

Southwark
Life

Housing News

Southwark
Council

January 2014

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MySouthwark



Southwark Council

Visit your local My Southwark Customer Service Point or One Stop Shop

Walk in and use the self service machines at the Customer Service Points

- Pay your rent or service charges
- Book refuse and recycling collections
- Access your My Southwark account

Book an appointment in advance to talk to an advisor

- Bermondsey Customer Service Point
 - Walworth Customer Service Point
 - Peckham One Stop Shop
- 020 7525 5565

Sign up to My Southwark to view your benefits statements, maps displaying local services and facilities where you live, planned road works and much more. It's quick and easy to register for an account. Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/mysouthwark

www.southwark.gov.uk/servicepoints

Southwark Council



IF YOU ARE A LANDLORD YOU CAN EARN MONEY BY LETTING YOUR PROPERTY TO US

Find out more at www.southwark.gov.uk/landlords or call 020 7525 4172

Social lettings agency

www.southwark.gov.uk/landlords

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE?

WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE OF THE SOUTHWARK LIFE HOUSING NEWS.

Firstly, I'd like to wish you and your family a most joyful new year. I hope 2014 will be very happy and peaceful for you.

As we look to the year ahead, it's wonderful to be able to start off as we mean to go on, with an exciting leap forward in the work at the Four Squares estate; you can read more about this on page 12.

I also hope you enjoy hearing from some of our young people about how they are developing their skills and themselves giving back to the community. Discover how our apprentices are working with contractors; how Joe is championing your repairs; and how Josephine is exploring all the borough has to offer.

I hope you enjoy this issue and as always, if there are any topics you would like to see covered or views you want to share, do please get in touch.

Best wishes
Cllr Ian Wingfield

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT

CONTACT US

Do you have something to say about Southwark Life Housing News? Write to: Letters, Southwark Life Housing News, Communications, Southwark Council, 160 Tooley Street, Second floor, Hub 5, SE1 2QH or email SLHN@southwark.gov.uk

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TWEET TWEET

We're online so if you are too, come and say hi. It's a great way to stay updated on the latest local events, news and info.

@LB_southwark

www.facebook.com/southwarkcouncil



WE'RE BRINGING THE REPAIRS SERVICE TO YOU

We've planned estate action days to make it easy for you to tell us about communal repairs and repairs in your home.

Come along to speak to your resident officer. We'll also have repairs contractors on hand to take a look at the work and make arrangements for it to be done – at times the repair can be done right away.

i For more information about upcoming estate action days
Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/ead

NEW ALLOCATIONS SCHEME TO SEE LOCALS HOUSED FIRST

Over the past two years, we have been asking residents for their thoughts on who council housing should be for and who should be prioritised. The waiting list is 20,000 long but just 2,000 homes become available to let each year.

Now we have created a new allocations policy for council houses which includes priority for those leaving the armed forces, penalties for people who act antisocially or cause disruption to neighbours and a bump up the list for people who make an active contribution to their local community through voluntary work. In order to help support those most affected by what's often called the 'bedroom tax', under-occupiers who genuinely need the space but are affected by the spare room subsidy will be awarded the highest priority on the housing register. To support local people in Southwark first, people also now need a five year local residency qualification before they can join the housing register.

Councillor Ian Wingfield, cabinet member for housing, said, "The new allocations criteria will help shape the communities we wish to see thrive and support people who are desperate for a home to get one more quickly."

i To see the full policy
Visit www.southwark.gov.uk

YOUR VOTE MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

Local elections are taking place in May.

They're your chance to really make a difference to local issues, from housing to social care to education. Your vote can change the future of our borough – so don't lose it! Watch out for a letter about registering to vote.

i Find more information
Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/voting

Southwark IN BRIEF

MEET OUR FIRST £1000 WINNER

Jean Bartlett has won £1000 for giving us feedback after her housing repair was completed.

The draw is held every three months. Every resident who has had a housing repair carried out on their property is emailed a link to complete an online satisfaction survey. A random winner is drawn from all the surveys received. Feedback is important to help us deliver the best service.

Jean said, "I'm amazed, I had to keep asking the person who told me to repeat himself because I thought it was a joke. I'd definitely recommend others fill in their feedback forms – you never know if you might win."

DISCOVER YOUR HIDDEN TALENTS

Ever thought about getting an additional qualification or trying out a new activity?

We offer hundreds of courses and qualifications for adults aged 19 and over or families with children. Courses take place all over the borough and include everything from creative learning such as dressmaking and pottery to basic skills such as reading, writing and numeracy, and qualifications in food safety, first aid and childcare. The spring term adult learning course guide is out now. Pick one up at the Thomas Carlton adult learning centre or at your local library.

i For more information
Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/adultlearning

A REMARKABLE COUPLE CELEBRATE A BIG ANNIVERSARY

Mr and Mrs Collier, respectively 99 and 94 years of age, on Christmas Day celebrated their 77th wedding anniversary.

The couple have lived in their flat on the Friern Road Estate since the year England won the World Cup in 1966 and passers-by might be lucky enough to catch the sound of Mr Collier singing to his wife. She still remembers bringing her future husband home for the first time: her aunt said "I wonder how long he will last!".

During an action day on the estate in Dulwich, Mr and Mrs Collier received a surprise visit from Gerri Scott, strategic director of housing and community services, who presented them with a bouquet to mark the very special occasion.

PROPER QUALITY CARE



Carewatch supports people over 55 years old in Southwark or Lewisham who have care workers at home.

They can talk to you about the quality of your homecare and whether you feel like you can make decisions about it, your home environment and general wellbeing.

i For more information contact Cate Lyle
Call 020 7358 4076
Email cate.lyle@ageuklands.org.uk

carewatch
supporting independence



WORKING KNOWLEDGE

Are you looking for an opportunity to earn while you learn? Here's how our apprenticeship scheme is helping local people to get new skills, a nationally recognised qualification and bring home a regular wage.



“I'm in my third year now. I've had a wonderful experience. When I first started everyone put themselves out to help me.”
Harry, apprentice plumber with Southwark Building Services.

Apprenticeships are more popular than ever. They're great because they provide an opportunity to earn while getting real work experience and a valuable qualification. We've been offering apprenticeships to local people for the last eight years and our scheme has grown from strength to strength. Many of our apprentices go on to permanent employment within the council and elsewhere at the end of their apprenticeship.

Cllr Dora Dixon-Fyle, cabinet member for children's services, said, "I started my working life as an apprentice for a London council so I know what great knowledge, skills and contacts can be gained from this valuable and quality experience. We're very proud of what we've achieved through our apprenticeship scheme. We're providing opportunities for local people to achieve their potential. It's all part of our commitment to increasing employment opportunities for people in the borough".

What type of work can you do?

We work with our partners to offer placements to local residents. These are in a wide range of areas including customer service, business administration, building trades and building maintenance.

We have apprentices working with Mears and Southwark Building Services, our repairs and maintenance contractors; A&E Elkins and Keepmoat, our major works contractors; Capita, our IT service provider, and Interserve, our building support services provider.

Coaching and mentoring

Throughout the apprenticeship you will be given advice and guidance. You will have a mentor who will discuss your career aspirations with you and do what they can

to help you achieve them. When Harry first started at Southwark Building Services he was working alongside a more senior plumber who took time to explain everything and show him the ropes. Now in his third year, Harry has a van and goes out to jobs on his own but he knows he can always call on his colleagues for advice if necessary.

"We like our apprentices to achieve high standards. They need to be reliable, dedicated and committed not only in their work but also in their studies at college. It's an opportunity of a lifetime; a trade apprenticeship is very valuable" said Paul Davis, operations manager at Southwark Building Services.

What about qualifications?

All our apprentices attend college one day a week working towards a Level 2 apprenticeship and then progress to a Level 3. Some go on to further and higher education. Jermaine, an apprentice surveyor with Southwark Council, is thinking about continuing his studies in building surveying or civil engineering.

How can I apply?

You can apply online. We advertise apprentice opportunities online and through the Jobcentre. Visit the website for entry requirements.

If there are no placements in the area that you're interested in, you can leave your email contact and we'll let you know when something comes up.

i For more information about apprenticeship opportunities and to apply online
Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/apprenticeship

MEET THE APPRENTICES



“I recently completed my apprenticeship and now have a permanent position in the housing maintenance and compliance team. It's a job that makes a difference to people's lives. Southwark is a great place to work. There's lots of scope to move forward with your career.”
Shani, communal repairs officer, housing repairs and maintenance



“I get involved in diagnosing housing defects and identifying the root cause of a problem. I love it. Every case is different. I'm working towards becoming a building surveyor or civil engineer.”
Jermaine, apprentice surveyor at Southwark Council



“I spent 30 years working in printing and graphic design. I never felt I would get an opportunity like this at my age. This has given me a great opportunity to change my career. I'm at college one day a week. It's strange being back in a classroom and the oldest person in class, but I enjoy every minute of it. The practical side of it is very interesting too, no two days are the same.”
Tim, apprentice carpenter with Mears

Facts about our scheme

- 291 apprentices have enrolled to do an apprenticeship since 2005
- 120 apprenticeships were available in 2013
- 105 apprentices are currently on the scheme
- 50 apprentices have progressed to higher level qualifications or university
- 120 apprentices moved into employment on leaving the scheme
- 175 apprentices have completed their full qualification
- 73 have worked with our contractors

Promise 9

Homes, jobs and growth

i For more information about the Fairer Future promises visit www.southwark.gov.uk/fairefuture

STRUGGLING TO PAY YOUR RENT?

PUT YOUR HAND UP FOR HELP

In these tough economic times, it's never been more important to pay your rent in full and on time or speak up when you can't.

In 2011/12, over 3000 tenants were in serious rent arrears and in 125 cases, this led to an eviction. Of course we don't want to have to evict anyone from their homes but non payment of rent is very serious and reduces the council's budget to keep your home in a good condition and make the improvements that you want. Paying your rent must be a top priority and shouldn't come second to shopping, holidays or anything else. No excuses. It also costs money to evict someone and this could be better spent on making improvements to your homes.

How is my rent spent?

The money from the rent you pay is used to cover the cost of repair and maintenance work to your property, the cleaning and lighting of the estates and communal areas and maintenance of the grounds.

How can I pay my rent?

There are so many options for paying your rent that you might find it hard to pick one; setting up a Direct Debit is probably the easiest way to make sure your rent is paid in full and on time every month. You can also set up a standing order, pay in person at one of our cash offices or a bank, use the automated telephone service or pay online. You can even send your payment in the post; but not cash, cheques or postal orders only.

“ I've set up direct debits to pay my rent so I don't have to worry about falling behind and I know it's been paid. ”

Rose, council tenant

Promise 1

Value for money

What happens if I don't pay my rent?

Refusing to pay your rent is different from not being able to pay your rent. If you can't pay, contact your income officer and we'll see how we can help you.

If you won't pay your rent and don't communicate with us, ignore reminders and break payment plan agreements we've set up with you, then the next steps lead to eviction. You'll have to appear in court, you may have to pay legal costs and if you are evicted before the arrears have been cleared, you may still have to continue paying after leaving the property. This process is obviously a last resort and can be avoided if you keep up your rent payments or contact us as soon as you think something will prevent you from paying your rent. Remember, there are over 20,000 people on the housing waiting list so if you don't pay your rent, someone else will.

Paying your rent is easier than ever before

Sign up for a My Southwark account, log on and make the payment from the comfort of your own home.

Or just pop into one of our My Southwark Customer Service Points and pay using our state of the art self service machines.

Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/servicepoints for more information

STRUGGLING WITH YOUR RENT PAYMENTS?

If you're trying to make your rent payments but are struggling to make ends meet, there are lots of organisations that can help you.

We know that many of you are being affected by the government's recent welfare reforms and may have found that you now have less money coming in or have additional costs to cover. That's why we as a council are doing everything we can to help you manage your finances.

But you still have to remember that paying rent should always be number one on your list of things to do.

Get in touch today to see what help you are entitled to and to see whether you're eligible to apply for a discretionary housing payment.

i For more information
Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/benefits or
Call 020 7525 1880

You can also contact these organisations

Citizens Advice Bureau

Free, independent and confidential advice in legal, money and other issues.
www.southwarkcabservice.org.uk
0844 499 4134

Cambridge House

Wide range of services including, legal advice, advocacy, disability and youth services.
www.ch1889.org
020 7358 7000

Southwark Law Centre

Specialist legal advice and representation in employment, housing, asylum, immigration and welfare rights law.
www.southwarklawcentre.org.uk
020 7732 2031

Blackfriars Advice Centre

Advice and assistance on welfare benefits, debt, housing, consumer, employment and other general advice issues.
www.blackfriars-advice.com
020 7358 7035



PUT YOUR HAND UP FOR HELP

Call 020 7525 2600
if you are struggling
to pay your rent

Pay your rent
Don't risk losing your home

Fairer future
Delivering our promises

Southwark
Council



www.southwark.gov.uk/rent



On average Joseph raises
60
repairs per day, the equivalent
of eight repairs an hour

A DAY IN THE LIFE...

JOSEPH OLDFIELD CALL CENTRE OPERATIVE

Detective, middle man and resident champion – when it comes to improving customer service, it's not just answering phones.

I'm pretty much on the phone for about eight hours a day" says Joseph. "As soon as we log on in the morning the phones start ringing, and it's rare they stop before we finish. I hear ringing even when I'm lying in bed" he laughs.

On an average day he raises about eight repairs an hour, or about 60 repairs a day. These range from "fairly simple jobs like chasing repairs" to more complicated leaks or roofing works, often requiring him to turn detective to fully resolve them. Raising repairs requires an encyclopaedic knowledge of the council's different repair options and procedures, as well as how to raise and appoint them.

Joe has been working at the call centre since last summer, after being unemployed for six months. Since then, he's become well known throughout the call centre for his sunny personality and limitless patience, attributes which help reassure even the most upset customers. "The vast majority of people you speak to during the day are really friendly. Some people can be quite frustrated, but I understand it's upsetting when something is broken. If you do your best to resolve the issues they really appreciate it," he says cheerfully.

One of the most challenging parts of the job can sometimes be liaising between the residents and his colleagues. Finding appointments that suit both parties can make for a lot of negotiation. "I'm the middle man, trying to help both the customers and the contractors."

With the advent of the colder weather, everyone at the call centre is getting ready for lots more calls. "Winter is always the busiest time of the year with the increase in heating repairs and bad weather causing more leaks," Joe says.

The team have had over 20,000 calls so far this month and Joe knows the attitude of the call centre team is crucial for dealing with the pressure. "People are always happy to help each other out and share experience and knowledge. It's a hard job but very rewarding."

For Joe, knowing that you've helped someone makes the hard work worth it. In typically understated style he admits he is most proud of "getting more efficient at the job. The better you are the less likely you are to cause complaints and the more likely you are to resolve the issues." Exactly the kind of person you'd want at the end of the phone in a crisis.

Promise 4
Improved customer service

FIVE FACTS ABOUT REPAIRS

- 1 In winter months the repairs team receive an average of 1000 calls a day
- 2 The team receives around 150 repair emails a day
- 3 1800 repair satisfaction phone surveys are completed each month
- 4 For quick and easy access to the repair services you can go online at www.southwark.gov.uk/repairs
- 5 To keep you informed about communal issues the contact centre regularly updates a block outages page at www.southwark.gov.uk/blocks



GET
ACTIVE
SOUTHWARK

**Start the New Year
with a new activity**

Search from hundreds of sport and leisure activities across Southwark at

www.southwark.gov.uk/getactivehn

Promise 3

Warm, dry, safe homes

THREE CHEERS

FOR FOUR SQUARES



At Four Squares Estate approximately **£30m** will be spent on improving 685 homes



Renovation work on the Four Squares estate really is something to celebrate.

We have to respect the fact that we're working in people's homes, it's not a building site. It can be a major upheaval for residents" says Keith Goddard, contract manager for our contracting partner Keepmoat, the company we commissioned to carry out work at Four Squares estate in Bermondsey.

He's been overseeing a three year project to upgrade 685 homes on the Four Squares estate, part of our major works Warm, Dry and Safe scheme. Approximately £30m has gone towards improving the homes inside and out; so far, over half are done and work on the inside of all the flats is due to finish in February.

Each flat takes about 15 days to complete. "The first week is the worst because that's when we do the rewiring and remove the kitchen cupboards," says Keith frankly.

"While we're doing the work we make sure there is as little disruption as possible by tidying up every evening and making sure residents have drinking water, they can use their cooker and at least have a temporary sink that's working. But after the first week you can already see the difference. And the end result is always worth it."

“It looks much nicer. I've got more work surfaces. The rewiring means that I have more sockets in the kitchen which is really useful. The bathroom was retiled and the pipes are boxed in. It looks much better and it's easier to keep clean. **”**

Joanna, resident



Outside work is due to start at the estate this month and is expected to last two years.

Because of how long the project lasts, we have tried to build a strong relationship with residents from the start. Keepmoat has helped organise events and activities for residents and the community, including a back to work programme aimed at reducing unemployment. At the end of the training, 20 residents received a Construction Industry Training Board accredited certificate for each course they attended, recognised nationally by employers.

Keith believes that when people get a say in what work is being done, they are happier with the whole process. "Residents get to meet the kitchen designer and have a say in the design of their kitchen. They can choose the style of kitchen cupboards, worktop and door handles. Sometimes residents are apprehensive but they usually feel happier when we show them pictures of the work that we've done at other estates.

"We have weekly meetings with the tenants and residents association and involve them in the decision making. It makes it easier to get work done."

Cllr Ian Wingfield, cabinet member for housing management, agrees.

"The residents of Four Squares have been through an awful lot over the past few years. We've pushed forward to get the work on Four Squares done as quickly as possible and we always try to involve residents in the decision making – it is, after all, about their homes. It's working well."

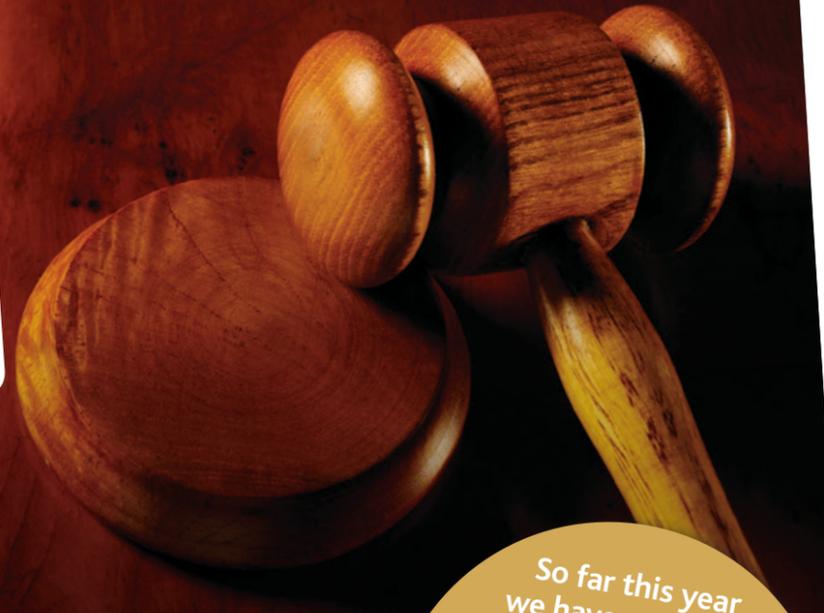
“The best part of this job is seeing the finished article. **”**
Keith Goddard, Keepmoat contractor manager

i For more information on all our major works
Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/housing



IN THE DOCK

Peckham man who duped an unsuspecting couple is evicted.



So far this year we have recovered **210** PROPERTIES which go back to house families waiting for homes

Mr Diego Ospina of Staveley Close, Peckham had been illegally subletting his council home whilst living in another illegally sublet property.

He had been conning an unsuspecting couple since April 2010, who believed that they had entered into a legitimate rental agreement. They had paid Mr Ospina a deposit of £750 and agreed to pay a monthly rent of £750, which is over £300 more than the rent the council charges. The couple were concerned and upset that they had been paying someone to rent a council home. With a lack of affordable rental property in the area, they were also worried about where they would move to next, as their 'landlord' was not going to be providing a reference.

Meanwhile, Mr Ospina was living in a different property in Peckham that was also sublet by another Southwark Council tenant. Upon being found out, his big worry about going to court was he would be liable for costs, both court costs and the legal bill for the council.

We were alerted to this case thanks to a proactive subletting operation that matched Mr Ospina to a different address than the Staveley Close property.

Our investigations revealed that unauthorised occupants had been residing at the property for a number of years.

Mr Ospina was convicted and ordered to pay £3633.94, as well as court costs of £400. The eviction was ordered and carried out.

As a result, we are now able to use the one bedroom property to provide someone in priority need a place to call home.

Do you suspect someone of housing fraud?

If you suspect someone is a housing cheat, let us know. Your help could make a real difference.

- Have they moved house without telling the council?
- Did they give false information in their housing application form?
- Have you seen them collect rent from neighbours?
- Do the tenants of the property keep changing?

REPORT IT

i If you know of anyone illegally subletting or taking possession of a property fraudulently, report it by calling **020 7525 4686** or emailing **housingfraud@southwark.gov.uk**

Your report will be treated in the strictest confidence and can be given anonymously.

Illegal subletting and the law

It is now a criminal offence to sublet your council home without permission from the council. If caught, you could face a maximum prison sentence of two years.

ILLEGALLY SUBLETTING YOUR COUNCIL HOME IS NOW A CRIMINAL OFFENCE

ASK SALLY

ANSWERING YOUR MONEY QUESTIONS...



Whether you're having money worries, need some advice about loans or have a question about benefits, Sally Causer of Southwark Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) has got straightforward, no-nonsense advice you can really use.

My fuel costs have gone sky high this year and I am dreading my next bill, but I have a new baby and need to keep the flat warm. What should I do? I'm really worried.

SALLY SAYS...

During winter it is crucial for your health that you stay warm in the home. If you are struggling to pay your bill you should contact your energy suppliers as soon as possible. There are grants, benefits and advice available to make homes more energy efficient, improve heating and help to reduce fuel bills. The CAB can advise you on this.

You should check whether switching supplier would save you money, and that you are on the best tariff.

Until Friday 28 February 2014, Southwark Council has provided funding for the CAB to offer support to people worried about heating their homes. Call **0800 090 1948** or **0333 321 8323** from a mobile.

Someone used my credit card - what can I do?

SALLY SAYS...

You may be a victim of identity theft. This is a type of fraud which takes place when someone you don't know gets hold of your personal details and uses them to access your account.

If you have been a victim of identity theft and your card is still in your possession, you will not have to pay for anything bought on it without your permission. If your card has been stolen, the most you will have to pay is £50, unless it can be shown that you have acted fraudulently or without reasonable care, for example by keeping your PIN number written down with your card.

You must act quickly: contact your credit card company straight away, keep a record of all conversations you have with them, and copies of any letters sent or received; report the matter to the police, and get a crime reference number.

For more information and advice about credit card fraud and identity theft, go to **www.cardwatch.org.uk**, or to the Home Office website at: **www.identitytheft.org.uk**

I attended a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) medical examination and was told I was fit for work. I disagree with this and have asked for an appeal but I have been told I can't get any money whilst this is being decided. What are my options?

SALLY SAYS...

The rules for challenging or appealing a benefit decision for most benefits paid by the DWP changed from 28 October 2013.

Now, if your claim is refused as a result of the Work Capability Assessment, you will no longer be entitled to payment of an Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) while your decision is being reconsidered. You will have to wait for the outcome of the mandatory reconsideration. If you then decide to appeal, ESA will start to be paid at the assessment rate while you wait for the appeal hearing.

You could consider claiming Jobseeker's Allowance while waiting for a decision on your ESA, but you'll need to look for work and meet the usual Jobcentre requirements.

You can find more information about changes to the appeals process at **www.gov.uk**. If you need help with your appeal call into your nearest advice agency, or contact Southwark Council's Rightfully Yours service on **0207 525 3393**.

GOT A QUESTION FOR SALLY?

citizens advice bureau

Email **slhn@southwark.gov.uk**.

Sally can't answer all letters personally but if you need help with money issues contact Southwark Citizens Advice Bureau on **0844 4994 134**

For full details of opening times and more useful information about the advice agencies in Southwark please visit **www.southwarkadvice.org.uk**

Sally works for Southwark Citizens Advice Bureau Service (CAB) which is an independent local charity. Southwark Council does not take any responsibility for the information provided.

KNOW YOUR GAS SAFETY

Got gas appliances in your home? Make sure you know what you need to do to keep safe.

When you've got gas appliances in the home, it's really important to get them regularly checked. If you're getting a cooker or a gas item fitted, make sure your engineer is registered Gas Safe so you can be totally sure they know exactly what to do. All gas engineers working for the council are Gas Safe.

Every year by law we do a safety check of the gas appliances in our tenants' homes. It's to see whether there's any work that needs to be done to keep you safe and give you peace of mind. Watch out for a letter arranging your appointment; if you can't make the time we suggest, just let us know and we can rearrange.

We are happy to give gas safety advice.

If you're a tenant you can talk to your resident officer to get permission to install appliances.

Get appliances checked immediately if you notice:

- The flames are lazy yellow instead of a crisp blue
- There are black marks on or around the appliance
- There is too much condensation in the room

Did you know

- If you are a leaseholder you are responsible for the repair and maintenance of gas appliances that you install.
- Your gas provider will still send you a service charge if you have a gas meter even if you don't have any gas appliances. To avoid being charged you can instruct them to remove it.
- Gas cylinders and propane bottles are extremely dangerous and should not be used or stored in flats.
- We also offer a gas safety service for leaseholders for £88.50. For more information please contact home ownership services on hsg.homeownership@southwark.gov.uk or 020 7525 7660.

What to do if you smell gas

Follow these simple steps

Turn off the gas supply
Find the handle near the gas meter and turn it off. This is normally done by pulling the handle all the way down. If you can't find your meter or you can't turn the gas off you must call the Gas Emergency Service.

Put out all flames
Don't smoke, light matches or lighters and do not turn light or power switches on or off.

Open doors and windows
This will help to reduce any danger from built up gas.

Call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999. Follow any advice the gas emergency services give you immediately.

Tenants must remember...
...to tell us what's happening by calling the customer call centre on 0800 952 4444. We will send out a gas engineer to check you're safe and see if any repairs are needed.

Do you know the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning?

You can't smell carbon monoxide. You can't see it or taste it either so it's important for you to know and recognise the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Common signs are

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Being out of breath
- Dizziness
- Collapse
- Loss of consciousness.

If you experience these symptoms, see a doctor or go to the hospital immediately.

You can buy carbon monoxide alarms from most DIY shops or from your gas provider. If you are over 60 you may be able to get a free carbon monoxide safety check.

 For more information about gas safety Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/gassafety

Don't let disputes get worse

If you are a leaseholder and you have a dispute with the council, you can get help to get it sorted as quickly and easily as possible.

The friendly, straightforward arbitration service may be able to help you find a solution that works for all parties. For more information on the types of leaseholder disputes that can be dealt with by the independent arbitration service, please visit www.southwark.gov.uk/arbitration



Free advice service for leaseholders

Leaseholders can now get free, independent advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) on problems in connection with your lease with the council, in a project funded by Southwark Council.

The advice and assistance they can provide are:

- Interpreting rights and responsibilities under the lease including major works and service charges
- Assisting vulnerable leaseholders in making representations to the appropriate part of the council
- Advice to leaseholders facing financial difficulties in meeting charges associated with the lease
- Facilitating access to advocacy and representation services
- Facilitating access to specialist money advice services

To find out more and get any questions answered, call 020 7237 9532 (message line) or email leasehold@southwarkcabservice.org.uk

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- Guaranteed vacant possession at the end of the lease
- No fees

 Whichever scheme suits you, our efficient staff can let your property without delay and without hidden costs. To find out more visit www.southwark.gov.uk/earnmoney or Call 020 7525 4172



MY SOUTHWARK

Josephine Ebehiala, Notre Dame pupil, Southwark Young Pilgrim and lifelong Southwark resident, tells us all about her Southwark...



What's your connection to the borough?

I've lived here all my life. I live on the Tabard Gardens estate in Bermondsey with my family. I'm in Year 11 at Notre Dame School where I'm studying for my GCSEs.

How do you like living on the Tabard Garden estate?

It's good, I feel like I've had a good upbringing there. It's been a bit crowded at times as I live with my mum, dad and five brothers and sisters. The youngest twins can be a bit noisy but I always manage to find space to study in quiet when I need it. When I need a bit more space, I like to spend time in the little park on the estate. It's handy for when you just want to relax.

What's your favourite thing about living in Southwark?

I like all the green spaces. Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park opposite the school is good – I like the free outdoor gym. But my favourite is Burgess Park where I spend a lot of time roller-skating. It's a nice place to spend time with friends and I'm really looking forward to trying out the new BMX track. My school is going to be starting PE lessons there soon, taking year 11 classes BMXing. I think it's a brilliant idea: how many PE classes get to do that?

If you were leader of the council for the day what would you change?

I'd improve the streets for cyclists. I'd make sure there was less traffic to pollute the area and I'd provide more room for bikes. I don't cycle on the streets at all at the moment but if I thought it was getting safer then I'd think about it.

Where's the one place in Southwark you would recommend a tourist should visit?

The Shard. I think it's fantastic. I took part in the Southwark Young Pilgrims programme in the summer, part of which involves working as a volunteer tour guide, giving directions and advice to visitors to the borough. We pitched our stall at London Bridge and it really made me laugh how so many people would come over to us, straight from the station, saying they couldn't find the Shard. It's the tallest building in Western Europe!

What did you think of the Southwark Young Pilgrims programme?

I really enjoyed it. Taking part helped me to build my confidence and also improved my public speaking. It has also opened up other opportunities to take part in borough events in the future. Being a tour guide for the London Bridge and Bankside area opened my eyes to a lot of things about the borough I'd never known before. I learned about the area's history and discovered places like HMS Belfast which most young people in my part of Southwark have never even heard of.

Do you intend to stay in Southwark when you leave school?

Maybe. I want to go to university and I've got two good options, London College of Communication (LCC) and South Bank University, right on my doorstep. I'm interested in journalism and design, so LCC would be a good bet.

Earlier this year, the school helped us enrol on a work experience project with IPC Media on Southwark Street. To start with, I did some training at LCC. The tutors there were really good and helped me to learn Photoshop and InDesign. Only a couple of weeks later, I found myself helping to layout the TV Times at IPC. If you remember a stylish feature about the Luther series last summer – that was me!



Notre Dame school
www.notredame.southwark.sch.uk

Southwark Young Pilgrims
www.mayflower1620ltd.co.uk/SYP

To find out more about what the council is doing to make Southwark cycle safe, visit
www.southwark.gov.uk/cycling

Want to share your Southwark with Southwark Life Housing News? Email SLHN@southwark.gov.uk and let us know what makes the borough special to you.

SOLVE BOTH PUZZLES FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A £50 SHOPPING VOUCHER

WORDSEARCH

USEFUL HOUSING CONTACTS



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

Joanne Chapel from Bermondsey was the lucky winner last issue.

Tell us what you would like to see in the next issue of Southwark Life Housing News.

1

2

3

Name:

Tel:

Address: Age:

Comments about the magazine:

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|---------|
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Southwark antisocial
behaviour unit
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www.southwarkhomesearch.org.uk

WRITE TO SOUTHWARK LIFE HOUSING NEWS

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SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



There are seven slight differences in the two pictures of children, parents and staff at Kintore Way Nursery School in Bermondsey, celebrating after becoming the first nursery school in the borough to be judged as Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted. Can you spot them?

Andrew White from Dulwich was the lucky winner last issue.

Send your completed competition entries to Southwark Council, Southwark Life Housing News, Communications team PO BOX 64529 by 31 February 2014.

Winners will be notified by letter announced in the next edition of Southwark Life Housing News.

The information you provide will be used fairly and lawfully. Southwark Council will not knowingly do anything which may lead to the breach of the Data Protection Act 1998.