



▶ Joanna Lumley
opens landmark
Stockwell
development
Page 3

▶ Hertford
residents
get gardening
Page 6

▶ Annual report
for tenants
2015/16
Pages 9-14



Hello!

Welcome to the winter edition of Neighbourhood Life

As the nights draw in and the temperature drops, we should remember some of the most vulnerable people in our society – people who don't have a place to call home.

Back in October, I chose to give up my bed for the night to help those who don't have one. Along with 200 other senior level professionals taking part in the CEO Sleepout, I slept rough at Lord's Cricket Ground to raise money and awareness of homelessness. I'm proud to have raised over £2,300 (at the time of writing this put me in 7th place) for the Cardinal Hume Centre, a hostel for street homeless people in Westminster, where we have over 1,000 properties.

My experience of a night in a safe cricket ground was nothing compared with the discomfort and lack of safety so many homeless people face on a daily basis. But it was enough to highlight just how difficult life is for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

November saw the 50th anniversary of the iconic film Cathy Come Home. For those of you who don't know, Cathy Come Home tells the heart-breaking story of a young family's descent into homelessness.

At the time of its release it caused a national outcry and forced the nation to face up to shocking levels of homelessness. But 50 years on, in the grips of a new housing crisis, things are not much better. Not enough homes are being built and homelessness is on the up.

At Network Homes we believe good homes make everything possible which is why we take our obligation to build new homes seriously. We have set ourselves an ambitious target of building over 1,000 homes a year. And we will continue to support our partners in meeting their obligations for homeless households. The challenge of defeating homelessness is daunting, but we are determined to play our full part.

Inside you will find your usual mix of latest news and advice from Network Homes. I hope you enjoy reading it!

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and peaceful festive season.

Helen Evans
Chief Executive

Don't miss
Benefit Cap
update
Page 15

Office opening hours and service over the festive period

As always, we aim to provide you with a good service at all times including over the festive period. Our office opening hours during this time will be:

Office opening hours

Monday 26 December to Tuesday 27 December 2016 **Closed**

Wednesday 28 to Friday 30 December 2016 **9am to 5pm**

Monday 2 January 2017 **Closed**

Our offices will be open as usual from Tuesday 3 January 2017. Usual office opening hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Remember, you can use the self service portal to report a repair, view your rent account and pay your rent, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, online via our website at www.networkhomes.org.uk. If you have an emergency repair while our offices are closed, please contact us on **0300 373 3000** and you'll be directed to our out of hours repairs service.

Joanna Lumley opens landmark Stockwell development



Our new award-winning landmark development for Stockwell was officially opened on Thursday 29 September, in absolutely fabulous style by television and film star Joanna Lumley.

Park Heights is the latest phase of our £175 million regeneration of the Stockwell Park Estate in South London. The new 159 home building replaces a poor quality 1960s tower block, which previously sat on the site.

The distinctive 20-storey building includes 84 homes for social rent and 75 apartments for private sale, and boasts a roof garden with panoramic views across London. Many of the former residents of the old tower block chose to return and now have brand new homes still at social rents. Five of these families were able to join us for the launch where they had a chance to meet Joanna Lumley and even show her round their homes.

When the regeneration is fully complete in 2018/19, the estate will include over 1,600 homes, with a broad mix of tenures and incomes. There will be no loss of social and affordable housing overall.

We caught up with Joanna, who lives in the Stockwell area, and she said: "I am so proud and happy to be at the opening of the wonderful Park Heights. I love the fact that the greater number of homes are affordable, and that all the apartments are the same, whether privately owned or otherwise."

"As a Lambeth resident for 25 years I feel very privileged to be in such a forward-looking borough, and as a Stockwellian I am thrilled that Park Heights is standing in all its glory in our local community."



"I am so proud and happy to be at the opening of the wonderful Park Heights."

Joanna Lumley

Audio, Braille, large print and translation services

We can provide any section of this document to you on audio tape, CD, in Braille or in large print. We can also translate this document into other languages. If you require these services please contact Customer Services on **0300 373 3000**.

Mayor of London visits our South Kilburn development

We were delighted to welcome the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, to our latest West London development Kilburn Quarter on Thursday 18 August.

Helen Evans, Chief Executive, gave the Mayor a tour of the development where she introduced him to one of our residents, Regina Rice. Regina has lived in the area her whole life and was born in Cambridge Road, which is next to Kilburn Quarter. She was pleased to meet the Mayor and show him around her new four bedroom, ground floor flat.

Due to be completed in 2017, our Kilburn Quarter development

will have four blocks and include a total of 103 apartments for social rent and 126 for private sale. All of the apartments will have a balcony or terrace, with one to four bedroom apartments and duplexes available. In the middle of the scheme will be a beautiful landscaped garden with a children's play area.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said, "It was great to meet residents moving into this new neighbourhood in South Kilburn today and encouraging to see boroughs like Brent pushing their housebuilding targets and providing more affordable homes for Londoners to buy and rent."



Network Homes named 'Winner of Winners' at National Housing Awards

In September we scooped 'Overall Winner', 'Best Design' and 'Best Small Development' at the National Housing Awards.

The Overall Winner award is presented to the organisation that the judging panel feel has exceeded in moving the home ownership industry forward by introducing an outstanding solution or development into the sector.

Our Electric House development in Willesden Green won the Best Small Development award. Electric House is a new development featuring 20 luxury one and two bedroom apartments. Its design takes

inspiration from a former 1930s listed building.

We also won the Best Design award for our distinctive Park Heights development in Stockwell Park.

"We have a clear vision to create beautiful homes which leave long-lasting legacies and give customer delight. These prestigious awards from our industry show that we are on top of our game."

Vicky Savage, Executive Director of Development



Thumbs up for our first Residents' Day

More than 500 residents from across London and Hertfordshire came along to our first ever Residents' Day on Saturday 24 September at Brent Civic Centre in Wembley.

Over 70 members of staff from Network Homes were present to meet and greet residents. Stallholders included teams from Network Homes as well as representatives from partnership organisations such as Learn Direct and Groundwork London. Everyone had the opportunity to find out about services available to them, ask questions and voice their opinions.

It was a busy day with lots to see and do. We had free health checks and massages on offer as well as the chance to take part in a raffle to win a laptop and iPad mini. Residents were able to book appointments to access our advice surgeries held by our Welfare Advice, Neighbourhood and Income teams. We've worked hard to follow up cases collected on the day and to address any issues raised to ensure any identified support or advice needs are being met.

Part of the day included a conference where residents got the chance to hear from our new Chair Bernadette Conroy, and Dianne Larrington, our Involved Resident of the Year. There was also a Question and Answer Panel and live voting sessions. Some of the feedback during the live voting sessions revealed that:



"A great idea as it gives residents time to talk about their needs."

- ▶ 51% of residents are most concerned about the cost of living
- ▶ 44% would like to know more about Welfare Reform
- ▶ 46% believe the most important thing about a repair is that it is of high quality.

This is valuable feedback and will inform our decisions in the next year.

Over 200 residents told us how they felt the day went and it was a definite 'thumbs up'. Mrs Mills, who got in touch with us after the event, said, "Thank you for a lovely day at Brent Civic Centre yesterday. Everyone was so helpful and friendly. I hope to be at the next one!"

Thank you to everyone who came. You helped to make it a great success.



"It breaks down barriers and it will foster the spirit of togetherness."



Neal Court residents get gardening



On Friday 23 September, residents at Neal Court in Hertford came together to help tidy up their communal garden and make it a place for everyone to enjoy. It showed how much can be achieved when everyone gives a helping hand.

Neal Court is part of Network Homes' supported accommodation for people with mental health and learning disabilities. Oluwatosin Olusanya, Network Homes' Neighbourhood Officer, was keen to get the residents involved in community development projects. After

consulting with the residents and their support workers, it was clear they wanted to improve and enhance their environment, starting with the outside space. The gardens had not been maintained for the last 10 years and improving them was an ideal first project for everyone.

The gardening day was well attended and the residents played a huge part in restoring the garden by cultivating the soil through digging and planting flowers. DC Landscape, local gardening provider, also came along to help out. Everyone involved was rewarded for their hard work with food and refreshments.

Oluwatosin said, "I'm very proud of the residents who were involved in helping to restore the garden at Neal Court. Without their hard work and enthusiasm it wouldn't have happened. This was the first

phase in improving the residents' environment at Neal Court. I want to ensure all residents feel comfortable in their surroundings - it's their home after all".

Next year is going to be very exciting for the residents at Neal Court. A range of projects have been planned to revamp different areas of the supported accommodation.

Well done to all at Neal Court for coming together to make a difference to your outdoor space.



Green Team transforms Temple Fields communal gardens in Hertford

Guests gathered at Bircherley Court in Hertford on Wednesday 26 October for a celebration event to thank the Green Team volunteers for transforming one of our communal gardens.

Our Temple Fields site in Hertford is now an open space for all to enjoy. The Green Team has installed a new paved seating area and a shed complete with bike racks to provide a shared storage area. They've also created a new wildlife area complete with a bird table.

The team was formed as part of a 14 week landscape training programme run by community charity Groundwork Hertfordshire with funding from Network Homes. It gives young people the opportunity to gain practical skills and qualifications which help them with employment.

Jackie Trundell, Head of Neighbourhood Services for Network Homes, and guests present at the event thanked the Green Team members for their hard work before presenting them with a certificate for completing the programme.

They'll also receive City & Guilds qualifications in Practical Horticulture and Employability Skills.

Congratulations Green Team for creating a community space we can all enjoy!



Residents enjoy our family fun days

Over the summer months, we held family fun days for local residents in Northolt (London) and East Hertfordshire.

Rectory Park fun day

On Saturday 30 July, over 350 local residents from Rectory Park Estate in Northolt came out to enjoy a day full of fun and games. We had a variety of lively and entertaining activities on offer, including karaoke, a magic show, a 'design your own home' competition and a rare exhibition of model planes from the Rectory Park Model Flying Club.

Residents also had the chance to meet the architects and view the latest designs for the estate, which we're redeveloping as part of a major £100m regeneration project. The development is due to be completed in March 2020 and will bring an additional 170 new homes to the local area.

Ridgeway fun day

Over 250 residents from Ridgeway Estate attended our family fun day at Sele Farm in East Hertfordshire on Saturday 16 July. The packed Fun Day had a host of activities to entertain families, including fairground rides, karaoke, free face painting and a live graffiti art workshop from the Signal Project.

Residents got to see the exciting new designs for their neighbourhood, which is being redeveloped as part of our major £30 million regeneration project. They also had the chance to suggest names for the new buildings on the estate. The new homes will be ready in 2018 and will consist of 87 homes for affordable and social rent, plus 50 homes for shared ownership.



Happy 100th Birthday Dorothy

Mrs Dorothy Unsworth from Waterford in Hertford celebrated her 100th birthday in October.

Mrs Unsworth has been a Network Homes resident for the last 32 years. Not only did she receive a card from the Queen she also had a surprise visit from Jackie Trundell, Head of Neighbourhood services at Network Homes, and Clare Adamson, Neighbourhood Team Leader, who presented her with flowers, a cake, vouchers and a card for her birthday.

Neighbours and friends also helped her celebrate in style by organising a tea party at Waterford Village Hall. Mrs Unsworth was delighted with all the gifts, cards and attention she received for her birthday.

Jackie Trundell said, "She's a remarkable and amazing woman. It's an honour to meet someone who has clearly had a full life."

Happy 100th Birthday Dorothy!

Make a difference to the service you receive and join our Scrutiny Panel

If you want to ensure that we're constantly improving our services then this is the group for you! We're looking for tenants, leaseholders, or shared owners to join our Scrutiny Panel.

The Scrutiny Panel is a group of residents who make recommendations about how we can improve our services. The Panel completes detailed reports of their findings to ensure that we're providing a housing service that meets the needs of our customers.

The Panel has just finished a review of our Customer Service Centre and our Grounds Maintenance Service, and is about to start a review of our Complaints Service.

As a panel member, you'll have access to a range of training opportunities to support you in your role. If you would like to help improve the service you receive from us and you can commit to attend regular meetings and project sessions, then this role is for you!

For more information contact: **(Hertfordshire and out of London residents)** Ian Lamerton, Co-regulation Manager for Hertfordshire and Out of London, on **01992 800629** or **ian.lamerton@networkhomes.org.uk**.

(London residents) Rebecca Biccocchi, Community Engagement & Investment Officer on **020 8782 4253** or **rebecca.biccocchi@networkhomes.org.uk**.

Keen to make a difference?

Are you driven to bring about change in your community? Do you believe that services could be delivered in a different way? Perhaps you're passionate about a particular part of what Network Homes does?

If this sounds like you then the new Community Engagement & Investment Team is now in place

and waiting to hear from you!

The team, consisting of Peter Adams, Judine Alleyne, Rebecca Biccocchi and Shauna Hutchinson, are working on lots of projects designed to let you have your say about how we shape and improve our services.

Following your feedback at our Residents' Day 2016, we are now

putting together a new Menu of Involvement activities so that you can have your say, no matter how much time you have to spare.

If you're interested in finding out more call **0300 373 3000** and ask for the Community Engagement Team or email **get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk**.

Join the Network Homes Readers' Group

We're currently recruiting residents to join our Readers' Group. Effectively communicating with our residents is a top priority. Our Readers' Group helps us to provide you with information that's easy to understand and read.

The Readers' Group reviews our customer communications, such as leaflets, letters, guides and publications, to ensure they

are written in plain English and are free of jargon. As a member of the group you'll receive the information to review before it's sent out to residents. You'll have the opportunity to give us feedback on how it can be improved. We'll take into account the feedback when writing the final copy, to ensure our written information is readable and accessible to as many of our residents as possible.

You can be involved as much as you like and you can do most of the activities from the comfort of your home. If you're a resident and live in a Network Homes property then you can join the Readers' Group.

For more information or to sign up to the group, contact our Community Engagement Team at **get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk** or call us on **0300 373 3000**.



Annual report for tenants 2015/16

Welcome to our Annual report for tenants 2015/16, highlighting our performance and achievements over the last year.

2015/16 was a great year for Network as we brought all of the housing associations in the Group together to form a single housing association, Network Homes. Throughout the year, we made great strides towards achieving our ambitions to build 1,000 new homes a year, achieve 90% customer satisfaction, increase our financial strength and become a Sunday Times 'Top 100 Company to Work For'.

80.1%
overall customer satisfaction

One of the top 10 customer service centres in the UK Contact Centre awards, May 2016

Your rent

We set the rent for our social rented homes in line with the Government's policy on target rents and based on the size and value of the property. The table below shows the average rent for our properties per week.



Average social rent per week 2015/16

Bedsit	£90.33
1 bed home	£107.49
2 bed home	£124.08
3 bed home	£135.93
4 bed home	£145.44
5 bed home	£154.27
6 bed home	£164.92
Average	£124.34

In 2011, the Government introduced a new policy on rents called Affordable Rents. All of our rents for new homes and some of our rents for existing homes let after this time have been at the Affordable Rent level. Our Affordable rents are set in line with the Government's guidance. Affordable rents are capped at 80% of the market rent level.

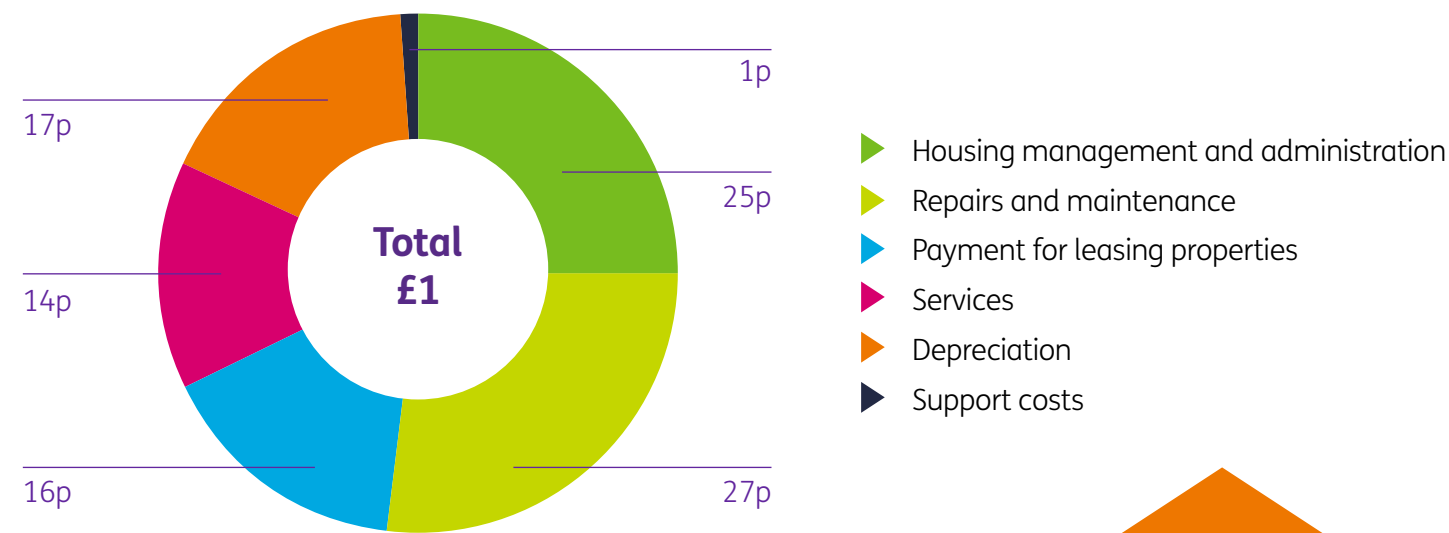


Average affordable rent per week 2015/16

1 bed home	£182.27
2 bed home *	£212.17
3 bed home	£197.16
4 bed home	£203.49
5 bed home	£212.26
Average	£198.99

***Please note:** the average rent of a two bed home is higher because we have more 2 bed homes in London, where rents are typically higher, than we have in areas outside London.

How we spend each £1 of your rent



Our performance on rent arrears was better than the performance of our main peer group of other London-based housing associations.

3.6%
current rent arrears
(target 4.5%)

Empty homes

Before new tenants can move into an empty home, our surveyors check the property to make sure it's safe and in a good state of repair.

It takes us 31 days on average (target: 30 days) to carry out this process and move new tenants into a home.

During 2015/16 we lost nearly 1% of potential rent money due to homes being empty.

Repairs

We are committed to making sure that your home is well maintained and in a good state of repair.

78%
resident satisfaction with overall repairs

100%
of homes had a valid gas safety certificate

91%
of reactive repairs were completed on time

56,000
day to day repairs completed



Customer services

We're dedicated to providing you with a high level of service and we're working towards achieving 90% customer satisfaction. In 2015/16 over 80% of our customers were satisfied overall with our services.

We recognise the importance of customer complaints and welcome them as a valuable form of feedback about our services. We aim to resolve all complaints at first point of contact which is stage one of the complaints process. Last year, only one complaint reached the Independent Housing Ombudsman Service and this complaint was not upheld.

Stage of complaint	Number of complaints
Stage 1 - Resolved by the Management Team	1,564
Stage 2 - Resolved by the Director or Executive Director	149
Stage 3 - Resolved by the Board	32
Total number of complaints	1,745

Thriving communities

We've invested to help residents access advice, employment and training, to improve communal areas and take part in community projects. We also encourage resident involvement at every level of the organisation and offer a variety of ways to get involved and help us to improve our services.

Our communities in numbers during 2015/16:

88%
satisfied with our customer service centre

79%
of enquiries resolved at first contact

90%
of complaints received were resolved at stage 1

183
referrals to our job ready programme, Worksmart

£400,000
environmental and wellbeing improvements on 35 estates

£301,552
social value generated via our community engagement initiatives

225
residents got involved with Network Homes over the year

105
residents accessed employment training and support

32
residents supported into work

49
CVs produced via the Worksmart programme and 56 interviews took place

- **Different ways residents got involved:**
- 4 Local Panel meetings held
 - 2 Mystery Shops conducted
 - 1 resident quality inspection conducted
 - 1 scrutiny project conducted
 - 70 residents attended Resident Involvement Celebration and Awards event

Value for money

We're always monitoring to make sure we're delivering value for money services. We benchmark our services using HouseMark, a membership-based organisation which seeks to help the social housing sector improve performance and achieve value for money.

This year, we've:

- ▶ Invested £46 million in new homes
- ▶ Invested over £30 million in maintaining our existing homes
- ▶ Created new contracts to improve our cleaning and grounds maintenance services at better value for money

- ▶ Completed 945 new homes
- ▶ Improved our current rent arrears performance by 0.5%

Over the next three years we intend to invest a substantial amount of money in improving our customer services through better IT systems and investment in repairs, our customer service centre and in staff training.

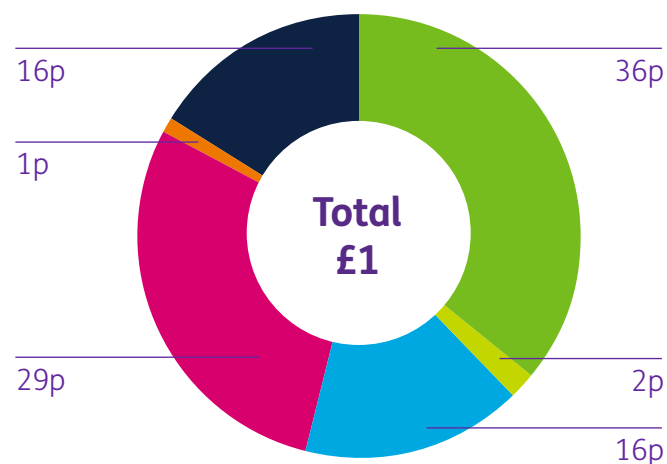
Financial results

We improved our financial performance in the last year and made a net surplus of £155 million. All of our surplus is reinvested back into our business to build new homes and improve our services.

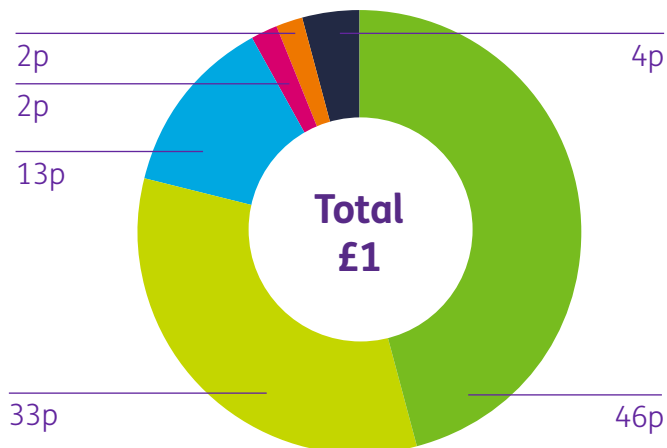
Network income	£'000
Social housing income (rent, service charge and grants)	£137,969
Surplus on sales of properties	£7,465
Interest on bank deposits [^]	£477
Other social income*	£62,389
Non-social income +	£110,654
Revaluation of investment properties	£2,594
Restructuring of loans	£62,335
Total income	£383,883

Network expenditure	£'000
Social housing costs	£103,428
Cost of properties sold	£75,056
Loan interest payments	£29,616
Other social costs	£5,251
Non-social costs	£5,223
Cost for restructuring of loans	£9,979
Total expenditure	£228,553

Where each pound comes from



Where each pound goes



We are an award-winning housing association and build award-winning homes. These are a few of the awards we won during 2015/16:



[^]Interest on bank deposits amounts to less than 1p therefore it is not shown on the pie chart.
^{*}Other social income includes fees from agency contracts, supporting people contracts and sale of shared ownership properties.
⁺ Non-social income includes rent from commercial properties, rent from student accommodation properties, and market sale properties.

New financial booklets to help you make the right decision

Are you looking for guidance on your finances? Perhaps you'd like some hints on budgeting or tips about what to do if you find yourself in debt? *Your Money* and *On the Money* booklets can help.

We've been doing a lot of work recently to help make sure we're supporting residents to maintain their tenancies. A big part of this is making sure you have access to the right financial information.

We've produced two booklets to help you make your money go further. *Your Money* has a range of financial information and advice

covering managing your money, dealing with debt, savings, different types of benefits and much more. *On the Money* provides similar information but is aimed at and written for young people.

We hope these booklets will help you to make the right decisions especially if you have concerns about your finances. Please contact us on **0300 373 3000** or email us at **get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk** if you'd like a copy of *Your Money* or *On the Money* booklet.



Are you affected by the reduced Benefit Cap?

From 7 November, the weekly Benefit Cap will be reduced for working age tenants, meaning some of you will receive fewer benefits to help pay your rent.

Who is affected?

If you live in London and are of working age:

- ▶ For a couple, with or without children, and single people with children, the cap will be reduced to £442.31.
- ▶ For single people without children, the cap will be reduced to £296.35.

If you live in Hertford and other out of London properties and are of working age:

- ▶ For a couple, with or without children, and single people with children, the cap will be reduced to £384.62.
- ▶ For single people without children, the cap will be reduced to £257.69.

How we can help

If you think you may be affected by the Benefit Cap please contact your income officer or call us on **0300 373 3000** and ask to speak to a welfare adviser. You can also email the Welfare Advice team at **welfareadvisors@networkhomes.org.uk**.



There are several exemptions from the Benefit Cap and our advisors will help to check whether you should be exempt or help you apply for your full benefit entitlement.

If you're affected by the Benefit Cap, our employment service can assist you into work which may help you manage the shortfall. Contact Kamara Jackson on **0300 373 3000** or email **worksmart@networkhomes.org.uk**.

Don't wait if you think you may be affected!

Fire safety in your home

With the festive period fast approaching it's important that you ensure your home and family stay safe. Here are some fire safety top tips to help you:

- ▶ Check the battery in your smoke alarm every week and remember to clean it and remove dust.
- ▶ If you use fireworks, ensure they are stored in a metal box – ideally outside in a safe and secure place. Always read the instructions and never go back to a lit firework. Keep a bucket of water nearby should an incident occur.
- ▶ Make sure your festive lights conform to the British Standard. There should be a British Standard logo on the packaging.



- ▶ Decorations can burn easily - don't attach them to lights or heaters.
- ▶ Do not overload electrical sockets. Watch out for faulty and over-heating electrical equipment and wiring/cables.
- ▶ Never leave burning candles unattended and place them on a fire resistant base away from flammable items.
- ▶ Practise your fire escape plan. Make sure your family and visitors know what to do in an emergency.
- ▶ If you live in a flat, familiarise yourself with the building's fire strategy.
- ▶ Switch off electrical appliances when not in use, unless they're designed to stay on. Take special

care with festive lights and always switch them off before you go to bed.

- ▶ Most fires start in the kitchen so never leave cooking unattended.
- ▶ Make sure cigarettes are completely extinguished.

Taking these steps will help you and your family stay safe in your home. If you require any further assistance or advice please contact Network Homes' Fire Safety Team on **0300 373 3000** or download our *Fire Safety in Your Home* booklet from our website www.networkhomes.org.uk. Alternatively, your local fire service can provide advice.



Protect your belongings with home contents insurance



Winter weather can bring unexpected damage both to our homes and possessions. While Network Homes insures the building you live in, it is your responsibility to insure your personal belongings.

We've teamed up with Thistle Insurance Services to offer you an affordable home contents insurance scheme which can give you peace of mind. My Home Contents Insurance covers

damage to your household goods and contents by fire, theft, water, vandalism and other household risks.

Six reasons to choose My Home Contents Insurance:

- ▶ Affordable standard cover rates
- ▶ No excess - you do not pay to put in a claim
- ▶ No yearly commitment and flexible regular Pay-As-You-Go payment options

- ▶ Covers damage to internal decorations
- ▶ Covers lost or stolen keys and even the contents of your freezer
- ▶ Optional accidental damage cover available for items such as TVs, hearing aids and wheelchairs.

To find out more about My Home Contents insurance visit www.thistlemyhome.co.uk. Alternatively call **0345 450 7288** or email myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk.

Improving your repairs service

We're pleased to announce that since Tuesday 1 November we've been working with Wates Living Space Ltd to carry out repairs.

Wates Living Space Ltd is an arm of our building partner Wates Ltd. They've taken over the repairs and maintenance of our homes in North, West and South London, from our previous contractors, Rydon. Wates are a leading UK building and construction company and a family-owned business dating back to 1897.

Over the past few months we've put in a lot of work behind the scenes to make sure that you don't experience any difficulties when you call to log a repair. We've also worked hard to improve our

services, so that if your repair is not urgent, you can now choose the most convenient time for our repairs person to come to you.

Residents living in East London and Hertford will continue to have their repairs serviced by our existing contractors, MCP. Their processes have also been upgraded to be brought in line with the new way of working that Wates will be using.

Although some of you have a new repairs contractor, the way you report a repair has not changed. You can still call our Customer Service Centre on **0300 373 3000** or use the self service portal on our website (www.networkhomes.org.uk) to log your repair.



Keeping your home pest free

We've recently changed our pest control contractor. From Thursday 1 December, we're using Monitor Pest & Bird Control.

Monitor Pest & Bird Control have expertise in housing and they provide a specialist pest/bird control and prevention service. They work with customers to remove and prevent infestation. They also train residents and the community on best prevention practice.

Pest control issues in communal areas

The new contract covers communal areas and external grounds of flats only. It does not cover the inside of your home. If you have a pest control problem within the communal areas of your building, please contact our Customer Service Team on **0300 373 3000**.

Pest control issues in your home

We've agreed a discount rate with Monitor for our residents who need to use their services. If you have a pest control problem inside your home, you can contact Monitor directly on **01474 358855** or email them at info@monitorpestcontrol.co.uk. You'll have to pay Monitor directly for this service. For more information visit www.monitorpestcontrol.co.uk.



Darryl gets Worksmart

Darryl Handford, a Network Homes resident in Hertford, successfully found his way back into work with the help of the information, advice and guidance (IAG) support he received from the Network Homes Worksmart programme. Worksmart, which is run by Groundwork, is a free employment support service for our residents.

The support the Worksmart programme gave to Darryl helped him to secure his first interview. Although he didn't get the job it inspired him to explore his options further including becoming self-employed.

Darryl said, "I spoke to Sarah, IAG Adviser, and made the decision to go self-employed. I was inspired by a job I did last year, where I really enjoyed working outdoors and gardening, so I decided that was what I wanted to do as my own business. I set up D Hand-Scapes – Garden and Home Maintenance".

The IAG Adviser was also able to get £200 in funding for Darryl which he spent on tools to help kick-start his business. She also secured a further £100 in hardware store vouchers. As a result, Darryl can now offer a wide range of services for garden and home maintenance.

**Darryl said,
"The scheme works well and I think more people should use it. It makes it easy to get a job or find what you want to do."**

If you would like to find out more about the information, advice and guidance support we offer including how to access the service, contact Kamara Jackson on **0300 373 3000** or email worksmart@networkhomes.org.uk.

Complete the self service portal survey and receive £10 worth of vouchers

Earlier this year we launched the new online self service portal. You now have a chance to tell us what you think about the portal by taking part in a short online survey on our website at www.networkhomes.org.uk/living-in-your-home/self-service-portal/. As a thank you for taking part, we will send you a £10 Love2shop voucher if you complete the survey by Monday 16 January 2017.

The self service portal is quick, easy to use and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can use it to view your rent account, pay your rent and report a repair. If you would like to use the online portal visit our website, www.networkhomes.org.uk, and you will find it in the 'Living in your home' section.

Don't forget to tell us what you think by Monday 16 January 2017 to receive your £10 voucher!

Looking for work?

Are you, or is someone that lives in your household, looking for employment, training or help with their CV? Kamara Jackson, our new Employment & Training Advisor is here to help.

Kamara joined the team in October and will be running our Worksmart programme. The programme is there to help you on your journey to employment.

No matter what your personal needs are, if you're interested in finding work then get in touch. We have lots of options available to get you moving in the right direction. We can help you access

relevant training courses to get you back into work, apply for jobs and prepare you for interviews.

In the last 12 months Worksmart has helped get 32 residents into work. If you'd like to find out more about what Worksmart can offer contact Kamara on **0300 373 3000** or email worksmart@networkhomes.org.uk.

Keeping you warm this winter

Over the last few months, we've worked hard to ensure residents in our sheltered housing stay warm over the winter period.

At the beginning of the year, we completed a full review of the communal heating and hot water systems in all of our sheltered housing schemes. The review identified performance issues at some of them. To help make a difference, we've replaced the communal boilers in five of our sheltered housing schemes in London - Biko House, Tulsi House, Rosemary House, Corsham House and Newcroft House.

To ensure the works were completed to a high standard our Senior Gas Inspector, Victor Okechukwu, worked closely with the contractors during each installation. He also worked with scheme managers to make sure all our residents' needs were met throughout the duration of the project.

We're very happy with the boiler installations and we're confident that our residents will feel a great benefit throughout the colder months. The work doesn't end there as we'll continue to identify further communal systems that need replacing for next year's programme.



Are you prepared for winter?

Top tips for winter proofing your home

It's that time of year when the temperature drops and the nights draw in. The changing season presents a whole host of new risks. Preventing some of the risks now can protect your home, improve your energy efficiency and save a lot of hassle if the unexpected happened.

Our winter checklist:

- ▶ Check your heating system works correctly. Set your thermostat to 18–21°C and use a timer to turn the heating on and off. This helps save on your fuel bills and prevents pipes from freezing.
- ▶ Draw the curtains at dusk and close internal doors to unheated rooms.
- ▶ Use insulation to block any draughty gaps.
- ▶ If your radiators have cool spots when the heating is on, bleed them to improve their efficiency.
- ▶ Regularly check all the taps in your home during the winter months. If little or no water flows, there may be frozen water in the pipes.

- ▶ Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms weekly. It's your responsibility to change the batteries and ensure the alarm works.
- ▶ Prevent frost damage – make sure your gutters and gullies are clear of leaves and debris.
- ▶ If you have a garden, make sure it's tidy and free from rubbish that could cause slips and trips if covered by frost or snow.
- ▶ Never leave burning candles, incense or oil burners unattended and keep them out of reach of children and pets.

If you have any issue with your property, please contact us on **0300 373 3000** or report a repair via our online self-service portal at www.networkhomes.org.uk.



► Ways to pay your rent

We understand you may have a lot of expenses over the festive period but it's important you don't forget to pay your rent. Paying your rent should be a priority.

There are a number of ways you can pay your rent:

- ▶ **New online self service portal**
– pay online, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at www.networkhomes.org.uk.
- ▶ **Over the phone** – via AllPay, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on **0844 557 8321** or call us on **0300 373 3000** between 8am and 6pm. You'll need to quote your unique payment reference number.
- ▶ **Direct Debit** – contact our Income Management Team on **0300 373 3000** to set up a Direct Debit.
- ▶ **Standing order** – make payments to Network Homes Limited, sort code: 20-74-09, account number: 53408728. Please remember to quote your payment reference number.
- ▶ **AllPay payment app**
– download the app for free from your app store. For more details visit www.allpay.net.
- ▶ **Pay Point outlet** – pay at the Post Office or any Pay Point outlet using your rent payment card.



If you have any concerns about paying your rent over the festive period, please contact us on 0300 373 3000.

Keep in touch

0300 373 3000

customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk

www.networkhomes.org.uk

 [@networkhomesuk](https://twitter.com/networkhomesuk)

 www.facebook.com/networkhomesuk

Registered office: Network Homes, Olympic Office Centre, 8 Fulton Road, Wembley, HA9 0NU.

A charitable Registered Society no. 7326 under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. Registered Provider no. 4825.

If you would prefer not to receive the Network Homes newsletter you can opt-out by emailing communications@networkhomes.org.uk or writing to Marketing & Communications Team, Network Homes, Olympic Office Centre, 8 Fulton Road, Wembley, HA9 0NU.