

Connections

KEEPING YOU INFORMED



**Coronavirus –
the latest** pg4



**Join our
committees**
pg 12



**Our work with
homelessness**
pg 17



Welcome

from Carl Byrne

Group director of housing

Welcome to the latest edition of **Connections**, our magazine for residents.

With everything that is going on at the moment, it is difficult to imagine a time when we were not experiencing some kind of restrictions. After the country went into lockdown at the end of March, we were forced to scale back to all but our most essential services in line with government guidance and we thank you for your patience and understanding during that time.

Our priority remains to keep our residents and colleagues safe. In some cases, we've had to change – albeit temporarily – some of our procedures to take into account social distancing (see page 5). For more information on how we can support you during the Covid-19 lockdown, please see page 4.

We've already started to provide routine as well as emergency repairs for most households, where residents are comfortable with our operatives coming into their homes. We have a fairly big backlog of routine repairs that have built up while we were able to provide emergency repairs only,

but have a plan to manage those. For full details, see page 6.

All at NHG were saddened and angered by the tragic killing of George Floyd in the USA, which sparked protests across the world. We are an anti-racist organisation that supports equality and diversity for our BAME residents and staff, and we stand alongside those trying to eradicate racism in our society (see page 7).

June also saw the third anniversary of the Grenfell Tower disaster. Our thoughts at this time are with all those affected by the tragedy, particularly the eight NHG residents who lost their lives, as well as their friends and families (see page 6).

Finally, do you have a passion to improve NHG? We are looking for six residents to support our board in making decisions by joining our governing committees. The closing date is 13 July – see page 12 to apply.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition. To tell us what articles you would like to see in future editions of **Connections**, or to give us feedback please email ResidentsMagazine@nhg.org.uk.

Contents

P4 NEWS

P11 GETTING INVOLVED

P17 YOU AND YOUR HOME

P21 IN YOUR COMMUNITY



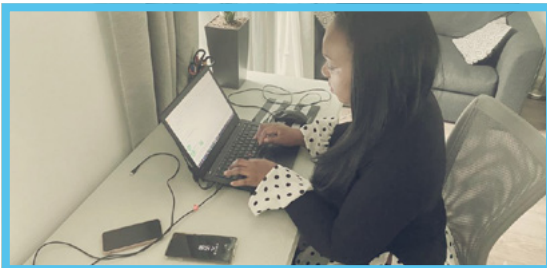
P8 Domestic abuse: you are not alone



P14 Improving services through resident involvement



P20 Barbecue (and balcony) safety



P18 A Day in the Life of... a housing operations manager



P23 Helping people live well with dementia

Coronavirus (Covid-19)

We're starting to deliver more routine services as the government continues to ease lockdown.

As we went to press, many earlier lockdown restrictions had been lifted, which means we're starting to reintroduce many services we had to put temporarily on hold at the start of the pandemic.

In particular, we're able to carry out routine as well as emergency repairs for most households now. Please see page 8 for more information about repairs and what you can expect if we need to carry out work inside your home.

Wherever possible, we'll continue to identify and use alternatives to physically coming into your home, but we're also looking at how we can get more of our colleagues safely back out into your communities to provide more face-to-face support if you need it.

Our priority remains to keep our residents and colleagues safe as we open up more of our services. We've carried out several risk assessments in line with government guidance to help us do that. You can find those on our website.

Your housing officer remains your main point of contact for any queries and should be able to resolve most issues over the phone. In an emergency or out of hours, your call will automatically divert to our

customer service centre. You can also use our online My Account service (www.nhg.org.uk/residents/my-account) to manage several tasks yourself whenever it's most convenient for you.

We appreciate that many of you are experiencing financial hardship as a result of the pandemic. Please talk to your housing officer if you are in this situation so we can discuss how best to help you. Likewise, speak to your energy supplier if you're struggling to pay gas or electricity bills.

If you need to make a claim for additional housing benefit or universal credit, please do so as soon as your circumstances change. Your housing officer can help you with that too, so please get in touch if you need to. You'll also find useful advice on the Department for Work and Pensions website (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions) or you can call them on 0800 055 6688.

For the most up-to-date information about how we're responding to the ever-changing coronavirus situation, please visit our website at www.nhg.org.uk/residents/coronavirus.

Changes to our procedures in light of Covid-19

Like many organisations, the services NHG provides require a high degree of face-to-face contact.

As of 15 June, here is how we have changed the delivery of some of our services:

Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB)

While we still encourage you to report ASB to us, where possible we are asking staff to use video and telephone interviews. With staff not able to visit, in order for us to build a case we rely on you to gather as much evidence as possible.

While we have had increased reports of household noise during lockdown, new forms of ASB, such as hosting parties or coughing at people, are also being considered.

Domestic abuse

We have been raising awareness among frontline staff regarding how to spot signs of possible domestic abuse during the lockdown and discreetly check in with residents. This could include seeing an increase in ASB, noise/nuisance reports or repairs requests.

Staff have also been taught how to report instances of domestic abuse to the right agencies. As ever, we invite you to get in touch should you need support. For more information

and sources of support, see page five of this magazine.

Lettings

During the first weeks of lockdown, we were only allowed to do lettings in emergency situations. Now that the government has lifted restrictions on moving home, we are supporting people who want to move but we are still avoiding mass viewings.

To minimise physical contact for you and our staff, we are piloting online viewings and only doing face-to-face viewings if the applicant is genuinely interested. Throughout the viewing, applicants are asked to respect social distancing measures and staff carry out a risk assessment beforehand. This is to ensure that nobody who plans to attend a viewing has coronavirus symptoms.

Finally, we have scrapped in-person sign-ups and are using online tenancy agreements and forms.

Estate inspections

With lockdown restrictions easing, we have re-started inspecting high priority blocks and estates, and over 450 resident monitors are supporting us (to become an estate monitor, see page 16).

We are continuing to look at how we can get colleagues safely back into your communities.

Carrying out repairs during lockdown

It is important that all our residents continue to have a decent, warm and safe place to live.

Like many landlords, when lockdown restrictions came into place, we had to prioritise the repairs that we provided, and we moved to an emergency only repairs service.

As lockdown measures have been eased, we have been able to carry out routine as well as emergency repairs for most households. There was a backlog of repairs that needed to be addressed when restrictions were lifted, so in some cases it has taken longer than normal to carry out non-essential work. We are working hard to get back to normal timeframes for completing all repairs.

To keep our staff and residents safe, we are continuing to only carry out emergency work where a household member is isolating or

where an individual is being shielded.

If you are having a repair completed, the operatives entering your home should notify you in advance of arrival, maintain a safe distance and follow hygiene procedures, as set out in the latest government guidance.

You should continue to log repairs in the normal way, and if you are logging the repair via our online MyAccount service, please provide photos where possible to help increase the chance of us fixing your repair on the first visit.

For more information about what to expect when we visit your home to complete a repair, please take a look at www.nhg.org.uk/residents/repairs-and-maintenance/report-a-repair or contact your housing officer.

Remembering Grenfell

Sunday 14 June marked the third anniversary of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. At this difficult time, our thoughts are with all those affected, particularly the eight NHG residents who lost their lives, as well as their friends and families. A series of online community events were held on the day, which we highlighted on our website, while people were also urged to Go Green for Grenfell by making their windows light up green at 10.30pm.

Become an estate monitor

See page 16

A new way to contact us

You can now get in touch with your housing officer through your My Account portal using My Requests.

Thousands of residents make use of My Account to make payments and raise repairs. With My Requests, you can get in touch about anything else.

Making a request will send a message directly to your housing officer who will get in touch, and you will receive an email confirmation with a reference number. If your housing officer is on leave or unwell, someone else in their team will pick up your query and contact you.

Within My Requests, you can also view and see the progress of your requests.

Watch this space as we make My Requests a place where you can keep the conversation going and get everything you need from all our services.

We've had over 1,200 customers contact us this way since we launched the service in April. Why not join them?

www.nhg.org.uk/residents/my-account/

Black Lives Matter

Last month, George Floyd was killed while being forcibly restrained by police officers in Minnesota, USA. His death sparked protests across the world as people campaigned for racial equality.

Notting Hill Genesis is an anti-racist organisation that supports equality and diversity for residents and staff whatever their background. We are committed to making our leadership more reflective of our staff and residents and this work will continue

in the months and years to come.

The UK still has much to do to eradicate racism across our society and this should be a moment to reflect on what each of us can contribute towards that.

Diversity brings strength, success and resilience and we want to ensure all our residents, colleagues and communities can benefit from that.

To find out more about the fight against racism in the UK, visit www.standuptoracism.org.uk.

A new way to buy your own home

See page 10

Domestic abuse: you are not alone

The coronavirus lockdown is a challenging and daunting time for us all, but for some it means spending more time with an abusive partner or family member.

If you are living in fear of abuse or are being abused, please be aware that you are not alone. Support is still available and you can still leave home and seek help. Refuges remain open and you can call support services and the police **on 999** for assistance.

Police work is still happening during the outbreak

Covid-19 is not an excuse to keep survivors isolated with their abusers. The police have personal protective equipment (PPE) and can still attend calls to homes and remove and arrest perpetrators. Court hearings are still happening and local authorities are providing



accommodation to perpetrators who are removed from their homes.

Spotting abuse during social distancing

If you are worried about a neighbour or family member, don't be afraid to raise a concern

If you yourself need help and advice, or are worried about somebody else, you can contact the following services:

In an emergency:

- **Always call 999** if you are at risk or you are worried about someone's safety.
- If you are in danger and unable to speak, you can call 999, followed by 55 which will alert the police

to an emergency **without you needing to speak.**

- If you are **deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired**, you can call the 999 textphone on 18000. You can also text 999 if you've pre-registered for the emergency SMS service (www.emergencysms.net)

If you are not in immediate danger:

- If you are not in immediate danger, you can report abuse to the police by calling **101**.
- If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired, you can call the police's non-emergency textphone number: **18001 101**.

Support and advice

- The freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline on **0808 2000 247** is open 24 hours a day and is for anyone, not just victims. You can also visit www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- When telephone support is not safe, **Women's Aid** (www.womensaid.org.uk) offers an instant messaging service through online chat (available Mon-Fri 10am-12pm), email support (response within five days) and a survivor's handbook to get help on housing, safety planning, dealing with police and more.

Remember, if a child is in immediate danger please call 999

If you are concerned about the safety of a child or children:

Contact your local authority's children and families service immediately.

You can also contact the NSPCC anonymously on 0800 800 5000 (Mon-Fri 8am-10pm and 9am-6pm at the weekend) or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

If you are causing a family member to be harmed or afraid:

If you need support about your own abusive behaviour, you can talk to a helpline adviser in confidence, without judgement, on freephone 0808 802 4040 (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm) or visit <https://respectphoneline.org.uk/>.

Other resources

- **Safe Lives Resource Hub** (<https://safelives.org.uk/knowledge-hub> or call 0117 403 3220)
- **Surviving Economic Abuse** during Covid-19 (<https://survivingeconomicabuse.org/resources/>)
- **Hestia's Bright Sky App** is a free to download app offering a UK-wide directory of specialist domestic abuse support services. If you have an iPhone or iPad, go to the App Store, or if you have an Android phone or tablet, go to Google Play and search for 'Hestia Bright Sky'.



A new way to buy your own home

NHG is now offering homes through London Living Rent, a scheme set up by the Greater London Authority (GLA) to help people save enough to get on the housing ladder.

Our first homes will be available in Newham and Wembley, but you are likely to see more and more of these homes in our future developments.

If you qualify for London Living Rent, you will be given a three-year tenancy on a reduced rent, at the end of which time you should have saved enough for a deposit to buy the home you have been renting through shared ownership.

To be eligible, your household income must be £60,000 a year or lower, but meet a minimum income cap. You also need to be currently renting in London and unable to buy a home, including shared ownership, in your local area.

All available properties, from both NHG and other housing providers, are advertised on the GLA website **(you cannot apply directly to NHG).**

See www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/improving-private-rented-sector/london-living-rent

East Anglia homes transferred to new landlord

At the end of March, we transferred more than 800 homes across East Anglia and parts of Essex to Sanctuary Affordable Housing.

The decision to transfer was made as we felt that services to residents in these areas could be improved by having a more locally-based landlord.

Sanctuary were selected following a rigorous selection process and we were confident that they would provide a high level of service. We worked closely with them to make

the transition as smooth as possible for residents and staff alike.

We wish all our former tenants a successful future with their new landlord and are grateful to all of those who took part in the consultation process.

We would also like to thank all the staff in our East Anglia region. Over the years they have transformed so many lives, and we know they will continue to do so now they have moved to Sanctuary.

Shining a spotlight on
temporary housing

See page 17

Universal Credit and Covid-19

Covid-19 and the lockdown measures have had a huge impact on people's incomes and livelihoods.

Universal Credit (UC) can support you if you are working as well as if you are out of work. If you're not sure whether you are eligible to claim, complete a benefit check online at: www.entitledto.co.uk

Claiming UC:

- You can request an advance payment to cover you before you receive the first payment. You would pay this back once your claim is in place.
- In most cases, money awarded for housing costs will be paid directly to you which you must then pay into your rent account. You can do this by setting up a direct debit or standing order.
- If you have any arrears, you should speak to your housing officer to arrange a re-payment plan. **If you have any concerns about paying your arrears or rent, please speak to your housing officer immediately.**

We are here to help and support you where we can, and it is always better to raise any concerns or issues with us earlier rather than later. During the lockdown, we have put in place additional welfare benefits support; your housing officer can refer you to this if needed.

Employment, training and debt support:

We work with partner organisations to connect residents to a range of employment and training support, along with debt advice and mental health support.

To search our database and self-refer, go to: www.nhg.org.uk/residents/support-services/

To receive regular employment, training and debt updates by email, go to: <http://eepurl.com/gz3KAT>

Join our committees and help shape NHG's future

Do you have a passion to work with us to improve and scrutinise our work?

We are looking for six residents to support our board (which already includes two residents) in making decisions by each taking a place on each of our following committees:

- **Audit and risk committee** – oversees NHG's financial strength and integrity
- **Development and sales committee** – looks at NHG's development and regeneration programme and provided approximately 1,500 new affordable homes last year
- **Nominations committee** – oversees recruitment to NHG's committees and board
- **Operations committee** – scrutinises performance across NHG's residential businesses
- **Remuneration committee** – looks at pay and reward for top staff, board and committee members
- **Treasury committee** – oversees the borrowings NHG makes to provide new homes.

Salary: £3,500 per annum, taxable

Location: Bruce Kenrick House, King's Cross, London with online engagement by email, phone/video

Contract: Fixed term, three years

Committee members are responsible for working jointly to:

- Ensure the corporate strategy, as delegated to the committee, is being delivered
- Oversee probity and honesty in the organisation
- Engage in appraisal of own and the committee's performance and support recommendations arising

The time commitment is four to six evening meetings a year, attendance at an annual overnight strategy event and engagement in training and support as needed. You will need to read papers beforehand and be expected to actively participate in meetings. There will be support available to help you get to know the work of the committee and wider NHG.



Recruiting for care staff – thank you

Abilities:

You must:

- Have decision-making experience
- Be committed to improving customer experience
- Be confident at representing NHG
- Be able to develop a broad overview and identify long-term implications and possibilities
- Have the skills and confidence to support and challenge the chair and fellow board committee members
- Understand the different roles required respectively of the chair, committee members, chief executive and staff – both within and outside of meetings
- Identify and clarify key points under consideration
- Demonstrate effective meeting skills – allowing differing views to be expressed and accepting decisions achieved
- Have integrity and concern for acting fairly.

The closing date for applications is 13/07/20 at 12pm.

The application process will involve completing a short application form, 1-2 rounds of interviews conducted over the phone or video conference and a reference.

To apply, please complete the application form at: www.nhg.org.uk/jobs/committee-member/

For more information, please contact us on 020 3815 1052 or at: GTeam@nhg.org.uk

In the last edition of Connections, we told you we were looking for care staff to join our services to support our most vulnerable residents.

We had a fantastic response, with over 6,000 expressions of interest, including from residents and staff recommending a friend, and we have now hit our initial target.

Since we started this campaign, we have made 87 offers to successful candidates, with 21 having already started their induction. We have worked hard to bring induction online, to ensure new staff are able to undergo this safely before starting work with our residents.

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our new starters. If you or someone you know may be interested in joining us, more information can be found at: www.nhg.org.uk/jobs/careers-in-care/ or by calling 020 7563 0350.



Improving services through resident involvement

Despite having to postpone several involvement meetings following the coronavirus outbreak, NHG's resident involvement team has still had a busy few months gathering feedback and enabling residents to have their say.

In 2019/2020, a total of 349 residents took part in 62 activities, and made a total of 55 recommendations towards service improvement.

Some examples of service improvement include:

- Changing the language and format of some of our resident-facing communications, such as the online rents booklet, service charge packs and procedures on income collection and subletting.
- Creating a resident asset management steering group whose input helped shape the priorities of the NHG Standard for Homes.

- Helping our NHG offices become more accessible to those with disabilities.
- Recommending that residents should be more actively involved in procurement exercises.

What's happening now?

The coronavirus outbreak presented us with an opportunity to try and resume our activities via video technology. Here are a few examples of what has taken place online.

Complaint reviewer's feedback session:

Our independent resident complaint reviewers evaluated our stage 2 complaints process. The group suggested key things to include when training new resident reviewers.



Fire safety project

Since the turn of the year, the oversight and scrutiny group have been working on a project on building and fire safety. At the time of writing, the group were about to present their final recommendations to the director of building safety, Andy McKay, to head of region and fire safety lead Debbie Smith, and to Jamie Flintoff, head of leasehold services. The full details of these will be shared on our website in due course.

Support for LGBT+ community:

Members of our LGBT+ forum provided feedback on signposting support services on the NHG website, and offered reflections on NHG's service delivery during lockdown.

Scrutiny groups

Our scrutiny groups in the west

region fed back on our service delivery during lockdown, and the Hammersmith and Fulham group also looked at how gas contractor complaints are handled as well as the contents of our gas compliance warning letters.

Health and disability panel:

Members of the panel looked at some of the procedural changes as a result of Covid-19. For more information, see page 7.

Asset management steering group

The group were consulted about the repairs backlog, and helped create the risk assessment for contractors visiting residents' homes (see page 8).

Getting involved

There are many opportunities for residents to get involved and have your say. While some of our resident involvement groups are limited to a particular size, if you are interested in a specific subject area, we would like you to hear from you.

Please email involvement@nhg.org.uk and tell us what areas you are most interested in.

Even if you can't physically make it to one of our meetings, there may still be opportunities for you to get involved remotely.

Please continue to check our webpage for further updates from our involvement groups.

NHG sets up telephone befriending service during coronavirus restrictions

See page 21

Become an estate monitor

While NHG staff work hard to keep areas clean and tidy and resolve any issues, we do rely on residents to report problems and work with us.



As an estate monitor, you can help us raise the standards of service at your scheme, block or estate by telling us:

- How well our estate services are being carried out
- Whether cleaning contractors are turning up weekly
- Whether gardening is carried out regularly and to a high standard
- The condition of communal areas, including car parks and playgrounds

You can give us your feedback in variety of ways by:

- Completing an online survey
- Responding to a text message that we send you

- Emailing us your findings. You may be invited to attend a quarterly meeting with our contractors.

While this is open to all NHG residents, we are especially keen to recruit volunteers living in the north and east of London who receive cleaning and/or gardening services.

By giving us at least five pieces of feedback annually, you will receive a gift voucher at the end of the year as a thank you.

Please contact us on 07584 370 081 or at: EstateServices@nhg.org.uk

Shining a spotlight on temporary housing

Did you know that NHG is the largest housing association provider of temporary housing in London?

Temporary housing offers a home to households who do not have a permanent place to stay. These households would either be homeless or living in bed and breakfast/hostel type accommodation.

Within London, more than 56,000 households were in temporary accommodation in 2019 alone, which is an increase of 30 per cent compared with five years ago.

NHG currently offers over 3,000 temporary housing properties. It does so by partnering with boroughs and local authorities who then nominate households. Our tenants get the same tenancy type as other social and affordable housing tenants, so while they are housed by us they have the same rights and security of tenure. The bulk of our temporary housing portfolio are houses leased to us by private landlords who would otherwise be letting these properties on the private market. By leasing to us, these landlords are fulfilling a social purpose.

Covid-19 has increased the importance of and need for temporary housing, to ensure more families can be given a home. Since

lockdown began in March 2020, we have housed over 150 new households, allowing them to finally have their own space.

Households within temporary housing all have a dedicated housing officer. During the last few months, over 4,000 calls have been made by housing officers to check in with these households to see how they are managing and whether we can offer any support. This has included arranging for these households to receive food vouchers, providing IT support for tenants to request government food boxes, and on some occasions buying and delivering food to our most vulnerable tenants.

As NHG does not own the majority of our temporary housing properties, this does mean that households may have to be rehoused at the end of the lease. For this reason, we ensure we work closely with our local authority partners as they will be responsible for finding households their new home.

While temporary housing will not be a person's forever home, it provides an important stepping stone for the tenant and their family for however long that may be.

Notting Hill Genesis teams up with GoodGym to help vulnerable residents during Coronavirus

See page 22



A Day in the Life of... a housing operations manager

In the third of a series of articles, we speak to various members of NHG staff from across the organisation about their role and what their typical day (or week) is like.

Felesha Miles is a housing operations manager for our south region, including Westminster, Lambeth and Southwark, and is based at our Vauxhall office.

One of our residents, Colin Burns, asked Felesha to tell us about her experiences.

Why and when did you join NHG?

I joined Notting Hill Housing (now NHG) in 2015. Before that, I worked in housing for local councils and for another housing association for 14 years in various roles in the income, court, repairs and leasehold teams, and as a customer officer and manager. Notting Hill Housing had a job vacancy for a housing officer which suited my skills and values perfectly. Their 'All Together Better' corporate banner really attracted me.

What is your role today?

I'm a housing operations manager with a team of 10 housing officers and a team co-ordinator.

What can a typical day look like?

Normally writing up reports and overseeing and co-ordinating. I used to meet with the rest of the team once a week but now we meet online every morning for up to an hour. It keeps us connected and bonds the team.

How has the coronavirus lockdown changed your job?

I used to meet with the rest of the team once a week but now instead we do a team call every morning for up to an hour. It keeps us connected and bonds the team. Also, we get a lot of calls about breaking of Covid-19 rules and more noise complaints. The use of technology and social media by residents and staff [in lieu of face-to-face meetings] is increasing.



What do you find the most rewarding?

Supporting and empowering my team and being the voice of reason when resolving issues.

What are the frustrations?

I'd like a few more hours in the day to get everything done, especially now.

Is there a situation that you were able to resolve that stayed with you?

I resolved a serious problem of rent arrears. The resident (property owner) had no control over the household spending by her partner who was not paying the rent. After an open discussion, we offered her support and avoided an eviction.

What do you do in your spare time?

Relaxing with my family as well as supporting my mother at this time.

One thing you would like residents to know about housing officers?

We are here for you, especially now. If you have any concerns about arrears or paying your rent, please speak to us first and we can refer you to any support you may need.

Is there a Green Doctor in the house?

Green Doctors is a charity that helps people to save money, stay warm, and improve energy efficiency in their homes.

Your Green Doctor will help you:

- save money on your energy bill
- switch energy providers to save money
- access warm home discounts
- apply for grants for energy or water debt.

Consultations (currently being done by phone) are free and available for anyone on a low income, for those who have a health condition or disability, for people aged over 65 or if there is a child under five in the household.

For more information or to self-refer, go to: www.nhg.org.uk/residents/support-services/resources/green-doctors/

Alternatively, call 0300 365 3005.

Barbecue (and balcony) safety



With summer fast approaching and the temperature starting to rise, we understand that people's minds are going to start turning to barbecues.

While we know it is a staple of the season for many of you, we need to remind you that the nation is still following social distancing rules and, as such. The rules will revert to normal once social distancing measures are fully relaxed.

Over recent years we have seen an increase in people having barbecues on their balcony. This is dangerous at any time, as well as violating our tenancy and leasehold agreements.

London Fire Brigade (LFB) is aware that "balcony BBQs" are on sale, but they strongly advise against their use. Just because they are advertised as such, does not mean they are safe to use.

Mark Hazelton, community safety group manager for LFB, says: "We urge people not to light barbecues on their balconies. Balconies are often enclosed and it's easy for barbecues to get out of control and cause a fire which can then spread to other properties."

In terms of other fire safety advice regarding balconies:

- If you smoke outdoors on your balcony, always ensure that cigarettes are fully extinguished and disposed of properly.
- If you live in a block of flats, please don't use your balcony as extra storage space. While it can be handy, balconies packed with flammable items can cause a fire to spread much more quickly.
- Keep an eye on what is around your balcony doors, as direct sunlight coming through the glass can spark a fire.
- Charlie Pugsley, head of LFB's fire investigation team, said: "This sort of incident isn't as rare as you would think. I've seen everything from sparkly doorknobs and crystal balls to glass fish bowls and Nutella jars containing crystals all start fires. "Crystal and glass ornaments, as well as items such as shaving mirrors, should be kept out of direct sunlight."
- Do not block or cover over smoke detectors.

NHG sets up telephone befriending service during coronavirus restrictions



Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) has started a new telephone befriending service to help combat isolation and loneliness among residents during the coronavirus restrictions.

Called 'Call and Chat', the service is run by volunteers and residents who sign up will receive a weekly phone call to see how they are, whether there is anything they need and have a friendly conversation.

Call and Chat is available for all residents, not just those that are older or vulnerable, and calls will take place between Mondays and Fridays at a mutually convenient time*.

Mandy Worster, volunteer programme manager, said: "Many of our residents are cut off from their usual social activities and groups because of Covid-19. Regardless of whether they are self-isolating or just social distancing, this can be very lonely.

"Call and Chat is designed to help residents through this difficult time and promote wellbeing. At the same time, if our volunteers have any safeguarding concerns about a resident then they will endeavour to assist with this as well."

If you are interested in finding out more about our Call and Chat service or would like to sign up for this, please contact us on 07596 333835 or at: volunteering@nhg.org.uk. Our volunteers will treat what you tell them in strict confidence and will not share your details with anyone outside of NHG.

* Unfortunately calls cannot be scheduled to take place late at night or during weekends.

Sign up now and take control of your account

See back page

Notting Hill Genesis teams up with GoodGym to help vulnerable residents during coronavirus

During the lockdown, we have been working with GoodGym to support residents unable to get to the supermarket or pick up prescribed medicines.

GoodGym encompasses local groups of runners who combine good deeds with exercise: they run to a location, perform the task and run home. Runners can log onto the GoodGym website to see and sign up to runs/opportunities in their community.

In the past, Goodgym runners have assisted NHG with clearing an allotment at one of our supported schemes in Lambeth, paving the way for a plaque unveiling at another scheme in Brixton and helped out at our Open House Weekend at another scheme in Islington. Now, volunteer runners are delivering food and essential items to those that need it.

Mandy Worster, volunteer programme manager at NHG, said: "We have agreed to provide GoodGym with details of any older and vulnerable residents that have told us that they are struggling to collect food shopping and prescribed medicines, and have said that they are happy to have



volunteers deliver these items to their home."

Alex Kenmure, head of business development at GoodGym, said: "We are currently focusing our attention on providing essential support during this crisis and supporting the organisations and people that provide this support. We want to help those who are isolated and lonely, and the demand is high."

GoodGym has runners in 58 areas across the UK and over 700 volunteers have signed up to support this initiative. All volunteers are background checked and have been trained in social distancing measures in light of Covid-19.

Mandy Worster continued, "We hope that residents find this service useful and would like to thank GoodGym for their support."

For more information, see www.goodgym.org/reports/missions



Helping people live well with dementia

NHG has pledged to become completely Dementia Friendly by raising awareness, knowledge and understanding of dementia, both internally and externally, and getting staff and residents trained to become 'Dementia Friends'.

Over 3m people UK-wide have now become Dementia Friends, including those among our staff, residents and communities.

Hosted by Age Exchange, the Living Well Group based at our Cheviot Gardens scheme in Lambeth is the latest of several initiatives that NHG is supporting across our older peoples' services to increase awareness of dementia.

Pamela Sinnott, service development manager at NHG, said: "One in 14 people over the age of 65 in the UK are living with dementia, and one in three people know someone who has been diagnosed.

"We are continuing to do what we can to raise awareness, and for there to be an easily accessible support group within the business."

Lydia Thurgar, development officer at Age Exchange, said: "We are grateful to NHG for allowing us to run a warm, welcoming group in their bright, airy Cheviot Gardens facility. It's so important for people to have the chance to meet others in a similar position and take part in fun, creative activities that trigger memories.

Last year, NHG received funding from Westminster City Council to establish an intergenerational choir for people living with dementia at Penfold Street, our extra care scheme in Westminster. The choir is still going strong but is temporarily suspended due to the coronavirus restrictions. For more information, email florentina.kasabaqi@nhg.org.uk

The Living Well Group at Cheviot Gardens is also suspended, but otherwise meets every Thursday between 11am and 3pm. Contact Lydia at: lydia.thurgar@age-exchange.org.uk

For more information, email dementia@nhg.org.uk or see www.dementiafriends.org.uk/

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Notting Hill Genesis

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