

Help to save the planet

Repair, re-use and win £100!

Do you ever feel that household items from bygone eras used to be made to last – unlike things made today? So do we!

What's the oldest appliance you own that you still use?

Do you have an item that is very old but still in great working order? It could be a TV, an iron, or even a toaster! It could be



something handed down by generations of your family, or it could be something you bought yourself, treasured and used reliably.

Let us know what the item is and

send us a photo. You can email agha@apnagar.org.uk or write to us (see back page). The person with the oldest working item will receive a £100 prize from us!

Coffee morning with the AGHA Team

Over the next few months, we are planning to hold coffee mornings for residents at our offices and at local neighbourhood venues.

We want to say hello to residents in person and find out how you are. Please call us to reserve your place now, so we know how many residents to expect.

Each coffee session will last for approximately one to two hours and will usually be on the last Saturday of the month. Coffee and biscuits will be on us!

Coffee session dates

We will meet from 10am to noon on the following dates:

- Saturday 26 March 2022
- Saturday 23 April 2022
- Saturday 28 May 2022, and
- Saturday 25 June 2022.

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What's happening to energy prices?

On 1 April 2022, energy prices are set to rise by 54%. Unless you have a fixed-price deal, your charges will rise by half.

In October 2022, energy prices are expected to rise another 20%.

Energy prices are not expected to fall until April 2023.

These prices are similar across the whole energy sector. This means that you are unlikely to get a better price by switching supplier or by opting to take up a new fixed-price deal.



Government help

The Government has announced two plans to help you pay your energy bills this year.

1. Council Tax rebate

If your Council Tax is in bands A to D, your annual bill in April 2022 will include a £150 rebate. This is to help you pay for higher energy over the coming months.

This rebate will not apply if your household does not have to pay council tax. But, if your income is low, you may be able to make a claim from the Council instead.

2. Energy bills rebate

In October 2022, everyone gets £200 (or a credit note) taken off their electricity bill. If you are on prepay, you will get this through your smart meter, or you will be sent a voucher or cheque instead.

However, from April 2023, every electricity bill will include a new £40 annual charge. This will be added for five years.

Winter fuel schemes

Winter Fuel Payments If you were born by 26 September 1955 and you get a state pension or benefits, you will get a Winter Fuel Payment of £100-300. For queries, call the helpline on 0800 731 0160.

Warm Home Discount People on low incomes may get a £150 Warm Home Discount taken off their electricity bill. Funds are limited this winter, but more households will qualify in future. Call the helpline on 0800 731 0214.

Cold Weather Payments When the temperature stays below 0C for seven days during November to March, people on Pension Credit, Universal Credit, and other benefits for jobseekers, get £25 each week towards their higher costs.

Help with energy bills

For advice go to www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households

If you are getting behind with

payments, contact your provider to agree a plan you can afford.

Use the online grants search at: grants-search.turn2us.org.uk, to find social tariffs from providers and grants from charities.

Meet Cristiana and Richard



Apna Ghar has recruited two new staff members.

Cristiana Monteiro joined us in September 2021 and Richard Bynoe joined us this January. Both are Customer Service Advisors.

You can say hello to them in person at one of our coffee mornings, so please come along.

Tackling damp, mould and condensation

Damp and mould can be bad for your health, especially if you have underlying health conditions. We take all cases of damp and mould seriously and are here to help.

Sometimes, you can fix these problems by making simple changes to the way you live. But sometimes, they can be caused by a problem with the building. We can advise you and help to put things right.

Bathrooms, toilets, and wet rooms often have damp or mould, but you may also see signs elsewhere – for example, in your bedroom or around your windows, where hot air hits cold spots, or behind furniture, where the air cannot fully circulate.

You can prevent serious problems developing by tackling damp or mould early, and wiping away any mildew or light mould safely. Damp or mould left untreated will only get worse over time.

No-one should live with damp and mould, so if you report this to us, we will visit to carry out an inspection, give you advice about what to do and organise any follow-up works needed. Call us today to book your home visit or for further information and advice.

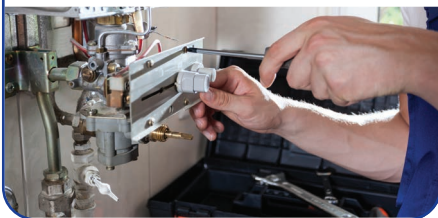
Heating, hot water and boiler faults

We all need to stay safe, well and warm, and use our heating efficiently.

If your home is owned by Apna Ghar, you can call K&T Heating on 020 8269 4507 to sort out any heating, hot water or boiler faults.

For any other plumbing problems – including radiators not working properly, toilet leaks, or faulty taps – please call Apna Ghar.

If your property is owned by another landlord, call them direct. (See the back page.)



Annual rent changes

Your rent will increase from Monday 4 April 2022.

We have sent a letter with details to all our residents. Please follow the instructions, to avoid falling behind with your rent.



Where is your water stopcock?

Your water stopcock is the control tap for your mains water – please make sure you know where it is.

Stopcocks are used to switch off the mains water supply to your home when a plumber calls, or if you have a leak or broken tap. In an emergency, this can prevent serious damage.

A stopcock has a tap head and connects two lengths of pipe. It is usually under the kitchen sink, in the bathroom, or in a cupboard. Sometimes, stopcocks are in a communal cupboard. If you can't find yours, ask your neighbour.

Test your stopcock carefully, at least twice a year, to check it hasn't seized up. You can loosen it with WD40 or a similar product if necessary.

Please call Apna Ghar if you need further advice.



Advice if you are on a low income

Are you getting the right benefits?

Check which benefits you can claim, by using the calculator at: benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk

Find out more details about a particular benefit and how to claim it, by using the A-Z list at: www.turn2us.org.uk/Your-Situation#A-Z

There is really useful information on this website about **Universal Credit** and **Housing Benefit**.

Hardship support from the Council

Find these schemes on your Council's website.

Council Tax Support reduces the amount of Council Tax you pay.

Discretionary Housing Payments are temporary rent top-ups for people who get Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit.

Hardship schemes (fund names vary) typically offer grants or referrals if you cannot afford basic essentials.

Help with water bills

Thames Water has two social tariffs for water.

- **WaterHelp** cuts water bills in half for households on very low incomes.
- **WaterSure** caps bills people on benefits, who are on a water meter and use a lot of water because they either have three or more children under 19, OR include a household member with certain medical conditions.

Download the forms for both schemes at: www.thameswater.co.uk/help/account-and-billing/financial-support/waterhelp

Social tariffs for Broadband

These providers/schemes offer social tariffs for people on benefits: BT Home Essentials; G Network Essential Fibre Optic; Community Fibre; Virgin Media Essential Broadband; Hyperoptic Fair Fibre.

Contact details

Apna Ghar Housing Association
21 Westmoreland Road, London NW9 9BW

Phone: 020 8795 5405

Email: agha@apnaghar.org.uk

Web: agha.org.uk



Report a repair: office hours

- If you live at Emily Duncan Place, call One Housing Group on **0300 123 99 66** (weekdays, 8am to 6pm).

All other homes:

- Call Apna Ghar on **020 8795 5405** (weekdays, 9am to 5pm) for all non-gas repairs.
- For gas boiler and heating repairs, call K&T Heating on **020 8269 4507**.

Report an emergency: outside office hours

Call the landlord that owns your home (see below).

Apna Ghar	020 8795 5405 or 01772 666 029 (from 5pm)
PA Housing	0300 123 2221 (from 5pm)
Notting Hill Genesis	033 3000 3000 (from 6pm)
Guinness Partnership	0303 123 1890 (from 5pm)
Islington & Shoreditch HA	020 7704 7300 (from 5pm)
L&Q	0300 456 9996 (from 6pm)
Metropolitan Thames Valley	020 3535 3535 (from 6pm)
Network Stadium HA	0300 373 3000 (from 5pm)
Octavia Housing	020 8354 5500 (from 5pm)
One Housing Group	0300 123 9966 (from 5pm)
Peabody Trust	0800 022 4040 (from 5pm)
Sanctuary Housing	0800 131 3348 or 0300 123 3511 (from 5pm)

Fire safety: smoke alarms

We fit smoke alarms on each floor of your home, to keep your family safe. Smoke alarms can give vital early warning in a fire.

You are responsible for testing your alarm weekly and replacing any batteries as needed. Tell us immediately if an alarm is not working, so that we can get it repaired.

