NEW YEAR, NEW VISION
A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OUR RESIDENTS

INSIDE
> Your feedback on our services
> What’s on in Lewisham
> Free educational opportunities
> News from your community

WIN £50
WIN shopping vouchers worth £50

Fire Safety
4-page pull-out
I’m now eight months into my post as Chief Executive of Lewisham Homes. I’ve already had the pleasure of meeting many residents particularly during consultation events as we’ve worked with you on refreshing our business plan and rethinking our core values, vision and mission.

Soon we’ll be able to share our new and improved vision, focused on thriving communities and places that people are proud to call home. We’ll be making detailed plans to deliver these ambitions in line with our roles as:

**Landlord** - Consistently delivering an excellent and reliable resident experience.

**Placemaker** – Building and investing in safe and sustainable homes and neighbourhoods.

**Employer** – Creating an inclusive team and a place to do great work.

**Partner** – Working in partnership to improve quality of life and life chances.

**Enterprise** - Being an efficient, high-performing business, maximising opportunities to deliver more.

One thing that I want us to get better at this year is really listening to the voice of our residents. We want you to know how committed we are to improving our services.

Wishing you a happy and successful 2019.

Margaret Dodwell, CEO.
We’re incredibly proud of residents from our Woodpecker Estate in New Cross, who organised and carried out a mammoth community clean up, with help from MP Vicky Foxcroft and charity CleanupUK. A total of 18 people took part and with all hands on deck, the group got to work fast, managing to clear a mini-mountain of rubbish in just one hour.

Alain Rozet, our tenant from the estate who initiated the clean up, said, “Last summer, I think because there were lots of people outside and it was very hot, there was lots of littering and I just wanted to do something about it.” As well as cleaning up the area, he says it was a great way for people from the community to build relationships. “It pushed us to actually talk to each other,” he laughed. “Now people recognise what we do and hopefully they’ll think twice before throwing rubbish in the street.”

Are you handy with a set of shears? Do you love the outdoors? Then you might be just who residents from our Pepys estate are looking for to join the ‘Friends of John Evelyn Garden’ volunteer team.

Based in Deptford, they’re looking for both regular and occasional members who can devote some time to helping maintain the garden and who are up for meeting new people while doing so.

Sound like something you’d like to get involved in?

07434 611 695
info@pepys.org.uk

It was a great, and thankfully sunny, morning and I enjoyed meeting and chatting to local residents and kids. It’s fantastic to see the community coming together to improve their local area and I was glad to be a part of it. I look forward to joining another session soon.

Vicky Foxcroft MP

Lewisham in bloom

Thanks to the hard work of our Grounds Maintenance team, each year from September to December selected communal green spaces across the borough have bulbs and seeds planted and sown.

This means we’ll see daffodils appear in March, hyacinths in May, poppies in June and alliums in July. So far we’ve planted 38,000 bulbs, 2,000 plants and two tons of seeds!
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Our annual garden party at the Albany is always one of our calendar highlights. It’s the one time of year when we get to engage with residents face-to-face while soaking up the sun and enjoying delicious food and fantastic entertainment from some of Lewisham’s top chefs and musicians.

Here are some of the highlights from last year’s event.

Supporting our youth

As a social housing provider we understand the importance of engaging with young people in our communities and doing what we can to enhance their opportunities.

That’s why we partnered with the Woodpecker Youth Club in New Cross to help with funding for its Girls and Boys Groups. Available for young people aged 8-14 from the borough, the initiative was created to educate and inspire.

Over eight weeks, the youth club was able to reach close to 40 young people. “The sessions have taught me how to look after myself,” said Rebecca, aged 10. Jaz, another participant aged 11, said: “I really liked the group discussions.” We look forward to supporting other programmes like this in the future.
Discovering the world of digital skills

Our Digital Skills for Work programme offers fantastic employment prospects for those interested in joining the digital workforce.

The programme was created in collaboration with Phoenix Community Housing and London Borough of Lewisham to provide basic digital skills for jobseekers. So far it has spawned two part-time paid positions and 20 volunteer opportunities exclusively for Lewisham locals.

Nanssi, along with the volunteers, now plays a vital role in helping us set up and deliver digital support for unemployed Lewisham residents.

Eager to learn some digital skills of your own? We hold free drop-in sessions for residents every Thursday from 10am-12pm in the reception area of the Old Town Hall in Catford.

As part of Get Online Week, we hosted a special interactive event to encourage more residents to improve their web skills and #Try1Thing on the internet.

Attendees learnt how to set up an email address, access online banking safely, and manage their Universal Credit and tenancies online.

Thanks to the roaring success of our free Learn to Code courses, almost 30 of our residents have been able to gain essential skills that can help kick-start a career in digital technology. Our ICT and Community Relations teams joined forces to deliver two instalments of the course, teaching attendees the basics of HTML, Javascript, SSMS and SQL.

One resident said: “It was really refreshing to have a course that’s not commonly accessible to those with little or no experience. I was inspired to learn new skills and the resources were excellent.”

Another commented: “The course was brilliant, I can’t find fault. Just wish there were MORE dates! It was so much fun.”

Congratulations to all of our residents who completed the course!

Keep an eye on our website for news on how to sign up to the next series of sessions.
We’ve been working closely with London Metropolitan University to provide educational housing courses for our residents.

Our Introduction to Local Housing and Improving Housing Services courses have proved hugely popular. “Informative, useful and fun,” one attendee said about Introduction to Local Housing. Another resident said that the Improving Housing Services course was one that “All tenants should attend.”

Of the residents who have graduated from these courses, two have subsequently done work placements with us. One went on to complete a degree in housing while others have pursued further training and taken part in our Resident Scrutiny Committee. Lewisham Homes resident Princess Balogun even joined our Board in 2016 after having previously attended the Improving Housing Services course.

Want to become one of the alumni? Our next Introduction to Local Housing course is taking place on 9 February 2019. Contact us to find out more: getinvolved@lewishamhomes.org.uk

Teaching the best lessons

We partnered with housing association The Hyde Group to offer a 14-week Teaching Assistant NVQ Level 2 Certificate course. This was open to people in Lewisham aged 19+ who were unemployed and claiming benefits.

We kickstarted the programme with an information day for Lewisham Homes residents. Those interested in applying for a place could then submit an application with some help from our staff. There were 25 places in total and we’re happy to report that 12 of our residents were accepted.

The successful applicants learned some important skills that can help them become teaching assistants, like safeguarding, supporting children using positive behaviours, and nurturing young people’s development.

An experience like no other

I very much enjoyed my time and would like to say a big thank you to everyone who supported me during my work placement at Lewisham Homes.

Ramatu Conteh

We were delighted to welcome one of our residents when she joined us for a three-week work experience placement last summer. Ramatu Conteh first attended one of our free ‘Improving Housing Services’ courses delivered by London Metropolitan University.

After attending the course she was inspired to pursue a career in housing, and enrolled on a degree course at Southbank University, which she successfully completed this year.

During her placement with us, Ramatu spent time with staff from our Housing Management, Welfare Benefits, Health & Safety and Community Relations teams.

We wish her all the best for the future!
 Winslade Estate Cyber centre reopens

Thanks to a collaboration between Lewisham Homes, United Living and Winslade Tenants’ and Residents’ Association (TRA) residents from the Winslade Estate in Newcross can now access a newly refurbished Cyber Centre after a five-year closure. It has now been fully redecorated, with new lighting, a brand new kitchen and newly installed work surfaces. Construction company United Living has also donated two laptops.

We consulted local residents on plans to reopen the centre and the response was overwhelmingly positive with digital support on the estate cited as a priority for many. “We are very much appreciative of the support in getting the centre back into use,” said James Henderson from Winslade TRA.

Lewisham’s Home for Art

We’re working with local artist Patricio Forrester, Founder and Creative Director of Artmongers, to create public pieces of art that will be displayed on development sites for new homes in 2019.

We’d like to say a big thank you to the team from St Giles Trust’s Routeways programme who came to deliver an employment support taster workshop at our office. The session was available to residents who are employed but need support financially.

Nadia, Emily, Melissa and Margaret from St Giles Trust held an excellent workshop where attendees received one-to-one support with a variety of employment skills, such as CV writing and interview techniques. They were also put in touch with organisations who can offer training and employment opportunities.

One resident said: “The course was brilliant and it has given me the confidence to pursue my goals and apply for jobs.”

You can find out more about St Giles Trust at stgilestrust.org.uk

Want to have your say on what these will look like? You can join us at an open workshop to meet the artists and personally contribute ideas on 17 January.

For more information, email getinvolved@lewishamhomes.org.uk
How we can help you with Universal Credit

Our specialist Welfare Benefits team can help residents with:

- **Getting to know Universal Credit**
- **Getting online and using the internet**
- **Receiving the right amount of money**
- **Setting up a budget planner**
- **How and when to pay your rent**
- **Identifying your benefit entitlements**

**Universal Credit is paid MONTHLY not weekly like Housing Benefit.**

You will get one payment for all your benefits paid direct to your bank account.

You will need to budget your money to ensure everything is paid on time.

**Universal Credit can only be claimed online.**

You will need to know how to use the internet and be able to access the internet via a smartphone, tablet or computer.

You must know your National Insurance number and rent charges to make your application.

**Universal Credit replaces:**

- Income Support
- Jobseeker’s Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit

Council Tax support will remain separate. You will need to make a claim online to Lewisham Council.

✉️ welfarebenefits@lewishamhomes.org.uk 0800 028 2 028
What’s inside:
> Smoke alarms vs heat alarms
> Making a fire escape plan
> What is carbon monoxide poisoning?
> Choosing a carbon monoxide alarm
STAY FIRE SAFE

The most common causes of fire in the home are smoking, cooking, candles, heating and electronics. You MUST ensure you have appropriate smoke and heat alarms fitted that can detect fires and alert you quickly if there is one.

London Fire Brigade explains: “Smoke alarms detect smoke – fit them in all rooms where a fire might start. But in smoky or steamy rooms like your kitchen or bathroom, a heat alarm is more suitable. These alarms go off when the room reaches a certain temperature.”

TOP TIPS FOR USING YOUR FIRE ALARM

> One smoke alarm isn’t enough – fit them in all rooms where a fire might start.
> Ensure any alarms you purchase come with a Kitemark or European (CE) safety mark.
> Always fit smoke alarms on a ceiling unless it specifies they’re also suitable to be mounted on walls.
> Follow the installation instructions that come with the alarm.
> When fitting your alarm, screw don’t glue. If you use glue, it can seep into the alarm and stop it from working.
> Keep your smoke alarms away from kitchens or bathrooms as steam can damage the alarms, or mistakenly set them off.
> Fit a heat alarm in the kitchen.
> Choose smoke alarms with a 10 year or long-lasting sealed battery.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can book a fire safety visit with the London Fire Brigade and get a free smoke alarm fitted.
Visit www.london-fire.gov.uk to find out more.
MAKE A FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

Being prepared for a fire can save lives. With everyone in your household:

- Plan what you would do if there was a fire in your home.
- Agree your escape route out of the building.
- Make sure you all know where the keys to the front door and windows are kept.
- Learn how to navigate the stairs in darkness so you could do the same in thick smoke.
- Keep your escape route clear of obstacles.

WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

Call 999
Call the emergency services as soon as it is safe to do so. Do not try to tackle the fire yourself, as this could put yourself and others in danger. The sooner you call 999, the sooner the fire brigade will be sent to deal with the fire.

Fire inside your home
If the fire is inside your home, get out and stay out. Do not waste time rescuing valuables. Try to stay calm, and if you can, close the doors to rooms to prevent smoke and fire spreading. If you live in a block, close your front door to prevent smoke and fire spreading into the corridor or stairwell. Alert your neighbours and do not return to your home until the fire brigade tells you it is safe to do so.

Fire outside your home
If the fire is elsewhere inside the building, or outside of your home, London Fire Brigade advises you to stay inside. You are usually safer in your home unless heat or smoke is affecting you. Close your windows and front door, and place bedding or any soft materials at the bottom of your room door to block smoke from entering.

Smoke
If there is a lot of smoke, stay low. Crawl along the floor where there is less smoke and the air is cleaner.

Do not use lifts
Use the stairs. If you live in a block, make your way out using the emergency exit staircase. During fires, lifts are dangerous because you may become trapped inside.
Carbon monoxide (CO) fumes are highly poisonous. They are produced by the incomplete burning of fossil fuels. Around 50 deaths and hundreds of injuries are caused each year as a result of CO poisoning.

CO can build up when gas appliances, including cookers and heaters, are incorrectly fitted, or when flues, chimneys and vents are blocked.

**SYMPTOMS OF CO POISONING:**

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Breathlessness
- Collapse
- Loss of consciousness

CO poisoning symptoms can easily be confused with generally feeling unwell, which is why it’s so dangerous. It’s important that you install an alarm in all rooms containing solid fuel, gas, or paraffin devices.

**TYPES OF CO DETECTORS:**

**Sealed battery detectors**

The battery for this kind of detector is sealed inside the unit. Once it runs out, the alarm sounds, letting you know it’s time to replace the unit.

**Replaceable battery detectors**

With this detector, batteries need to be changed every two to three years, though the alarm still has a lifespan of between five and 10 years.

**Smart detectors**

These alarms send a message to your smart phone if they detect dangerous levels of CO.

**Patch detectors**

Rather than sound the alarm, this kind of detector changes colour when there’s CO in the atmosphere.

To compare CO alarms, visit which.co.uk
We regularly service and maintain all lifts in our buildings but they can break down occasionally.

If you become shut in a lift, please DO NOT dial 999. London Fire Brigade is already very busy and if attending to someone stuck in a lift they’re not available to deal with more serious incidents.

To support London Fire Brigade in reducing unwanted calls, Lewisham Homes has its own lift release service. Pressing the call button inside your lift will put you straight through to the release engineers who will attend and let you out.

Everyone plays a role in preventing fires and ensuring escape routes aren’t blocked. We’d like to remind residents to keep communal corridors clear and respond immediately to requests to remove obstructions. Above all, nobody should store anything that presents a clear fire risk in the communal areas within our blocks such as mopeds, wood and paper items or gas canisters.

We’ll be piloting a tighter clear corridors policy in some blocks, starting in February 2019, and will consider rolling this out to more properties after April. We’ll inform all residents who will be directly affected by this before we make any changes.

Do it online
24/7

Have you signed up for our online portal My Lewisham Homes?

It’s simple to view and manage:

> Your tenancy details
> Your rent and service charge information
> Your garage accounts
> Your contact preferences
> Your Tenancy and Rent officers

QUICKER THAN CALLING, EASIER THAN VISITING THE OFFICE

Tried, tested and approved.

Our residents tell us that My Lewisham Homes is clear, convenient and fuss-free.

If you haven’t signed up yet, it’s quick and simple to do. Just visit lewishamhomes.org.uk and select Do It Online.
Making your house a home
AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

At Lewisham Homes we understand how important it is for our residents to be able to move freely and comfortably around their homes, regardless of any disabilities or reduced mobility.

That’s why we provide basic adaptations to properties where residents are experiencing difficulty getting around. You don’t need an assessment from Lewisham Council’s Community Occupational Therapy Service to access this.

Examples of what we can install, adjust or adapt for you include hand rails, bathroom lever taps, safety glass and easy-to-use WC flush handles. Additions for those with visual and hearing impairments are also available.

To apply for a basic adaptation, please call our Customer Contact Centre on 0800 028 2028.

Did you know?

If you have poor mobility or health issues and need to see your Housing Officer, we can come to you.

We’re on hand to help with things like ASB complaints and support referrals.

We can also speak to you about your rehousing options, including downsizing, and tenancy changes.

Community care

Carers Lewisham is a charity that supports unpaid carers in the borough by providing advice and emotional support.

If you or someone you know could benefit from these services find out more at carerslewisham.org.uk.

January 2019
Your feedback
Tenant satisfaction survey

Between June and August 2018, we contacted 1,000 general needs and sheltered housing tenants for our 2018 satisfaction survey. We wanted to find out how many residents are happy with the service we provide and see how the responses compare to our last survey which was carried out in 2016. We’ve also compared this year’s feedback to the London average for tenant satisfaction in social housing.

See how we rank:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lewisham Homes services</th>
<th>2018 score</th>
<th>2016 score</th>
<th>Improved?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall satisfaction with services</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of home</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood as a place to live</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>🔴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and maintenance service</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens to views and acts on them</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>🔴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home owner satisfaction survey

In order to gather feedback from our leaseholders, we contacted 552 home owners in June 2018. Again, it was important for us to find out how many residents are happy with the service we provide and compare the responses to the feedback we received from our home owners in 2016.

See how we rank:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lewisham Homes services</th>
<th>2018 score</th>
<th>2016 score</th>
<th>Improved?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall satisfaction with services</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood as a place to live</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>🔴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for money</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>🔴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A first for Lewisham
SOCIAL HOUSING FRAUD PROSECUTION

In May last year our Tenancy Audit team worked closely with Lewisham Council to secure our first ever prosecution for subletting. The tenant, who was a solicitor, received a suspended custodial sentence and was ordered to pay back the unlawful profit of over £3,000, plus Lewisham Council’s legal costs of £5,000.

We terminated more than 60 tenancies in the first six months of 2018. Each tenancy ended means someone in need from the council waiting list can be rehoused.

We rely on referrals from staff and residents to achieve these results.

Action we took between April-September 2018:

- **Warning letters**: 169
- **Acceptable behaviour & good neighbour agreements**: 2
- **Mediation Referrals**: 1
- **Evictions**: 1

If you suspect someone is committing housing fraud, let us know. All reports will be kept confidential.

occupancy.checks@lewishamhomes.org.uk

Make a Stand against domestic abuse

At Lewisham Homes we house thousands of people, and employ hundreds, many of whom will have been affected by domestic abuse either directly or indirectly.

That’s why we’ve signed the Chartered Institute of Housing’s new pledge to take action in support of victims of domestic abuse.

Our ASB team works hard to support domestic abuse victims. By signing this pledge we’re committing to continually improving the work we do around this.

Read more about the Make a Stand pledge at:

cih.org/makeastand

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, you can call the 24-hour freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline on 080 8200 0247.
We’re keen to improve the skills of our workforce, and to ensure that we’re an employer that welcomes and gives opportunities to all.

In order to highlight our commitment to inclusive leadership we’re running leadership training courses that focus on improving the diversity of our workforce.

We rounded off Black History Month with a talk from Kevin George, former footballer turned author, therapist and speaker. Kevin, who was born and raised in Lewisham borough, regaled us with tales from his time in football, where he played for West Ham and Charlton amongst others.

He explained that while writing his book, ‘Soccology’, he spoke to other former players about all aspects of life in the sport, but when it came to writing a chapter about race, he couldn’t get enough of his former peers to talk about it. So, why was that? Kevin thinks a key reason is a lack of awareness of the role race plays in football. He believes that raising awareness is one of the most important things that Show Racism the Red Card does.

To find out more about Show Racism the Red Card, visit theredcard.org

In celebration of Black History Month, we showed our support for anti-racism educational charity Show Racism the Red Card by taking part in its annual Wear Red Day. And boy did we paint the office red! Staff were also encouraged to donate £1 towards nationwide anti-racism education and we ended up raising a total of £128.
Our Grounds Maintenance team is responsible for the upkeep and care of the green areas on our estates. On a chilly autumn day we spent some time with one of our Grounds Operatives, Dan Richardson, who’s also a longstanding Lewisham Homes tenant. Read on to find out what he got up to that day.

7:15am  It’s an early start for Dan who goes to meet the rest of his team on site in Wells Park, Sydenham. “Once I arrive I unload the van, then make sure all the tools are ready to use. I also check that I’ve got my noise-cancelling headphones, PPE (personal protective equipment) and high-vis jacket with me.”

8:30am: Dan and the team can now start using their power tools to begin clearing the thousands of leaves scattered across the green. “At the moment we’re mainly using leaf blowers but soon we’ll need hedge cutters as well. We’ve also got other things like our hoes, bags and rakes. A couple of people will start blowing the leaves into piles near the van and then we’ll start bagging them up.”

1pm: After lunch there’s still lots to do. “Wells Park is a big site so we’ll probably be here again tomorrow because there are lots of leaves. They fill up really quickly so we need to go and drop them off at the tip once or twice a day.” Dan and the rest of the team work together to get as much done as possible. “We’ve got a great morale within our team, everyone chips in.”

2.45pm: Dan starts to pack up and prepares to travel back to site. “At the end of the day we tidy up any mess we’ve made.” Despite the cold weather, being active means he’s been able to stay warm. “When you’re working you warm up quickly so as long as it’s not wet I don’t mind.”

3.30: Having arrived back to the site and dropped off the tools, he’s done for the day and heads home.
WIN! Spot the difference

Want to be in with a chance of winning shopping vouchers worth £50? Simply find the five differences between the two pictures below.

To enter: You can enter by post or email. You must include your name, age, address and contact details along with each difference that you’ve spotted.

Email: communications@lewishamhomes.org.uk with the subject title ‘Spot the difference’ or send your entry by post to: Communications Team, FREEPOST Lewisham Homes (no stamp needed).
Submissions must be received by Monday 4 February.

lewishamhomes.org.uk/events
Our Community Relations team work closely with residents to plan different leisure and educational initiatives that help our communities thrive.

Got a great idea to better your community but unsure how to execute it? We’d love to hear from you. Contact us to find out more about how you can get involved in things like:

- Training opportunities
- Gardening forums and clean up days
- Community programmes including street dance and sessions for young people at the Albany
- The Resident Scrutiny Committee
- Supporting community facility management

Closing our Albany office

Having reviewed the number of residents using our office at the Albany, we’ve made the difficult decision to close the office on 31 March 2019. We’ve looked at the most common enquiries received at the office and we will be providing some convenient alternatives for those who use it.

If you have any queries regarding the closure of the Albany Office, please contact us:

✉ enquiries@lewishamhomes.org.uk
0800 028 2 028
lewishamhomes.org.uk/your-community

Meet the Community Relations team

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