

Newsletter

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter A warm welcome to our 52nd Newsletter. As always, we are pleased to bring you a variety of updates from our sites and schemes around the country. This issue contains important updates for tenants on a number of issues and we would encourage you to take time out to read and enjoy the Newsletter. Thank you.

Universal Credit Update

The roll out of Universal Credit (UC) continues. UC is a benefit payment for people in or out of work. It replaces some of the benefits and tax credits you might currently be getting including:

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



The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) calls these legacy benefits.

UC is now operating in all job centres across the UK. This means that all new working age claims are now for UC. In practice this means the number of households receiving UC is steadily increasing.

The final stage of the UC process is for the DWP to move all remaining claimants across to the new system under a managed migration. This means that those tenants who are currently in receipt of one of the listed legacy benefits will be contacted by the DWP regarding their existing claim and will be required to make a new claim for UC.

You do not need to do anything until you are contacted by the DWP.

The government announced in March that a small-scale trial for the migration (10,000 claimants) would take place in Harrogate in July 2019. Once complete, the large scale migration should begin in 2020 and is planned to be completed by 2023.

We expect to receive notification from each Local Authority once the migration begins and we will work closely with tenants to assist with claims ensuring no break in the payment of benefits. If you have any concerns regarding your current claim or the possible impact of UC, please speak to your Housing Manager.

Summer Walkabouts

The annual Summer Walkabout events have been taking place over the past couple of months.

- Queen Mother Court – 18 June
- Peter Kennedy Court – 20 June
- New Park Gardens – 4 July
- The Anchorage – 9 July
- The Dene – 18 July
- Dunham Gardens – 8 August
- Romaleyn Gardens – 22 August

We would like to remind tenants that the walkabout provides the opportunity to feedback to THA Staff on issues that concern them. Walkabouts are led by the Housing Manager and Scheme Manager for the scheme with refreshments provided at each event.



Thank you to all tenants who attended this summer and who provided valuable feedback.

Over 75's TV Licences

As you may have seen in the news recently, free TV Licences for all people aged 75 and over will come to an end in June 2020. This means that all over 75 licence holders under the current scheme will be issued a free over 75 licence for less than 12 months.

From 1 June 2020, there will be a new scheme introduced. Under the new scheme, anyone aged 75 or over who receives Pension Credit will still be eligible for a free TV Licence which the BBC will pay for. Households where there is no one aged 75 or over that receives Pension Credit will need to buy a licence if one is needed.

You need to be covered by a TV Licence, including a free over 75 TV Licence, to watch or record live TV programmes on any channel, or to download or watch any BBC programmes on iPlayer – live, catch up or on demand. This applies to any device and provider you use.

If you are 75 or over and live in a residential care home, supported housing or sheltered accommodation (including all THA sheltered housing schemes) which has a reduced licence fee you will continue to be covered by your free licence until it runs out after June 2020. After that, if you are no longer eligible for a free licence because you do not receive Pension Credit, you will need to pay but it will be at the reduced licence fee for your home.

TV Licensing have advised that they will contact housing providers to advise what needs to be done regarding the new scheme. Once we have more information regarding this matter we will contact tenants to update them.

Health and Safety

THA undertake a variety of measures to keep our buildings and tenants safe. Here is an outline of some of the Health and Safety matters taking place across the Association:

Fire Safety

We continue to review fire safety across all properties and have recently reviewed our Fire Safety Policy. One of the areas where we were aware that improvement could be made was how we provide fire safety information to new tenants. We have now completed our review and a Fire Safety Pack is enclosed with initial tenancy documentation. We have included a Fire Safety Pack with this Newsletter for your information.

We have regular Fire Risk Assessments undertaken for our common parts and these are due this year for all General and Family properties apart from Holmesdale Road. This includes OEHA properties). Access into your flat will not be required.

Door Checks

In line with the Fire Safety regulations we have introduced an annual check to each flat entrance door which opens onto a common space. This is a time consuming check for staff to undertake because of the number of doors involved - although the check to your door should be completed within 10 minutes. Please assist staff by providing access when required so that these checks can be undertaken as swiftly as possible.



Electrical Safety checks

We carry out electrical tests every 5 years to each property. Please provide access for this check and also for any follow-on works required.

Gas Safety Checks

These are completed annually for properties with an individual boiler. Please work with our gas contractors to have the service completed before the expiry date of the existing certificate.

Maintenance

The Anchorage

Readers of previous Newsletters will be aware that this contract took longer to get on site than anticipated. We were hoping to be off to a good start in the New Year but the resolution of some safety concerns took time to be achieved. Once on site we have been beset by the changeable weather which has further hindered progress.



We are, however, pleased to report now that the bulk of work has been completed and we are hopeful that the remaining work will be finished shortly. Thank you to the tenants and staff at The Anchorage for your patience whilst the works have been carried out.

Cyclical Decoration

Thank you to tenants in the Brent area, Queen Street Croydon, and Verona Drive Surbiton, amongst others, who provided access to contractors to enable our 2018/19 programme of repainting to be completed. We have redecoration programmes in the Bexley area and several properties in Haringey this year. Please liaise with area staff and Housing Managers regarding colour schemes – we are always pleased to consider suggestions from tenants which give the common parts a refreshed look.

Routine Maintenance

A big thank you to tenants who have completed satisfaction forms over the year. We are always pleased to hear your feedback on repairs to know what went well and what could be improved. The satisfaction figures for the year ending 31 March 2019 were:

	<u>Contractor quality</u> <u>of work</u>	<u>THA</u> <u>Repairs</u> <u>Service</u>
Very Good	77.9%	79.7%
Good	18.5%	17.5%
Satisfactory	2.9%	1.3%
Poor	0.7%	1.5%

Staff News

We were delighted earlier this year to welcome two new, permanent appointments to our Finance team. Martin Grundy joined as Finance Director and Martina Jelinkova as Finance Manager. They join Senior Finance Officer, Vasu Sivakumaran and Finance Officer, Sharmila Antao in the team based at Head Office in Rugby Chambers, London.



Also from Head Office, Maintenance Administrator, Carly Shipman is away on maternity leave. Our congratulations and best wishes go to Carly, husband Stuart and new arrival, Thomas Andrew. We have welcomed Sital Patel to the office as she covers Carly's maternity leave.



Around the country at our sheltered schemes, staffing has been fairly stable for the past 6 months. The only change we have seen is at Queen Mother Court in Bournville, where we are currently recruiting to the Scheme Manager position. In May this year all Scheme Managers attended a short seminar at Head Office. These seminars play a vital role for the Managers in terms of communication and consistency of service delivery.



London Tornados

Teachers' Housing staff recently took part in the Chartered Institute of Housing Rounders Tournament in Chiswick in support of Women's Aid. Sophia Greenberg and Rapinder Sangha, supported by Martina Jelinkova were part of the *London Tornados* team who took a very creditable second place in the regional heat. They now wait to see if they have progressed to the national finals – fingers crossed.



New Board Members for THA

Two new members have joined THA's Management Board. Maabena Adae-Amoakoh is a chartered accountant with extensive experience in financial management particularly in the social housing sector. Simon Beresford is a board director with a track record of effective leadership and governance in the financial sector, particularly in asset management and building societies. Maabena will sit on the Finance, Audit and Development Committee and Simon will sit on the Operations Committee.

Sadly we say goodbye and a huge "Thank You" to Gary Gilbert who retires from the Board this summer after nine years' service with the Association. Gary chaired our Finance, Audit and Development Committee for several years and whilst sharing his financial and governance expertise has also been a keen attendee at the annual consultation meetings at our sheltered schemes, taking a particular interest in activities at Peter Kennedy Court. We wish Gary well for the future.

Development Update

Our development mission is to provide more homes for rent for people working in education in London. This involves considering new locations and reviewing our existing properties to see where we can increase the number of homes we provide.



Earlier this year we met with tenants at Peter Kennedy Court in Croydon to discuss our vision to provide two additional blocks providing 15 homes for teachers plus the replacement of six sheltered flats with more accessible units. As part of the project we hope to improve landscaping throughout the scheme and introduce features including natural play space, accessible paths and allotment beds for tenants. Biodiversity will be improved by the use of meadow paths and log piles. We received very positive feedback on our proposals and subsequently submitted a planning application.



Our Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy has changed.

We have recently carried out a thorough review of our ASB Policy, taking into account current legislation and benchmarking against other housing providers to ensure our policy is fit for purpose. As part of this policy review we have included a section which provides more clarity with regards to what is, and what isn't, considered ASB.

ASB (including harassment and hate-related crime) covers a number of categories and includes:

- Alcohol related ASB
- Domestic Violence
- Physical violence, such as attacks on a person or threats of violence
- Hate-related incidents based on protected characteristics
- Harassment/intimidation/threatening behaviour
- Fly-tipping (where the perpetrator is known)
- Misuse of communal areas
- Noise (outside of acceptable hours in line with the tenancy agreement)
- Nuisance from vehicles (e.g. abandoned vehicles, joy riding, nuisance repairs)
- Pets and animal nuisance
- Vandalism and damage to property, including graffiti
- Verbal abuse
- Drug use and drug dealing
- Other criminal behaviour

What is not considered ASB?

Living Noise – THA does not consider everyday living noises as antisocial behaviour. Examples of living noise include:

- Babies crying
- Children playing
- Walking across a floor
- People talking
- DIY noise that is taking place at reasonable hours as specified by the tenancy agreement
- Sound from music or TV coming from a property at a reasonable hour as specified by the tenancy agreement
- Doors closing
- Toilets flushing
- Cooking smells

Although THA can understand that this sort of behaviour can affect some residents, it forms part of everyday life when people are living in close proximity to one another and we will not investigate such reports as formal ASB cases. We also understand that some everyday living noises can be a cause for concern, for example babies crying for a very long time. Where this is the case, the Housing Manager can investigate the matter and will determine if there are safeguarding concerns or other support needs that need to be addressed through the relevant authorities.

Within the review, we have also included the responsibilities of the tenant in reporting ASB to THA.

Tenant Responsibility

Whilst THA will investigate and take action where it is appropriate and they can see that ASB has occurred or a tenancy breach has been determined, it is a tenant's responsibility to ensure they undertake actions to help provide evidence and be clear how the reported ASB is affecting them.

Actions the complainant will be responsible for:

- Keeping accurate Nuisance Logs as provided by THA and return them to the Housing Manager at the agreed times
- Understand that THA is not always able to take action against an alleged perpetrator where complainant/victim involvement is withheld
- Report any criminal activity to the police
- Provide details of any police reports made to enable THA to contact and work with the officer(s) involved
- Keep THA updated with any changes in circumstances; for example, where the ASB has stopped or escalated
- Take on board THA's recommendations and advice to help resolve the situation
- Be prepared to consider giving evidence when going through a court process if the case relies on that evidence, and understand that if evidence is not provided, we may struggle to achieve the required outcome
- Understand that THA will look at different ways to reduce ASB, and that eviction of an alleged perpetrator will not always be the most appropriate course of action

THA have a responsibility to investigate any ASB complaints but in order to do this, we rely on factual and detailed information being received from tenants.

If you would like a full copy of the policy or you would like to talk about any concerns you may have, please contact your Housing Manager.

Romaleyn Gardens

After a hectic end to 2018 and a wonderfully mild January here in Devon we were all ready to start another year of activities. It is always Jumble Sale time at the beginning of the year at Romaleyn Gardens. This year we raised a fantastic £400 to donate to the Children's Hospice South West, Little Bridge House. February saw the start of our monthly Fish & Chip quiz nights, where the red and blue teams continue to battle it out for the coveted silver cup.

March brought us a wonderful surprise.

Romaleyn Gardens won Bronze in our category at The National Housing for Older People



Awards 2019 - quite an achievement considering the size of the South West of England and we are very proud to say we were the only scheme in Torbay to win such an award. So a huge thank you to everyone who voted for Romaleyn; the tenants, families, friends, service contractors, taxi drivers, and doctors and health service workers. Deputy Manager Sherrel Doyle and I couldn't have been prouder of the backing we received; in fact I was seen dancing around the office with delight, which was another achievement on many fronts. Our certificate takes pride of place in Reception.



Back down to earth, and the scheme was used as a Polling Station twice in May; the local council elections and then the European Parliament election, so it was best bib and tucker for the scheme on view to the general public. Because our Social Funds were very healthy we asked the tenants what they would like to see their money spent on. The overwhelming majority voted for free coach trips, so off they went to Powderham Castle and enjoyed a lovely sunny day out and learnt quite a bit of history as well. They are now looking forward to a free day out to Looe in our neighbouring County of Cornwall, so we'll have passports ready at the Tamar Bridge.

In June we held a fundraising night for Circus Starr, to enable very ill or under privileged children to visit the Circus. The lady R.A.T.S staged a tribute to Victoria Wood evening, ably assisted by a 'couple of blokes'. It was songs, sketches and chat all from Victoria's wonderful collection. Of course we couldn't miss out 'two soups' or the wonderful Ballad of Barry and Freda ('Let's do it') which rounded off the evening, from which we raised £250 for this very deserving cause. Have a lovely summer.

Ruby Brown - Scheme Manager

The Anchorage



It has been another busy period at The Anchorage since the turn of the year with major works to our roofs.

Thankfully, we are now approaching the end and it will be good to see the scheme looking its best again as the scaffolding is removed. This will also allow our residents to get back to their gardening while the good weather is here.



We have welcomed new tenants to the Scheme and have celebrated with one of our residents who turned 103 in July. Armin Diamond joined us as Handyperson in November last year and he has settled in really well as part of our team with Susan Clayton who has now been with us for 5 years.

We continue to hold weekly coffee mornings and fish and chip lunches, both of which are really popular. We are fortunate that local businesses support our residents, for example the local deli will deliver hot home cooked meals to The Anchorage daily.

We look forward to an enjoyable summer here on the south coast.

Stephanie Chester - **Scheme Manager**

Dunham Gardens



I know we are midway between Christmases, but I must start by saying what a great time we all had last December. Dinners, parties, carols etc. - so many people joined in to make Dunham Gardens a very festive place. (As our Christmas jumpers will show)

But now, I cannot believe we are half way through 2019 already; time certainly flies when you're having fun. Dunham Gardens continues to have Songs of Praise on the first Thursday of each month. This is run by the local vicar and it's really wonderful to see so many friends and family members join us for this.

We've had other visitors as well. The local senior school came along to do some craft work with the tenants. This was a lovely afternoon and we hope to continue this on a regular basis. Then the local



fire service came to the scheme and gave the tenants a talk about safety in their home. It was very interesting and reassuring to know we are doing the right thing as a scheme. At the end of May, Wiltshire Farm Foods visited and spoke about their company and also gave us



tasters of the meals they can provide.

We have now linked up with the local primary school and they came to Dunham Gardens in early July to sing to the tenants. We are also hoping to do some gardening together and have some history days. I think this will be great for both the children and the tenants.

We continue to enjoy our fundraising activities. In June, we raised £125 for the Alzheimer's Society by hosting a Cupcake day. Our summer fair will be held on Saturday 10th August and we are already getting things together as we want this to be the best one yet. Fingers crossed the weather will be on our side. Hoping you all have a wonderful summer.

Emma Pickering - **Scheme Manager**

Old Etonian Housing Association

We are delighted to welcome two new Members to the Old Etonian Housing Association (OEHA) Management Committee. Andrew Watt and Henry Harries, who attended their first meeting in July, are looking forward to meeting tenants at the Eton House walkabout in September. Andrew and Henry bring extensive skills to the Committee, particularly in financial areas. We take this opportunity to thank Michael Brooks, who is retiring from the Committee this year after several years' service, for his commitment and valued input.

Peter Kennedy Court

Peter Kennedy Court continues to be a lively scheme where most days you will find someone to chat to.

The tenants in the sheltered block have been very active supporting several charities over the last year and have donated a wonderful £1,700 between different charities. Last year's Macmillan Coffee morning raised an amazing £647, £230 of which came from the sale of Bidy Howard's knitted toys and bears. The raffle at Christmas raised £93 for Crisis at Christmas, while Red Nose Day raised £481 and from our Summer Fete this year we sent off a cheque for £450 supporting the Air Ambulance Service. As the Scheme Manager I am very proud of the generosity of the tenants and their families, who are always willing to give their time and money to whatever events we hold here.



The Knit and Natter group have also been busy knitting every Monday afternoon. The blankets and hats were donated to the Neo-Natal Unit at Kings College Hospital in London; the Nurse who collected them was so pleased with them. I gather the group are on their second round of blankets so we are all looking out for wool in the charity shops.

It's so nice to hear laughter and chatting in the lounge and the lovely space we have inside and out is now well used. There is usually something going on every day. It may be a Coffee Morning, Tuesday Lunch Club or Wednesday evening's social gathering, but if you want to join in there is always a warm welcome. A couple of music afternoons have been held and were well attended. It's great to see everyone singing along to the songs. Even Gary, our Handyperson, couldn't resist a dance with a few of the ladies.

How lucky were we to have the hottest day of the year so far for our Summer Fete? The Gazebos and umbrellas created some shade for people to sit under and enjoy live music provide by De' Borah Powell, a tenant in the General Needs Block. All the while drinking Pimms, eating Hot Dogs or enjoying a cooling ice cream! Family and friends came to rummage through the Bric-a-Brac and clothes stall too, hoping to bag themselves a bargain and many did. The Tombola was a great success with adults and children alike. The heat was too much for some who stayed inside eating cakes and drinking tea, spending time browsing through the books and DVD's. The ladies on the Raffle were busy folding all the tickets while others were trying to Name the Bear. All in all it was a fabulous day and those tenants involved in the organisation, setting up, helping on the day and putting it all away after worked very hard to help make it such a successful event. Thank you to everyone who helped.

We now have the rest of the summer to enjoy the lovely gardens around us and make the most of the warm weather because if the second half of the year of the year goes as quickly as the first we will be thinking of Christmas before we know it!

Lynne Sabes - Scheme Manager

Bella Thompson and Magdalene Thomas moved into Peter Kennedy Court in Croydon during 2018. After meeting at the Knit and Natter group their friendship developed and they now spend a lot of time together. Previously they both lived alone, in accommodation that was no longer appropriate for them and both felt they needed the safer environment that Sheltered Housing could bring. Feeling vulnerable and isolated they both heard about the scheme through other people and first impressions convinced them that it could be a pleasant place to live.



"We like to go shopping together and go out for meals. Sometimes in the evening we go to each other's flats for a cup of tea and a chat. We like to join in with all the things that go on during the week and have made lots of other new friends as well. Wednesday evenings are good fun in the lounge, there's usually a good crowd and sometimes there's even some dancing!"

Bella particularly likes the trees and the wildlife in the gardens, she enjoys watching the young foxes that can be seen playing early morning and evening. Magdalene says that moving to PKC has made her more confident. She liked the way that other residents welcomed her when she first arrived and she knows there's always someone to help you out if you need it.

Teacher's Positive Move

"I was looking to find alternative accommodation due to a number of issues with my previous property, and was told about Teachers' Housing Association by a colleague, an ex-tenant of theirs. I was previously living in a house with facilities shared with 5 other people which had damp and was located a considerable distance from the school where I work. I decided to apply to Teachers' Housing Association as, due to the manageable rents they offer, it would give me the opportunity to finally afford to move out alone.

I found the application process very quick and was kept informed and made aware of everything I needed to know throughout, and once an offer had been made, moving into my new property meant that the time it now takes me to commute to work has been considerably reduced which in turn has resulted in me being much happier."

- Brent Tenant

OUT OF OFFICE HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS

Contact Details

Effective from July 2019



Preventing Water Leaks

There are some preventative measures which tenants can take to reduce this situation arising:

- Wait for the sink or bath to fill and then turn off the taps. Do not leave the room whilst taps are running as overfills happen very quickly and cause significant damage.

- Check the water connections to your appliances on a regular basis and attend to any signs of seepage promptly.

- Whenever possible, only use appliances when you are at home in order to spot any leaks before they escalate. If appliances are set to run whilst you are at work, for example, this could mean that a leak would not be discovered for several hours. This gives the water time to soak into the materials around it and can cause more issues later.

- If your property is going to be left unoccupied for any period, it is a good idea to turn the water supply off and drain down the heating system and pipes. This is especially important in the winter to avoid the freezing of pipes which can then burst under pressure.

If you notice a leak from one of the Associations' pipes or fixtures please contact us as soon as possible so that a repair can be undertaken. Delay can cause serious damage to the property.

	Plumbing Emergencies	Gas, Central Heating, Hot Water Emergencies	Electrical Emergencies
Bexley	Renford Services Relative Group	Taylor Heating Ltd Renford Services	Renford Services MAC Services
Brent	Relative Group Juniors Plumbing	Taylor Heating Ltd	MAC Services
Firmans Court	Relative Group Juniors Plumbing		MAC Services
Haringey	Relative Group Juniors Plumbing	Taylor Heating Ltd	MAC Services
Verona Drive & Sydney Court	Renford Services Relative Group	Taylor Heating Ltd Renford Services	Renford Services MAC Services
Old Etonian Housing	Relative Group Juniors Plumbing	Taylor Heating Ltd	MAC Services
Peter Kennedy Court	LG Heating Renford Services	(Flats 22-82) LG Heating (Flats 1-21) Renford Services	MAC Services Renford Services
Queen Street & Holmesdale Road	Renford Services LG Heating Relative Group	LG Heating Renford Services	MAC Services Renford Services

Taylor Heating - 01920 870 658 or 07825 560 187
 Renford Services - 07958 419 591 or 020 8777 1674
 Juniors Plumbing - 07983 111 091
 MAC Services - 0207 486 9075
 Relative Group - 0800 023 5996
 LG Heating - 07837 473 782

For Clarification, we define emergency works as follows:

- Dangerous structures
- Gas Leaks
- Blocked/overflowing external drains
- Serious flooding or leaks
- Loss of water supply
- Complete failure of electricity supply
- Blocked WC (if there is only one WC)
- Total loss of space and water heating

Please note that if you call out an emergency contractor for non-urgent work you may be charged by Teachers' Housing Association.

We also ask that you report any emergency repairs, and details of any call-outs, to Teachers' Housing Head Office as soon as possible (0207 440 9440). **Please retain this information sheet for future reference.**