



Fire prevention

Subsequent to the recent horrific fire incident at Grenfell Tower, we would like to remind all residents of the importance of fire safety. Please see below some important points to be considered by all residents:

- All doors in communal areas must be kept closed; some residents are wedging open communal doors which can lead to serious spread of flame and smoke in the event of a fire.
 - Automatic Opening Vents in common areas must be kept closed at all times; some residents are tampering with the controls and opening these to allow for circulation. These have been designed to open when there is smoke from a fire, residents are not permitted to open or use the controls. This can cause the mechanisms to fail and not operate when needed.
 - No BBQ permitted anywhere inside or out the building including the balcony.
 - No gas cylinder usage
- We urge all residents to co-operate with us on this, fire safety is extremely important and it is for your safety and the safety of your neighbours. We hope by working with residents, we can minimise the risk of fire and keep residents safe in their homes.
- It is your responsibility to test the smoke alarm on a regular basis. If you hear a beeping noise on the device please replace the battery or if it is hardwired then report this to us on **02073925400**. If you are not sure how to test the alarm please contact us on the above number.
 - Please keep all communal areas clear of any items that could impede escape in case of an emergency. Even door mats could be a trip hazard if visibility is reduced or a resident has mobility issues or sight impairment. We are moving towards a zero tolerance policy where any items found in the common areas will be removed immediately and possibly disposed of.



Gas safety inspection

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Resident involvement

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Parmiter's Almshouse & Pension Charity



Are you a pensioner living in the old borough of Bethnal Green?

If you are over 60, live in the old Metropolitan Borough of Bethnal Green (parts of E1, E2 & E3 area), are on a low income, you may be able to apply for a Parmiter's Almshouse & Pension of an extra £150 per year.

You will also receive invitations to four social events and a trip to the seaside each summer.

For further information and to download an application form, please go to **www.parmitersalmshouseandpensioncharity.org.uk** Closing date for application is 31st July 2017.

Out of hours emergency call

Since 1st April 2017 Spitalfields HA has appointed Pinnacle Services to handle and filter all out of hours calls received from tenants.

The out of hours procedure remains the same, residents are required to call our office number on 020 7392 5400 (Repairs Team). This will automatically direct the call to Pinnacle.

Out of hours calls will be from 5:30pm – 9:30am Monday to Friday, and all day on weekends and holidays. Please note, Pinnacle assess each call and determine whether an operative is required to attend, you will be advised if your call is not an emergency. Furthermore, any attendance made without the repair being an emergency will be rechargeable to the resident.

Therefore, please ensure calls fall under the following categories to avoid paying any charges: Cover provided as part of the basic Emergency Service:

- Total loss of water supply.
- Fire Damage.
- Total loss of electricity power.
- Breaches of security of the front door of your property and windows

where it has been caused by a criminal activity and you have obtained a crime reference number from the police.

- Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fittings.
- Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack, or (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling-house) toilet pan. (If from main access chamber/shared gully then please call Thames Water)
- Burst pipes, overflows (serious water leaks that cannot be contained)
- Rain pouring in
- Flooding
- Offensive or racist graffiti
- Police call for emergency repair to the property
- Car park gate not opening
- Lift breakdown
- Communal door entry phones not working or main entrance door not opening
- Any works that are a potential fall health and safety risk
- Serious storm damage that is likely to lead to an emergency situation
- Internal power failure
- Gas boiler & Central Heating failure.

- NB. Gas Leak: Please Call National Grid on **0800 111 999**

For the following types of repairs, you are advised to contact the supplier first. (Only if they cannot assist should you contact our contractors).

Water supply failure:

THAMES WATER
– **0800714614**

Sewer Flooding / Blockage: -
08003169800

Gas leak or supply failure:
NATIONAL GRID
- **0800 111 999**

Electricity failure or dangerous faults:
UK POWER NETWORKS
- **0800 3163105**

Residents are also reminded that Spitalfields HA provides emergency repairs during the day; residents can call the office number during office hours to request an emergency repair on the day. Repairs which do not fall under any of the above categories should be reported when the office opens.

It is anticipated that this change will improve the way the out of hour's service is being delivered to residents. It will also reduce the number of non-urgent calls, recharges to residents, and misuse of the service.

Freephone for repairs



Please note that due to a lack of use and high associated costs, Spitalfields HA is no longer using the Freephone repairs line.

All repair requests should be reported using: **020 7392 5400** and select Repairs Team.

Alternatively, non-emergency repairs can be reported online.

Access for annual gas safety inspections

By law, all landlords have to ensure tenanted properties have had an annual gas check carried out. This is for the safety of residents.

Spitalfields HA has commissioned Robert Heath Heating to undertake annual checks, and arrangements are made approximately two months prior to the expiry of the previous check.

This allows sufficient time to make contact and arrange access for a check before running out of time.

There have been cases where residents have not provided access. All residents are reminded of the importance of these checks to keep you and your neighbours safe from gas related accidents. Please ensure access is provided to Robert Heath Heating.

You will usually receive a letter from them with an appointment. If you are unable to keep an appointment, you can always rearrange the appointment with Robert Heath.

Please remember, failure to provide access for a gas safety inspection is a breach of tenancy, and could lead to Spitalfields HA having no option but to take legal action.



Non-emergency online repairs reporting

As advised in the previous newsletters, we now have an excellent way of reporting repairs via the Spitalfields HA website. Please visit the website and click on 'report a repair'; this will take you through to M3 central.

It is an easier and more interactive way of reporting a repair as you are able to diagnose the repair using pictures and descriptions. Online reports are also

dealt with quickly and efficiently. Residents are encouraged to report all non emergency repairs online. All online repair reports will be automatically entered into a competition in which each month, a winner will be picked out of a hat to receive a shopping voucher of £25.



Universal Credit Update [changes effective from April 2017]



Universal Credit (UC) full service has commenced for residents living in:

- E3/E14 area (from 22 February 2017)
- E1/E1W area (from 29 March 2017)
- Newham (from June 2018).

Full service will apply to all working age claimants who meet the criteria or who have a change of circumstance. Currently the UC data base cannot cope with households who have 3 or more children; these families will remain on legacy benefits until this is resolved.

Parents with a youngest child aged 3, including lone parents, are expected to look for work if they want to claim UC.

UC pays your benefit to you monthly and will include your housing cost (your rent) which you will then have to pay to us.

Tax Credits and Universal Credit two child limit

From 6th April 2017, Child Tax Credit will no longer be paid for three (or more) children who are born on or after 6 April 2017, unless an exception applies. Elements will continue to be included for all children born before 6 April 2017. The same applies to those who receive UC.

Tax Credit Family Element removed

Anyone starting a family after April 2017 will no longer be eligible for the Family Element in tax credits or the First Child Element of UC.

ESA Work-Related Activity component abolished

From 1 April 2017, new ESA claimants who are placed in the Work-Related Activity Group will receive the same rate of payment as those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and the equivalent in Universal Credit. This equates to a reduction in the benefit.

Getting on with Money

The Bromley by Bow Centre has relaunched the Getting on with Money (GOWM) project after receiving Big Lottery funding for three years. The project will offer free one-to-one money management sessions to residents.

These sessions take place on the 2nd Monday of each month and will be particularly useful for residents who are struggling due to:

- Debts and rent arrears;
- Changes to their benefits e.g. moving onto Universal Credit;
- Reduced or fluctuating income as a result of job loss, a zero hour contract or self-employment;
- Managing money alone for the first time following a relationship breakdown; and
- Generally finding it difficult to make ends meet day to day.

We also work with a number of other agencies e.g. food banks, employment services.

If you would like to be referred to any of these projects, discuss these matters or have further queries on UC, please contact our Tenancy Support Officer – Pauline Roach on **020 392 5423**.

Stephen Bernard, Spitalfields Income Recovery Officer



Did you know your tenancy agreement states your rent is due weekly and in advance?

Did you know you should pay your service charges in advance?

Paying your rent or leasehold service charges is often regarded as a low priority when a household needs to tighten up on their financial commitments; this is a misconception that can potentially lead to you and your family losing their home for non-payment of rent or leasehold service charges.

All debt advice agencies, including the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) will always advise you that the most important bill to pay first, above anything else, is your rent, service charges or mortgage.

In other words, keeping the roof over your head should be your first priority.

At Spitalfields Housing Association, I Can Help, Yes I Can... especially if you're having any financial difficulties. I work very closely with partner agencies such as Getting On With Money, a Money Advice Service.

I can refer you for financial assistance. Getting On With Money provides free, face to face, independent and confidential advice on all matters relating to personal finance which include, Personal Budgeting, Savings & Investments, Credit & Borrowing and Benefit & Taxes to name a few.

If you're experiencing any financial problems, especially paying your rent or service charges, please contact me at Spitalfields, We're More Than Happy To Help.

Star in the Community Awards



Celebrating your success Bushra, we have marked your contributions with Star in the Community Awards.

Recently our resident Bushra Muquid won an Inspirational Resident Award that recognised her fantastic contribution to her local community.

Bushra was particularly recognised for helping elderly residents with support needs, and breaking barrier's to isolation. Residents have commented:

"Bushra is always helpful and does not wait for anyone to say 'hello', she will say it first!"
"She will make a cup of tea, has a smile and time to chat, and check in to see we are ok."

Many congratulations Bushra!

Community Development and Residents Involvement Update



The Residents Involvement Team has been busy preparing for the launch of the new customer engagement strategy and community centre opening on Pedley Street. It is an exciting time for community development and our women's, youth and other community projects.

The new centre will be the hub for all of our activities and projects. We are working closely with the Vallance Community Sports Association who will be based at the Centre with us and will be providing a number of activities such as 3 evenings per week Youth Club for local young people, a range of recreational and educational activities as part of the regular sessions, a personal development workshop/training programme once a quarter and other holiday projects.

The community centre will open in early July and will provide opportunities for community groups and experienced providers to deliver services and activities.

Brian Akintokun, senior community development officer expressed his excitement about the pending launch: "This centre will give us the chance to provide positive engagement opportunities to customers, that will help improve quality of lives in the process. We will be able to support more Spitalfields residents by the creation of strong partnerships with experienced providers from the third sector." For the centre update please contact Brian on **0207 377 1306** or email him at: **brian@spitalfieldsha.co.uk**.

We are currently refreshing our approach to community engagement and are working with a number of groups to ensure that what we do going forward will have a positive impact where residents need it.

It will mean greater partnership working and will include projects into familiar key engagement strands like health & wellbeing, youth engagement, financial & digital inclusion as well as employment and training support. If you would like to get involved, please contact Brian.

We look forward to keeping you updated on our website at: **www.spitalfieldsha.co.uk**.

Sky and Virgin Media

We are working with Sky and Virgin, allowing them to carry out works to our estates and blocks to provide access to services such as fibre optic internet, Sky Q and Virgin V6.

This is to give residents who choose to take up these services directly with the supplier the opportunity to benefit from advancing services. Both firms will be carrying out their setup work in the coming month and we will let residents know when this work is completed.

We appreciate the advances in technology, and as part of the digital inclusion strategy we will endeavour where possible to enable access for residents.

Join us for our Youth Club Open Day



**Wednesday 12th July
3:30pm – 6pm**

**Youth Club will officially begin from the week of
17th July from 6pm – 8pm**

**SHA Community Centre
117 Vallance Road
E1 5BW**

Delivered by our new partners Vallance CSA

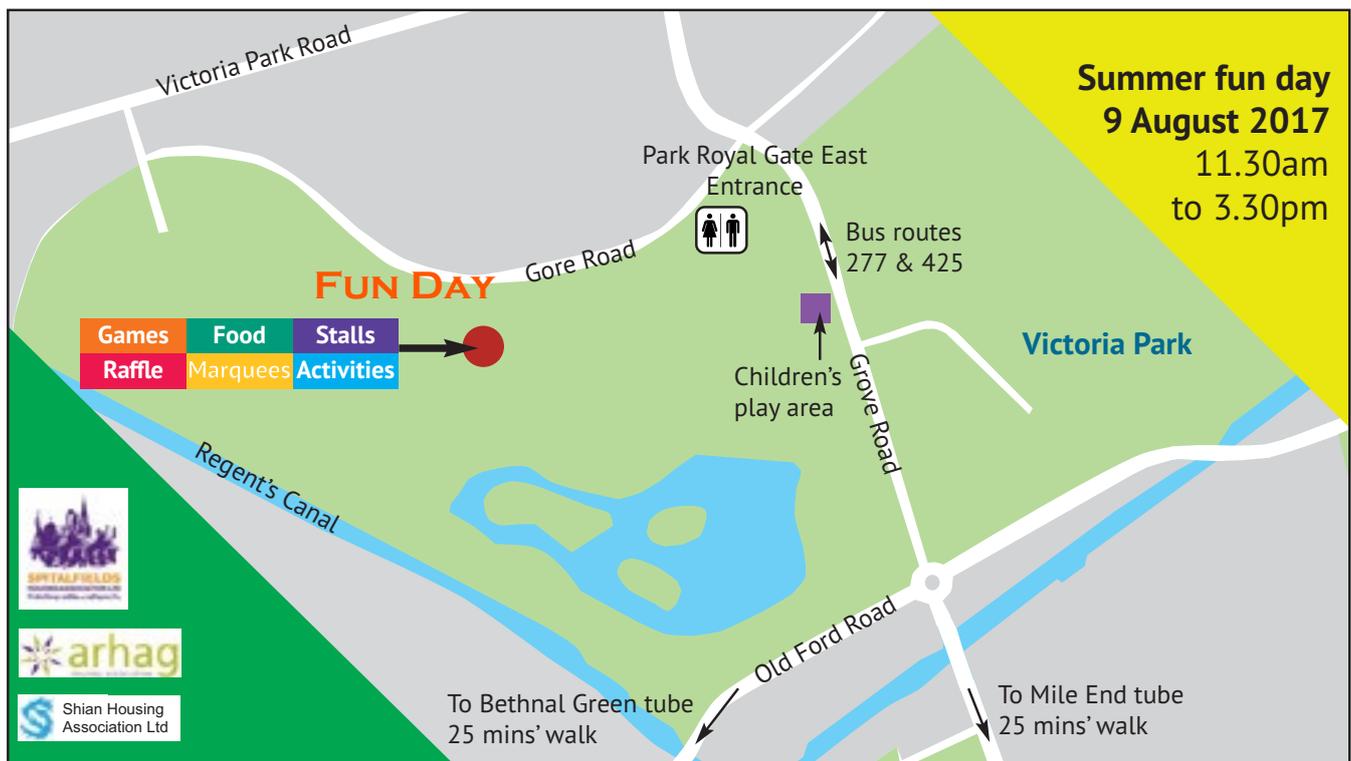
**Contact Brian for more information:
brian@spitalfieldsha.co.uk | 07903 623570**

Come to our Fun Day!

9 AUGUST 2017

11:30AM-3:30PM

VICTORIA PARK



Together with our landlord partners Shian and Arhag Housing Associations, we will hold our Fun Day on Wednesday 9 August.

There will be lots of fun activities with bouncy castles, a raffle draw, egg and spoon races, face painting, caricature art and food. We are also inviting local agencies to run stalls offering advice on recycling, sexual health, employment, money management and debt.

To register an interest, call the office on 020 73771306 or email asma@spitalfieldsha.co.uk – people who sign up in advance and come on the day will get free entry to the prize draw and a free food pack.