

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)

L&Q: 0300 456 9996

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



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

General enquiries (including repairs)
Phone: 0208 795 5405
Fax: 0208 795 5755
Email: agha@apnaghar.org.uk

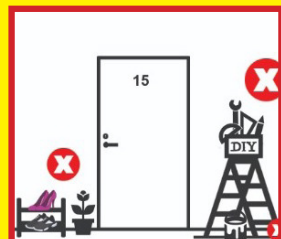
Website: www.agha.org.uk

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



If your landlord is AGHA, call **K&T Heating** directly to report boiler and hot water repairs only: **0208 269 4500** (Please do not report general plumbing issues as these are not covered by K&T Heating.)

FIRE SAFETY



Please keep shared areas and escape routes clear at all times.

1. All items left in shared areas can emit hot toxic gases in a fire, delay your escape and obstruct emergency services especially where visibility is reduced by smoke.

2. Any items found are subject to immediate removal and will not be retrievable.

3. Always store items within the confines of your own property only.

Shared areas include: Entrances, lobby areas, corridors, landings, stairs, understairs, balconies, risers, meter, electrical, service or storage cupboards, access roads, undercroft parking or garage areas, walkways and grassy or communal gardens.

Get Involved

If you'd like to get involved in our services, call **0208 795 5405**.

We would love to hear from you and we have range of involvement activities to suit all ages and can accommodate different time commitments.

Debt Advice

For free debt advice and help, contact any of the organisations below:

National Debtline
0808 808 4000 www.nationaldebtline.org

StepChange Debt Charity
0800 138 1111 www.stepchange.org

Citizens Advice
08444 111 444 www.citizensadvice.org.uk



Summer 2021

Summer News from Apna Ghar

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter. We hope you are all keeping safe and well. Please keep an eye out on the latest changes to do with Covid restrictions due from the Government.

PAYING YOUR RENT

Please pay your rent in full and on time as usual. We rely on your rent to pay for the services we provide. If your income is affected by COVID 19, call us for advice. We can refer you to debt support agencies, help you apply for benefits/Universal Credit or to complete forms. Never ignore rent demands as we can also arrange affordable repayment plans if you have fallen behind with your payments. If you ignore our contact attempts or don't pay your rent, we may take Court action and you could face eviction from your home.

COMMUNAL AREAS

Regular cleaning services are continuing as normal.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We are dealing with ASB issues as usual. Please report any concerns you have to us. Call the Police 101 non-emergency number, to report suspected criminal activity.

REPAIRS

We are delivering our repair services as usual but some repairs may be rescheduled due to Covid. **If you have symptoms of COVID 19 – please tell us when you call.** We are still completing essential safety works and annual gas safety checks, **please allow access when our contractors contact you.**



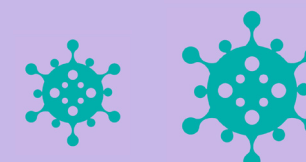
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

If you are experiencing domestic violence, we are here to support you. Contact us in confidence on **0208 795 5405** or the **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** on **0808 2000 246** or visit www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Update on our services

► 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 **0208 795 5405** or email us at agha@apnaghar.org.uk
► Apna Ghar's repairs and maintenance service is carrying out works as normal, but we may need to reschedule if you have covid symptoms or if you're self isolating. If your home is owned by another landlord, they will tell you about their arrangements.

► Gas safety checks are being carried out as normal throughout the pandemic. Please give our contractors access, or make a more convenient appointment.
► Our grounds maintenance and cleaning services are running normally – with extra sanitising and deep cleans when needed.



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Our Top UC Tips ...

If you're looking to claim UC (Universal Credit) or moving from Housing Benefit or already claiming UC, have a look at our top tips:

Tip 1: Claim as soon as you can. UC is not backdated and is only paid from the date you claim. If you don't claim straight away, you could lose money and be liable to pay any missed rent yourself.

Tip 2: Think Monthly: UC payments are calculated monthly; you will receive one single payment a month, so you may need to budget to avoid falling short in the middle of the month. Contact us for a Budgeting Form.

Tip 3: Think about your Bank Account: Is your bank account overdrawn? If it is your UC payment will be swallowed up immediately when it arrives, leaving you short to pay your rent. Consider opening a separate basic bank account just for your UC payment. If you are vulnerable or already in arrears – you can request for your UC payment to be paid directly to AGHA Housing, contact us to arrange this.

Tip 4: You need to make a separate claim for Council Tax reduction directly to your local Council at the same time you apply for UC. If your claiming UC and your circumstances change, claim your Council Tax support straight away.

Tip 5: Don't get more than 8 weeks in arrears with your rent: recovery costs are usually non negotiable with UC. Recovery will start at 20% until your rent debt is fully repaid, so avoid falling into 8 weeks of arrears.

Tip 6: Your dedicated DWP Work Coach – make the best use of your Work Coach. They can help you gain skills/training and to find a job. Hours spent with your work coach will count towards your Claimant Commitment Hours.

Tip 7: Your UC Portal - Use your UC Portal to make enquiries and to contact UC. Take a screen shot if you want to send us proof of any queries you've raised or responses you've got back from UC.

Tip 8: Non-dependent deductions (e.g., for children over 18 years living with you) are very high under UC – **they are £75.53 for the first non-dependent and for the second/any subsequent non-dependent.** This may leave you short with your rent. Therefore, it's up to you to ensure your household members are all contributing or helping you to pay your rent. Remember, as the tenant - the rent is your responsibility.

Tip 9: Don't forget April - Your rent will usually change every April, make sure you update your new rent on your UC Portal, or you could fall into arrears.

Tip 10: If you're in rent arrears please screenshot your online journal messages to UC and any replies you get and send this to us via email to keep us updated.

Tip 11: Contact us if you need help with your UC payments.

UC Universal Credit

Stay Safe, Always ask for ID

All the contractors we use to carry out repairs to your home should be wearing a uniform and/ or carrying ID from the company they work for.

Do not let anyone into your home or block if they have no ID, or they not willing to show it.

If in doubt, call the Office.



Want to make changes to your home?

If you intend to make changes or alterations to your home, under your tenancy agreement you must ask for written permission from us. **Never make any changes or alterations without obtaining our written permission first**, this includes removing any fixtures, fittings (including ceiling lights), doors, walls, erecting sheds, outbuildings or any type of extension.

Speak to a member of our staff before you make any changes or email agha@apnagar.org.uk.



Are you a Poet?

Do you write as a way to relax? We'd love to hear from you if you have a poem to share.



You can either send us an existing poem or write a new one. Your poem could be about how you've coped with lockdown, acts of kindness from anyone in your local community or even just your personal reflections about the last year. Send us your poem to agha@apnagar.org.uk, maximum of 500 words and your poem could be featured in our next newsletter. Good luck, you might be a poet and you don't even know it!

Deadline for entries is 31st August 2021.

Lost your keys?

AGHA do not have spare keys for your home.

If you lose your keys or lock yourself out you will need to arrange for a locksmith to change the locks at your own expense. Please do not call the emergency contractors. If you do, you will be re-charged for the call out fee.



Our New Kickstart Employee

Meet Noah Hilditch, kickstart Programme Trainee who started in June and is completing a 6-month paid Kickstart job here at AGHA.

The kickstart scheme is a government funded programme which provides jobs for 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment. We are very happy to welcome Noah and to participate in this programme with Clarion Housing Group who are the lead consortium Partner providing 800 new 'Kickstart' jobs.



KICKSTART
SCHEME

gov.uk/kickstart

