

LSHAnews

THE LSHA TENANTS' NEWSLETTER **SUMMER 2025**



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We are really pleased to be sending out this Summer edition of the LSHA Tenants' newsletter

There has been a lot of hard work by the team over the last year, that is beginning to pay off. We hope that you are seeing the impact and the improvements that we have been working hard on, by listening to our tenants and working with the Tenants Group.

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.

Listening to our tenants and reflecting on what was said, our responses and revising our procedures has been an important part of all we have done over the last six months.

***You Said, We Did* is a theme that we are proud to report on, and we hope you will be pleased with. We have been working with tenants and listening to the feedback to look at how we work and our structures in place.**

STAFFING

You said you want to see more of our staff and to have better lines of communication with them. As a result, we have introduced some new roles and defined their tasks and activity.

You said you wanted better access and quicker responses. Conversations with our tenants and results of the tenants survey last year identified this was an area we needed to improve. As such, we have put a stop to the '*we have 5-10 days to get back to you*' responses.

While we do work with guidelines and we can't always respond immediately, we agree that the message from such a response does not set the right tone. We do expect staff to acknowledge emails, even if they cannot always respond immediately.

The new roles should create capacity and improve focus, enabling Housing Officers to spend more time on tenancy issues, rather than chasing repairs.

We are also currently reviewing the role of Housing Officers, and how to get the best out of this essential part of the team. **Teniola Abe** has been robustly covering one post for a couple of months and will oversee both patches for the time being.

We will of course update you when we have reviewed and appointed to the new role(s).

NEW ROLES:

Maintenance

Historically, LSHA employed surveyors, as well as commissioning independent consultants for bigger projects. The role never quite sat well within the structure, and the balance of maintaining day-to-day repairs, budgets, and compliance issues got caught up in the bigger project management issues.

As a result, and again listening to what tenants were telling us, we have restructured this aspect of the service into two part-time roles, a Maintenance Officer and Maintenance Coordinator.

Addison Marsh joined us as Maintenance Officer in February and will oversee the day-to-day maintenance and repair issues, void and post work inspections to check on quality of repairs and value for money. Addison has an impressive background in building and maintenance management as well as the skills, focus and knowledge to ensure that contractors are working in our tenants and therefore, LSHA's best interest.

Nevaeh Beckford joined us in May, as our new Maintenance Coordinator, which will focus on raising and tracking individual jobs, job completion, tenant satisfaction with completed works and chasing up ongoing or overdue repairs. Nevaeh brings experience from a variety of roles within housing associations and local government and has a good understanding of the challenges and opportunities a good maintenance service can bring.

We believe this will provide tenants with a more focused and efficient maintenance and repairs service, and will create capacity for Jerome, our Customer Services Officer, to focus on compliance and other tenant communication and contact.

“ I joined LSHA in February following a career in the public and private property industry for over 30 years. I have worked for various local authorities and housing associations across London.

I have held various management roles within the social housing sector in housing management, estate services, technical and repairs & maintenance departments. I have also worked as a consultant managing stock transfers and departmental re-organisation/merger.

I am excited to have joined LSHA at a time of important change and organisational development and I am looking forward to being a part of LSHA's future journey with improving tenant cohesiveness, involvement and driving up service quality. ”

Addison Marsh



An Apology

Due to an administrative error, we recently sent some rent statements and other information in the wrong size envelope.

This caused an underpayment on the postage. We sincerely apologise for this error.

A text was sent out to all tenants, asking to send a copy of the Royal Mail notice, so that we could credit your Rent Accounts with the £1.50 accordingly.

Tenant and Community Engagement Officer

We bought our Tenant Engagement role in-house with the appointment of Brian earlier this year. Brian is experienced in both housing and community investment.

This role combines the two aspects to ensure that our Tenant Voice is heard internally, but also that access to community, resources and opportunities are fully exploited to the benefit of our tenants.

In addition, the role will work closely with the Tenants Group and the new Tenant Experience Committee which is overseen by the LSHA Board, and he will receive any applications to the Community Grant.

Brian said:

“I’m excited to join LSHA as we look forward to making improvements to services with help of LSHA tenants.

It will be a gradual process, but it’s a great time to come onboard to share my experience on how we can embed a culture of what real tenant engagement can look like!”

Board Member

As part of our drive to improve our services and make sure our Tenant Voice is heard, we have also recruited a new Tenant Board Member.

We were delighted to have several applications to the Board and to see **Carol Myers** join us. Carol's enthusiasm and wider skills bring a fresh perspective to the Board proceedings, and we look forward to working with her.

Carol Says:

“I am excited to have recently joined the Lambeth and Southwark Housing Association as a Tenant Board Member. This new role is an opportunity for me to contribute to the betterment of our community from a tenants perspective. Having lived as an LSHA tenant for ten years, I have witnessed first-hand the challenges and opportunities that come with community living. My experiences have fuelled my desire to play a more active role in shaping our housing policies and ensuring that our community thrives.

As a tenant, my primary aim is to draw on my first-hand experiences to ensure that tenants' voices are heard in all decision-making processes.

I am committed to contributing to the development of policies that promote a safe, inclusive, and harmonious living environment. This includes working on initiatives that enhance tenant rights, improve living conditions, and by engaging with, and fostering a strong sense of community, to ensure that we can work together to address any challenges and celebrate our collective achievements.”

Tenant Experience Committee (TEC)

This is a new committee set up by the Board to oversee the services that we deliver to tenants and facilitate tenant engagement.

The committee consists of Board members and two tenants, **Paul** and **Michelle** (pictured right). Both have been LSHA tenants for a long time! They are acting as critical friends to the Association and will ensure the Tenant Voice is heard. They will help us reflect on past experiences of what did and didn't work to help us move forward. We accept, you told us in the last Tenant Satisfaction Survey, that things weren't brilliant, and we told you we want to change that.

Michelle says: “I have been a tenant with LSHA for five years and didn't take part in the tenants' meetings before because I am technophobic! Now I have a smartphone, and I am attending the Tenants Group online every month using Teams!

I attended a short online seminar on heating our homes and extra support we can apply for if we need it. This was organised by LSHA for tenants because they understand we are going through a 'cost of living crisis'.



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I am very excited to have the privilege to speak up for tenants and help create the positive changes we all want to see. LSHA want to get to know their tenants, after all, we are not just a voice over the phone or an email, it is by meeting people that we develop real relationships. I have got to know other tenants and the LSHA team. Everyone is working hard to create positive change and create opportunities for every tenant to give their suggestions to reshape the service to one that we can all take pride in together.

I am really enjoying the tenants' meetings, they are always interesting and are already creating positive changes!”

Paul says: “I have been a tenant with LSHA in Kennington for 25 years. I am a member of the Tenants Group and have recently taken a place on the newly formed Tenant Experience Committee.

Since 2009 I've worked alongside LSHA with the aim of improving services and communication between tenants and LSHA. I feel strongly that tenants and LSHA working constructively and respectfully together benefits us all, tenants and staff alike.

I'm very pleased to see the commitment from Emma and her team to improve our working relationship and there is lots of dedicated, hard work going on - the current Tenants Group and the new Tenant Experience Committee are great examples of staff and tenants working together, with a clear commitment from LSHA to put into action many ideas and suggestions from tenants.

One recent outcome is the development of branding for the Tenants Group which combines the LSHA logo and the idea of tenants working together, which you'll be seeing on upcoming communications with you.”



Tenants Group

Paul and Michelle are also active members of the Tenants Group. Set up a few years ago, the numbers attending meetings fluctuate between 3 and 11 tenants. The Group is intended to be proactive and ensure that tenants' voices are genuinely heard.

We are hoping that the Group's independence will grow and becomes truly tenant-led, with staff facilitating rather than leading it. This is essential to ensure

the Group becomes a critical friend, holding LSHA to account, challenging us and also working with us. So far, the Tenants Group has helped us draft several policies and procedures including the Decant Policy and Recharge Policy, making sure that the wording and 'ethos' of the policies are both appropriate, accountable and fair to tenants as well as achieving the 'business objective.'

Meetings are online and open to all tenants who want to get involved.

We know that there are many reasons why people cannot always commit to attending every meeting, and that's fine. We want this to be a dynamic and evolving working group. There are members of the Group willing to attend every meeting, others want to dip in and out, attend individual working groups or bring their experience on specific tasks, such as policies or where they have an interest in a particular subject. If you are interested please contact **Brian** via getinvolved@lsha.org.uk

Tenants Group Away Day 22 March

LSHA invited Esther Clarson from Think Together, specialising in tenant involvement to facilitate an Away Day with LSHA tenants: The day was a great success.

Esther and Brian wanted to say a huge thank you for coming along to the tenant workshop, for your time, openness, and engagement on the day.

The workshop started to build an improved, stronger approach to tenant engagement at LSHA. Tenants talked about the changes happening in social housing regulation. They shared thoughts on what's been difficult in the past, but also about the changes you're starting to see - especially in how LSHA is listening and wanting to work better with tenants. There was a real feeling that we want to move forward with tenants as partners, rebuilding trust and making tenant voices heard.

Tenants shared lots of brilliant ways tenants can get involved, including community events, surgeries, working with younger

people and families, a tenant-led newsletter and regular updates. You also gave a thumbs up to creating the Strategic Tenants Group and how that can help shape decisions and influence LSHA. This needs to be supported with training, a small budget, recruitment and the right information.

What's next?

We'll bring everything together and share a first draft of a new Tenant Communication Plan. Over the next couple of months, the Group will develop a simple plan for the year, what you'd like to achieve, what support you'll need, and how we can make it happen together.

"We're looking forward to working with you and turning your feedback into actions."

The following key-words are a summary feedback from those that took part on the day:

- Productive • Interesting
- Informative • Empowering
- Getting ideas

"Enjoyed it, positive to talk about the past and now working on what's next."

TENANT-LED NEWSLETTER

Through our recent communication and consultation with tenants, including day-to-day contact, Tenants Group, and other engaged tenants, we have been discussing better ways of communicating.

Tenants have suggested, and we would welcome greater involvement with, a tenant-led newsletter. We aim to produce three newsletters a year as well as the Annual Review.

If you would like to support us to produce the next newsletter, please contact **Steve** at getinvolved@lsha.org.uk

Tenants Coffee and Catch Up

The Tenants Group has submitted a Community Grants application, to trial an informal coffee and catch-up session for all tenants to attend, and to explore the issues they would like the Tenants Group to address at those meetings. The details are still being finalised but to find out more, please contact Brian via getinvolved@lsha.org.uk who can put you in touch with the engaged tenants facilitating the meetings.

Grow-Your-Own Gardening

Would you like to grow your own veg?
Perhaps you would just like to make your communal gardens greener and more beautiful?

Working with Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST), LSHA has an opportunity to install some raised gardening beds in a small number of properties across Lambeth and Southwark. If you are an LSHA tenant in a property that has communal space and you would like to know more, then please contact Brian at getinvolved@lsha.org.uk to register your interest.

BOST is an environmental charity established to improve people's health and well-being by helping to make the places where they live and work greener and more beautiful. You can find out more about the work they do here: bost.org.uk/green-hub



CCTV and Ring Doorbells:

For low-cost security, CCTV and smart doorbells are becoming more popular as the prices become more affordable. In principle, LSHA does not object to the use of smart doorbells, but tenants must remember the following:

- You **must have clear signs** up to say CCTV is in operation.
- Your CCTV/Smart doorbell **must only cover your home and garden.**
- If your CCTV/Smart doorbell looks out on to a communal area, it should be set to **only record when the doorbell is pressed.** It should not be sense-activated.
- You **must not** use CCTV or your smart doorbell to listen into other people's conversations.

Please also remember that when you pass other people's CCTV / Smart doorbells, they may be able to hear and record what you are saying!

You can find out more about your rights and responsibilities when installing or using CCTV and smart doorbells from the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk/for-the-public

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Complaints

In November 2024, the LSHA Board approved a new Complaints Policy. The new two stage policy follows the guidance and regulation required by the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS).

The HOS requires housing associations to acknowledge and respond to complaints within set guidelines. Tenants can also now contact the HOS directly, without exhausting the organisations complaints policy, unlike before.

Since 1 October 2024, LSHA has logged 19 official complaints from 15 tenants

- Maintenance and Repairs x 6
- Rodents x 1
- Tenancy and ASB x 3
- Benefits & Support x 2
- Gardening x 1
- Damp and Mould x 2
- Heating and Hot water x2
- Staffing x 2

Of these, three were upheld, four were partially upheld, four were not upheld, and six are still under investigation. One complaint is sitting with a contractor to resolve.

In February, LSHA received one Maladministration Determination from the HOS with regards to a complaint initially made three years ago.

While disappointing to receive this determination, LSHA acknowledge that service offered at the time was not to a level that we would expect and have discussed ways to ensure that service delivery improves going forward.

Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance Contract

We have started the tender process in earnest for a new cleaning and grounds maintenance contract.

This is a contract that brings opinions and views from all sides of the spectrum, with glowing compliments and quite frustrated complaints from tenants across the board! We currently employ three contractors and in the past LSHA employed cleaners directly. We are open to both options, but the cost and viability of directly employed cleaners, needs to be considered as well as the cost of line management for any new employees that we take on.

In preparation for the tender, **James** has been out and has measured the size of the communal

gardens, hallways, paths and lobbies, this is important to ensure that we get value for money. And that contractors know what they are bidding for. We have just completed our initial Tenant Consultation, getting 27 completed surveys back. We asked tenants to clarify what's important to them and the frequency for those tasks to be carried out. We will use the results to prepare the contract balancing feedback with the contract price for each scheme. In response to direct feedback from tenants, one thing we will insist on is an individual cleaning schedule for each building to be displayed in that scheme.

Four tenants have expressed an interest in joining the working group to prepare the tender and assess tenant responses.

Maintenance and Repairs Contract:

Like the Grounds Maintenance and Cleaning Contract above, we are starting consultations on the maintenance, day-to-day repairs and essential maintenance contracts and services.

We will of course be coming out to tenants ahead of the tenders to find out what is important to you in this service. We are also looking for tenants to take part in the working group to help prepare the tender and make sure we reflect tenants' views in the new contract, if you would be happy to help us, please contact **James** at getinvolved@lsha.org.uk

Stock Condition Surveys

Emma, our Chief Executive, is working with the Board and Senior Management Team to put in place a long-term strategy for maintaining and improving LSHA properties and your homes.

We are in the process of commissioning a Stock Condition Survey. This is essential to help us identify the condition of kitchens, windows, doors and other key aspects of the property to ensure that we remain the right side of legislation, but also to inform our investment strategy in line with decent homes standards and tenant expectations.

We want to move from firefighting and reactive repairs to planned maintenance, and investment. To do this, we will need to ask tenants to allow access to your homes to carry out the surveys. We will commission independent consultants to carry out this vital piece of work and then work with the team to align the aspirations of the LSHA team with the expectations of you as tenants and build a robust strategy and business plan to improve your homes.

Estate Inspections

To improve our services, we have been advertising the dates of our estate inspections on noticeboards in communal areas to encourage tenants to take part.

This hasn't always worked due to competing priorities. Again, listening to your feedback, we are looking to develop this further. Instead of relying on just the Housing Officer, the whole team will be carrying out these inspections.

Hopefully, fresh eyes will pick up smaller issues that might get lost with familiarity. It will also give tenants the opportunity to meet the wider staff team. We will also display any repairs or other actions identified, and report back on those during the next inspection. These reports will be displayed on the noticeboards.

Community Grant Application

In the last quarter, one Community Grant application was received, to provide additional heating and energy efficiency packs to some of our listed buildings where any insulation and improvement work is either prohibitive due to cost or planning regulations.

Paul applied for a grant on behalf of about 25 tenants, providing simple draft excluders and radiator foils to help reflect heat back into the room. These small but welcome packs were Paul's idea and reflected the message and discussions in the Tenants Group during the presentation by the Upper Norward Library, Energy Project, on how to improve heating in the home and preventing damp and mould by simple tasks including not placing large pieces of furniture against outside walls.

In addition, and to help tenants further reduce the impact of damp and mould, Addison is developing a factsheet for tenants with guidelines to help address this issue, another way that LSHA is looking to work with tenants to help improve standards and safety in your homes.

If you have an idea for a Community Grant (up to £500) that would benefit your scheme or immediate LSHA neighbourhood, please look on the LSHA website: www.lsha.org.uk or contact Brian at getinvolved@lsha.co.uk

Domestic Abuse

Domestic violence or abuse is something which can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, identity, or any other characteristic.

Finding help can be difficult and can take great courage to come forward and talk to someone. Listed below are some of the services that can help, in confidence and at your own pace.

These organisations are highly trained and can signpost you to support and advice or just listen!

National Domestic Abuse Helpline:

Open 24/7

Telephone: 0808 2000 247

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Respect Men's Advice Line:

Monday-Friday 10am to 5pm

Telephone: 0808 8010 327

email: info@mensadviceline.org.uk

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Women's Aid:

Women's Aid provide a directory of information, resources and advice on domestic abuse, including 'covering your tracks' to stay safe. email: info@womensaid.org.uk

www.womensaid.org.uk

National Centre for

Domestic Violence (NCDV):

A free, fast emergency injunction service to those at risk of all forms of domestic abuse regardless of their financial situation, ethnicity, gender or sexuality www.ncdv.org.uk or Text NCDV to 60777 and they will call you back, or Telephone 0800 970 2070 (option 1, to make a referral).

National Stalking Helpline (Suzy Lamplugh Trust)

Monday and Wednesday 09.30 to 8pm. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 09.30 to 4pm.

Telephone: 0808 802 0300

www.suzylamplugh.org.uk

ManKind Initiative Helping men escape domestic abuse
Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm.
Telephone: 0808 800 1170
or 01823 334 244

www.mankind.org.uk

GALOP. Specialist support for LGBTQ+ community

Monday & Tuesday 9.15 to 8pm.

Wednesday to Friday 9.15 to 4.30pm.

Telephone 0800 999 5428

Email: Help@galop.org.uk

www.galop.org.uk

Anti-Social Behaviour

please let us know

Please inform us if you come across examples of Anti-Social Behaviour, to help us create positive and clean communal environments within our properties and amongst tenants in your homes.

Examples of this may be:
Persistent dropping of litter in the communal areas, fly-tipping, graffiti, aggressive and threatening behaviour. Noise nuisance and aggressive behaviour between tenants or directed at staff is not acceptable, so please let us know as we do take these incidents very seriously.

You can also report Noise Nuisance on The Noise App
www.thenoiseapp.com

Please contact us for more support, or to make a report email: info@lsha.org.uk

We want people to engage as much and as often as they can or want to. We don't want people to feel overwhelmed or burdened in their participation. We also want to hear from as many tenants as possible on the various issues we need to talk about to achieve the changes we all want and ensure that the tenants voice is truly heard.

The 'Menu of Choice'

- **Working Groups** on individual service reviews and tenders
 - **Taking Part** in specific consultations
 - **Policy and Procedure**, reviewing and writing new ones
 - **Tenants Group** – critical friend, challenging and supporting development, attending meetings and away days – you don't have to attend all meetings if you can't manage it
 - **Estate Champions** - working with us to get the word out!
 - **Tenant-led Newsletter** to help inform neighbours on improvements, important issues and opportunities in the community as well as appealing to all ages
- To find out more, or explore how you could get involved, please contact getinvolved@lsha.org.uk

MyTenancy

Tenants frequently call us for confirmation of rent account balances and service charges. These details can be easily accessed through the My Tenancy App.

To download the App, you will need your Tenancy Reference Number and an email address. If you need help to set this up, please contact your Housing Officer or info@lsha.org.uk

Log in requires an email address, which cannot be changed once registered. If you change your email, you will need to remember the one used for registration.

ESTATE CHAMPIONS

To improve accountability to tenants and improve communication, we are developing Estate Champions.

Estate Champions will be volunteer tenants who work with us to feedback, engage with neighbours and to help make our schemes and properties, safer, cleaner, and better informed on planned work, servicing and other important issues from tenant perspectives on policies, procedures, and forms.

If you are interested in becoming an Estate Champion, please contact **Brian** at getinvolved@lsha.org.uk

KEEPING IN CONTACT

If you change your telephone number or email address, it is important to let us know so that we can keep in contact with you. We will, from time-to-time, carry out tenancy audits that will cover these issues, as well as improve and update essential data about your household make-up and protected characteristics, but we cannot do this for all tenants every year.

If you think that we may not have your correct or up-to-date information, please contact us on **020 7735 3935** or info@lsha.org.uk so that we can ensure we update our system and provide you with the right services and updates as appropriate.



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
Great homes and vibrant communities

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

We will respond to phone calls, emails and letters within 48 hours – at minimum to acknowledge receipt