

Winter 2019

CHATTERBOX



HIGHLIGHTS

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Christmas and New Year Opening Times

This year the office will be closed from Tuesday 24th December at 4:00pm and will open again on Thursday 2nd January 2020 at 9:00am.

Wednesday 25th December 2019	Closed
Thursday 26th December 2019	Closed
Friday 27th December 2019	Closed
Monday 30th December 2019	Closed
Tuesday 31st December 2019	Closed
Wednesday 1st January 2020	Closed

If you have an emergency repair during this time, please call our out of office service Panda on 01295 660011



Damp, Mould & Condensation

Too much moisture in your home can lead to damp and mould conditions. This is often due to condensation.

Are your wall surfaces, windows, furniture or clothing damp? Do you have black mould growth? If so, it is likely that you have a condensation problem.

Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather and appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. To avoid condensation there are three main factors to consider and these are moisture, ventilation and heating.

Moisture

These steps will help you reduce the condensation in your home by producing less moisture:

- Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling
- Do not dry washing on radiators, dry washing outdoors on a line or put in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on
- Tumble driers must be vented to the outside

Ventilation

You can ventilate your home without making draughts to reduce moisture:

- Keep a small window open when someone is in the room
- Open any trickle vents on windows
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider or using fans if installed. Close the doors when these rooms are in use to prevent moisture reaching other rooms.
- Do not block air brick vents

Heating

You can make sure that you have adequate heating in your home to reduce moisture:

- The ideal temperature in your home is 19-22 degrees Celsius in the living rooms including the kitchen and bathroom and 16-20 degrees Celsius in the bedrooms
- The room temperature should not drop below 15 degrees Celsius to avoid condensation and increased humidity
- Do not heat up cold bedrooms in the evening by opening the door to heated rooms as the warm, humid air will condensate on the cold surfaces of the bedroom.

First steps against mould

- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash ensuring you follow the manufacturer's instructions. Dry clean clothes and shampoo carpets.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to prevent mould occurring.

Merry Christmas



The festive season will shortly be upon us and homes across the country will be twinkling with fairy lights and Christmas cheer. Highlighted below are some common activities that may be putting you and your family in danger at this time of year and there are some simple tips to help you stay safe.

Christmas Trees

A real Christmas tree is a popular choice, but did you know that a real tree can catch fire a lot quicker than a fire retardant artificial one so it's worth considering a fake tree.

- If you do have a real Christmas tree, you need to make sure you keep it well watered so that it doesn't dry out.
- Don't spray hairspray on the pine needles to stop them dropping off as it's very flammable.
- Keep the tree well away from any source of heat.

Christmas Lights

- Don't overload plug sockets and try to avoid the use of extension leads or adaptors. Leads can be a trip hazard.
- As Christmas lights are packed away for most of the year, they can easily become electrically unsafe. Always read and follow the manufacturer instructions.
- Do not attempt to repair faulty lights unless it's just a bulb, always replace the lights.
- LED lights operate at extra low voltage, they use much less power and generate less heat reducing the risk of fire and burns.
- Check your lights are not damaged or broken before use and look out for loose wires.
- Use identical replacement bulbs and replace failed bulbs immediately to prevent overheating.
- Lights used outdoors should be specifically designed for outdoor use and should be connected using a 30ma RCD protected socket.
- Keep lights away from flammable decorations and materials that can burn easily.
- Switch all lights off and unplug them before going to bed or if you are going out.

Anti-Social Behaviour & Keeping Safe at Christmas



PHA Homes are looking to ensure that this holiday period is one of peace and celebration for all. However, celebration should be controlled and not create nuisance to your neighbours.

PHA Homes urges you to be considerate of your neighbours and will not tolerate anti-social behaviour, especially not over the festive period.

PHA's top tips for keeping safe and avoiding anti-social behaviour this Christmas are:

- Ensure all doors and windows are locked when you leave the house and don't leave presents on display.
- Be aware when online shopping.
- Take care of your own mental health and general wellbeing – talk to somebody if you need help.
- Don't spend more than you can afford.
- Try to get a lift to and from any Christmas parties and don't walk home alone.
- Do not overload electrical outlets with Christmas lights to avoid risk of a fire.
- Be aware of parking if you have visitors over.
- Turn the volume down when it gets late.
- Don't leave your dog alone for long periods of time.
- Speak to your neighbours.

Winter Wordsearch Competition

For your chance to win a £25 voucher of your choice complete the word search and return it to us at 32 Lavant Street, Petersfield or by email to admin@phahomes.co.uk by Friday 13th December 2019.

Instructions: Try to find all the hidden Winter words in the word search puzzle below. (Words can be spelled forwards, backwards, diagonally, up, or down).

E	T	C	G	B	W	T	B	X	E	S	S	Y	H	I
T	N	A	H	Q	L	W	I	K	Q	E	N	T	O	J
A	Y	E	H	I	I	I	A	U	V	F	O	S	L	T
L	W	C	Z	N	L	L	Z	O	S	W	W	O	I	S
O	I	W	T	O	F	L	L	Z	I	W	G	R	D	E
C	I	E	M	W	R	G	Y	P	A	H	O	F	A	W
O	R	D	O	W	T	F	W	I	B	R	F	N	Y	O
H	S	N	E	E	R	T	E	N	I	P	D	J	S	S
C	S	C	T	M	I	T	T	E	N	S	Y	A	N	N
T	E	P	A	E	L	C	I	C	I	F	K	O	A	G
O	J	E	K	R	H	B	O	O	T	S	W	M	C	I
H	Y	U	S	E	F	D	N	I	W	B	W	O	V	V
F	I	R	E	P	L	A	C	E	A	O	L	E	E	I
A	V	U	C	R	U	G	U	L	N	D	D	C	E	N
C	P	Y	I	J	U	U	L	S	U	Q	S	I	Y	G

BLIZZARD	GIVING	ICICLE	SNOWMAN
BOOTS	GLOVES	MITTENS	SNOWSUIT
CHILLY	HAT	PINE TREE	WIND
COLD	HOLIDAYS	SCARF	WINTER
FIREPLACE	HOT CHOCOLATE	SNOW	
FROSTY	ICE	SNOWBALL	
FROZEN	ICE SKATE	SNOWFLAKE	

Name

Address

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Regular smoke detector and CO detector checks

Smoke alarm testing:

Please remember to test your smoke alarm on a regular basis to ensure that they are working correctly. If you have any concerns regarding your smoke alarms, please report them to us as soon as possible.

CO detector testing:

If you have a CO detector installed in your home, please remember that it needs to be tested regularly in the same way as your smoke alarms. If you have any concerns about your CO detector, please let us know as soon as possible.



Summer Competition Winner.

Congratulations to Sharon from Petersfield who was the Summer newsletter competition winner and chose a £25 M&CO voucher.



Ramshill Community Event

PHA Homes own over 40 properties on the Ramshill estate and recently contributed £250 to the Community event that was held in October. The community event was a great success with the sun shining, a good turnout and bands playing.

It was confirmed that Hampshire County Council and Taylor Wimpy will conclude their legalities within 4 weeks and all the roads, pathways & green areas at Ramshill, bar one street, will be formally adopted.

Introducing Claire Abrahamson Housing Assistant

We are pleased to welcome Claire Abrahamson to the team.

Claire has joined us as Housing Assistant. Claire works part time and helps assist Lauren with helping tenants sustain their tenancies. Claire has previously worked for Local Authorities and has a mental health and nursing background.

Good News Stories

Mrs W from Petersfield was on PHA Homes internal waiting list for a larger property, due to having 2 boys over 16 years of age and being overcrowded in their two-bedroom property.

They recently all moved to a three-bedroom property and at the Post Sign Up Visit, Mrs W stated the following;

"The boys are very happy to have their own space and the dog is loving the garden! The new neighbourhood is lovely and closer to the school and town. We are very happy with our move, thank you."

If you are looking to upsize or downsize your home, contact Lauren Parrett, Housing Manager on **01730 263589**, to be added to the internal waiting list so you can be contacted when a suitable property arises for your housing need.

Chimney Sweeping

Some of our homes have solid fuel heating in the form of woodburning stoves or open fires. PHA Homes will only carry out the chimney sweep and maintenance on any PHA owned woodburning stove.

PHA homes do not undertake chimney sweeping on any property that has an open fireplace or has a wood burner fitted by the tenant (via a private works request) this needs to be arranged and paid for by the tenant of the property.

If you have an open fire and do not wish to clean or use it any longer then PHA homes will be happy to block the fireplace up so that it can't be used.

It is recommended that chimneys are swept once or twice yearly, depending on what is being burnt, and this can be required every few months during winter when the heating is being used more frequently. Chimneys should be swept before you begin to use them to ensure that any build-up of soot is removed, and the sweep will also check the chimney for any issues.

Regular chimney sweeping is the responsibility of tenants. PHA Homes require that a chimney sweeping certificate is submitted to us once a year so that we can ensure this is being carried out regularly by a registered sweep.

The two recognised associations for chimney sweeps are NCAS and The Guild of Master Sweeps.

If you have solid fuel heating and haven't sent us a chimney sweep certificate for 2019, please arrange to do this as soon as possible.

Gas Servicing & Maintenance

Following on from the last newsletter, a meeting has recently been held with our new account manager at Robert Heath Heating (RHH) to discuss a number of concerns.

With effect from November 2019, RHH will be contacting every tenant following a completed appointment and asking some customer satisfaction questions.

The outcome of these telephone surveys will be relayed back to PHA Homes so that we can work with RHH to improve the current service.

PHA Homes also have a company who carry out audits on the work that is undertaken by RHH. Following a gas service appointment, you may be contacted by PCM who undertake our on-site audits, they also undertake all audits on replacement boiler installations. This information is then reviewed by PHA and RHH to ensure any concerns are dealt with promptly.



Reminder for Tenant & Resident Involvement Members

We would like to take this opportunity to remind all tenants and residents that we are seeking new members for our Tenant and Resident Involvement Members Panel.

You will be able to assess our current policies and procedures across a variety of topics such as maintenance standards, bathroom and kitchen refurbishments, tenancy sign ups, complaints, communal areas, anti-social behaviour, mutual exchanges and much more!

If you would like to be involved with improving our customers satisfaction by making positive changes to the way we do things, then contact Lauren Parrett, Housing Manager on **01730 263589**. The new programme and panel are due to commence in 2020.

Health & Safety Compliance Audit

During 2019 PHA Homes has had an external audit carried out on all of our legislative compliance areas of health and safety in your homes.

This covers all “high risk” activities such as gas servicing, electrical certification, legionella, fire risk assessments & asbestos records.

We are delighted to be able to report that PHA Homes has successfully passed all areas of the audit and we continue to prioritise compliance within the business to ensure that all of our properties are as safe as possible for our tenants & residents.

You Said We Did

On the estate walkabout earlier this year, we were advised that there had been parking issues at Dickins Lane due to the lines and numbers for the car park spaces having faded.

We arranged for our contractor to repaint all the numbers and lines for all three car parks in Dickins Lane so that it is clear who the parking spaces are for.

We did the same at the car park areas in Fern Close after receiving a walkabout form highlighting that the numbers needed to be repainted.



Clear Your Rent Arrears

With Christmas fast approaching, PHA Homes urges tenants to budget carefully for Christmas and to not risk their homes by slipping into arrears. PHA takes this opportunity to remind you that your rent is your main priority bill and must be paid in advance as per your contractual obligation. It is not a bill that should be overlooked by any means.

There are many ways in which you can pay your rent which include Direct Debit, Bank Transfer, Allpay, cash or cheque in the office, or by debit card over the telephone. We understand that most people experience financial difficulty at some point in their life, but we expect you to contact us immediately to notify us of such difficulty, so that we can work with you to help you and prevent you from losing your home.

If you are at all concerned about paying your rent, or wish to discuss a fair payment arrangement, please contact our Housing Team on **01730 263589 who will be happy to discuss your situation with you.**

Some tips for clearing your rent arrears:

- Talk to us so that we can help to identify the problem and work out a payment plan.
- Avoid feeling pressured to buy expensive gifts at Christmas.
- Prioritise your rent payments – your home is the most important bill.
- Reduce your monthly expenses and budget.
- Submit all information to Housing Benefit / Universal Credit as a matter of urgency so your claim can be processed as soon as possible.
- Check how much you owe through rent statements or by calling the office.
- Seek free help and advice through Citizens Advice, National Debt Helpline or Money Advice Service, for budgeting and coping financially.
- If you have a joint tenancy you are both equally responsible for paying the rent.