



Welcome from the CEO



Welcome to our Spring Newsletter

I am sure you will all agree it has been a long winter and that we really need some sunshine and normality back in our lives. As we move towards the easing of lockdown we have given you an update on our services which we hope you will find useful.

We have also given you an update on some projects we are currently working on and where we would really like your input. In the following pages you will see an update on our plans for resident engagement and for a very different annual report, but we really need your help to make these a success. There is no point in us trying all these initiatives if it simply isn't of any interest to you!

I know you are busy and providing us feedback may seem pointless (or at least not on the top of your TO DO list) but I can promise you that we do listen and will often make changes to our services as a result. Whether you can spend 5 minutes or 5 hours over the coming year, please tell us what you think and what we can do to improve.

As this newsletter is being written we are just coming to the end of our latest full resident survey which has been carried out for us by Acuity, an independent organisation that has been working with housing providers for some 20 years and has carried out over 1500 resident surveys. Many of you will have been contacted by Acuity and if you provided feedback then thank you, you can feel satisfied that you have contributed to the shaping PCHA for the future as we use your feedback to improve our services.

The survey data will be collated and reviewed by Acuity during May and we will share the results with residents when we publish our annual report in the summer. Once the report has been received we will be seeking a number of residents to work with us in using the results to shape our services. If you are interested in taking part please contact us at housing@pcha.co.uk.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.

Karen

Gardening Competition

It's that time of year again, when flowers start to bloom in gardens big and small! Whether you have a big or small garden, courtyard or balcony, the PCHA team invite you to get green fingered and enter our gardening competition.

The categories are:

The best children's garden

The tallest sunflower

The best hanging basket or planter

The best fruit, veg or herb garden

The best communal garden

Please send photographs and a brief description to housing@pcha.co.uk by

Sunday 18th July.

A panel of members from the PCHA Board will judge the entries and winners will be notified by Friday 30th July.



New Resident Engagement Policy

At PCHA we pride ourselves on the relationship we have with our residents. We aim to take a more personal approach to working with our residents, developing a positive and collaborative relationship with them. Our aim is for PCHA residents to have every opportunity to positively engage with us and to play a constructive role in evaluating and improving our services both operationally and strategically. Our new Resident Engagement Policy sets out our approach to this.

Engagement and involvement activities will be delivered in a variety of ways, enabling as many residents as possible to participate. We will continue to modernise our approach, and will build on our digital engagement opportunities to ensure our service is efficient and easy to access for all.

We aim to:

- ⇒ Create a positive culture of customer service and resident engagement, engaging with residents in a warm and positive way
- ⇒ Ensure that we foster positive and trusting relationship with our residents
- ⇒ Communicate effectively and honestly, in a clear and accessible way, using plain language and no jargon
- ⇒ Ensure we listen to residents' views and respond positively
- ⇒ Ensure PCHA provides customer-focused, value-for-money services, and is transparent about costs and charges
- ⇒ Provide a wide range of flexible opportunities for residents to be involved in a way they choose
- ⇒ Provide appropriate support and resources, to support and enable effective involvement by our residents
- ⇒ Remove barriers to effective engagement and to try to engage with those under-represented or hard-to-reach groups to ensure all residents have the opportunity to be involved
- ⇒ Provide timely and relevant performance information to support effective scrutiny of PCHA's performance.

The full policy can be found on the PCHA website at www.pcha.co.uk or provided on request. Let us know if we are on the right lines!

Get Involved....

PCHA is committed to involving our residents in developing, shaping and scrutinising our services. We will therefore offer a range of opportunities for engagement and involvement, both informal and formal, that residents can dip in and out of as required to suit them.

Options for involvement:



Join our **Armchair Club**. If you join the Armchair Club you will be asked to comment upon policies, documents or other communications from the comfort of your armchair. You could pick and choose whether you want to comment (or not) at any stage!



Be a **Scheme Champion**. Help us monitor cleaning and gardening services at your scheme, joining us on our regular inspections and letting us know if there a problem.



Apply to join our **Partnership Board**. The Partnership Board will be made up of residents and staff to scrutinise performance, develop new services/ideas and shape the future of PCHA.

If you want to find out more about these or other options to get involved please contact Steve (steve@pcha.co.uk) or Karen (karen@pcha.co.uk) or call us on our normal number – 020 8659 3055.

Coronavirus Update



Getting back to 'normal'

As the first signs of spring have emerged, we too have gradually been emerging from lockdown and COVID restrictions. At last, things are starting to return to some sort of normality, although the queues outside Tom's barber shop near our office in Maple Road remind us that the old normal is a long way off!

It's been a challenging year for everyone and we hope that, as far as possible, our residents and their friends, family and neighbours have come through unscathed. Whilst we'd love to be filling this newsletter with details of summer events and opportunities to get together, sadly we are not there yet. However, we would like to take the opportunity to update you on our services and what we are continuing to do to keep you, your home and the PCHA team safe.



Coronavirus Update

Stay up to date

We have had to review and tweak our services at various times during the year and will no doubt continue to do so. As always, we will keep you up to date through our posts on Facebook and the PCHA website. If you don't follow us on Facebook (see our profile pictured right), do search us out and give us a "like". It's a simple and effortless way of keeping in touch and up to date with what is happening at PCHA.



Follow us on Facebook @PengeChurchesHA.

Our service – moving beyond lockdown

Throughout the various lockdowns and restrictions, we have continued to deal with all emergency repairs and safety works and checks (such as gas servicing). We have also ensured our caretaking and grounds maintenance services continued, although at times there was an impact on the frequency of attendance.

As the government began to ease coronavirus restrictions by introducing a four-step plan out of lockdown, we began to make plans for our own return to normality and with it, a more recognisable service. We reintroduced our full repairs and maintenance service on 8th March and will follow this up with the reintroduction of our planned maintenance programme from 17th May. This includes things like kitchen and bathroom replacements and communal redecoration. We are busy putting some final tweaks to the programme, and will write to affected residents nearer the time of the work.

Coronavirus Update (*continued*)

Resident visits

Our office remains closed to the public and the majority of the team continue to work from home. Over May and June, visits to the office will remain by appointment only. If you do need to see us in person we will be happy to arrange a visit, either at your home or in the office, so please get in touch. Covid secure arrangements will remain in place in the office for the foreseeable future.



As we begin to get out and about again, please help us to keep you and the team safe by following the government's social distancing guidance and remaining two metres away from our staff. If you are able to wear a mask, even better, and our staff will always wear a mask when visiting you. It will also help us to know if you're continuing to shield or self-isolate and of course, you **MUST** let us know if you have any Covid symptoms or have tested positive.



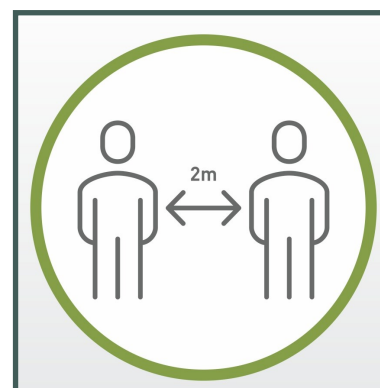
Coronavirus Update (*continued*)

We're here to support you

We're still here to support you if you're struggling to pay your rent, need help claiming Universal Credit or have other tenancy-related issues. Contact us by email at housing@pcha.co.uk or calling 020 8659 3055.

Following government guidelines

Our main priority is to keep you safe and so we follow the latest government guidelines regarding safety measures such as social distancing. These guidelines also apply in communal areas such as stairways and corridors and as a gentle reminder to our residents and visitors we have put up notices across our communal buildings to this effect.



Please stay tolerant...

Finally, we are still receiving increased reports of anti-social behaviour. We know that stress and anxiety caused by the events of the past year – as well as being stuck indoors – can cause behaviour that may be out of character. Please continue to be tolerant and kind towards your neighbours at this time. We are continuing to take swift and firm action against perpetrators of serious or repeated incidents of ASB and work closely with the police to address such issues. Please note that we have no powers to take action against people who don't follow social distancing guidance, but the police do have powers to act where needed.

Get in touch

We will continue to provide regular updates relating to the impact of coronavirus on our services. If you have any concerns or suggestions to assist us in managing services through these unprecedented times, please do let us know by contacting us at housing@pcha.co.uk or calling us on 020 86593055.

Introducing Acorn Environmental



We are pleased to announce that following a review of our grounds maintenance services we have appointed **Acorn Environmental** to provide services across our external communal areas (on larger schemes).

We were delighted to have some residents on the selection panel and we are grateful to them for putting Acorn (and the other contractors) through their paces. Like PCHA, Acorn pride themselves on their high standards of working and their mission statement is simple, *“be the best, deliver the best, never be satisfied”*. Given their alignment with our own values and service vision, we believe we’ve found the perfect partner!

Acorn have now taken over from our previous contractor and therefore you may see Acorn vans on and around our sites over the coming weeks and months.

The appointment of Acorn Environmental has enabled us to take a fresh look at the levels of service we provide and as a result, we have increased the number of visits throughout the year from 20 to 26. This will enable grass cutting and shrub maintenance to continue into December instead of finishing at the end of the summer months. In addition to the grass cutting, included in the contract is litter picking, management of flower beds, trees, shrubs and hedges, and weed clearance.

A full copy of the specification is available for residents upon request.

During the course of the contract, we will aim to provide you with further service details for your scheme. At PCHA we continuously strive to provide the best possible service to all of our residents and we expect that this change in contractor will enable us to continue to do so.

Meanwhile if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

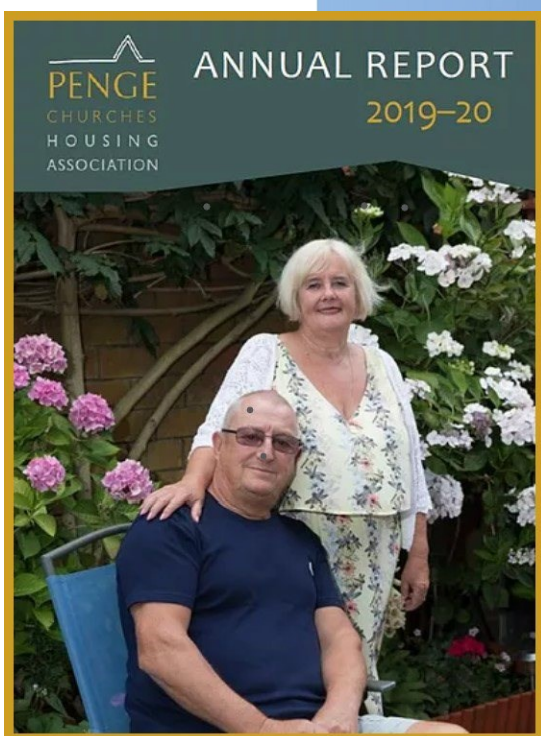


Annual Report

We normally produce our annual report in September, outlining our performance for the previous financial year (April to March). We realise that this means the information that you need to review our performance is already six months out of date! Therefore, this year we are going to try to produce the report in June to make it more meaningful for you.

We would like your input into what you would like us to cover so please contact Karen (karen@pcha.co.uk) if you have any thoughts on what you would like us to include.

Additionally, we are planning to do a film version of the annual report using the magic of Zoom! Our idea is to do this as a Question and Answer session with residents and the Executive Team (by Zoom so you don't need to leave the house!) and then we will use this to create a live annual report. Of course we cannot do this without you, so if you would be willing to get involved in this project and shape our first live annual report, please contact Karen.



Stafford House



On 1st April we welcomed our residents at Stafford House, Hamlet Road into the PCHA family.

Stafford House is a large Edwardian building owned by PCHA and home to 13 residents. The scheme has been a dedicated supported housing scheme for people with mental health needs for some 30 years. In 2009 it underwent extensive refurbishment and development to increase capacity and improve the living environment for residents. The scheme is eco-friendly with solar panels on the main roof, low energy fittings, high levels of insulation and a bicycle store.



**Stafford
House**

Stafford House

Until recently, the management of Stafford House was carried out by our partner Amber Housing with floating support for residents provided by Hestia. During a review of our staffing structure in 2019 we took the decision to invest in a Resident Support Officer and, given this extra resource, it was a sensible decision to take back the management of Stafford House. Our thanks go to our colleagues at Amber Housing (Community Options) for their hard work and commitment to the residents at Stafford House over the years.

Over the coming months we will be reviewing the strategy and processes for managing the scheme to ensure the best positive outcome for residents. To do this, we will work alongside Bromley's Strategic Commissioner for Mental Health Services, the Bromley housing team and Hestia. Sam, our Resident Support Officer (pictured below) will be responsible for managing the scheme on a day to day basis.



Sam

Building Security

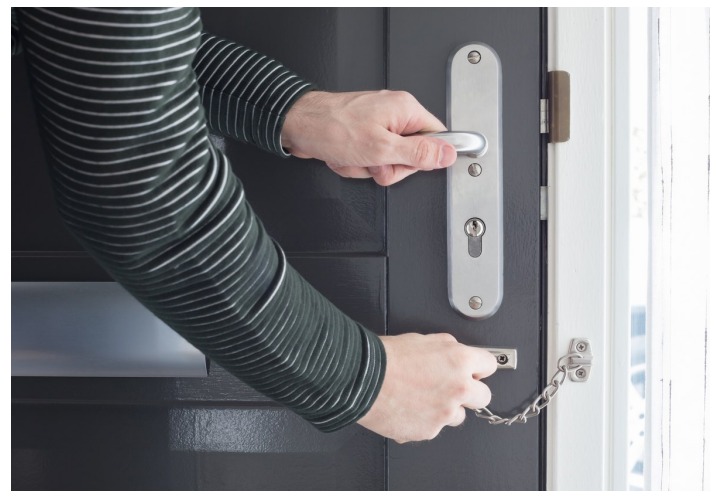
During the past year we have received an increased number of calls about building safety, security and ASB in many of our blocks. With that in mind, here are a few tips for keeping your home and the communal areas of your building safe.

A door entry system may be fitted to your building, particularly in purpose-built flats. This helps to keep you and your neighbours safe and prevents vandalism by keeping strangers out of communal areas.

Whether you have a door entry system or not, please make sure that the following security measures are followed:



- Always make sure the main (communal) doors are closed when you are coming and going
- Never let anyone into the building unless you know they are entitled to be there
- Never prop doors open, whether your own flat door or the communal main entrance door
- Do not leave spare keys under pots or in other hiding places
- Do not give keys to friends for use when you are not there
- If you see anyone vandalising property or dumping rubbish in communal areas please contact us immediately. In the case of criminal damage, contact the police.



Building Security

We work closely with the fire and rescue service and carry out fire risk assessments in all our communal buildings, taking action to keep them safe and free from fire dangers. To help keep these areas safe, both internal and external communal areas must be kept clear of personal items and belongings, including buggies and bikes. We reserve the right to request that any such personal items be removed.



Please do not store personal items such as buggies or bikes in communal areas.

Please note that smoking is not allowed in communal areas including stairways and corridors.



DIY – the Hidden Dangers!

To make your house a home, you might want to make changes or do some DIY. That's great and we encourage residents to do so, but it's important you don't start any work without talking to us first.

We're happy for you to make minor changes (like decorating) without our permission. For anything else, you'll need to let us know what you want to do and ask our permission before you begin. For full details see our leaflet on our website entitled 'Repairs Responsibilities'. Go to www.pcha.co.uk, find the 'Our Publications' menu and click on 'Leaflet Rack'. If you're looking at the electronic version of this newsletter, the leaflet is linked [here](#).



One of the things you must *not* do without permission is drill into walls. Installing a few framed photos or mounting a TV might sound simple enough, but every year thousands of people learn this lesson the hard way: You should never—and we mean never—drill into a wall when you don't know what's behind it!



DIY – the Hidden Dangers!

Most homes have a number of pipes and wires running through any given wall, and unless you know how to find them, you risk injuring yourself, seriously damaging your home, or both. The main dangers of drilling into a wall are hitting an electrical wire, water pipe, or gas pipe. At worst, you could get seriously hurt; and even if not, you will be responsible for the cost of any repairs to put things right!



Contents Insurance

It's also worth a reminder that PCHA does not insure the contents of your home so any damage caused by a failed DIY project (even one that is permitted!) could prove quite costly. **My Home Contents Insurance Scheme** is a specialist Tenants Contents Insurance policy that offers insurance for the contents of your home including cover for items such as furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, electrical items, jewellery, pictures and ornaments. It will also cover you for the cost of redecorating your home following a leak or similar occurrence.

To find out more about the scheme or contents insurance in general, you can:

- Call Thistle Tenant Risks on 0345 450 7288
- Visit <https://www.thistlemyhome.co.uk/>
- Ask us for an application pack, which we can send out to you by email. Contact us on housing@pcha.co.uk or call 020 8659 3055.

Struggling with Energy Bills?

SELCE (South East London Community Energy) have been working with Bromley Council to deliver a new Healthy Homes project, aimed at helping those who struggle to pay their energy bills.

South London 
healthy homes

If you are over 65 years of age, are on a low income, or have a disability or long-term health condition, their service can help.

They are currently offering free telephone advice sessions that can help you make your home more energy efficient, get you discounts off your water bill and also explain how you could pay less for your gas and electricity.

The advice they give is free and impartial, and their advisors can help you in the following ways:

- Telephone advice and support on energy savings
- Advice on how to switch energy service providers
- Advice on accessing the warm energy discount
- Debt advice relating to energy bills
- Energy packs to save money (LED bulbs, Foil panels for behind radiators, and draft proofing)



They also have multilingual advisors who can offer advice in Latin American Spanish, Urdu, and French. They aim to respond to you within 3–5 days.

SELCE will currently be operating this service up to the end of June 2021 and we would encourage any resident who meets the criteria to get in contact.

For further information and to book a free session, please call them on 0808 169 1779 or book via www.cact.org.uk/swtw.

Mental Health Resources

Welcome summer and ward off the lockdown blues!



If the thought of getting back out into the world after lockdown has filled you with anxious energy, you are not alone!

The following websites have helpful information on everything from mindful moment practices to managing anxiety and depression:

- [nhs.uk/mental-health/](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/)
- [mind.org.uk/](https://www.mind.org.uk/)
- [mindful.org/](https://www.mindful.org/)
- [healthline.com/health/mental-health/](https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/)
- [helpguide.org/articles/depression/](https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/)

There is a lot of help available if you are struggling with your mental health so take the time to invest in your mental and emotional wellbeing, and get ready to embrace the summer!

Contact Us



General:

020 8659 3055

housing@pcha.co.uk



To report a repair:

020 8659 3055

repairs@pcha.co.uk



To report a health and safety issue:

020 8659 3055

healthandsafety@pcha.co.uk

www.pcha.co.uk

Making a positive impact

