Keep your home at a constant temperature, ideally 18–21°C. This will help you stay warm and well and also help reduce your fuel bill.



3 Use draft excluders under all your doors and stick insulation strips around your windows. These will stop cold air from coming into the room while preventing any warm air from escaping. These can be bought cheaply in most DIY stores.



4 Never hang your washing on the radiators. This reduces the amount of heat available to warm up the room. Instead, hang your washing on a clothes airer in a warm, dry room.

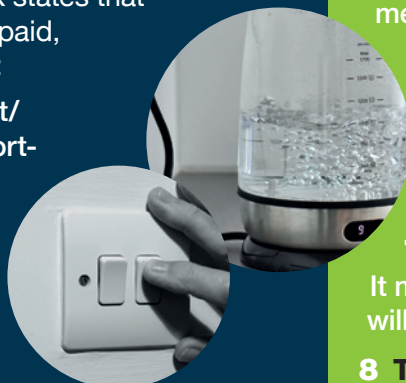
5 Always cook food with the lids on. This saves heat, allowing you to cook food faster using lower temperatures, meaning you use less energy.



6 Never leave appliances on standby. By leaving that little red light on TVs, computers or stereos, you're actually wasting a surprising amount of electricity. It's much better for your wallet to turn them off at the wall.

7 Don't overfill the kettle when making a cuppa. It might seem small but only boiling what you need will help save money and energy.

8 Turn off lights in rooms you're not using.



What is the Energy Bills Support Scheme?

The UK Government is providing a package of support worth £37 billion in 2022 to 2023 which includes the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

Through the scheme, domestic electricity customers in the UK will receive a £400 reduction in their electricity costs from this October.

The guidance on GOV.UK states that this will not need to be repaid, for more information visit:

www.gov.uk/government/news/energy-bills-support-scheme-explainer



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 from us:

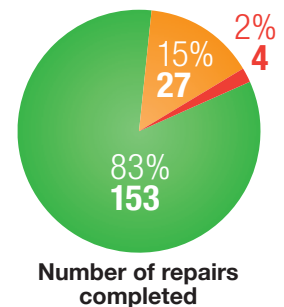
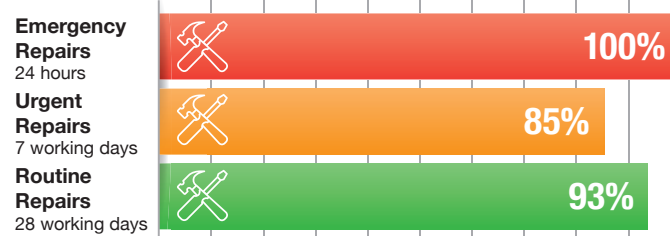
- A confirmation text when an appointment has been booked
- Receiving a call from the contractor to once the appointment has been booked
- Having repairs completed to a high standard
- Receiving a service that complies with the current COVID19 health and safety regulations
- Ensuring that our tenants are satisfied on completion of the works



Congratulations to Ms. Thompson-Weekes, Otha House, our Prize Draw Winner, who received £50 for taking part in the repairs survey by text or letter. You could be a winner too! Please take part, to help us improve our repair services to you.

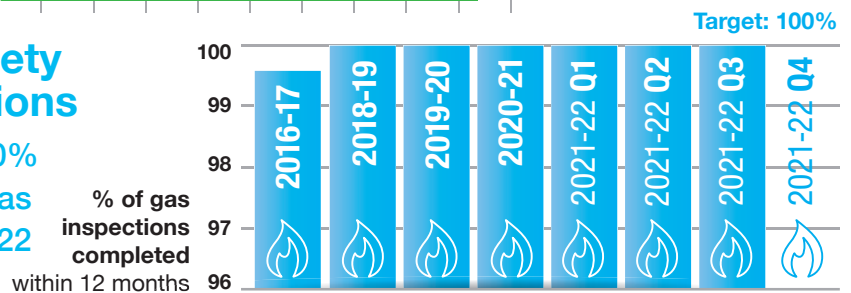
Repair Completion Statistics – April 2022 to June 2022 (Quarter 3)

Percentage of repairs completed within target time



Gas Safety Inspections

We are 100% compliant as of June 2022



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.

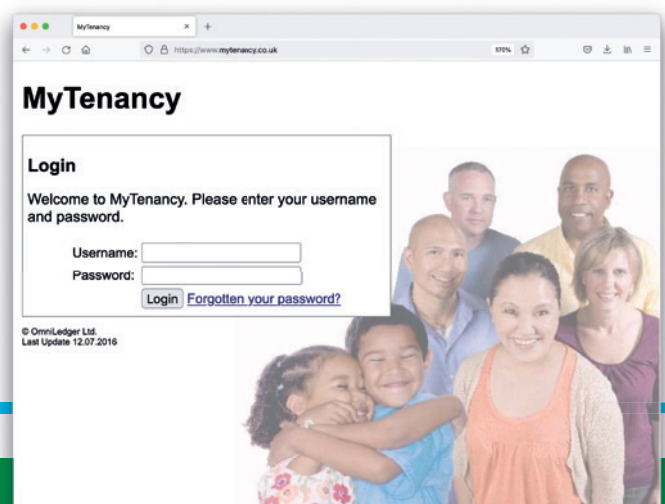
First time tenant login details will be issued by the Association. It is then the tenant's responsibility to change these details to suit their own preferences.

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

Remember:

- Username and passwords are now case sensitive
- There is a "Forgotten your password?" hyperlink that will allow you to recover your account



LSHA Annual Rent Changes

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 3.1% as of September 2021. The rents for 2022-2023 will increase by CPI of 3.1% as at September 2021 plus a margin of 1%. This comes to a total increase of 4.1% this year.

This means that LSHA will be increasing rents by 4.1% on Monday, 3rd October 2022.

Rent increases will happen right across the social housing sector as landlords raise rents in line with the government standard.

We will write to you in August 2022 to confirm exactly what your rent will be from 3rd October 2022, along with any increase to your Service Charge if you pay it.

To find out more about the government's rent standard, go to: www.gov.uk/government/publications/rent-standard.

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.



Annual rent increase Your questions answered

Here is information about the 2022 annual rent increase for Lambeth & Southwark Housing Association with effect for most tenants on the 3rd October 2022.

We explain

Why rent is going up

How and when the increase will take effect

How you can access financial advice and support if needed

Why is LSHA increasing my rent?

From 1 April 2020, the government's Regulator for Social Housing is letting housing associations increase rents in line with its 2020 rent standard. This standard allows for a Consumer Price Index (cost of living) increase which is currently 3.1% 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 3rd October 2022 for weekly tenancies, and for monthly tenants at Vaughan Road from the 1st October 2022. (Butler House tenants from 7th November 2022) 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.

It 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 4.1% for 2022.

If you're concerned about your rent increase and would like some advice on claiming benefits or managing your money, call us on: 020 7735 3935

Help with Money

Search 'Energy Advice' online for free services to help you reduce your energy bills

CITIZENS ADVICE - help if you are struggling with your bills. Search 'Citizens Advice' online or call 0800 144 8848

HELP FOR HOUSEHOLDS - find out what cost of living support you could be eligible for. Visit the Cost of Living Campaign website at: www.costoflivingsupport.campaign.gov.uk

MONEY AND BENEFITS ADVICE - visit: www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

STEPCHANGE DEBT CHARITY - offering free expert debt advice. Visit: www.stepchange.org

Make sure you're getting the help you need.

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

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.



Tesco Free Kids meals DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS

T&Cs: One free kids' hot meal deal or kids' breakfast for dine in or one Kids' Pick 'n' Mix per item purchased by an adult in the café. Clubcard/app required, 25/07/22 – 26/08/22. Offer is subject to availability and kids' meals may vary in cafés. Kids' Pick 'n' Mix may be the only option available in some cafés, this consists of 1 sandwich, 1 drink, 1 fruit item and a choice of 2 snacks. Kids' hot meal deal and breakfast options are for dine in only. The Café has the right to withdraw or amend the offer. Offer varies by region.



Foodbanks: The Trussell Trust

The Trussell Trust support a nationwide network of food banks and together they provide emergency food and support to people who are struggling financially in these current times.

This means people can receive a food bank parcel of nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food from their local food bank. The trust also provides debt advice, mental health support, and benefits guidance.

To find a foodbank in your local area visit: www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/

At LSHA we are currently looking into providing a referral service for those who wish to use food bank services in their local area, we will keep you posted on this matter.



CALM Campaign Against Living Miserably

An organisation that will give support with anxiety, mental health issues, relationship breakdowns.

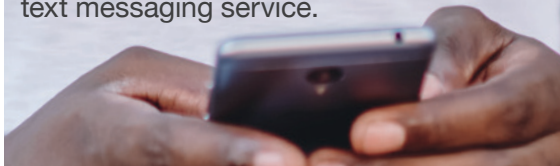
Please go to their website www.calmzone.net for more information.

Do not suffer in silence!

LSHA Texting Service

Our text number is 07826 826823

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



ASDA CAFÉ

KIDS EAT FOR £1*

ALL DAY, EVERY DAY
DURING THE SUMMER
HOLIDAYS!

Choose from our cold pick & mix selection or hot favourites! *T&Cs apply.



**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 5 working days for a response to your email queries.