

Rent matters

We need you to pay your rent on time and in full, so that we can provide the services you rely on.

Direct debit prize draw

You can pay your rent in a number of ways. However, paying monthly by direct debit from your bank account is by far the most convenient. Phone us on 020 8795 5405 to set this up.

If you pay by direct debit, and your account has been in credit for at least three months, it is included in a regular prize draw. The latest winner of a £50 voucher is Mrs Walsh from Ealing.

Universal Credit – rent increases

Following our April 2020 rent increase, some residents failed to update the amount in their Universal Credit portal. **Please check that you did this.** It is important to update your details quickly, or your housing element may be underpaid, leading to a build up of rent arrears.

Phone our Income Officer Neha Govind on 020 8795 5405 to find out more.



Repairs and recharges

Most repairs are the responsibility of the housing association that owns your home. However, some are down to you.

If a contractor carries out a repair that is your responsibility, you may be recharged. So, you need to know who is responsible for what.

Landlord responsibilities

The owner of your home is responsible for keeping it in a good state of repair. This means they are responsible for:

- the structure of the building
- the outside of your home and shared areas, and
- all the plumbing, electrical and heating systems they installed at your home.

Tenant responsibilities

Check your tenancy agreement or tenants' handbook to see which repairs your landlord expects you to carry out for yourself.



CV Workshops

It is a difficult time to be job searching, so we would like to offer some help, in the form of CV workshops.

A CV is a summary of your details and experience. Getting your CV right can make a big difference to your jobsearch.



If you are an AGHA tenant, go to the maintenance section of our website at www.gha.org.uk and check the section headed 'Repairs you are responsible for'.

The list will include things like:

- keeping your home tidy
- looking after your garden
- keeping waste pipes and drains clear
- repairing and replacing any items you own or that you had fitted to your home
- putting right any damage caused by someone in your household
- decorating the inside of your home, and
- fitting or replacing items such as light bulbs, fuses, tap washers, plugs, toilet chains and new toilet seats.

If you would be interested in taking part in a workshop, phone 020 8795 5405 or email us at gha@apnagar.org.uk



Fire safety reminders

We take our health and safety responsibilities very seriously and carry out regular fire risk inspections. We ask you to play your part too.

No fraud zone

We have a zero tolerance approach to fraud.

If you let your home to someone else – or hand over the keys for cash – you're committing social housing fraud. It's also fraud if:

- you gave false details when you applied for the property, or
- you claimed succession rights you're not entitled to, when the tenant died.

Social housing fraud is a criminal offence. If you're caught, you could go to prison for up to two years and face a fine of up to £50,000.

If you claim housing or other benefits that you are not entitled to, you could be prosecuted for benefit fraud.

If you think a property is occupied by the wrong people, or being used as an AirBnB or other holiday let, please call phone us on 020 8795 5405. You don't need to leave your name.

STOP FRAUD

- Don't keep rubbish or personal items of any kind in shared areas. They can slow emergency escape routes, catch fire, or make it harder for the Fire Brigade to fight a fire. If you ignore this advice, we may remove your items without warning and charge you the cost of doing so.
- Please comply with the 'no smoking' rule in shared areas.
- You cannot use your balcony for barbecues.
- Take care to prevent fires inside your home, especially when cooking, using candles or smoking.
- Please check your smoke or heat alarms regularly and change the batteries when needed. If your alarm is wired in, but it isn't working, call the housing association that owns your home.
- Never interfere in any other way with your smoke or heat alarm or any of the other firefighting or safety devices in your home or the communal areas at your block.



Test your central heating

Now is a good time to test that your heating is working – before the weather turns really cold.

However, before reporting a fault, you should first check:

- you have money on the meter
- your room thermostat is turned up, and
- your programmer is on.

If your radiators are not heating evenly and up to the top, you need to 'bleed' trapped air out. Get a radiator bleed key (about £1 in any DIY shop) to open the little valve at the top and



something to catch water in. As you turn the key, you will hear the hiss of air. Once you see water, close the valve immediately.

Out-of-hours emergency repairs

Emergency repairs, when our offices are closed, are handled by the landlord that owns your home. Our offices are closed on weekdays from 5pm to 9am, at weekends and on Bank holidays.

Apna Ghar: 01772 666029 and press option 5 (from 5pm to 9am and all weekend) – this service is provided for us by Places for People.

Notting Hill Genesis: 0845 603 0714 (6pm to 8am)

Guinness Partnership: 0303 123 1890 (6pm to 8am)

London & Quadrant Housing Trust: Use the emergency numbers for Apna Ghar properties.

Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing: 020 3535 3535

Network Homes: 020 3701 3589

Octavia Housing & Care: 020 3589 3078 (Mears)

One Housing Group: 0300 123 9966

PA Housing Group: 0116 257 6716

Peabody Trust: 0800 022 4040

Sanctuary Housing Association: Out-of-hours gas team: 0800 288 9289
Repairs: 0800 916 1525



Contact us

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

General enquiries (including repairs)

Phone: 020 8795 5405

Fax: 020 8795 5755

Email: agha@apnagar.org.uk

Website: www.gha.org.uk

Write to: Apna Ghar HA
21 Westmoreland Road
London NW9 9BW



Update on our services



Since March, we have had to make major changes to the way we deliver services. We want to thank you for your patience during this difficult time.

During the pandemic, we have followed government advice. We have put the safety of our residents, staff and contractors first. We are particularly concerned about the health and wellbeing of our elderly and more at-risk residents.



For the moment this means the following.

- Our staff are still mostly working from home.
- Our office is closed to visitors.
- If you need to contact us, you should phone us on 020 8795 5405 or email us at agha@apnagar.org.uk

Supporting you

Please contact us if you are:

- in financial difficulty
- worried about the wellbeing of someone in your home, or
- know of a resident who needs support while self-isolating.

We will make sure people get the support they need.

Repairs

Apna Ghar's repairs service is now running normally and we have continued to get gas safety checks done throughout this period. If your home is owned by another landlord, they will explain the service they are currently offering.

Please make sure you give contractors access. They will take care not to put you at risk. They may ask you to wait in another room while they work.

Please tell us when you report your repair if anyone in your home has coronavirus symptoms.

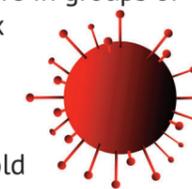
Communal areas

Apna Ghar's communal repairs and cleaning contractors are working normally.

Staying safe

To keep yourself and others safe, follow government guidance.

- **Wash your hands** – especially after touching communal doors and lift buttons.
- **Face** – wear your face mask in shops and other indoor settings (you might want to do this in crowded outdoor spaces too).
- **Space** – keep your distance from others (2m/6ft if you can) – including in communal corridors and stairways.
- **Rule of six** – you should not meet anywhere in groups of more than six people (unless they all live in your household with you).



Get involved

If you would like to help improve our services, call 020 8795 5405 to get involved in our work. We will be delighted to hear from you.

We are updating our Complaints Policy. If you would like to take part in a virtual policy review workshop (10am to 4pm, 4th and 11th November 2020), please contact us to book a place.

Think of others when you park

When you park on or near your estates, we ask you to be considerate and think of everyone's safety.

- Don't block access routes.
- Don't park on private land.
- Keep to any parking restrictions in force in your neighbourhood or at your estate.

If the owning landlord at your estate runs a parking permit scheme, contact them or their parking contractor to get a permit. You will usually need the right paperwork for the vehicle and for it to be roadworthy.



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