



Kingston Churches Housing Association

Christmas 2020

Housing Services Manager Update

Despite it being a difficult and challenging year for everyone, the Housing Team have adapted our working procedures in order to continue to offer a good service to our tenants.

Housing Team Update

I want to thank everyone for working with us and participating in our covid-19 questionnaires earlier in the year and updating us with your contact details. This helps us to keep accurate records in case we need to contact you quickly.

We will continue to keep you updated regularly on any government guidance and relevant news.

Calum & Trudi have been working extremely hard managing your issues. I want to thank them both for their hard work which has been difficult at times whilst working from home.

Tenant Engagement

I plan for a visit from a firefighter to attend our sheltered housing to discuss precautions we all need to be aware of in our day to day activities. If you have any concerns and what we all can do to prevent accidents in the home now, and in the future. This will be informal, and I hope to hold in Spring.

I will be updating the library at Wilberforce House, Thornton Lodge and Torrington by the end of January next year. Those of you who like reading will be able to borrow a book from our library. When you finish reading the book, simply return so someone else can borrow the book. Please let me know if you have a favourite author and whether you prefer to read fiction or non-fiction (eg. autobiography, history or facts). This will help when replenishing our books.

If you need help with shopping, collecting newspapers and prescriptions please contact us for details of a local helper. If you need any extra help, we can provide details of your local foodbank.

We are holding a raffle with three prizes:

1st prize is a £25 M&S voucher, **2nd prize** is a selection of word searches and crosswords, **3rd prize** is a box of chocolates.

If you would like to enter our fun raffle, please contact Trudi on 07951 966452 or Calum on 07951 966457 who will be delighted to enter your name in our draw. The deadline for entries is Tuesday 22nd December 2020 at 5:00pm. The lucky tenants will receive their prize before Christmas by Karen Hart, Housing Services Manager.

We would really like to hear from you about what activities and events you want. A comment was received from one family thanking us for the trip to the theatre as without these trips they would not all be able to visit the theatre.

Please see below a selection of tenant engagement activities since we began. We are looking forward to reinstating our tenant engagement activity.





Gas Safety Certificates

When you receive letters requesting you book an appointment for your annual gas safety check, please do not delay contacting us, you can make appointments up to two months before the due date. It is a health and safety issue and you may receive a warning of notice seeking possession if you do not contact us. If you need to self-isolate please let us know immediately, so we can book your appointment for 14 days after

As we all face unpredictable times this winter, if we all work together, I am confident we can overcome obstacles and minimise the risk of the spread of Covid-19. By following the governments updates we can keep everyone safe.

As we approach the Christmas break spending time with family and friends will be different this year. Between 23 and 27 December 2020 you can form a Christmas Bubble which composes of people from no more than three households. You can only be in one Christmas Bubble and cannot change your bubble. You can continue to meet up to six people who are not in your Christmas bubble outdoors according to the rules.

Finally, I hope everyone stays healthy and safe during these unpredictable times and I hope you all have a lovely Christmas with friends and family.

Karen Hart
Housing Services Manager



Payment of Rent

If you have any concerns regarding your rent, you can seek assistance from citizen advice centres who can assist on the new style job seekers benefit or universal credit.

Alternatively, please contact Calum on 07951 966454 who will be happy to help with general guidelines on benefits or will work with you to arrange a payment plan to reduce your rent.

If you are unable to work, please contact Housing Benefit or Universal Credit immediately to make a claim to get help to pay your rent.

You can contact Housing Benefit by telephoning 020 8547 5501 or by emailing benefits@gov.uk. To make a claim online, visit www.kingston.gov.uk/benefits.

For Universal Credit Helpline on how to claim contact 0800 328 5644 or go online on www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim.

Fire Safety Visits in January 2021

Those tenants due fire safety checks will find enclosed a letter about the quarterly visits due on:

Wednesday 20th, Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd January 2021.

CORONAVIRUS December 2020 Update

We are heading towards the end of one of the most challenging years most of us have ever faced, and whilst we are not out of the woods yet, there is hope on the horizon.

We all enjoyed the lifting of restrictions during the summer, but these were then followed by an initial 3 tier system followed by a further national lockdown during November. We are now back in a revised 3 tier system, currently the high-levels tier 2 & 3. All these changes can be quite confusing, so please contact us if you need any help keeping up to date.

I am pleased to announce that KCHA have had no reported incidents of Covid-19 with Tenants and Staff, which is testimony to the measures we have all taken to control the spread of the virus and keep ourselves and others safe. I want to ask people to continue to observe the guidance as you have been doing so successfully all year.

My family and I were tested on the 1st December and the results all came back negative within 24 hours. If you or anyone in your household is showing symptoms, the process to book, get tested and receive your results is very straightforward and quick.

It is very welcome news that the UK was the first to officially approve and order the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine, with the first vaccination taking place on Tuesday 8th December. Initially the vaccine will be limited to certain groups most at risk, and then it will be more widely available.

Further information and advice on Covid-19 and the vaccine programme can be found using the following link: <https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/>

You will all have been contacted by telephone from our housing team on a number of occasions since March to see how you are managing during this extraordinary year. I know many of you are busy, so please let us know if you would prefer us not to continue with these check-up calls and we will make a note.

In the last mailing I offered you all the chance of a reward of £50 for contacting the office and providing up to date contact details (e.g. email, mobile, landline). Two lucky winners were to be chosen at random, but only two people responded. So it's worth remembering in future, that engaging with us here at KCHA can be very rewarding.

Congratulations to our winners, Mrs A Kim of Kingston & Miss J Poplett from Surbiton.

On the major works front, the Stock Condition Survey I told you all about in September will be nearing completion now. I want to thank all of you for providing access to the surveyors. The information collected will help us to plan an effective maintenance strategy for years to come, and will help us refine our improvements programme in order to give you homes to be proud of.

Finally, please allow me to wish you all a wonderful and healthy Christmas and New Year.



Ross Brown, **Chief Executive**

Rent Statements

Your rent statement showing the balance at **11th December 2020** is enclosed. **Please check that it is correct and let us know if you think there are any discrepancies.**

If you need a rent statement that goes back further we will be glad to send you the information. Just let us know.