

# Neighbourhood Life

Summer 2017



▶ Hertford  
subway gets a  
makeover  
**Page 7**

▶ 243 Ealing Road  
has green fingers  
**Page 8**

▶ Kilburn Quarter  
residents get  
to know their  
neighbours  
**Page 12**





## Housing homeless young Londoners



We've recently expanded **Project Vista, a partnership between Network Homes and New Horizon Youth Centre that supports 16-21 year olds across London who've been made homeless.**

New Horizon already uses two Network Homes properties to house homeless young people as part of the project. We've added an additional two, five bedroom flats in Islington, London making a total of four flats housing up to 20 young people.



New Horizon Youth Centre provides support to homeless young people who may have suffered from a family breakdown or domestic abuse. Individuals can live in the property for one year, and then the charity helps them move on to the private rented sector.

We decided to expand Project Vista after a successful first phase. All residents involved took on extra work hours, accepted promotions, maintained or started jobs they would otherwise have lost if they did not have a place to live. The stability has also helped residents save for a deposit and develop independent living skills.

Helen Evans, Network Homes' Chief Executive said: "We are committed to our social purpose and helping those who are affected by the housing crisis so it's great to be able to play our part in providing homes for some of the most vulnerable people in our society."

## Keep up to date and in the know by following us on social media

**Did you know that Network Homes has several social media channels including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram? If you want to receive all of the latest information from us and you can't wait until the next issue of Neighbourhood Life, then it's time you start to follow us!**

We regularly promote local community events, ways you can get involved, job vacancies and information about our services.

Following us will ensure you don't miss out. You'll also find out about some of the fantastic work we do in the community such as our fundraising events for our chosen charity St Mungo's.

So what's stopping you? Don't be shy, follow us today!



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[www.instagram.com/networkhomes](http://www.instagram.com/networkhomes)

## Welcome to the summer edition of Neighbourhood Life

**Your safety is extremely important to us and so is being transparent and open about our activities.**

So, in light of the recent tragic fire at Grenfell Tower we've included a three page feature on fire safety (pages 4-6). This includes an update about the actions we've taken to ensure our buildings are safe and what fire safety measures we have in place. We've also included useful information about how you can reduce the risks of a fire in your home and what to do in the event of a fire.

In addition we have a dedicated Fire Safety Team which is on hand to answer any fire safety queries you may have. You can contact them at [fireenquiries@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:fireenquiries@networkhomes.org.uk) or on **0300 373 3000**.

**We hope you find this useful and enjoy reading the summer edition of Neighbourhood Life.**

*Helen Evans*

**Helen Evans**  
Chief Executive

### Audio, Braille, large print and translation services

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## A-level students take on Hertfordshire dragons



**A team of A-level students from Hertford, sponsored by Network Homes, have quadrupled their money for charity in the annual Dragons' Apprentice Challenge, and scooped an award for best managed project.**

Team 'Fresh Start' from Richard Hale School in Hertford, included four year 12s who are all studying a business related A-level. They were mentored by a 'Dragon' from Network Homes who provided ongoing support and guidance. Their assigned charity was Future Living which offers a valuable support service to those suffering from addiction.

The Fresh Start team put on a variety of events to make money including selling Krispy Kreme doughnuts and arranging a 'Kick it week', where they encouraged other students to give up something they use everyday and donate the amount they would have spent on it to Future Living.

Fresh Start has raised over £400 since October and plan to raise more money for Future Living with more events.

Not only is the challenge a great way to raise money for local charities, but it also provides students with an invaluable experience of what it's like to run a business. Team leader, Matt Rudd said: "The Dragons' Apprentice Challenge has taught me many things including how to speak well to clients and how to speak at different meetings - whether that's with our Dragon, Susan Lankester from Network Homes, or Sandra Conte, Chief Executive of Future Living. We hope we can use these skills in future with other businesses so we can further understand what it's like to be in business."

Each of the six short-listed teams presented what they have done over the last six months with their initial £100 and what they have learnt to four 'Super Dragons' at

**"We hope we can use these skills in future with other businesses so we can further understand what it's like to be in business."**

**Matt Rudd**  
Team Leader

the final event at the Spotlight in Hoddesdon on Monday 27 March. They then answered questions from the Super Dragons.

Various awards were given out with categories including best poster, most money raised and an award for the overall winner. Fresh Start won the award for the best managed project.

Paul Huckstep, Network Homes' Regional Director said: "We are delighted to have sponsored the Fresh Start team from Richard Hale School. It's fantastic that they have raised so much money for Future Living through all their hard work."



# Grenfell Tower fire – an update for our residents

The tragic fire at Grenfell Tower will be on all of our minds for a long time to come. We understand many of you will have concerns and questions about fire safety, especially those of you living in blocks of flats. The safety of our residents is our top priority so we want to make sure you have all of the information you need to feel safe in your home.

## What happened at Grenfell Tower?

The fire broke out in the early hours of Wednesday 14 June. 40 fire engines and over 200 firefighters attended the scene to tackle the blaze. It wasn't until after 1am the next day that the fire was brought under control. By that time, fire and smoke had destroyed the 24 storey building.

Sadly, over 80 people lost their lives with the final number expected to be higher.

## What caused the fire?

The fire was not started deliberately but Police have confirmed it was caused by a faulty Hotpoint fridge freezer.

The government has ordered urgent testing of the model which was involved, and Hotpoint is urging consumers who believe they own that model to contact them.

If you have a Hotpoint fridge freezer **with the model number FF175BP** or graphite fridge freezer **model number FF175BG** you should make sure you register the appliance with Hotpoint to receive the latest updates.



Ring **0800 316 3826** or visit the Hotpoint website for the latest information.

## What about the cladding?

The cladding on Grenfell Tower is widely believed to have significantly contributed to the spread of the fire.

It was made from an aluminium composite material (ACM) with a polyethylene (plastic) core. This is less fire proof than other alternatives such as zinc.

The government instructed landlords to send in samples of cladding from high rise blocks. So far all cladding samples tested have failed these tests. But the government's agency, BRE, is only testing ACM panels from properties of six storeys or more at the moment and is focusing on cladding with a polyethylene core, as these panels are seen as the priority and the most likely to fail.

The government has stressed that cladding as a product is not unsafe in itself but it's important the right type is used. Also a cladding test failure doesn't necessarily mean a building needs to be evacuated. A lot of buildings will have many other safety features in place meaning they are still safe to live in. The fire safety of a building depends on the overall fire safety systems in place, not just on the cladding.

The decision by Camden Council to evacuate some of its tower blocks was taken because there were other fire safety failures of the building alongside the ACM cladding.

## What has been Network Homes' response?

We've acted swiftly to respond to the emerging findings of the Grenfell fire.

Communication with our residents has been a top priority. In the immediate days after the fire we hand delivered letters with the latest fire safety information to all our residents living in tower blocks. We then sent these letters to everyone else.

At the same time we compiled a report of all our buildings with external cladding to investigate the type of material used.

We have sent samples off to the government for testing from our buildings which we believe have ACM cladding. We have 10 buildings confirmed as having this type of ACM cladding fitted and four have failed the test. Samples we've sent from other buildings which have different cladding have been archived by the BRE as they do not believe these ones are a priority for testing.

We've been communicating with everyone living in these properties to let them know what we've found. Our next step will be to work closely with residents to agree an action plan of what to do about the cladding on these buildings.

The London Fire Brigade has also inspected these buildings and confirmed they are still safe to live in because they have a number of other safety features in place. The safety measures vary between buildings but include things like sprinklers in each flat, automatic smoke vents or fire compartmentation between flats and between the floors of the building.

## Zero tolerance to storing items in communal areas

One of the major fire hazards in a block of flats is items left in communal areas - things like bikes, buggies and boxes. Not only can they help a fire to spread faster but they can trip people up when trying to escape. So as an extra safety precaution we have introduced a zero tolerance policy for items left in communal areas.

We will now remove any items we find in communal areas immediately. We will no longer give you notice or a time period to remove these items.

## Dedicated fire safety team

We've also set up a dedicated fire safety team which is on hand to answer any questions you have about the fire safety of your home. You can contact them at [fireenquiries@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:fireenquiries@networkhomes.org.uk) or on **0300 373 3000**.



# Six fire safety measures already in place to give you peace of mind



**We're never complacent about fire safety at Network Homes. Here are six key measures already in place to give you extra peace of mind:**

1. All our blocks have up to date **100% compliant fire risk assessments** and we have a two year programme to deal with any issues identified. We're spending around £2million on this programme in 2017/18 alone. We also have a primary authority partnership agreement with the London Fire Brigade, which audits our fire safety management arrangements.
2. We have an ongoing programme to **continually re-assess our buildings** and act on the recommendations of risk assessments, including carrying out work where necessary.
3. Our housing officers **inspect our estates every month**. We also run a 'big building check' every year, where groups of staff volunteer to inspect communal areas in our buildings. This is another very useful way of picking up and dealing with problems.
4. We have a framework of **specialist FIRAS accredited fire safety contractors**. FIRAS is the mark of endorsement of competency in the installation of fire safety products and systems.
5. We've rolled out a programme of **fire safety training for all our front line staff** to make sure they're up to date with the latest good practice.
6. Network Homes was awarded a Gold ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) award in April for **excellence in safety**, and achieved a four star rating in a British Safety Council health and safety audit in March.

**IMPORTANT • IMPORTANT**

**Fire safety in blocks of flats**

**Top tips to reduce risk of fire in your home**

You can reduce the risk of fire in your home by taking the following simple steps:

1. Test your smoke alarm every week.
2. Make sure everyone in your home knows what to do in the event of a fire, in accordance with the policy for your building.
3. Be careful with candles. Keep them away from curtains, carpets, furniture, bedding and other flammable items.
4. Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
5. Don't leave cigarettes, pipes or candles unattended.
6. Switch off the TV and other non-essential electrical equipment at the socket when not in use.
7. Switch off heaters and cookers when you're not using them.
8. Don't use or store devices that run on a gas cylinder.
9. Check your cooker is turned off before you go to bed.
10. Keep communal areas, fire exits and fire escapes clear of any obstructions at all times.
11. Don't prop fire doors open.

**What to do in the event of a fire if you live in a purpose built maisonette or block of flats**

**The London Fire Brigade (LFB) has some useful advice about what to do if your flat or maisonette is being affected by fire or smoke, and your escape route is clear:**

- Get everyone out, close the door and walk calmly out of the building.
  - Do not use the lift.
  - Call 999, give your address, the number of your flat and state which floor the fire is on.
  - Be ready to describe where you are and the quickest way to reach you.
- If there is a fire in another part of the building:**
- Purpose-built maisonettes or blocks of flats are built to give you some protection from fire. Walls, floors and doors can hold back flames and smoke for 30 to 60 minutes.
  - You are usually safer staying put and calling 999. Tell the fire brigade where you are and the best way to reach you.
  - If you are within the common parts of the building, leave and call 999.
- If there is a fire or smoke inside your flat or maisonette and your escape route is not clear:**
- It may be safer to stay in your flat or maisonette until the fire brigade arrives.
  - Find a safe room close the door and use soft materials to block any gaps to stop the smoke.
  - Go to a window, shout "HELP, FIRE" and call 999.

Read more on the LFB website at [www.london-fire.org.uk](http://www.london-fire.org.uk)



**Portland Place throws a party to celebrate its diversity**

Residents at our Portland Place sheltered housing scheme in Haringey celebrated in style by throwing a party with a distinct international flavour. The event, held in March, celebrated the wide diversity of nationalities and cultures of the people who live there.

We had a range of world foods to tantalize the taste buds and

played music from around the globe to really get the party going. Over 50 residents ate and danced the afternoon away while making new and lasting friends. There were also some lucky winners as we handed out awards and prizes for the best traditional costume.

We have residents from 19 different cultural backgrounds living in Portland Place so there was a colourful and flamboyant

representation of the wonderful diversity of people who make up this vibrant, sheltered housing community.

We were able to put on the event using funding from the Luke Onyeali Memorial Fund. This fund was a donation left to Network Homes by a former resident to provide activities and events that contribute to tackling loneliness and isolation across our Older Persons' Services.



**Police cadets' art work gives Hertford subway a makeover**

All Saints Church subway in Hertford has been given an impressive makeover using a collection of photographs taken by members of the Hertford and Ware Police Cadets. The subway, with the new art installation, was officially opened by Cllr Bob Deering with Cllr Peter Ruffles, Network Homes, East Herts Council and Herts County Council on 15 June in support of Clean Air Day 2017.

We worked in partnership with Herts County Council and East Herts Council to decide how best to improve this local space. We also provided funding for the project along with the Department of Transport. The main aim was to have the subway reflect aspects of the local community while promoting the theme of 'greater access to transport'. The work was then carried out by Community Clean, Hertfordshire's Highways Department and Ringway.

The Hertford and Ware Police Cadets creatively captured local attractions and landmarks across North Hertford and East Hertford. The photographs were artistically

combined with historical snapshots along the same route showing a nice display of what the area looked like before and how it's now seen through the eyes of young people.

Jackie Trundell, Head of Neighbourhood Services at Network Homes, said: "The subway has been wonderfully transformed thanks to the police cadets' creativity and imagination. It's now a pleasant and safe access route for everyone to use. We've enjoyed working in partnership on this project and look forward to working together again to make further improvements to the area for residents in the local community."







## 243 Ealing Road has green fingers

**Gardening galore! That's the best way to describe our recent allotment launch event on Friday 9 June at 243 Ealing Road in London. More than 50 residents showed up to celebrate the opening of the allotment space and claim their allocated garden patch.**

On the day, Pinnacle, our contractor, were on hand to give residents tips on how to make the most of their allotment as well as provide them with plants and tools to get started.



It was great to see residents having fun at the event and seeing young children getting involved in gardening with their parents. There was something for everyone from sowing seeds to having a bit of fun getting their faces painted and bouncing around on our space hoppers.

### Do you have an idea for a community event?

We're always looking to do more community events like this to bring our residents together and provide opportunities to find out more about our services. If you have ideas on how we can help your local community come together or if you would like to be more hands on with improving our services, please get in touch with our Community and Engagement team. You can email them at [get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk).

## Taking the time to hear our 'youth speak'

**We wanted to know what young people who live in our homes and local communities think about where they live and what they think could be better.**



In February and March this year we worked with Participation People to roll out a youth engagement project across our areas of operation in Brent and Stockwell Park in London, and Hertford. We invited young people to tell us what was important to them about where they live.

We received some great feedback and insight into what our young residents really want. They told us there were lots of good things about where they lived and highlighted the friendly and diverse communities, the number of talented young people that live in their areas and some of the sports facilities. There were also lots of ideas for improvement which generally focused on the need for more or better:

- ▶ sports facilities and activities
- ▶ creative outlets
- ▶ education
- ▶ work and well being opportunities
- ▶ maintenance and safety.

At the end of the project, some of the young people who took part presented their ideas to our decision makers at Network Homes and SW9 Community Housing. A well deserved shout-out and thank you goes to Peniel, Brandon and Kieron, year 9 pupils from Hertford, and to Kalya (15) from SW9 Community Housing. They took the time to speak to their friends and neighbours where they live or go to school, formulated ideas based on the feedback and presented all this to Network Homes and SW9 Community Housing managers.

We will be busy looking at the best ways to deal with issues raised so watch this space!

In the meantime if you're a young resident aged 16 to 25 and want to find out more about what we are doing please email us at [get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk) or text **07880 782 801**. We would love to hear from you.

## Talking about the Big Conversation

**In the spring issue of Neighbourhood Life we encouraged you to take part in our Big Conversation. Thank you to everyone who took part by completing our short online survey. We received 225 completed surveys and lots of great ideas to work on.**

The purpose of the Big Conversation was to find out how you want to have your say and get involved with the decisions we make that affect the services you receive. We'll be working through the results to identify key themes and make sure our new Menu of Involvement Activities is right for you.

Early results seem to show that you would like more ways to get involved through digital channels as well as see us organise more community-based activities. We're currently working on an action plan and will feedback our ideas in the next issue of Neighbourhood Life.

Everyone who completed the survey was entered into a prize draw to win £50 worth of high street vouchers. Congratulations to Mrs Tariq from Ilford who was randomly selected!

If you're interested in finding out more, or getting involved with Network Homes, visit our website [www.networkhomes.org.uk/getinvolved](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/getinvolved) or contact us at [get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk) or on **0300 373 3000**.





# Local resident panel update – keeping you informed

**There are a number of ways you can get involved at Network Homes to help shape the services you receive.**

Being part of our Local Resident Panel is an important way for you to have your say about the services you receive at a high level within the organisation. We have two Local Resident Panels - the London Region Panel and the Out of London Panel. Here we give you a quick update on what the panel members have been up to...

## London update

It's been a really busy time recently for the London Region Panel. As well as the usual documentation on performance we have to review, we've also received presentations from the new repairs contractor Wates and reviewed the policy on how residents receive expenses for getting involved.

In March the panel took part in an away day weekend at Ashridge House to identify the areas of business they wanted to get involved in. This was brilliant and a huge number of ideas were put forward for performance improvement. Since then, we've had a bus tour of new Network Homes' development sites giving us an insight into how new builds are planned, completed and made into new communities.

I've also been personally busy taking part in the contractor selection process for fire safety in order to gain an understanding of how it works.

## All the best!

Till the next update,  
**Catherine Joseph**  
Chair

## Out of London Panel update

The Out of London Local Panel has also been busy recently. Over the last 18 months they've been involved in a number of service reviews including anti-social behaviour, estate inspections, resident engagement, and the Network Homes' Customer Service Strategy.

They're currently looking at the handover processes for new developments and the input customers have into the design of them. They're also reviewing the number of customers who abandon their call into the Customer Services Centre without speaking to someone.

## Till the next update!

**Ian Lamerton**  
Co-Regulation Manager,  
Network Homes

# Get involved and become a panel member!

**Tenants, Leaseholders, and Shared Owners are all eligible to be Panel members.**

More information on our Local Panels can be found on our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/getinvolved](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/getinvolved). If you're interested in joining us, please email us at [get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk) or call us on **0300 373 3000** and ask to speak to Pete Adams for the London Region, or Ian Lamerton for the Out of London Region.

get involved



# Supporting our older residents

**In the last issue of Neighbourhood Life, we told you about the work we're doing to shape the services we provide to older people in London. One in five people in the UK will be aged over 65 in ten years' time. That's a fifth of the population retired or nearing retirement. As health and social care cuts become more severe, older people need integrated, personalised, preventative services more than ever.**

We need to be more innovative to help our older residents maintain their tenancies and continue living in their communities. 90% of older people in the UK don't live in sheltered or specialist housing so we started a conversation with our older residents to understand how we can help them.

We spoke to 100 residents aged over 70 in our London properties. The people we spoke to have a wide range of interests including weightlifting, clay-pigeon shooting, volunteering and gardening.

Some of the key findings that came out of the research showed that having a support network of family and friends makes a big difference to how well they manage living in their home. However, roughly 1 in 20 of our older residents mentioned they don't see other people regularly or have family or friends nearby. 75% of that group couldn't access the support services they needed. At the same time, just over a quarter of those we interviewed told us they would like to see other people more.

## How we can help

Our Activities Co-ordinator, Anne Marie Weir, runs an activities programme for residents in our sheltered schemes, which all our residents are welcome to come along to. We're proud that our schemes are friendly, and we would like them to become hub spaces for all our older residents. Please

give us a call on **0300 373 3000** or write to us at Network Homes, Olympic Office Centre, 8 Fulton Road, Wembley, HA9 0NU if you would like more information about our activities programme.

We also provide support or advice on meeting people, managing your budget, and adapting your property.

## Next steps

We know the most important thing we can do is keep in touch with our older residents and make sure they know how we can help them. Our conversations were really valuable. There is no one-size-fits-all service we can offer, but speaking to our residents is the first step, and we'll try to keep the conversation going.

Please get in touch if you are one of our older residents and would like to know about aids and adaptations, applying for sheltered housing, getting involved in your community, our handyperson service, or how to claim benefits. You can call us on **0300 373 3000** or email us at [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk).





## Kilburn Quarter residents get to know their neighbours

**On Saturday 20 May, over 80 residents at Kilburn Quarter came along to our Meet and Greet afternoon. The event was held in their communal garden and gave residents the opportunity to get to know their new neighbours and meet staff members from Network Homes.**

With the weather fighting to stay on our side, everyone was in good spirits as they enjoyed a range of activities. There was face painting for the children and a smoothie making exercise bike for all to try. The exercise bike was a hit with everyone as people got to do a workout while making a smoothie, which came in handy for a post exercise treat. We also had a raffle where three lucky winners walked off with a 32-inch Smart

TV, Nescafe Coffee Maker and a Sony Photoshoot Camera. No one was left hungry as everyone got to sample the delicious Caribbean cuisine on offer.

Kilburn Quarter is our latest completed development and is part of the £600million regeneration of South Kilburn. It has 126 apartments for sale and 103 rented homes in four blocks, all with a balcony or terrace. The blocks surround a landscaped garden with children's play area. The Meet and Greet event was a great way to get everyone together to enjoy and celebrate their new surroundings.

Residents commented on how it was a fantastic afternoon despite the cloudy weather and they enjoyed the range of fun activities that kept them entertained. They're looking forward to more Network Homes community based events in the future.

## South Kilburn resident, Regina Rice tells us all about her experience of estate regeneration

**Regina Rice has lived in South Kilburn all her life. She was temporarily rehoused when her building was demolished as part of the regeneration of South Kilburn.**

Michael Smith, our Resident Liaison Officer, catches up with Regina Rice to find out what she thinks about the regeneration of South Kilburn, the moving process and her new home.

**How did you find the process of moving home, relocating and returning?**

Moving house is always stressful, but we were regularly kept updated about our move date. The new development is only a few minutes away from our old address so this helped with the moving process as we already knew the area very well, and knew that our neighbours were moving with us.

**How did Network Homes help you with the moving process?**

Network Homes staff were very

helpful. We were introduced to the team during our first onsite visit of our new flat. The team at the head office in Wembley were also very helpful in assisting with the paperwork and the formalities of the move.

**How has the regeneration changed the estate and what were your first impressions when you moved into your new home?**

The appearance of the estate has dramatically changed for the better. Before, there were many large outdated looking tower blocks which made the area look cold and bleak. Having lived here my entire life, I have first hand experience of what a vibrant and multi-cultural area Kilburn is, however it's often portrayed in a negative light which is a pity.

The new developments have replaced the old, shabby looking tower blocks, and in their place are more modern buildings which are very stylish. It's amazing how much the area has changed. We're very happy in our new home.

**What are your favourite features in your new home?**

We now have four bedrooms as opposed to three bedrooms so there is more space! I'm very happy with the sizes of the bedrooms and living room. We also have a wet room which is a delight to use and a garden.

**What impact has the regeneration had on your household and your neighbours?**

As our flat is on one level, there is no need for us to use multiple flights of stairs. Our previous maisonette had no lift which was difficult to manage so this is another plus point. The regeneration has been positive, and our neighbours who are due to move are also looking forward to it!

**In a few words, how would you sum up your experience?**

Home sweet home.



# Universal Credit is coming – make sure you know how it will affect you!

**Universal Credit is a new combined benefit that will affect you if you're claiming Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit.**

Universal Credit is being rolled out in phases, according to your nearest Jobcentre Plus. The following areas will be affected soon:

**October 2017 - Acton, Barnet, Edgware, Finchley, Hendon, Southall.**

**November 2017 - Edmonton, Enfield, Palmers Green, St Albans, Walthamstow.**

**December 2017 - Barking, Brixton, Dagenham, Ealing, Hatfield, Stockwell, Watford.**

Your payment for the benefits already mentioned will now come in one monthly combined payment directly to your bank account. This means you will be responsible for paying your rent directly to us, your landlord, unless you have an Alternative Payment Arrangement.

### How will I know when Universal Credit will apply to me?

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will notify you when you will be moved across to Universal Credit. It's important you follow the instructions otherwise your payments will stop.

### Need to make a new claim?

You can apply for Universal Credit online at [www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit). There is a waiting time of six weeks before you will get



paid, so if you claim on 1 August, you will not be paid until mid September. Your next payment would be in mid October.

### We can help!

Our Welfare Benefit Advice team can assist you with claims and give you more information on any help you may be entitled to. You can contact them at [welfareadvisors@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:welfareadvisors@networkhomes.org.uk) or call **0300 373 3000**.

You can also try our benefits calculator at <https://networkhomes.entitledto.co.uk>.

If you need help getting ready for work or finding employment, our Worksmart team can help you. Contact [worksmart@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:worksmart@networkhomes.org.uk).

You can also access the survey via our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/worksmart](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/worksmart).

Through Network Homes' Worksmart service, you have access to free training and employment support and advice. We have a dedicated team of advisors available to support you with finding training opportunities to improve your skills or with finding a new job. We can also help you if you're thinking of a career change. We'll use your feedback to help improve this service and your access to it.

So don't forget to complete the survey by 30 September 2017 if you want to be in with a chance to win a £50 high street voucher.

**Tell us what you think about Worksmart**

**We're always looking at ways to improve our services so they work better for you.**

This summer we would like to find out what your training and employment support needs are and what you think about

Worksmart. We're running a short online survey with all residents about the service. **If you complete the survey by 30 September 2017, we'll enter you into a prize draw to win a £50 high street voucher.**

To start the survey, type the following link into your internet browser: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RM8C939>



## Get free debt advice!

**Are you struggling to pay off your debts? Do you owe money to several creditors?**

**We are working with a company called PayPlan to offer you free, impartial, tailored advice to help you manage and pay off your debts.**

PayPlan is a debt advice provider which supports people in debt and is authorised by the Financial Conduct Agency (FCA).

Advice from PayPlan covers a range of information and support including:

- ▶ informal arrangements
- ▶ bankruptcy
- ▶ debt relief
- ▶ repossession
- ▶ critical illness
- ▶ bailiffs.

### What are the benefits of speaking to PayPlan?

As well as helping you to manage your debt effectively, speaking to PayPlan can also help you to feel more comfortable and secure about your financial issues.

Speaking to PayPlan can help you to:

- ▶ prioritise your debts
- ▶ maximise your income

- ▶ look at savings you could be making
- ▶ restore feelings of self confidence and structure in your life
- ▶ identify suitable solutions
- ▶ attempt to get your debt levels frozen
- ▶ put your debts put into one affordable payment
- ▶ avoid bankruptcy.

### Are you eligible?

To be eligible for an assessment and to get a tailored payment solution, you must have a debt of over £4,500 with two or more unsecured creditors. You must also have £50-£100 of disposable income per month.

### Contact PayPlan

You can fill out a web referral form by clicking through from our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/PayPlan](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/PayPlan). PayPlan will set you up with an assessment call within 48 hours which usually lasts around one hour.

### Other support from Network Homes

If you are struggling to pay your rent, please speak to our Income team by calling **0300 373 3000**.

## Register your interest for money management courses

**We're teaming up with Brent Council to provide free money management courses – these are for all Network Homes residents, not just those who live in Brent.**

The courses will cover:

- ▶ welfare reforms
- ▶ tenancy management
- ▶ budgeting skills.

There will also be the opportunity for one-to-one advice with a solicitor.

We're currently agreeing dates for these courses so please check our website. If you would like to register your interest, please email [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk) with the heading 'Money management courses'.

If you are having trouble paying your rent, please call our Income Management team on **0300 373 3000**.





## Change to our gas servicing contractors

To help us achieve our ambition of delivering a first class customer service, we've changed how our gas servicing is carried out in London.

Since 2 June 2017, Network Homes has been working with a new contractor to carry out gas services.

Oakray Limited has taken over heating repairs and gas servicing in all of our homes in London, from our current contractors, PH Jones. Oakray has an excellent track

record working on our homes in Hertfordshire, having successfully delivered gas maintenance for Network Homes in this area for over two years.

Oakray has taken over all gas maintenance for 18 months while we find a long term replacement.

If you receive a letter, phone call or visit from an Oakray engineer, please be assured they are working on behalf of Network Homes. If you have any questions about this, please contact us on **0300 373 3000**.



## Working with new water contractors to keep your home clean and safe

**IWS (Integrated Water Services) joined us in March, taking over from TE Compliance. They're responsible for legionella testing and managing our water safety contracts.**

This ensures that water supplies to our properties are safe and clean through a series of periodic inspections. IWS will complete a series of risk assessments for our properties and we encourage you to give them access to your home so that we can ensure your system is safe. Please make sure that any water tanks or hot water storage cylinders are accessible for this inspection.



From April this year, Willows Pumps replaced Burch Drainage to service and repair the drainage pumps in our properties. Wates are still responsible for fixing blockages in your home unless we've identified it as your responsibility to resolve.



## Have you tried the allpay app?

allpay's payment app is a quick and convenient way for you to pay your rent. It's available for you to use anytime, anywhere and is a great option if you like to go cashless.

You can download the allpay app for free from your app store and it's available to use on Apple, Windows or Android smartphones. We receive allpay app payments the next working day making it a quick and effective way to pay your rent. The app also securely stores payment reference numbers, bank details and payment amounts making it a safe way to pay your rent.

Go to your app store today and download the allpay app to test it out.



## Look out for your new payment card

Over the next couple of months, we will be sending out new Network Homes payment cards to residents.

If you currently use a payment card to pay your rent you will automatically receive a new card from us. Please use the new card to make any future rent payments at a Pay Point terminal found in Post Offices, local convenience stores and petrol stations.

You will not receive a new payment card if you currently pay your rent via Direct Debit. If you pay by Direct Debit and would like to use



a payment card to pay your rent, please contact us and we will send you a new one in the post. You will not be able to use any previous payment card you may have as only a Network Homes payment card can be used.

Your new payment card will have your unique card number which is linked to your account.

Please contact our Customer Service Centre on **0300 373 3000** or at **customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk** if you have any questions or if you would like to request a new card.

## Changes to standing order payments

**Paying your rent by standing order is quick and hassle free. If you pay your rent by standing order it's important to check that you have our up to date bank details. If you do not have our correct details we will not receive your rent payments and you could end up in arrears.**

If you've set up your standing order over six months ago you must check that you are using the following bank details:

**Bank** - Barclays, St Albans

**Account name** - Network Homes Housing Ass Ltd No.2 Account

**Sort code** - 20-74-09

**Account number** - 53408728

You should also use your payment reference number to help us identify your payment. You can find your payment reference number on your rent account statement.

If you have used different bank details for your standing order payments, please can you amend them today.

Please contact us on **0300 373 3000** or email us at **customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk** if you have any questions regarding your standing order payments.



# Condemn condensation and put mould on hold

**Did you know that an average family produces up to 17 litres of water vapour a day? This vapour can lead to condensation and black mould if you do not deal with it properly.**

Condensation occurs when warm and moist air, such as steam from a kettle, comes into contact with cool air or a cool surface, such as window panes. Water droplets form when the cool air or surface reduces the temperature of the warm, moist air, turning it from gas to liquid. Too much condensation can lead to mould growing on walls, furniture and clothes.

As part of your tenancy agreement, you are responsible for preventing condensation and treating mould growth in your home.

## How to prevent condensation and mould:

- ▶ Hang your washing outside to dry if possible, or in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or extractor fan on. If you use a tumble dryer, make sure the vent pipe runs outside your home, unless it's a condensing dryer.
- ▶ When using bathrooms and kitchens, close the doors and open the window or use the extractor fan.
- ▶ When filling your bath, close your bathroom door, run the cold water first and then add the hot water to reduce up to 90% of steam.
- ▶ Keep a gap between large pieces of furniture and the walls. Where possible position furniture against internal walls rather than external walls.

- ▶ Always cook with the pan lid on and turn the heat down once the water has boiled.

## If black mould does appear, you should:

1. Treat the mould first by wiping down or spraying the effected area with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive approval number. Please make sure you follow the instructions.
2. After treating the mould, redecorate using good quality fungicidal paint and a fungicidal resistant wallpaper paste to help prevent mould recurring.
3. Follow the prevention tips above to help you control condensation and reduce mould in your home.

## We've achieved 100% monthly estate inspections

**We're proud to announce that since the start of the year all of our estates are being thoroughly inspected on a monthly basis.**

We carry out monthly estate inspections to ensure we identify communal repairs, health and safety concerns and cleaning and ground maintenance issues. If you see our officers on your estate please feel free to have a chat with them.

Don't forget, we also hold estate inspections with residents in addition to these monthly inspections. You do not need to book a place, just show up on the day. You can find the full list of the upcoming estate inspections we have with residents on our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/estateinspections](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/estateinspections).

## Tell us when you have a change of circumstances

**Under your tenancy agreement with Network Homes, you must let us know if you have any change of circumstances as soon as possible.**

A change of circumstances to your family include births, deaths, marriages or civil partnerships, etc. Please ensure you contact us on **0300 373 3000** so we can update your tenancy record.

## What to do if you have a complaint

### Network Homes is committed to providing an excellent customer service but we recognise that sometimes things go wrong.

We welcome feedback and we want to hear any complaints or compliments from our customers.

If you are dissatisfied with the standard of service you have received from us, we want to hear from you so we can put things right. All complaints that we receive are monitored to continuously improve our service.

### What is a complaint?

You should raise a complaint with us immediately if you are dissatisfied with:

- ▶ the standard of service you receive from us
- ▶ our response to your request or service
- ▶ something we failed to do.

We will not investigate complaints about issues more than six months old (unless there are exceptional circumstances).

### Useful to know

If you request a service such as a repair or if you are reporting anti-social behaviour for the first time, it is not a complaint. It becomes a

complaint if you believe a service you have requested has not been delivered to a satisfactory standard.

### How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint in any of the following ways:

- ▶ by e-mail to [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk)
- ▶ via our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/complaints](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/complaints)
- ▶ by telephone on **0300 373 3000**
- ▶ through an advocate (with your written consent).

We also love to know when we've done well. So if you want to leave us a compliment, do so using the methods mentioned above.

## Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

**Network Homes takes ASB seriously and we will not tolerate it on any level. Our Neighbourhood team take an active role to resolve ASB complaints. If we receive a report of ASB we will work with the offender to try and resolve it as quickly as possible.**

However we will take action against people causing ASB if they fail to work with us to resolve the issues.

We recently had a case where a resident was causing anti-social behaviour by having regular parties, causing distress to other residents, playing loud music, loitering in common areas of the building, taking drugs and using threatening behaviour. We worked with the

resident to try and resolve the issue and change their behaviour. This did not work so eventually we had to take them to court and get a possession order to evict them from their home.

This is obviously something we want to avoid because if you are evicted for rent arrears or ASB the council will see this as making yourself intentionally homeless and they will not usually re-house anyone who falls within these categories.

### If you experience anti-social behaviour, you should:

- ▶ Try to resolve the issue yourself speaking with the person causing the problem in a calm and reasonable way.

- ▶ Not retaliate. It could result in complaints being made against you.

- ▶ Keep a record of all incidents of anti-social behaviour, including dates, times, details of anyone involved and what happened.

- ▶ Report it to us – you can report ASB online at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/asb](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/asb), by email to [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk), by phone on **0300 373 3000** or writing to us at our Network Homes, Olympic Office Centre, 8 Fulton Road, Wembley, HA9 0NU.



## ▶ **Protect your belongings today and gain peace of mind**

**Did you know it's your responsibility to insure your personal possessions and home contents?**

We often assume that nothing will happen to our personal belongings, but sometimes things can go wrong unexpectedly. In these cases, it's important that you have home contents insurance to cover any damage or loss caused by fire, theft, water damage, vandalism or floods to your household goods and contents. Network Homes only insures the building you live in.

To help, we have teamed up with the National Housing Federation and Thistle Insurance to offer our residents the My Home Contents Insurance scheme.

### **Benefits of the My Home Contents Insurance scheme:**

- ▶ Low cost insurance premiums.
- ▶ Easy and flexible payment options: Pay-As-You-Go in cash, monthly by Direct Debit, annual cheque, postal order, debit or credit card.
- ▶ No Excess – you don't have to pay the first part of the claim.
- ▶ No minimum property security requirements (e.g. no special door or window locks required).
- ▶ Cover is provided on a new for old basis with no deduction for wear and tear – except in respect of linen and clothing.
- ▶ Cover for fire, theft, flood, water damage, household risks such as lost or stolen keys, freezer contents cover and much more.
- ▶ Cover for damage to internal decorations and external glazing.
- ▶ Covers accidental damage to sanitary fixtures such as toilets and washbasins.



**You don't need a bank account to apply or credit checks. It's quick and easy, just phone 0345 450 7288. For more information visit [www.thistlemyhome.co.uk](http://www.thistlemyhome.co.uk).**

### **Keep in touch**

 0300 373 3000

 [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk)

 [www.networkhomes.org.uk](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk)

 [@networkhomesuk](https://twitter.com/networkhomesuk)

 [www.facebook.com/networkhomesuk](https://www.facebook.com/networkhomesuk)

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