



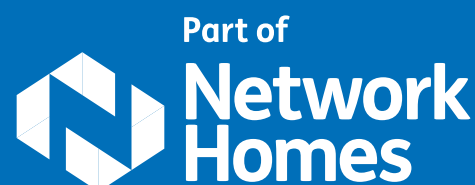
Community
Housing

Our Community News



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Welcome

At SW9 Community Housing we work hard to provide you with a safe neighbourhood to live in with a thriving, close-knit community. Throughout the year we put on events for you to take part in and get to know your neighbours.

We were delighted to see that the number of you who attended our Christmas party doubled compared to last year. We hope all those that came along to our winter events enjoyed the time spent with their families and neighbours.

As a community-focused organisation, we are proud to support our entrepreneurial residents and local businesses. We have a Community Chest grant fund which is available to any charity, local

organisation or individual who wants to make a difference. If you have an idea such as a new workshop, trip out or course that you need funding for, then get in touch with us. You can find out more about the grant fund on our website www.sw9.org.uk/community.

Best wishes,
Delroy Rankin
Executive Director

Talk to your local police officer

The Safer Neighbourhoods Team from Ferndale Police Ward is working closely with us to make sure that you feel safe in your community.

Every month, the team will be holding a drop-in surgery at the SW9 Community Housing office. This is an excellent opportunity for you to talk one-on-one with a member of the Safer Neighbourhoods Team and voice any concerns you have about crime in the local area.

The next drop-in surgery dates are:

- Thursday 5 April – 11am to 12pm
- Thursday 10 May – 11am to 12pm
- Thursday 14 June – 11am to 12pm.



Customer service

Universal Credit has arrived in Lambeth



Universal Credit, a major change to the benefits you may receive, started rolling out in Lambeth from December 2017. From this date, all new claims and all changes of circumstance applications transferred to Universal Credit.

What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit replaces a number of benefits including:

- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit.

Universal Credit will be one payment per household, paid monthly in arrears. This will currently affect residents up to Pension Credit qualifying age.

How will this affect Housing Benefit?

If you receive Housing Benefit, it will no longer be paid to SW9 Community Housing; it will be paid directly to you as part of your Universal Credit. This means that you will be responsible for paying your rent to us.

How will I be expected to pay rent to SW9?

As per your tenancy agreement, your rent account must be in credit at all times. In order to prepare residents for Universal Credit, we are asking that you pay a minimum of £5 per week extra to gradually get your rent account one month in advance. This means that when you start receiving Universal Credit, we won't have to ask you to pay a whole month's rent in advance, all in one go.

How do I make a claim?

All claims for Universal Credit must be made online via www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit. In exceptional cases they may accept a telephone claim but these will be very rare, so please check with the JobCentre for details.

What kind of bank account do I need?

You will need a bank account that accepts payments of Universal Credit and allows you to make Direct Debit payments.

Please check that your bank account is eligible and contact your bank if you need to change account type.

Get Direct Debit peace of mind



The introduction of Universal Credit means that if you receive Housing Benefit, most of you will receive the payment direct to your bank account. You will then need to pay your rent yourself to SW9 Community Housing.

The easiest way to pay your rent and service charges is by Direct Debit. It is a simple and safe way to pay your rent automatically from your bank account. All you have to do is agree the amount to be collected and the date of payment. After that, it will be deducted from your account on a regular basis. Please phone **020 7326 3700** for details, and we can set up your Direct Debit while you are on the phone.

Rent changes

If you pay rent, you should have now received a 2018/19 rent change notice. This notice informs you that your rent, service and other charges will be changing from 2 April 2018.

What should I do if I claim Universal Credit?

If you receive Universal Credit you will need to advise the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) of any rent and service charge changes upon receipt of this notice. This can be done by going online and updating your journal or by informing your work coach.

Please note: the DWP will not backdate any claims, so if you fail to notify them in time, you could become liable for any shortfall in your housing costs.

What should I do if I claim Housing Benefit?

If you receive Housing Benefit, you will need to tell your Local Authority your new rent amount and service charges. This can be done online or by visiting the local council office.

What should I do if I pay by Direct Debit or standing order?

If you already pay us by Direct Debit, we will



automatically change your Direct Debit to make sure that the correct amount is taken from your bank account. You will receive a letter from AllPay to confirm your new schedule of payment. If you pay by standing order through your bank, you will need to let them know the new amount to be paid.

What should I do if I experience difficulty in paying my rent?

If you are having trouble paying your rent, please contact us as soon as possible on **020 7326 3700** to speak to our Income team who will help you.

Alternatively, if you are worried that you might not be able to pay your rent, you can seek advice from Citizens Advice or a housing advice centre.

It is better to deal with the problem straight away. If you let debts build up, you could be at risk of losing your home.

Do you need support with your finances?



There have recently been a lot of changes to benefits. With the introduction of Universal Credit, Bedroom Tax and the Benefit Cap, you may be finding it difficult to balance your finances.

If you have been affected by any of the changes to benefits, or are struggling in any way with your finances, then our Income team are here to help. They can offer advice and help find a solution that is right for you. You can talk to us by calling **020 7326 3700** or email info@sw9.org.uk. We can also refer you to Network Homes' Welfare Benefits advice service.

You can seek further assistance from Advising Communities, a charity based at Olive Morris House on

Brixton Hill between 10am-2pm, every Thursday (except the 1st Thursday of the month) and every Friday (except the 3rd Friday of every month). They offer help with Universal Credit claims and can provide digital support, so that you are able to make claims and manage your online Universal Credit account independently. Visit www.advisingcommunities.uk for more information.

Alternatively, you can contact Turn2Us, a national charity that can help those experiencing financial hardship to gain access to welfare benefits, grants and support services. You can contact them by emailing info@turn2us.org.uk or calling **0800 802 2000**.

You can also visit www.gov.uk/universal-credit for further independent information about Universal Credit.

My home and neighbourhood

Rough sleepers on Stockwell Park Estate

As you may have heard in the news, the number of people sleeping rough has increased by 73% in the last three years.

If you do see somebody sleeping rough on the estate, you can help by alerting StreetLink. This is a service, managed by homelessness charity St Mungo's in partnership with Homeless Link, that makes contact with the rough sleeper and offers support.

To alert StreetLink, you can use their mobile app or website www.streetlink.org.uk. You can also call their hotline on **0300 500 0914**. You should give as much detail about the person and location as possible.



Network Homes and SW9 Community Housing are proud to be supporting St Mungo's as our Charity of the Year for the third year running. So far, through staff fundraising events and sponsorship, we have raised over £66k for the charity. This money goes towards St Mungo's work to end homelessness and rebuild lives.

Mutual exchange - is it for you?

A mutual exchange is where you 'swap' homes with another tenant. They can be a SW9 Community Housing tenant or from another housing association or local council.

Mutual exchange might be suitable if you:

- live in an overcrowded home
- are under-occupying your home
- want to move to a different area.

If you are interested in swapping your home, register online at www.homeswapper.co.uk. Remember, if you want people to be interested in your property, it is important to upload a photo of your home. HomeSwapper advises, 'try to show your home at its best, nobody wants to see dirty dishes or a blurry image'.

SW9 Community Housing is a member of HomeSwapper so it is free to use. For more information, visit their website www.homeswapper.co.uk or talk to your neighbourhood officer on **020 7326 3700**.

The UK's leading mutual exchange service

Helping more social housing tenants in the UK move to a new home

Get involved

Join a resident panel!

Resident involvement is at the heart of SW9 Community Housing. We are a resident-led organisation and depend on our tenants and leaseholders to help monitor and improve our services. We have several resident groups you can join if you are interested in getting involved.



Scrutiny Panel

The Resident Scrutiny Panel works on your behalf to ensure that we provide high quality, customer-focused services. By joining the Scrutiny Panel you will get a real opportunity to influence our services. You will work with your neighbours to make a positive impact, while gaining knowledge and learning new skills.

As a Panel Member, you will scrutinise a couple of our services a year. You will use a number of ways to look into how we currently work and how we can improve, including document reviews, staff interviews and estate inspections. You will then write a report with your findings and recommendations.

We would love more tenants and leaseholders to join the Resident Scrutiny Panel. You don't need any previous experience to join our panel; we are just looking for residents who are passionate about improving their community, can work well as a team, are reliable and have good evaluation skills.



Resident Communications Group

We produce a large number of publications for you; these include information leaflets, our annual report and this newsletter. We also give regular updates via our website and social media.

We want to ensure that all our communications are easily understood and useful, which is why we are creating a Resident Communications Group. This panel of tenants and leaseholders will work with us to make sure our communications are the best they can be.

Events Working Group

We pride ourselves on running great community events and activities for you during every season. We have the SW9 Festival in the summer, our winter activities, Q&A events and trips throughout the year.

You are best placed to tell us what events we should put on to make our community come together, have fun and learn new skills. If you want to have an active part in our events, you can join our Events Working Group to contribute ideas and help us organise our community activities.



If you are interested in joining any of these groups or just want more information, then please get in touch by emailing getinvolved@sw9.org.uk or phoning **020 7326 3700**.

Help make our community great!

Do you want funding for your bright idea?

Our Community Chest grant fund is available to support any entrepreneurial residents or local businesses that need funding for a community project. The project must support our mission, values and corporate objectives and be for SW9 Community Housing residents.

You can apply for up to £6,000 per year from our grant fund. This could be for projects such as activity classes, coaching or community events.

If you have an idea for a community project that benefits SW9 Community Housing residents, then get in touch today to find out how you can apply for our Community Chest grant fund. Email getinvolved@sw9.org.uk or call us on **020 7326 3700**.



Sign up for our free First Aid Course

Last summer we held a First Aid Course during our summer SW9 Festival. This proved to be a popular course, so we are giving you another opportunity to gain this useful qualification on Friday 6 April 2018 at 10am.

This is a three hour Basic First Aid Course for over 18s, delivered by St John Ambulance at the SW9 Community Housing office. On completion of the course, you will receive a first aid certificate which is valid for three years.



The content of the course provides basic life saving first aid, covering the following:

- managing an emergency
- resuscitation (adult CPR)
- communication and casualty care
- seizures (adult)
- bleeding (minor and severe)
- shock
- burns
- unresponsive casualty
- choking (adult)
- using a defibrillator.

To register for a place, email getinvolved@sw9.org.uk or call us on **020 7326 3700**. Places are limited so make sure you register early to guarantee a place.



Youth programme: make a difference, make yourself heard

We are creating a youth programme to empower, support and encourage our younger customers. Empowered young people can utilise their skills to gain employment, but they can also help mobilise and take an active role in their community, to make our neighbourhood a great place to live.

We want to take a proactive approach to the wellbeing of our younger residents, because together we can play a powerful role in shaping our community.

Our objectives are clear:

- **Raise aspirations** - we want to support our youth to set their sights high and expand their horizons.
- **Give young people a voice** - we want to foster an environment for our young people to voice their opinion on the services we provide and wider issues.

- **Empower** - we want to encourage our young residents to take a leading role in tackling issues that matter to them.
- **Encourage autonomy** - we want to help our youth develop their personal and leadership skills.

If you're aged 14-24, we invite you to join us on 12 April at 5pm at the SW9 Community Housing office. This will be the first session of our youth programme, so come along and share your ideas.

For more information email getinvolved@sw9.org.uk or call us on 020 7326 3700.

Changes to Worksmart

Network Homes' Worksmart programme is changing. To find out more information, read the article on page 11 of the Network Homes newsletter or call us on 020 7326 3700.



Regeneration

Development update



Graffiti area



After holding two community consultations, Network Homes is excited to report that they have come up with the final design for the redevelopment of the graffiti space on Aytoun Road.

The proposal for the space includes:

- Removing the current ramp and replacing it with two new entry points. One will be a new stairwell and ramp, replacing the south wall, increasing visibility and making the area more welcoming. The second will be a smaller staircase, built on the north side.
- Replacing part of the east wall with railings to allow better visibility into the space.

- Resolving the current drainage issues.
- New flooring to better support sports activities in the space.
- A new 'plinth' in the middle, to divide the space and allow for different activities to take place in the different halves.
- New lighting, CCTV and bins.
- A new finish to the external walls.
- New shrubbery around the walls to make the space more attractive.

Network Homes is hoping this new facility will support a range of activities in a safe and welcoming environment. You can expect to see it used for sport, art, exercise classes, outdoor markets, cinema screenings and more! We look forward to organising some great new activities in the space for you when it opens.

Network Homes have submitted this design for planning permission and will know in the next few weeks if it has been granted. If it has, they will start the development work as soon as possible, and hopefully have the new space ready for the end of the summer.

As always, if you have any questions, feel free to get in touch via email at stockwellhalloffame.consultation@networkhomes.org.uk or call us on 020 7326 3700.

Aytoun Road

Thanks to all those who attended Network Homes' community consultations on the proposed redevelopment of 1, 3, 5 and 7 Aytoun Road, as well as Aytoun Court next door.



The redevelopment will have 31 affordable homes (a mix of affordable rent and shared ownership) across the building, increasing it from four to six storeys.

Network Homes received only positive feedback on the proposals and have had a very productive meeting with Lambeth Council about the development. They will be submitting their proposal for planning permission in March.

My community

A winter packed full of fun events!

The winter season is a great time for family and friends to come together and share unforgettable moments. That's why we packed December full of fun events for our community to enjoy.



We kicked off the seasonal events with our Christmas Party at our office on 12 December. There was live music by local band Expression Inka, who played cheerful Christmas tunes with a Latin American twist. Many people took advantage of the other activities on offer during the evening, learning new skills with our knitting workshop and making Christmas cards.

A special thanks to Henry Construction, our building contractor who is working on Thrayle and Tyler House, who invited Santa to our event! Our Santa's Grotto was very popular with kids, each getting a present from Father Christmas. Henry Construction also brought treats for the adults; mulled punch to keep them warm and mince pies to feast upon. We also held a Christmas raffle, sponsored by our cleaning contractors, Zing. Everyone was on tenterhooks waiting to see what goodies they would be taking home! The party ended with the switching on of our Christmas lights by SW9 Community Housing Board Chair, Dee Alapafuja. Thanks to our CCTV contractor, The Bridge Group, for sponsoring our Christmas lights.

Thank you to everyone who attended the event and made it a success. This year we saw the number of attendees doubled, with over 100 celebrating with us.

Next on the Christmas calendar was our trip to Winter Wonderland on 21 December. We took a coach of 50 residents to Hyde Park to enjoy all the festivities that the event had to offer. Our residents got to explore the park before their first activity - ice skating! There was then time to discover the rides and Christmas stalls before everyone made their way to Zippo's Christmas Circus, where we were entertained by amazing acrobatics.

Our last trip of the festive season was to the Old Post Office Bakery. Special thanks to owner Richard for giving us a behind the scenes tour. Residents had a chance to see the hard labour that goes behind making delicious bread and pastries. They also got their hands stuck in with kneading the dough, as they took part in a pizza making workshop.

A big thanks to all of you who took part in our activities. Don't forget to check out our Facebook page to see more pictures from the events.

If you have any ideas for different activities you would like us to put on for the community, get in touch through our social media or by emailing getinvolved@sw9.org.uk.



Check out our new computer area

We have recently created a new internet café in the reception at our office, equipped with two computers. We also have tea and coffee available to residents using these computers.

Twice a week our digital champion will be stationed at the café, helping you access our online services. To find out more about when our digital champion will be around to help, email info@sw9.org.uk or call us on 020 7326 3700.



February Q&A event



We welcomed you to the office in February for another Q&A event. Thanks to those that came along and raised their questions.

These events provide you with an opportunity to meet our staff and ask any burning questions. These questions could vary from tenancy issues to updates on Network Homes' regeneration of Stockwell Park Estate and surrounding street properties. Henry Construction, who are working on the development of Thrayle and Tyler House, were also at the event, answering questions about these projects.

For more information about future events and activities, don't forget to follow us on social media. We advertise all our upcoming events on twitter via our page [@sw9housing](https://twitter.com/sw9housing) and on Facebook as 'SW9 Community Housing'. You can also check our website www.sw9.org.uk for news and events.

Edmond and Sons help Helmi get in the party spirit



Local funeral provider Edmond and Sons hosted a party at Helmi House in November. They put on a delicious spread for our residents, turned up the music and everyone had a little sing-along.

Edmond and Sons also gave away some lovely gifts at the Helmi House bingo, which is hosted weekly by care provider Mayfair. Residents won orchids, gift vouchers and even an afternoon tea for four.

Our Star Student Awards return









We love to celebrate the success of people in our community. Last year we held our first SW9 Star Student Awards, recognising the hard work that our younger residents put into their GCSE exams. We gave away two cash prizes to those that excelled in their exams.

The SW9 Star Student Awards is returning for 2018. If anyone in your household is taking their GCSE exams this year, then make sure they enter their results into our Star Student Awards to be in with a chance of winning a cash prize.



For more information about these awards, email getinvolved@sw9.org.uk or check out our website www.sw9.org.uk/community.

Our performance

Performance Indicator	Target	Dec 2017	Jan 2018	Our Improvement Plan
Customer satisfaction	65%	86% 	63.1% 	To measure customer satisfaction, we are sending text surveys to those of you who contacted us in the last month. In December, we asked you if we responded promptly to your query. In January, we asked you if we provided helpful and honest communication. Throughout the year we will be asking four different questions, your answers will allow us to see where we can improve our customer service.
Block inspections rated 'very good' or 'good'	85%	97% 	96% 	We encourage you to join us on the inspection of your block. You can find the new 2018 block inspection schedule on our website www.sw9.org.uk/community .
% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within 10 days	100%	100% 	100% 	Our performance in this area continues to be high, as we know that when something goes wrong, you need us to find a solution as soon as possible.
Repairs calls answered	90%	75.1% 	86.7% 	In February, we hired a new Repairs Coordinator to help deal with the quantity of repair requests we get through the phone. We hope to see an improved answer rate going forward. Remember, to report a repair, you can also email repairs@sw9.org.uk , or use our online self-service portal found on our website www.sw9.org.uk .



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