

Winter 2019

Edition 8

doorstep

customer magazine



Paragon Asra

PA Housing



Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of **doorstep**. As you know we recently changed the way that we deliver our services to you. #TeamPurple was set up to give you a more direct connection with us. Every neighbourhood now has its own Neighbourhood Coordinator (NC) and we hope you've had the opportunity to meet and talk to them. If not, there's sure to be a chance soon as our Neighbourhoods on Tour team will be out and about across all of our areas. You can read more about that inside.

There's also some examples of how the NCs have been making a difference to our customers. And you can find out all about a day in their life as they work on speeding up response times and helping us to get it right first time when we carry out maintenance and repairs in your homes.

The Leicester-based Service 24 team handle

out of hours and emergency calls, not just for our customers but also several other housing associations. They recently gained a nationally recognised service standard for their work.

Our services aren't all to do with bricks and mortar. We'll tell you about how being an involved customer is helping two of our residents to overcome their mental health challenges.

We don't just look after our adult customers as you'll see. We have a number of projects aimed at younger people that help them develop positive behaviours and useful life skills. And we've helped a few into the world of employment by offering work experience in many departments in our offices.

This time of year can often bring increased risk of fires because of candles and fairy lights so you'll also find some advice to

help you stay safe. Read it and take notice - it might just save your life!

And why not brighten up the long, dreary winter nights planning your entry for next year's PA Housing in Bloom contest. Classes start for the smallest plots - you can even enter a windowbox!

Meanwhile, whatever you celebrate we hope you have a great festive season and we wish you all well for 2020.

Simon Hatchman
Executive Director - Resources



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The cost to print this magazine is 22p per household

Coming to a Neighbourhood near you

Since the launch of our new Housing Services model in the spring we have been visiting many of our neighbourhoods to get to know you and to let you know more about us and what we can do for you. Called Neighbourhoods on Tour, the scheme takes staff and working partners out to a site for a half day to meet you directly and talk to you about what we can improve.

Customers are at the heart of everything we do, and therefore it is really important that well organised Neighbourhoods on Tour events ensure that we are there in person to answer and, hopefully, resolve any issues you may have on the day. The visits also help you to put a face to the name of your Neighbourhood Coordinators.

See the next page for planned events in the new year. If you

forget the dates, don't worry. The team are easy to spot. Watch out for their purple gazebo and go and have a chat.

Housing Operations Officer Deana Clarke is responsible for organising the Neighbourhoods on Tour events. She said: "I can honestly say that I am enjoying everyday of my role. I have met some great people who want to move forward with PA Housing ensuring we are making our Neighbourhoods a great place to live."



We've had several successes already. Here are just a few.

- During one Neighbourhoods Tour a resident said he was having trouble opening and closing his front door, so we arranged for our contractors Fortem to fix it.
- At another tour a resident attended Neighbourhoods on Tour to report a leaking toilet. The Neighbourhood Coordinator arranged for an emergency call out within 24 hours for the leak to be stopped and put right.
- On one estate a few unsightly gardens were letting the area down, so Neighbourhoods on Tour helped residents to tidy them up and showed them how to keep them neat. They even involved local teens who were on their school holiday.
- In a different neighbourhood a resident said she was having issues with her back door but wasn't sure how to report it. We raised a repair and showed her how to report any future issues. The door is now fixed.
- A Neighbourhood Coordinator spotted fly tipping during a Tour and called in our estates team to sort it out. They cleared up the unsightly mess and also cleaned off some graffiti to improve the estate.



We've already arranged some visits for the new year.

Don't worry if your neighbourhood isn't on the list yet. Keep an eye out on our website and our social media - we'll be with you soon!

Address	Date	Time	Where
Corfe Close, Hounslow	8 January 2020	2-6pm	Look out for the purple gazebo
West Molesey, Grovelands	15 January 2020	2-6pm	On the green opposite block 47-53
Beagle Court, 1A Long Walk	22 January 2020	2-6pm	In the car park
Plumstead, Greenwich	22 January 2020	2-6pm	Look out for the purple gazebo
Walton on Thames, Nelson Close and surrounding roads	29 January 2020	2-6pm	Central green in the middle of Nelson Close
Addlestone, Franklands Park (Strawberry Fields)	5 February 2020	2-6pm	Green in front of Bleriot Avenue houses



Fire safety at home

Fire in the home is always a frightening, distressing and potentially fatal experience. It's important to know the risks so you can take care to avoid them.

Latest figures from the Home Office show fire and rescue services attended 182,825 fires in England last year, of which 29,570 were in houses and apartments. There were 253 deaths as a result of fires.

We install detection systems designed to suit all our different properties and to cater for everyone. If you have particular needs, such as being unable to hear alarms or having mobility challenges, we will work with you to devise a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) if possible.

Our specially trained advisors carry out regular fire risk assessments to ensure our preventive

and protective measures are the best they can be. We update our provision and policies in line with the latest advice from the government and emergency services.

Fire and Safety Advisor Michael Wright said: "We want you to be happy and safe at home, so PA Housing does all it can to protect you and your property from fire. You can be sure that prevention and

protection measures we provide meet the highest standards, but there are also many things you can do to look after yourself."

Cooking appliances

Around half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents. Follow some simple rules to stay safe. Take care if you're wearing loose clothing – they can easily catch fire. Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob. Don't leave children on their own in the kitchen. If you have to go to another room, turn off the heat and move the pan to a cool ring. When you're done, make sure you switch off the cooker.

Take extra care when frying. Never leave a chip pan unattended. If the oil starts to smoke, turn off the heat and leave it to cool. If your chip pan catches fire, don't throw water on it. Don't take risks: turn off the heat if it's safe to do so, leave the kitchen, close the door behind you, and call 999.



Electrics

Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause around 6,000 fires in the home across the country every year. Don't ever plug in too many appliances to the same socket. Try to keep one plug to one socket. Certain appliances, such as washing machines, must have a single plug to themselves, as they are high powered.

Smoke alarms

Your home should have at least one smoke alarm and you should check it regularly. You're four times more likely to die in a fire if you don't have a smoke alarm that works. There are several different kinds, but most have an obvious test button. If your alarm doesn't work when you test it, let us know. A working smoke alarm could save your life.



Emollient creams

If you need to use these extra-strong moisturisers for skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis or bed sores it is particularly important that you take care. Residue from the creams can build up in furniture, clothes and bedding and make them highly flammable. Keep well away from fires or any kind of naked flame.



Candles

Two fires a day are started by candles. Keep them away from flammable materials like curtains. Put candles out when you leave the room, and make sure they're put out completely at night. Keep pets away, and don't leave children alone with lit candles.



Stay safe

Your priority if there is a fire is to stay safe. If you can smell smoke, hear or see a fire, or feel its heat, leave the building immediately if you can. Shut doors behind you and call 999 as soon as you are safe. If you cannot leave or think it would be unsafe, call 999.



Smoking

Every six days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette. Stub cigarettes out properly and dispose of them carefully. Put them out. Right out! Use a proper ashtray – never a wastepaper basket. Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.

Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, taking prescription drugs, or if you've been drinking. Never smoke in bed. You might fall asleep and set your bed or sofa on fire.

A view on Extra Care Albany House



Albany House is an Extra Care scheme for residents aged over 55, with 72 self contained flats. As well as communal areas, the scheme hosts its own café, gardens and a hair salon.

“We’re all ‘people’ people here,” says Gemma Davis, Scheme Manager. “I’ve got a really supportive team on the ground and a great manager.”

“Every day is different. We support all key areas of the business by helping with lettings and sign ups, monitoring rent accounts, managing and finding resolutions to antisocial behaviour, reporting repairs, assisting customers to manage their tenancies, monitoring hoarding cases and signposting to other professional agencies when more help is needed.”

“Our role is totally customer focused though; we provide immediate support to customers at all hours of the day.”

“You never get a quiet day! We deal with repairs, we respond to pull cords, we deal with fire alarms, but we also do activities like film nights and bingo,” said Scheme Officer Terrie Wealthall.

“Simple things like taking the time to listen and have a chat can make all the difference to someone’s day. We always try to go the extra mile to support customers – we want to make sure their voice is heard and decisions are made in their best interest.”

Kerry Roberts, Scheme Officer

For customers with varying levels of need, the staff have to be flexible and responsive.

“When a situation comes up and you feel like you’ve made a real difference to somebody – that makes it all worthwhile.”

“One of the nice things about Albany House is that



the customers look out for each other and many new friendships have been made. The tenants are settled and content in their routines – there’s a real sense of community spirit.”

Keen to meet some of the customers that the team had spoken of so highly, I ventured into the communal areas, where I met Hilda, aged 101.

“I had my party in here for my 100th. All the family were here. I don’t think I’ll do much for my 102nd – maybe go to Wetherspoons with my daughter. We go once a week.”

“I like living here – it’s about the best place I’ve ever moved! There’s security, there’s always someone here if you need them. We’ve got a café, a hairdressers, what more could you want?”

Hilda was then joined by Carol and Pauline, two more Albany House residents.

“I like it here – I like the people, everyone’s nice and helpful, and they’re all sociable. We do bingo and everything,” said Pauline.

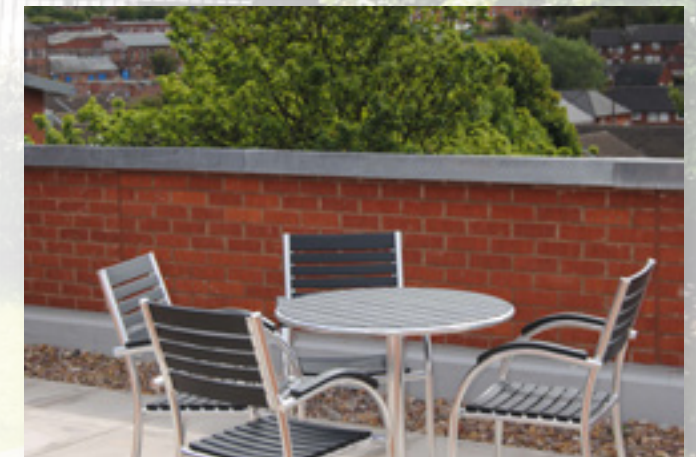
“I like Anjan’s cooking – it’s great in the café. And Carol does a stew, she puts it in the slow cooker for us.”

“I do stews sometimes,” agrees Carol. “I also made all the cushions in here. I did the flowers, I do the bingo and get all the prizes for it, I do pizza on a Friday night for film night and I do afternoon tea on a Monday as well! I’m always on the go. I’m not the sort of person to sit around.”

“It’s like living in a hotel here, and the staff are brilliant. We all get on well.”

Before leaving, we pay a visit to the café, where we meet Head Chef Anjan. Come rain or shine, Anjan is busy preparing meals for the residents of Albany House (as well as others – the café is open to the general public). He has even been known to come in on Christmas Day to cook a festive feast!

“I enjoy it, I find it rewarding. It’s a good feeling that I’ve done something for people that might not have that experience otherwise.”



A day in the life of a Neighbourhood Coordinator

We spent a day with Jo, one of our Neighbourhood Coordinators in Leicester, to see what she gets up to in a typical day.

9.00

Arrive in my neighbourhood and sort through emails and customer inquiries. I look after 857 properties and am the on the doorstep point of contact for our customers. I plan my day but need to be able to respond to any urgent issues, so every day is different and time management is key. We work closely with other teams – I might need to refer customers to one of our specialist teams, for example Tenancy Solutions, or our Home Moves team. A big part of the role is getting to know the customer, and building a rapport so I understand what support or advice they might need.

10.15

I visit a vulnerable customer as their neighbour lets me know that he's in hospital. I wanted to check on him but he's not in, so I email his support worker. We often have close working partnerships with other agencies and providers like this.

I notice one of the gates at the front of the block is broken, so I raise a repair.

11.15

My next visit is to a customer who is a hoarder. We worked with him to clear his garden last month, but my colleagues in Tenancy Solutions are now working with him to clear the property. This is a sensitive process and can take a long time. I continue to check in with the customer and make sure everything is ok.

He's not in but an inspection of his garden shows signs of hoarding again. I've flagged this on our system and will let Tenancy Solutions know.



15.15

I carry out an inspection of 43 properties in a block in the city centre. I walk around the communal areas looking for signs of flytipping, antisocial behaviour or any repairs. We do our neighbourhood inspections on our phones using a tool called Photobook.

The block is over three storeys, so I do an inspection here every month. For blocks under three storeys, inspections are quarterly.

I find a flytipped trolley and sticker it with a PA aware sticker. The sticker gives someone the opportunity to remove it and lets everyone else know that we are taking action. There is also some graffiti by the front door, which I report.

I'm pleased with the rest of the block – it looks clean and no repairs are needed. The last time I came, one of the fire doors needed repairing, but this has been done now which is great to see.

12.00

The next two visits are 'door knocks'. The first one is a customer with mental health issues – I want to do a welfare check and obtain his GP and next-of-kin details. The customer answered the door and seemed really pleased to see me – it was a really positive meeting and made me feel really proud to represent social housing and PA.

14.00

We need to do a potential tenancy audit; the property is in a nice area which has improved a lot in the last few months – we've worked closely with Estates and made a real difference with issues like flytipping, and grounds maintenance.

Nobody answered, so I left a card. But I realised that some work needs doing to some surrounding landscaping, so I took pictures and sent them through to Estates, as this is a key part of my role.

16:00

I head to a local café for a well deserved cup of coffee and to finish off any admin, as well as check where I need to be in the morning for another day out in my Neighbourhood!

17:30

I head off to speak to my newly formed Resident Group to help them plan some activities for over the festive period.

I really enjoy my role as an NC and find it so rewarding being out spending time with customers and helping to solve problems within my neighbourhood. Each day is different which is why it's so brilliant being a Neighbourhood Coordinator at PA Housing.

Something for the kids

Our young residents are as important to us as the rest of our customers so we support a number of projects for babies and teens. These 2 based in Walton on Thames are typical of activities across our areas.

Eikon Youth Club

This weekly session is held at the Cromwell Centre on St John's Drive in Walton on Thames and supports 8 - 13 year olds who want to be involved in a range of activities. It promotes wellbeing, goals and resilience and provides a safe place to go to develop their social, emotional and practical life skills. Outdoor activities are offered in the summer, but in the colder months leisure interests such as art and craft based workshops and cooking are available. The scheme is supported by PA Housing, Elmbridge Borough Council and Walton Charity.

The young people have taken ownership of Hedgehog Street - a community green space revived with support from Walton Community Allotment volunteers - to grow strawberries and potatoes. The site also has bug hotels, raised beds and wooden hedgehog sculptures. The project won the children's category in the 2019 PA Housing in Bloom gardening competition.

KT One Two Football

This is a community project based at Walton Oak School that provides opportunities to participate in regular extracurricular sporting activity, resulting in a range of benefits that impact on their behaviours and skills. Sessions incorporate football skills and drills, match competitions, and advice on healthy eating and wellbeing.

The sessions, delivered by Elite Sporting Provision, have now run successfully for more than two years across Surrey with around 50-60 young people per week taking part. The project has had a huge impact on the community - becoming well known and trusted by the families - and plays a key role in developing confidence, self-esteem, value and purpose in the young people taking part.

Eden Park

Eden Park in Corby caters for young single parents and their children. We arrange activities to provide holistic parenting support, such as baby massage, yoga, messy play, and excursions in order to encourage confident parents and bonding. We also offer The Freedom Programme, which provides a supportive, safe and friendly environment to look at domestic abuse. Some Eden Park residents are there as a result of domestic abuse and this programme helps them to deal with the after effects and to avoid abusive relationships in the future.



Recognition for resident volunteer

Diana Charman has been a PA Housing resident for many years and takes an active part in her local area to promote community and wellbeing. She has supported projects that deal with issues around the neighbourhood where she lives in Hampton and her achievements were acknowledged when she was highly commended in the Woman of the Year category at this year's Women in Housing Awards.

Working with local people and our resident involvement and neighbourhood teams, Diana has been one of the key people behind reviving the flagging

residents' committee and improving the estate. She has helped to tackle ways to promote community involvement, open up the community hub, and address antisocial behaviour.

She has worked hard with her neighbours and the residents' association to keep an allotment going, following PA Housing's and Fortem's revival of the space. The hub space and allotment activities have created new friendships and tackled social isolation, improving mental health and general wellbeing.

She helps other people without expecting anything in return, whether it is to befriend

isolated older people, making food for events, donations for people who move in and have nothing, comfort for those going through personal issues, or even looking after someone's cats.

Award organisers Inside Housing explained their criteria: "This award will recognise someone who is an inspiration to others. We are looking for someone who has demonstrated real leadership, and a personal commitment to supporting other women in their personal and professional development."

Her neighbours wholeheartedly support Diana's recognition. Steve

Cunningham said: "This lady is a diamond. Diana gets involved with the residents' association, including the allotment area, taking on tasks with a good and friendly nature. During the time I have been involved with the residents' association Diana is ever present supporting me as we attempt to build a stronger community."

And Michelle Araujo said: "Diana is more than a neighbour, she's a friend too and has so kindly helped many people in the estate including myself. She's very active in trying to make the area a better place to us all."

Stay warm this winter

Staying warm is important for your health and wellbeing. Here are some tips to help you beat the cold this winter.

Wrap up warm

Make sure you wear warm clothing. Clothes made from natural fibres like wool and cotton, or special fleecy fabrics are best. Even if you're indoors wear socks or slippers to stop your feet getting cold.



Eat, drink and be warm

Regular hot drinks and foods like porridge, soup and stews will help you to maintain body heat.



Don't drink alcohol

You might feel as if a little tot of something makes you warm at first, but alcohol expands blood vessels near your skin, drawing heat away from your vital organs and making you feel colder in the long run.

Beware of draughts

Close your doors, and if necessary use keyhole covers and letterbox covers to block draughts. You can also get thermal linings for curtains to help maintain the temperature.

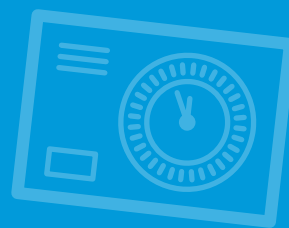


Heat your home, not your furniture

It might seem as if sitting very close to a radiator keeps you warm, but allowing the air to circulate is much better. Move beds, chairs and settees away from heaters.

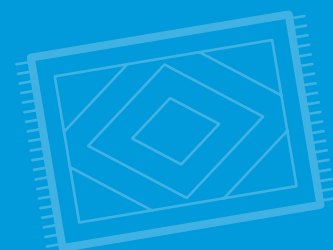
Use your timer

Having your heating on all day is costly and actually not effective. Use your timer to heat rooms only when you need them.



Think about furnishings

Use rugs to cover floorboards to reduce heat loss and make use of warm throws on chairs and sofas.



Use the support you can get

Do you know what cold weather benefits you're entitled to? Check gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment or call 0345 915 1515 to see if you're eligible for winter fuel and cold weather payments.

Success at Eden Park

PA Housing's Eden Park, which provides housing and support to vulnerable teenage parents, has won a prestigious award for its outstanding contribution to the Northamptonshire community.

The Corby-based scheme scooped the Edge Award at the 2019 Northamptonshire Community Foundation (NCF) Annual Awards, held at Royal & Derngate Theatre, Northampton, on Wednesday 6 November.

The Northampton Foundation, the independent grant-

making charity that organises the awards, revealed the judges had been "unanimous in their decision for the winner" of the Edge category.

The judges stated that:

"Eden Park provides a very much need service and support to young parents, to identify abusive relationships and to understand what should be 'normal'. It provides life skills, offering a vision and freedom for individuals. By working with a small number of clients, this group has much greater effect."

With 13 self-contained flats, Eden Park has made a huge difference to the lives of the parents and children it has housed and supported since it opened in 2005.

Many of the young families are referred to

the scheme via social services when their lives have reached crisis point, and the team at Eden Park have an excellent track record of spending up to two years supporting them to be ready to move into their own homes.

"We were nominated by the NCF. I think that makes it so much more special; someone took the time to think about us and feel we were worth nominating. Winning has allowed us to reflect on the work we do. Often, we just get on with it and we don't realise the impact we're making. It's a real confidence boost to say we're an award winning service. We are so proud."



Zoe Hall

Scheme Manager

Rent Increase

We do our best to keep our rents as low as possible but sometimes we need to increase them to keep pace with our costs, which generally increase in line with inflation. Since 2016, most of our tenants will have seen their rents (but not service charges) reduce by 1 per cent each year to meet government policy.

However, that policy has now changed and with effect from April 2020 we will be increasing our rents in line with the published Consumer Price Index ('CPI') level of inflation, plus 1 per cent.

The number is based on the CPI rate in September 2019, which was 1.7 per cent. This means that from April 2020 your rent will go up by 2.7 per cent. This will apply to tenants who are charged a social rent or affordable rent. We will contact you in February 2020 with details of your new rental charge, but we wanted to tell you about the increase now to give you the opportunity to plan your future household budget.

The extra income generated by this rent increase will be reinvested in our customer services.

Helping residents to help themselves

Mental health used to be a taboo subject but more and more people are now talking about its challenges, and finding that helps. Mental health issues mean different things to different people but PA Housing is doing what it can to support customers facing them. Many find that being involved in our activities has a positive effect. If you are facing any kind of mental health challenge please contact us or speak to a member of our staff and we can signpost you to the appropriate service.

Jane's story*

Over the last 20 years I have experienced mental health problems to varying degrees. It has not been an easy journey but it has made me who I am today. Social isolation makes my mental health worse, but by being an involved resident my own mental health has improved.

I have been a PA Housing tenant for over 8 years. One day I met the Resident Involvement Team who invited me to take part in a number of activities including the local forums. Although I couldn't take part in every aspect due to my mental health I found the team were very flexible and accommodating. It was refreshing to see, something that I have never forgotten. I saw first-hand that PA Housing do much more than provide homes. They help their residents rebuild and improve their lives in so many different ways. I found that by giving back to PA housing I rebuilt my self-confidence and self-worth, it made me feel that I was part of something bigger and allowed me to find my voice again.

Jane has since been involved in creating a pocket guide to mental health "Bridging the Gap", which is helping service users, carers and medical professionals in the Richmond Borough.

Carla's story*

Carla has been an involved resident for many years and it has helped her to deal with her very challenging past. She realised at an early age that she had been born the wrong gender. She tried various ways to cope, including cross dressing and gay relationships. She even married and had 4 children, but knowing she was not living the life she truly wanted she became angry, anxious and depressed. Eventually she requested gender realignment. She said: "Nobody has any idea about what it all did to my mind. Although I wanted to live as a woman it changed everything that I used to know about my life, my work, everything. But in spite of everything I've been through I am out the other side and I'm still standing." She admits that attending meetings as a PA Housing involved resident is still a challenge. "Before every one I am worried but as soon as I get there I realise it isn't so bad. I now feel I am getting somewhere - even if it is a slow process."

We've been listening!

You might have noticed some changes in this issue of doorstep. Not all of them are obvious, but they are all in response to your suggestions.



FSC
certification

Look out for the Forest Stewardship Council logo inside our front cover. It means the source of the paper has been independently certified as sustainable and produced in an environmentally friendly and socially responsible manner. The wood used in the papermaking process comes from well-managed forests that prioritise prevention of pollution, maintaining habitats of wildlife and indigenous peoples, and more trees are planted than harvested.



Reduced
print run

Thanks to your support we have been able to reduce our print run by 60% because so many more of you are reading this online! If you'd like to go paperless email commsandmarketing@pahousing.co.uk



Sustainability

If you prefer a paper copy you'll be pleased to know that our printer uses sustainable paper and the wrapper is made from recyclable plastic. But we're continuing to look for ways to make the magazine even more eco-friendly.



Carbon footprint

We are aware that there are carbon emissions as part of the production process. We use World Land Trust certified paper, which goes through 3 phases to ensure it is as carbon neutral as possible.

Measure: WLT actively assist in ensuring that organisations' emissions are accurately quantified.

Reduce: WLT advise and instruct organisations on how to reduce their emissions.

Offset: Through carbon balanced habitat conservation and restoration projects WLT helps to offset unavoidable emissions.



Saving money
for you

This isn't just more eco-friendly it's also helping to keep our costs low so we can avoid passing increases on to you.

Extra care step down flats

Step down is short term accommodation following discharge from acute medical services. It is a midway stage for people who are suitable for extra care but not yet ready to sign up for a permanent flat. Extra care accommodation is designed for people over 55 or those over 50 with an extra support need. Different levels of care are available according to what residents require.

Since February we have introduced 9 Step Down units at Visram House in Brent, London as a joint partnership with Brent Borough Council and Notting Hill Genesis. The focus is on enabling people to restore their level of independence by helping them to do things for themselves, rather than the traditional approach of doing things

for people that they cannot do for themselves.

Customers move in for a maximum of 6 weeks to help them achieve long term independence, which offers a better quality of life. They are supported by PA Housing staff and the care team, and gradually build up their independence.

We have a 90% success rate for customers moving from step down to extra care. Residents are successfully managing their tenancies and leading a more independent life. Such has been the success at Visram House that we have rolled out a step down bed at Chestnut House in Barnes, London in conjunction with Richmond and Wandsworth Borough Council and London Care.



Linda's story:

Linda was living in a council flat but had to leave it because she was prone to falls and needed regular hospital visits to treat her injuries.

She moved into a step down flat and was nervous at first, but soon found that staff at Visram House were welcoming, helpful and friendly. After her spell in step down she was offered an extra care flat and is now extremely happy. She now feels very secure because she has an intercom and also wears a pendant around her neck so she can call for help at any time.

She has settled into the Visram community and attends all in house activities such as yoga, chair based exercise and coffee mornings. She also enjoys bingo, takes a lead in calling the numbers and feels the best bit is handing out prizes to the winners. She said: "I am very happy here at Visram House and would recommend this building and its services to all my friends who are in need of extra care support."



Stock Investment Programme

We want our customers to live in comfortable and well-maintained homes so we carry out regular maintenance and improvements. We are aware that in the past we have not always carried out improvements as often as our customers may have liked but we now have contracts in place to ensure going forward our properties are kept in good condition.

Our stock investment team is responsible for planning and overseeing the improvements to your home. We carry out kitchen and bathroom replacements, install new doors and windows, and re-roof homes.

We are now well underway with all of our improvement programmes and you should already have been contacted if you are in this year's programme.

How do we decide what to do?

We have a dedicated team of Stock Condition Surveyors who visit our properties regularly. These visits are to ensure we have up to date information on the condition of our properties. Our surveyors spend about 30 minutes in your home checking each room and external areas. We combine their findings with information you have given us, and

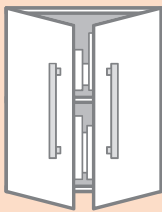
“The Service has been really good and the operatives are really nice. I’m very happy with my colours I chose for the kitchen and happy how it turned out” Mrs N.

what we’ve been told by our Repairs team and your Neighbourhood Coordinator, to give us a complete and up-to-date picture of the condition of your home. Using these findings we can decide which homes need to be included in our improvement programmes each year.

We’ll contact you when it’s your home’s turn to be inspected, so please help us keep our information up to date by letting our surveyors in. We complete about 2,000 surveys a year and we’ll be back in touch when your home needs improvements.

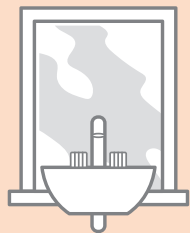
Our programme for this year includes:

736



new kitchens

524



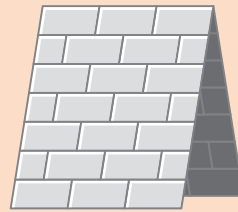
new bathrooms

892



window and door replacements

53



roof renewals

Standards accreditation for Service 24

Our brilliant Service 24 colleagues were presented with TSA accreditation at the International Technology Enabled Care Awards, which celebrate the positive impact technology can have on the lives of millions of people in the UK.

The TEC Services Association is the representative body for technology enabled care services, and its quality arm audits and certifies organisations against its standards framework. The accreditation means that PA Housing is now officially a TSA quality standard certified organisation.

Service 24 work tirelessly for our customers as well as looking after tenants on behalf of other housing providers. They are the first port of call for anyone experiencing an out of hours emergency, so their work is fast paced and high pressure. The accreditation is testament to their hard work and is truly a badge

of honour for the team and the organisation. They handle an average 337 calls a night. Here are a selection:

- A resident was worried about her neighbour and called Service 24. They asked the woman to stay with him until paramedics arrived, which she did. During the wait the man's condition worsened so she asked Service 24 to pass on information to the paramedics. She said: "What amazed me was that they could repeat almost word for word the very lengthy conversation I had had with her about his condition. That is a very rare skill, to be able to listen thoroughly and then repeat it back accurately. The standard of care from Service 24 is excellent, totally reliable and efficient and it is extremely comforting to be helped in such a highly professional and still compassionate way."

- When pensioner George pulled the lifeline in his flat and told Service 24 he had chest pains and was feeling dizzy, the operator called an ambulance and stayed on the line to reassure him until they arrived. He was taken to hospital and is now recovered.
- Service 24 called the fire service to a scheme in Nottingham when the alarm panel showed a fire in one of the flats and they could not get a reply from the occupant. There was no fire so the operator called a security firm to reset the panel.
- Operators called a nurse for Mr Jones when he called to say his medical catheter had detached.
- Mr Ayers called Service 24 when his carers failed to arrive to give him his regular medication. An

operator called the carers to ensure they were on their way then called Mr Ayers to reassure him.

- Pensioner Valerie's personal trigger activated but Service 24 was unable to reach her when they called back, so they called the ambulance service. Ambulance crew could not gain entrance and they called the fire service who broke in. Valerie was OK but had not heard anyone trying to reach her. The call was an accidental alarm.

Julie Hartshorn

Service 24 Manager



Customer experience

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do so we've set up a new Customer Experience Team to shine a light on how we can keep making improvements to the services we offer you.

The team is looking forward to being the catalyst for the business to continue to raise customer satisfaction. They will do this by listening to customers, stakeholders and colleagues, then analysing the information and using it to guide investment in ways to enhance your customer experience.

The team will focus on:

- Learning more about our customers so we can identify what matters to you and offer services you want
- Effective interpretation and analysis of data to identify new opportunities, improve efficiencies and offer value for money
- Ensuring your voice is listened to and heard in our decisions
 - Increasing our community investment opportunities across the whole of PA Housing



There are 4 sections in the team:

Reporting

Provides actionable reports and insight to manage and improve our services focusing on key performance indicators, regulatory reporting, benchmarking, management information, business intelligence, and forecasting.

Insight

Provides insight through customer journey mapping, management of complaints, customer satisfaction, customer data and identifying lessons learned to drive decisions and service improvements.

Community Investment

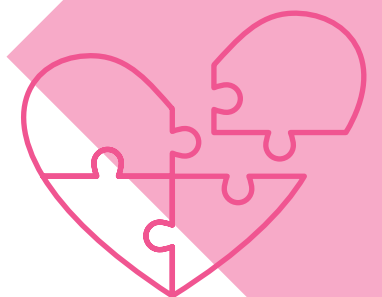
Facilitates skills and expertise needed to deliver a range of community programmes which develop and support communities, whilst recognising each community's unique requirements and characteristics. Focusing on employment support, digital inclusion, and local partnership working.

Resident Involvement

Supports local engagement and facilitates the voluntary work of our residents who want to have an impact on the decisions that affect their homes. Focusing on scrutiny, service improvement groups, Residents Council and Customer Forum.

"It's an exciting new opportunity and approach to focus on working with our customers and what matters to them. This fits in brilliantly and supports the work already underway in housing services and the investment in our properties."

Esther Clarkson
Head of Customer Experience



Experiencing work life

A group of young people gained valuable insight during work experience with us. The chance was open to the children of staff and customers and 5 candidates spent time with us - 4 in Leicester and 1 at our Walton on Thames office.

Placements were in our accounts, health and safety, learning and development, assets and treasury departments and the teens faced a range of tasks to help them in their future careers. One attendee secured a weekend job at Leicester Tigers rugby union club on the strength of her performance.

We gave CV writing advice, practised interview techniques, filled out personality profiles and helped them to establish their strengths and

weaknesses. One of the most challenging activities was a tower building exercise, using only spaghetti and marshmallows!

At the end of the experience there was a graduation ceremony for parents and family, and the candidates each left with a record of their achievements and testimonial from their mentor.

The sessions proved such a success that we are now planning another course during February half term, when we hope to have more placements and many more opportunities. If your youngsters are interested, check out our website for more information.

Here's what some of the candidates said afterwards:

"Participating in PA Housing's work experience programme most definitely saw my confidence flourish, my skills develop and my long-term career goals emerge. The work experience provided me with a unique feature for my CV, and kick-started my progress on the career ladder." - **Lucy**

"Typically office work is thought of as boring or repetitive, however I personally really enjoyed the different tasks which I carried out. This experience has been both beneficial and enjoyable for me; it is completely different from a school based environment, yet due to the warm welcoming, friendly behaviour and positive attitudes, settling in wasn't difficult." - **Shumina**

"What I most liked about working with PA Housing was that I could gain confidence and realise that I am a capable individual in challenging myself and sometimes working out of the comfort zone. It gave me an insight into the Accounts Department, and as this was the career I would like to get into it definitely helped me gain a better understanding of the role." - **Azeem**



Join in the chats



Do you follow us on social media? We have accounts on many different platforms and they're a quick route to our latest news, views and information. You can even join in the discussions on some of them.

It's a great way to pass on your good news or to share in ours, but remember it's not right for everything. Social media is handled by the Comms and Marketing Team, so if you need to report a repair, for example, it's not the fastest way to get help. Phone our call centre (0300 123 2221) or log on to My PA for that.

We want to offer you the best service with our communications. We're in the most-used places already, but if you think there's another stream we should join, let us know. We'd love to hear from you.

Twitter

You can find us on Twitter and there is always plenty to read. If you follow **@PA_Housing** you'll see how we work in collaboration with other organisations to provide the best housing services. Or check out

hashtag **#teampurple** to see what our Neighbourhood Coordinators do to improve our customers' lives. Many of the NCs have their own Twitter accounts, so look out for them online, or when you see them onsite ask them for their Twitter handle.

Instagram

Of course there are lots of photos and videos on our Instagram feed. Look for us **@pahousing** to see what we're up to. You'll find some corporate news on here but there's a blast of fun stuff too. Everything from turban tying to martial arts.

LinkedIn

If it's corporate news you're looking for our account on LinkedIn will keep you up to date. This is where you'll find information on all kinds of work that we do from grassroots to Board level. You'll find links to articles across the industry when we feature in the press, as well as news about our developments and investments. Search for PA Housing to see our latest posts.

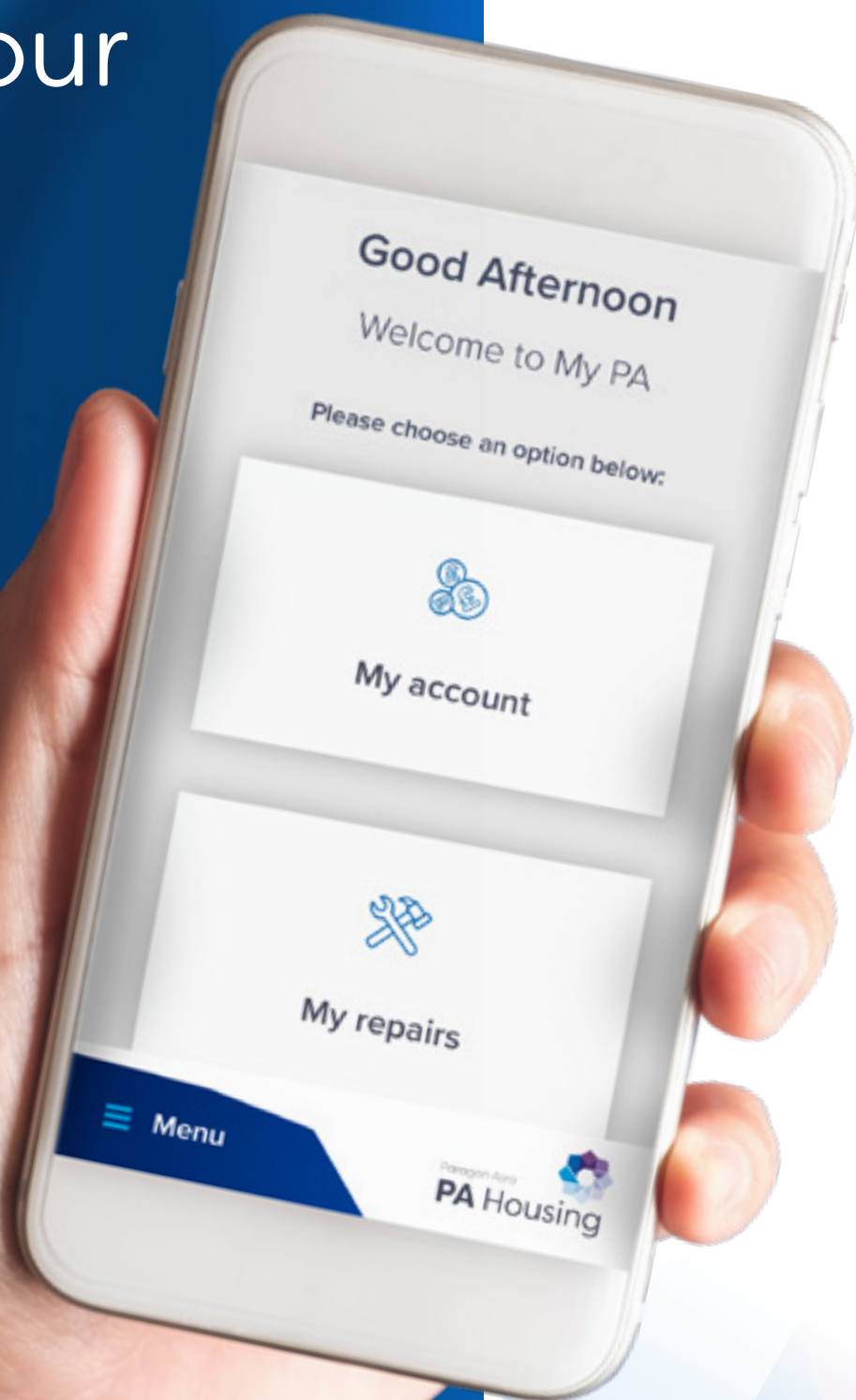
My PA - the fastest, easiest and cheapest way to manage your home online.

Secure and simple, it's available 24 hours a day at any time convenient to you - and no waiting in a phone queue.

You can:

- quickly diagnose and report your own repairs
- view the status of current repairs
- choose a convenient time for a contractor to visit
- pay your rent or set up a Direct Debit
- view your account balance
- request a refund
- request a new fob or keys
- view your personal details
- chat live with a member of our team

Register now on our website at mypa.pahousing.co.uk. You only need an email address and your payment reference number from your rent statement.



Helping domestic abuse survivors

Finding a safe home after fleeing domestic abuse can be extremely difficult. Official figures show that 6,000 people in England and Wales became homeless through domestic abuse in the first 3 months of 2019. That's 1 in 8 homeless people.

Domestic abuse affects both women and men. It can take many forms, including: coercive control, intimidation, degradation, isolation and threats; psychological or emotional abuse; physical abuse; sexual abuse; financial abuse;

harassment; stalking; and online or digital abuse.

PA Housing does all it can to support anyone suffering domestic abuse. The impact - even after survivors reach safety - is severe and long-lasting, so we offer practical and emotional help as well as signposting other specialist support services.

- We can help victims move to a safer area.
- We can install security measures such as extra locks and lighting.
- We can be a point of contact when someone needs to talk.

We are now planning specialist training for all our staff about domestic abuse, how to spot the signs, why it happens and why people go back to abusers. The training will be on two levels to meet the needs of front line and back office staff.

Katy's story

(Not her real name)

Katy called our customer contact centre and asked to move because she felt unsafe in her property due to ongoing harassment from her ex-partner.

She has a young son from a previous relationship and had been in a relationship with her abuser for 2 years. He was extremely controlling; she was never allowed out on her own; he monitored her phone and social media; he restricted finances and made her beg for money, even basics such

as milk and nappies; and he isolated her from family and friends. His violence caused injuries needing hospital treatment, but Katy stayed silent because she feared what he would do if she told anyone.

During a severe assault neighbours called the police and the attending officer encouraged Katy to press charges and seek support. Her abuser was convicted of assault, told to attend the Building Better Relationships Course and given a Restraining Order. But as Katy tried to move on he started visiting and trying

to get into her home. Her mental health suffered and she was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. Eventually he was sent to prison and Katy decided to take the opportunity to move.

We helped her to get supporting evidence from the Police, Social Care, UAVA (United Against Violence and Abuse), GP and her Health Visitor. Katy has been offered another property in a different part of the Midlands and is now looking forward to a fresh start, living without fear for her and her son.

There's not much you can do in the garden at this time of year - but it's never too early to plan.

The PA in Bloom contest gives our green-fingered residents the chance to show off their skills. You don't need a huge plot, competition classes range from something as small as a windowbox, to community gardens and allotments. There are even categories for children and young people.

If you love plants you could be in with a chance. Last year's overall winner Jane Watson had never thought of putting her garden up for a prize before. Even if you've never considered entering, why not give it a go in 2020?

Watch out for more details on our website and social media as spring approaches.

 @pahousing  @pa_housing

 www.pahousing.co.uk

