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PHONE SCAMS

PHA HOMES WOULD LIKE TO URGE ALL OUR TENANTS TO REMAIN ALERT FOLLOWING REPORTS OF SUSPECTED SCAMS BY TELEPHONE COLD-CALLERS.

The latest call is in reference to loft insulation being fitted to your home.



If you are unsure whether the caller is genuine, you could take their company name and call the office at PHA Homes to check with us.

Please be aware that PHA Homes will always write to our tenants first, informing them of any works that need to be carried out to their homes and will include dates and our contractors details.

BIN WASTE

We would like to take this opportunity to remind all tenants who use a communal bin store facility to follow the guidance given by Hampshire County Council when disposing of your household waste. You can find out more info on bin collections on East Hants website Bin collections East Hampshire District Council (easthants.gov.uk)

Please do not put any general waste into the recycling bins. Any recycling must be of the type allowed (cardboard / paper type waste) and must be removed from bags when placed into the recycling bins as the refuse collectors have been instructed not to empty any bin that may be contaminated with general waste. If they see a bag in the recycling bin they may decide



that the bin has been contaminated and decide not to empty the bin. This will mean the contaminated waste will need to be removed from the bin before they return in a further 2 weeks' time to attempt to empty the bins again.

All other general bin (food) waste needs to be placed in the general waste bins provided, not next to them.

Any bulky household items should be disposed of at the local amenity tip and not left in the bin store for someone else to dispose of.



IF YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED BECAUSE OF COVID-19 AND YOU ARE STRUGGLING FINANCIALLY, YOU MAY NEED TO CLAIM UNIVERSAL CREDIT (UC).

To see how much you could be entitled to you should use the benefits calculator available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators>.

It is important for anyone claiming UC to keep the Department of Working Pensions (DWP) updated of any changes in your circumstances, e.g. change of earnings, change of rent, change of health, etc. so that you ensure you are receiving the correct entitlement.

You should also notify UC of your housing costs so that PHA Homes can verify these to get your entitlement in place. We ask that you keep PHA Homes updated of your benefit status and when you receive your payment from UC, so that we can adjust your rent payment details accordingly.



If you fall into arrears as a result of claiming UC, we are more than happy to discuss an affordable payment arrangement with you to clear the arrears over an agreed period.

We may also request an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) which asks for payments to be made to PHA Homes directly.

Currently UC continues to suspend face-to-face 'Work Capability Assessments' to protect vulnerable claimants during the pandemic. The increased standard allowance of £20 per week, which was introduced in response to the coronavirus pandemic, is set to end on 6th April 2021, so you will need to adjust and budget accordingly to make sure you can meet your rent payments.

For further information you can call the Universal Credit Helpline on 0800 328 5644.



PEST CONTROL

WE HAVE RECENTLY HAD A FEW QUERIES REGARDING PESTS SUCH AS MICE AND RATS.

Only if pests are found in a communal area (i.e. a communal bin store) will PHA Homes arrange for a pest control expert to attend and deal with the issue. It may take the pest control expert several visits to ensure that they have been dealt with.

We would remind all tenants who use a communal bin store to ensure that only normal household bin waste is put in the bin store and that any rubbish bags are actually put into one

of the large waste bins provided and not left on the floor of the bin store, as this will encourage pests into the area.

If pests are found in the garden or inside an individual home then it is the tenants responsibility to deal with the issue. PHA Homes responsibility is to ensure the property has no obvious access points in the fabric of the building for pests to gain access into the property.



PLANNED MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS

Unfortunately, 2020 didn't turn out as anybody planned! Coronavirus restrictions affected our planned works programme and we were not able to achieve all that we had hoped to do in the year. We are hopeful that 2021 will be a better year and as the government unlocks the restrictions we will get back on track with our planned works programme.

We were able to continue with basic repairs but we had to limit our service for a large part of the year to emergency & urgent repairs only with some routine works as and when the restrictions allowed.

We were able to complete all safety compliance related works, such as fire risk assessments to the communal areas of our blocks of flats, gas servicing, electrical testing and legionella inspections ensuring safety compliance throughout the year.

As we look forward in 2021 we have a large electrical testing and inspection programme to complete plus updating our energy performance certificates (EPC's). This will run alongside our gas servicing programme and inspections of unvented hot water cylinders.





RESIDENT PROFILING

THROUGHOUT THE BEGINNING OF 2021, OUR HOUSING TEAM WILL BE CONTACTING ALL TENANTS TO GATHER UP-TO-DATE HOUSEHOLD AND CONTACT INFORMATION.

Resident profiling enables PHA Homes to have a better understanding of who is living in our properties so we can tailor and monitor our services to accommodate our tenants current and future needs and aspirations.

The phone calls are carried out to ensure that PHA Homes has correct and up to date information for each household. If you change your contact details (mobile number, landline, email) then please do not forget to let us know. Please do the same if any of your household information changes.

This would include:

- Additional/reduced people living at the property
- Employment/benefit status
- Disability/health status
- Support needs
- Preferred contact method

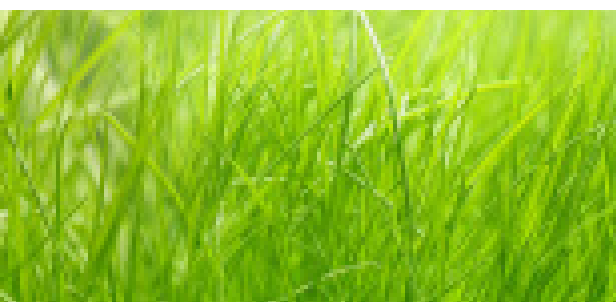


NOTE

All information is stored securely in our internal IT systems. We will also be asking for an up-to-date password for your account for general data protection recording (GDPR) purposes.

It is not compulsory for you to update any of this information, but we hope that you will work with us. PHA Homes must demonstrate that we have tried to collect this information, so it is important that we ask, even if you chose not to answer. The government agencies and local authorities are also using this housing data to help them to plan and provide suitable housing on both a national and a local level. This enables PHA Homes to facilitate more electronic communication, which hopefully makes life simpler for our tenants.

For more information, or to update the information we hold for you, please call 01730 263589 or email admin@phahomes.co.uk.



WINNER Autumn 2020

The winner of the Autumn wordsearch competition was Mr Wells-West from Stroud, who chose a £25 Waitrose voucher.

TENANT ENGAGEMENT

OUR TENANT ENGAGEMENT PANEL WORKED HARD ALONGSIDE PHA HOMES IN 2020 TO REVIEW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR BOTH HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE, DESPITE COVID-19 AND THE LOCKDOWNS.

It meant that we did not get to hold as many face-to-face meetings or group discussions as we would have liked, however, we did manage to complete five internal procedure reviews via email, post and over the phone.

As we begin 2021 in another lockdown, we hope restrictions will ease soon to allow some face-to-face group meetings, but we will continue as we have done if not.

We are very grateful to our excellent tenant engagement panel and appreciate their efforts and support during these difficult times. We currently have a full tenant engagement panel, however, if you are interested in becoming a member, please do let us know so that we can contact you should we get a vacancy.

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE TENANTS

PHA Homes have been phoning our more vulnerable and/or elderly tenants every week during lockdown periods to provide support to those people during such difficult times. These calls have been well received and really appreciated.

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS



As it has been such a tough year for everybody, PHA Homes wanted to support some households who had been struggling or effected by Covid-19 over the Christmas period. PHA Homes would have loved to help everyone, but unfortunately it is not possible to do so. We did manage to help 10 households, who were all delighted and grateful for the hampers we provided, and we hope this helped them out over the Christmas period.

FOODBANK DONATION

We also donated £100 to the Petersfield foodbank towards the end of 2020.

If you feel vulnerable, or feel you need some additional support, please let us know and we would be happy to add you to our contact list.

You can call us on 01730 263589 or email admin@phahomes.co.uk.

STAR Survey 2020

Many thanks to all our tenants and residents for taking part in our STAR (survey of tenants and residents) during the autumn 2020. The survey is in a standard format and has been widely adopted by registered housing providers to measure tenant satisfaction levels and enable meaningful comparison and benchmarking of the results.

Your views and opinions are very important to us at PHA Homes. It enables us to know what your aspirations and priorities are when we review the services we provide for you. When we review our services we do so together with our TREG group (tenants and residents engagement group). As part of any review we will consider your views from the STAR survey. All tenants were contacted by telephone with an 89.3% response rate.








Overall satisfaction remains high but we do need to do some work in the areas where satisfaction has dropped.

PHA Homes belongs to a benchmarking club that uses a company called Acuity to benchmark performance against other smaller associations and all associations both large and small nationally.

THE REVIEW OF ACUITY BENCHMARKING PERFORMANCE METRICS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2019/2020 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Results	Smaller Associations	All Associations Nationally	PHA Results
Overall service provided	89%	85%	93%
Quality of home	89%	84%	88%
Neighbourhood	87%	84%	88%
Rent (value for money)	89%	86%	94%
Repairs & maintenance	87%	78%	89%
Listens to views & acts	79%	68%	84%

The results of the 2020 STAR survey are:

Question	2020	2017	Comparison
Response rate	89.3%	69.5%	
Taking everything in to account how satisfied are you with the service provided by PHA Homes?	93%	93.2%	
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of your home?	88%	97.4%	
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?	88%	93.7%	
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your rent provides value for money?	94%	91.9%	
Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the repairs service you received in the past 12 months?	89%	85.8%	
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that PHA Homes listens to residents views and acts upon them?	84%	81.7%	
Thinking specifically about the building you live in, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that PHA Homes provides a home that is safe and secure?	93%	-	Comparison not available
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that PHA Homes is easy to deal with?	91%	-	Comparison not available
How satisfied are you with how easy it is to make contact with PHA Homes?	96%	-	Comparison not available

Acuity members reported high levels of satisfaction with overall service, quality of the home, neighbourhood, value for money of the rent and the repairs service (87% to 89%); with noticeably lower ratings for listening to views (77% to 79%).

Compared with larger providers (over 1,000 units) median ratings were often 3% to 5% higher. The exception being satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service which were rated considerably higher (8% and 11% higher respectively).

Our Performance in 2020:

Legislative compliance:

Annual gas servicing	100%
Electric safety testing	100%
Fire risk assessments	100%
Legionella	100%
Asbestos	100%
Health and safety incidents	None

Housing Management:

Current tenant rent arrears	0.5%
Number of new tenancies granted	35
Number of complaints received	10
Time taken to re-let an empty property	15.6 Calendar Days
Asbestos	100%
Health and safety incidents	None

Repairs and Maintenance:

Repairs orders raised	645
Performance against time target for repairs	100%

Miscellaneous:

New homes completed and let	8
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Repairing Responsibilities:

One of the issues that came out of the lockdowns and residents surveys during 2020 is the lack of clarity around what is the tenant's repairing responsibility and what is PHA Homes responsibility as the landlord.

As such we have developed a new information leaflet for all our tenants and residents. A copy will be sent to all tenants with this spring edition of Chatterbox and a copy will be included in every new tenancy pack going forward.

The information in the leaflet reflects what is set out in your tenancy agreement, which is a legally binding contract between PHA Homes and our tenants. These repairing responsibilities apply to all social housing tenancies and therefore are not unique to PHA Homes.

In future when you contact us to report a repair we will be advising you when the repair is a tenants' responsibility.

New 'Out of Hours' (OOH) emergency repairs service provider

PHA Homes have now changed to a new provider for our 'Out of Hours' emergency repair service.

Lifetime Construction will now be providing this service on behalf of PHA Homes. They are based in Portsmouth. Lifetime Construction will cover all non-gas related emergency calls such as plumbing, electrical & drainage related emergencies. The number for you to contact out of normal office hours is 02392 812308.

Robert Heath Heating (RHH) will continue to cover all gas related repairs and breakdowns during normal hours and also outside of normal office hours. The contact number for them is 03330 141 000 or you can contact them via email on pha@robertheath.co.uk

ELECTRICAL SAFETY IN YOUR HOME

PHA Homes carries out 5 yearly electrical inspections in all our homes and communal areas to ensure that all installations and fixed wiring are safe for use. As such some of our properties will require an electrical inspection to be carried out during 2021. Our electrical contractors will be in touch with those tenants whose homes are due to be inspected to arrange a mutually convenient appointment for the inspection to be carried out.

PHA Homes also carries out these safety inspections every time a property is vacant or a mutual exchange is being completed. Following the inspection, an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is submitted to us to enable us to maintain appropriate safety records.

Please note that tenants and residents are not permitted to make any alterations to the fixed electrical installations or wiring in their homes without written permission from PHA Homes.

If permission is given for such work then the work must be carried out by a suitably qualified electrician who is registered with a recognised governing body such as NICEIC, NAPIT or ELECSA, and an electrical certificate must be provided to PHA Homes to prove that the changes have been carried out to the required standards. This also includes changing power socket face plates or installing additional lights or sockets.



Common issues that can occur within a home and should be reported to us so that we can arrange a repair include:

- Broken power socket face plates
- Power sockets that spark when used or don't work
- Exposed wires
- Dark yellow or brown marks around power sockets or light switches
- Light bulbs that don't work or blink frequently. However light bulbs are the responsibility of the tenant and need to be checked and changed before a fault is reported to PHA Homes.

Condensation & Mould



PHA Homes have recently seen an increase in queries relating to condensation & mould. This is mainly due to the very cold weather that we have had lately and properties being warmer than the temperature outside.

On average, a 4 person family creates an incredible 112 pints of moisture each week through everyday activities such as breathing, bathing, cooking and laundry. As much as 30% of the moisture in our homes is attributable to laundry drying.

Modern homes are more energy efficient than ever, with measures such as double glazing, composite doors, improved wall and loft insulation and draught proofing. While this makes homes easier to heat, it can also lead to stale humid air becoming trapped. This warm, moist environment provides the perfect breeding ground for airborne pollutants such as mould spores, dust mites and volatile organic compounds which can negatively impact your health if not dealt with.

Condensation is a common damp problem in winter when there is inadequate ventilation or poor heating in a property. It occurs when excess moisture in the air comes into contact with a cold surface and is often found on windows and walls. Although it may seem like a small issue, condensation can lead to further damp and mould growth if not dealt with in a timely manner.

Condensation can appear in houses on colder wall and window surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air, such as behind beds, kitchen cupboards and the corners of rooms. It usually occurs when a lot of moisture that can't escape has been produced.

A few simple steps that our tenants can take to eliminate the amount of moisture and condensation building up in their homes and causing damage are as follows:

- Ventilate the property - open windows & trickle vents to allow fresh air in.
- Keep your house warm - heat the whole house rather than just one or two rooms and keep low background heating on all day, even when there is no-one at home.
- Don't dry clothes indoors - if using a tumble dryer to dry your clothes, make sure it is vented outside. If you use a condenser dryer this can still cause moisture in the air so let fresh air in to circulate and clear the damp air.
- Keep lids on saucepans – use extractor fans in the kitchen when cooking or boiling water.
- Ensure you use the extractor fan(s) - when showering / bathing leave the extractor fan running for a short period of time after you have finished until the steam / moisture from the room has cleared, ensuring the door is kept closed. If you don't have an extractor fan in your bathroom then open the window to allow any steam to escape, again keeping the bathroom door closed.

CONDENSATION & MOULD

FIRST STEPS AGAINST MOULD:

- You should treat any mould you may already have in your home. If you then deal with the basic problem of condensation, mould should not reappear.
- Wipe down windows and window-sills every morning in cold weather.
- You can use a mild bleach solution to remove light mould staining on hard surfaces.
- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and windows frames with a fungicidal wash. Follow the manufactures instructions precisely.
- Dry clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets.
- Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. Please note this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints and wallpaper.
- The best way of avoiding severe mould growth is to minimise the source of the moisture / dampness, and properly heat and ventilate your home.



Penetrating Damp



Rising Damp

If you believe you have a rising damp or penetrating damp issue in your property then please let PHA Homes know so that we can investigate further.

For clarity, these 2 issues are described as:

- **Rising damp** – is caused by water from the ground getting into the walls and floors often due to the failure of the damp proof course or membrane.
- **Penetrating damp** – check for a leak in the roof or gutter, rain water pipes or even the mains water supply; missing roof tiles; damaged flat roof coverings; cracking to brickwork; rotten windowsills; blocked guttering; blocked or missing air bricks; crumbling brickwork or rendering to chimneystacks.

SPRING WORD SEARCH

Name

Age

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

BUDS

GREEN

MELT

SPRING

BUGS

GROW

MUD

TREE

BIRDS

KITE

NEST

WARM

DROP

LEAF

RAIN

WIND

FROG

MAY

SEEDS

WORM

For your chance to win a £25 voucher of your choice complete the word search and return it to us at 32 Dragon Street, Petersfield, or by email to admin@phahomes.co.uk by Friday 16th April 2021.

Name

Address



GET IN TOUCH

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