

Meet the team for coffee

We've been holding monthly coffee mornings at our head office since March. Why not join us?

We welcome these informal chats to find out how you are and what you need from us. We can also ask for your feedback on the services we provide.

We will hold our next coffee mornings at our offices from 10am to noon on:

- Saturday 28 July
- Saturday 28 August
- Saturday 24 September
- Saturday 29 October
- Saturday 26 November



Call us to reserve a place, so that we know how many residents we can expect.

Rent rise

Update your claim

In line with Government guidelines, we raised your rent by 4.1% in April. This reflects the inflation rate last September.

If you claim benefits, you must add your rent increase to your online Universal Credit account, or pass on the details to your Benefit office, if you get Housing Benefit.

If you delay, you could lose part of the benefit you rely on to pay your rent.

Ms Gulati is a winner

Ms Gulati from Willesden is the winner of our £100 repair and re-use prize – as advertised last issue.

We asked you to tell us about the oldest appliance, in working condition, that you are still using.



We wanted to celebrate looking after items, instead of adding to landfill.

Ms Gulati is proud of her sewing machine, which is an impressive 46 years old.

Contents

Help with the cost-of-living crisis	2
Summer health and safety	3
Help to sort out debts	3
Tips on how to manage damp and mould	3
Win £100 in our summer gardening competition	3
No dumping	3
Advice if you want to move	4

Help with the cost-of-living crisis

In April, to help people pay their rapidly rising energy bills, the Government announced a wider package of support.

There will now be four extra grants during 2022-23 – paying some households up to £1,500 in total. These amounts will not count towards the benefits cap and you will not pay more tax.

Support for everyone

If you have your own electricity meter (your supply is not communal), you will get a £400 grant this winter. This does not have to be repaid. The money will come off your electricity bills between October 2022 and March 2023, or it will be added to your pre-payment meter (you may get vouchers instead).

Pensioners

You will get an extra £300 on top of your normal Winter Fuel Payment of £100-300. This will be paid in November or December 2022.

People on benefits

You will also get £650 if you claim any of the following:

- Universal Credit
- Child Tax, Working Tax or Pension Credits
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support allowance, or
- Income Support.



The money will be paid in two amounts. You will get the first payment this July and the second in the autumn. The money will be added to the account you get your benefits paid into.

People with disabilities

You will get an additional £150 in September if you claim:

- Attendance, Constant Attendance, or Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement, or
- Scottish disability benefits.

Dealing with your energy provider

If your monthly payments have recently risen by a lot more than half, you should check why.

Very large rises may be correct if:

- your cheap fixed deal ended
- you recently opted for an expensive fixed deal, or
- your provider expects your usage to rise.

However, if you are in credit, you should contact your provider to challenge the rise. They may be over-estimating your likely usage. You may be able to get your monthly payments reduced.



Summer health and safety

The landlord that owns your home carries out regular health and safety checks to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards at your scheme. However, we also rely on you to play your part.

Using your home

You must give access to staff and contractors, so that they can service and check your gas boiler and fittings every year. You may also need to give access for an electrical or other check at other times.

You must not store items that could catch fire on your balcony or use your balcony for a barbecue.

We do not allow you to put up grilles or gates in front of doors or windows.

Outside your home

You must not keep any personal belongings in the corridors, stairways or other shared areas at your scheme. These could cause a fire or make it harder for people to escape in an emergency.

Smoking is not allowed in any shared areas.

Thank you for helping to keep everyone safe.

Help to sort out debts

If you have a debt problem, it's important not to panic – but don't ignore it either.

Contact us, so that we can support you by referring you to debt specialists.

The organisations listed below also offer free help.

- Citizens Advice Bureau at www.adviceguide.org.uk, or phone 0800 144 8848.
- The Money Advice Service at www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk or phone 0800 138 7777.
- National Debtline at www.nationaldebtline.org, or phone 0808 808 4000.
- StepChange Debt Charity at www.stepchange.org, or phone 0800 138 1111.

Win £100 in our summer gardening competition!

We will be awarding £100 prizes for the best rear or front garden, or balcony garden, this summer.

To take part, simply email us a great photo of your garden to agha@apnagar.org.uk

The closing date for entries is Wednesday 14 September.



Tips on how to manage damp and mould

Mould develops in damp atmospheres. You will usually find it where there are poor air flow and cold spots.

The corners of rooms, under and around windows, behind furniture and on the grouting of bathroom tiles, are all common places.

As a tenant, you are responsible for managing mould in the first instance.

Keep mould to a minimum by airing rooms, avoiding creating steam and condensation, and always wiping up any water.

You should clean down mould with a fungicidal wash and redecorate with fungicidal paint.

If you have damp or mould, call us to book home visit, so that we inspect the problem and help and advice.



No dumping

If you have bulky items to dispose of, please don't dump them on your estate or in the bin rooms. Tenants who do this will be recharged. We may also consider this a breach of your tenancy agreement.

Let us know if you have arranged a council collection, so we know it is being dealt with.

Advice if you want to move



If you want to move, contact us, so that we can tell you about your options. But be aware that we won't normally help you to move if you owe us rent or if we are taking legal action against you.

Swapping your home

Your best option is to swap your home with another social housing tenant. You can do this if you:

- have an assured tenancy, or
- you are an assured shorthold tenant with a fixed-term agreement, and
- you have the written permission of both landlords before you make your move.

If one of you has a fixed-term agreement, the swap partner only takes on what remains of the tenancy. Your homes must be suitable for each swap partner.

To advertise your home and find a swap partner anywhere in the UK, you can sign up to an online scheme called HomeSwapper. This service is free for our tenants. Go to www.homeswapper.co.uk

Getting a transfer

We cannot usually offer a transfer to another Apna Ghar property, because we only own a small number of homes and many are for people with disabilities.

For a local move to social housing with another landlord, you should add your household to your council's housing register. However, even with a strong reason to move, you might not get a home.

The Mayor of London's Housing Moves scheme (www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/council-and-social-housing/housing-moves) helps people move to another London borough. However, from July 2022, the scheme is only accepting new applications from victims/survivors of domestic abuse and former rough sleepers.

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)
Notting Hill Genesis	033 3000 3000 (from 6pm)
Guinness Partnership	0303 123 1890 (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)

Homes for older people

We own no sheltered schemes, but we can help you access this sort of housing with another landlord.

If you are aged 55 or over (or your partner is), you can register for the Mayor of London's Seaside & Country Homes scheme for a move outside London. Go to www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/renting/seaside-country-homes

Homes for grown-up children

Call us for advice if your children are ready to live independently, so that we can talk through their and your options.