Summer 2022

Edition 12

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Do you remember, in our previous edition of doorstep, we set out our New Years' Resolutions to improve the way we do things at PA Housing with our customer experience plan? As September starts and autumn arrives, we want to update you on our this story, about the progress from the year so far.

For many of our younger residents, September is about returning to school and learning important lessons that will take them far in life. We wish you all good luck, especially to those of you who are moving into new schools or doing exams this year. At PA, we'd like to think we're approaching this autumn like a new year in school as we turn the lessons from your feedback into action. Currently, we're in the middle of our 'We are PA' 12-week sprint to regain your trust which involves a huge effort across our teams to become more confident in our ability to support you.

Also, we have some exciting news from Team Purple, who are out and about in

3 Bede Island Road, Leicester LE2 7EA

Paragon Asra Housing Limited is a charitable Community Benefit Society registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

Registered Office: Third Floor, Pentagon House, 52-54 Southwark Street, London SE1 1UN. Community Benefit Societies No. 7536. Homes England No. 4849

your neighbourhoods, working hard to get positive outcomes for you. Recently, they held a PA on Tour event to meet our new residents, transferring in from Clarion Housing. You can read more about introduction of Wi-Fi to all our independent living accommodation, and much more on the pages that follow.

If you would like to know who your Neighbourhood Coordinator is, you can find out by visiting www.pahousing.co.uk/ neighbourhood

We hope you enjoy this edition of doorstep! As ever, if there's anything you would like to see in future editions, or you would like to be featured yourself, please get in touch and let us know.

Best wishes,

Ian Watts

Executive Director of Customer Services



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Connecting Communities



f @PAHousingUK y @pa_housing pahousing

A warm welcome to some of our newest customers

We're delighted to welcome 411 new households in Leicester and Nottingham to PA Housing after we completed the transfer of these customers' homes from Clarion Housing on 25 July 2022.

> "We've worked well with Clarion to ensure the transfer is smooth and we are thrilled to welcome our new customers - especially as many are already familiar with us as a local housing provider. We look forward to introducing people to our range of housing services and getting to meet them all over the coming months."

Rachael Smart

Assistant Director, Housing Services









During August, we held two PA on Tour events so that these customers could meet some of our colleagues, including their new Neighbourhood Coordinators who will be working in their areas. As you can see from the photos, it was a great turn out at both events, with everyone enjoying the sunshine and the opportunity to mingle, ask questions, and get to know each other.

Thank you for attending

My PA has had a makeover!

My PA - the fastest, easiest, and cheapest way to manage your home online - now has a brand-new look!

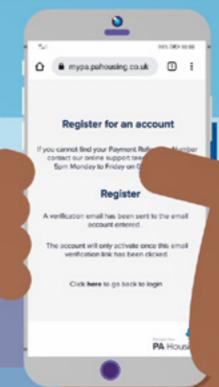
Secure and simple, it's available 24 hours a day, at any time convenient to you. Also, there's no waiting in a phone queue! We listened to your feedback and have made it even bigger and better than before.

You can:

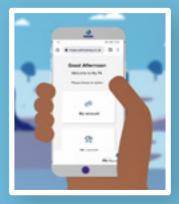
- quickly diagnose and report your own repairs
- view the status of current repairs
- choose a convenient time for a contractor to visit
- pay your rent or set up a Direct Debit
- view your account balance
- request a refund
- request a new fob or keys
- view your personal details
- chat live with a member of our team

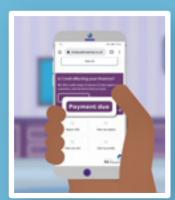
Register now on our website at: mypa.pahousing.co.uk

You only need an email address and your payment reference number from your rent statement.



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On your marks, get set, go!

Our 12-week sprint to restore your trust

Over the last few years, the social housing sector has seen a decline in customer satisfaction with many residents losing trust in the sector - and that includes PA Housing. This is our time to step up and address these issues head on with our 'We are PA' 12-week sprint. In our previous edition, you said you wanted action on areas such as our repairs service, reporting on My PA, and the way we communicate, so these are the steps we're taking to prioritise your recommendations.

Trust is built by consistently being there when you need us, doing what is required, being transparent with the issues we're facing, taking ownership of our responsibilities, communicating clearly, and making sure your voices are heard and acted on.

Our sprint is an intense, focused way of working to put things right through positive engagement and evidencebased solutions. Everything we're doing in this sprint is based around your feedback, so we intend to work with you and everybody in our team to deliver these improvements. Over 50 colleagues and 11 involved residents from across PA volunteered to take part in this • Group 1 is focused on our Damp and Mould Action project, so we're passionate about making progress. Also, we listened to the wider resident voice through surveys and service improvement panels to review our policies and communications. This sprint is about setting the foundations for how we want to work with you in the future. From there, we would like to develop and grow this way of working.

Below, we've set out the 7 areas that we're focusing on to better serve you.

1. Helping our Hubs to help you

The aim of this is sprint is to develop the confidence and capability of our Advisors across the 3 Contact Hubs (Housing, Repairs, and Income) in effectively handling your calls.

Your feedback showed us that we need to provide more human customer service and own our responsibilities. Therefore, we are delivering a training programme that enhances customer care and empathy, including an induction scheme for new staff where resident voices and your lived experiences are heard as soon as people start.

2. Listening to your voice

Our Customer Voice Model is one of the tools we're using to learn from your feedback. This involves using data and your feedback to highlight the different ways we can influence decision making and improve our services

3. Proactive communication and

the digital experience in Repairs

This part of the sprint is split into two groups:

- Plan reviewing our policies, processes, and keeping you updated with proactive communication.
- The aim of Group 2 is to make reporting a repair in our My PA app easier and faster, so more of you feel
- comfortable using it.

4. The 1% challenge

As we mentioned in our last edition, we introduced the 1% challenge to give our colleagues at PA the chance to suggest the small things that we could do to raise customer satisfaction. This is because we know that small changes to the way we work can make a huge difference.

So far, we've been working on implementing over 50 changes based on these suggestions including more regular interaction with you during repairs and increasing the use of our database to ensure teams are joined up and communicating effectively.

5. A culture to be proud of

This area of the sprint is focused on developing the PA Culture, which is all about how we can work together as a team to provide a better service.

If we get the culture right for our colleagues, we can get Our aim is to provide more understanding and control the service right for you. When colleagues feel satisfied for residents who are experiencing ASB. We want them and motivated to work within a team, this leads to better to feel included in the process and confident that we will results. We hope that this can reignite our purpose as an take the appropriate action where necessary. organisation that connects people in every community Your feedback highlighted that we need to show we're we serve.

6. Being Disability Confident

We plan to raise awareness and enhance our current services to become more inclusive and accessible for disabled residents who face barriers and challenges in their day-to-day lives.

A new way of asking what you think

We've partnered with GovMetric to help us carry out feedback surveys by SMS text message and email. You'll receive one of these after a new interaction with us. That could be that you've phoned and spoken to one of our Hubs, or it could be following us carrying out a repair in your home.

This feedback helps us continue to improve the way we do things for you, and allows us to make changes where they're needed, based on your suggestions.

A couple of things to remember though:

- The text messages will come from +447411292011 and will ask you to click a link.
- The emails will come from pahousing@govmetric.com
- These do not replace the telephone surveys you already receive from MEL

We know how careful we all must be around scammers using text messages and emails, so we wanted to let you know that if you receive one of these messages, they are genuine, and are being sent on our behalf.

We look forward to seeing your feedback.

We're focusing on being Disability Confident because we know that 16% of our residents have a disability. Therefore, we want to better understand their lived experiences to ensure our services are more inclusive and accessible.

7. Tackling antisocial behaviour (ASB) positively

taking ASB seriously. Therefore, we will be taking stronger action and improving communications to make sure we're responding to cases in the right way.

Our sprint is now well underway, and our team is working hard to regain your trust by improving the things that matter to you.

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Fire safety in your home

Fire in the home can be a frightening, distressing, and potentially fatal experience. It's important to know the risks so you can take care to avoid them.

We install detection systems that are designed to suit all your homes and cater for everyone. If you have particular needs, such as being unable to hear alarms or having mobility challenges, we will work with you to devise a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) if possible.

Our trained advisors carry out regular fire risk assessments to ensure our preventive and protective measures are the best they can be. We update our provision and policies in line with the latest advice from the government and emergency services. Fire and Safety Advisor Michael Wright said: "We want you to be happy and safe at home, so PA Housing does all it can to protect you and your property from fire. You can be sure that prevention and protection measures we provide meet the highest standards, but there are also many things you can do to look after yourself."



Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause around 6,000 fires in the home across the country every year. Don't ever plug in too many appliances to the same socket. Try to keep one plug to one socket. Certain appliances, such as washing machines, must have a single plug to themselves, as they are high-powered.

Candles

Two fires a day are started by candles. Keep them away from flammable materials like curtains. Put candles out when you leave the room, and make sure they're put out completely at night. Keep pets away, and don't leave children alone with lit candles.

Cooking appliances

Around half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents. Follow some simple rules to stay safe. Take care if you're wearing loose clothing – they can easily catch fire. Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob. Don't leave children on their own in the kitchen. If you have to go to another room, turn off the heat and move the pan to a cool ring. When you're done, make sure you switch off the cooker.

Take extra care when frying. Never leave a chip pan unattended. If the oil starts to smoke, turn off the heat and leave it to cool. If your chip pan catches fire, don't throw water on it. Don't take risks: turn off the heat if it's safe to do so, leave the kitchen, close the door behind you, and call 999.

Smoke alarms

Your home should have at least one smoke alarm and you should check it regularly. You're four times more likely to die in a fire if you don't have a smoke alarm that works. There are several different kinds, but most have an obvious test button. If your alarm doesn't work when you test it, let us know. A working smoke alarm could save your life.

Smoking

Every six days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette. Stub cigarettes out properly and dispose of them carefully. Put them out. Right out! Use a proper ashtray – never a wastepaper basket. Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.

Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, taking prescription drugs, or if you've been drinking. Never smoke in bed. You might fall asleep and set your bed or sofa on fire.



Using BBQs

Summer may be drawing to close, but a reminder that if you're using barbeques to please do so safely. Allow hot coals to cool before disposing of them, and never light a BBQ on a balcony, roof terrace, or in a communal green space – especially in dry weather.

Stay safe

Your priority if there is a fire is to stay safe. If you can smell smoke, hear, see, or feel the heat of a fire, leave the building immediately if you can. Shut doors behind you and call 999 as soon as you're safe. If you can't leave or think it would be unsafe, call 999.

Do you know about Rate my Neighbourhood?

Team Purple PA Housing

Rate my Neighbourhood is one of the ways we make sure we're doing the best job we can for you within your neighbourhoods. Members of Team Purple ask for your feedback, and for you to rate where you live with a score out of 10.

On average, you rated where you live 7 out of 10. This was a fantastic result for 2021/2022 and shows that our Team Purple approach is really having an impact.

You can find out more about your neighbourhood on our website and social media channels.

pahousing.co.uk/ neighbourhood

We're stamping out **Tenancy Fraud**

In the last edition, there was an article about how seriously we take tenancy fraud. Recently, members of Team Purple from our Tenancy Solutions Team successfully brought a long-standing case of tenancy fraud at one of our homes in Leicester to an end.

It took 15 months in total, largely due to a backlog in the court systems dating back to the pandemic. After working with the police and various other agencies, we were able to prove to the judge that our tenant was not living at her home, and instead was allowing a group of unknown individuals to live there. Complaints of antisocial behaviour including noise, the smell of drugs, and items in communal areas being stolen were logged and used as evidence. Therefore, the judge provided us with an outright possession order. This means that she has lost her tenancy and once we've cleaned up the mess that has been left, the flat can be given to someone who needs it.

You can find out more about how we tackle antisocial behaviour on our website:

www.pahousing.co.uk/asb

Have you tried our **ASB Toolkit?**

The ASB Toolkit provides useful information on tackling different types of antisocial behaviour including some other useful contacts. www.pahousing.co.uk/asbtoolkit





The cost of living increase

With energy bills and fuel costs soaring and the largest increase in inflation in 30 years, we know that many of you may be struggling financially. It's a worrying time, but we mean it when we say we're here to help.

Tenancy Sustainment Team

Our specialised team are trained in money management and budgeting so they can assist you to get all the benefits you're entitled to, such as Universal Credit claims and appeals. They have already helped thousands of customers.

Government Support

There are several different schemes that have been announced, so we've created this quick summary of what is available.

- £150 rebate via council tax for all households in bands A to D. Recipients who don't pay council tax by Direct Debit should receive instructions from their local authority about applying.
- £650 Cost of Living payment for claimants of means-tested benefits – including Universal Credit, Income-based JSA, Income-based ESA, Income Support, Pension Credit, Working Tax Credits, and Child Tax Credits. These were paid in two stages: the first payment of £326 was paid in July and the second will be in the autumn. You're entitled to this payment if you've been in receipt of benefits between 26/04/22 – 25/05/22. Automatic payments, no need to apply.
- £150 Cost of Living payment for people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence

Payment, Attendance Allowance as of 25/05/22. This will be paid automatically in September. There is no need to apply, and it will be paid in addition to the £650 mentioned above where applicable.

- £300 pensioner Cost of Living payment. Payable to all pensioner households as a top-up to the winter fuel payment paid in November / December. Must be state pension age on 25/09/22. It is paid in addition to the £650 and the £150 where applicable.
- £400 energy rebate. Payable to every household. Energy suppliers will deliver this support to households with a domestic electricity meter over six months from October. Direct Debit and credit customers will have the money credited to their account, while customers with pre-payment meters will have the money applied to their meter or paid via a voucher. No details yet on households whose energy costs are included as a service charge.

Energy bill savings and gas safety

It's not only for your safety that we need to inspect your gas appliances each year. Of course, that's a huge part of making sure you, your families, and your neighbours are safe, but having correctly functioning appliances can also save you money on your energy bills.

If you've not had you gas safety inspection, please get in touch.

leing green can also save you money

As well as having efficiently working appliances, making some simple changes around your home to be more sustainable can also save you money. Turning down your thermostat, washing your clothes at a lower temperature, and not keeping the water running while you brush your teeth can all make a difference to your bills.

Here are some more green money saving tips that may help you in these challenging times:

- Switch to LED bulbs. Traditional bulbs are incredibly inefficient. Modern LEDs are the opposite and last longer, making them less wasteful.
- Unplug those chargers. Across the country, people are unnecessarily over-charging their mobile phones, laptops, and other devices. Instead, as soon as your device is fully charged try and get into the habit of unplugging it. Not only will this save energy, but it also prolongs battery life. It could also save you about £60 a year on your electricity bills.
- Do full laundry loads. Half-load settings save very little energy, so a full load is more energy efficient. Do fewer (but fuller) wash loads instead.

Looking to save money elsewhere?

- Make use of loyalty schemes at your local shops, restaurants, and supermarkets because as well as gaining points to spend on items, some of them now unlock more rewards and discounts.
- Plan out your meals for the week before you do your shopping. Not only will this help to reduce food waste, but it will also ensure that you're not spending money on items you don't need.
- If you need to travel around the country a lot or commute to work, consider getting a rail card or investing in a yearly bus pass to save money in the long term.

We hope that you find these budgeting tips helpful.



We know we don't always get it right!

So, let's do something about it! It's our aim to provide excellent service to all residents, but we know that things can sometimes go wrong, and we can fail to meet your expectations.

That's why we have a committed Customer Experience Team who are there to respond to your complaints, investigate them, and resolve them where possible.

Give us a call, send us an email, contact us through My PA, or fill in a Complaints Form online, and our team will get back to you within 5 workings days (usually 48 hours), letting you know we've received your complaint. We'll also confirm that we're investigating what went wrong and we should update you on this within 10 working days. This is the start of Stage 1.

Then, once a thorough investigation about the root of the issue has been carried out, we'll offer our apologies for the inconvenience you've experienced, and we'll keep you informed with regular updates about what we're doing to solve the problem.

If we can't agree on a solution at the end of this process, the next step is to take your complaint to Stage 2 which is shown on the infographic opposite.

Could we have oone better?

If you're not happy with the level of service you've received from us, then it's important you let us know so we can do better.

To make a complaint, visit our website, send us an email, or call us today.

www.pahousing.co.uk/complaints complaints@pahousing.co.uk 0300 123 2221

Referrals to the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)

Throughout the complaints process, you're entitled to refer your complaint to the HOS at any point and from 1 October, you'll no longer have to not have to contact a designated person or need to wait 8 weeks before contacting them. The HOS have done this to help speed up the process for you.

You can find out more about this on their website, as well as details on how to contact them should you need to:

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk 0300 111 3000 info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk Start

1

Why is it important to make a complaine?

We always appreciate your feedback because we genuinely want to help you and knowing where things have gone wrong can help us to improve our services. And, when our services are performing at their best level, this helps to benefit everybody involved.

Finish

Make a complaint You can give us a call, send us an email, or fill in a complaints form online. Please provide as much specific detail as possible. Attaching photos will assist the investigation.

Stage We'll get back to you We will acknowledge 10 days your complaint within 5 working days (usually 48 hours) to tell you we've got your complaint.

> We'll investigate your complaint to find out what has gone wrong and how we can fix it.

We'll report back what we've found out, what we're going to do to put it right, and we'll say sorry.

Well get back to you, Like Stage 1, we will acknowledge your escalation to stage 2 within 5 working days (usually 48 hours).

We'll re-investigate your complaint again and involve the next level of management, usually a Head of Service or Assistant Director for their perspective.

We'll report back with what we found out during the new investigation, let you know what we're going to do to put it right, and we'll say sorry.

Complaint resolved*

*If we can't agree at the end of Stage 2, the next step is to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

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BA Housing

Have you thought about working with us?

Do you have a passion for social housing? Just because you live in a PA home, that doesn't mean you can't apply for a role with us too. We'd love to hear more resident voices and as both an employee and a resident, you could influence how we do things at PA Housing with your own unique insight.

Scan the QR code below or follow @PAHousingJobs on Twitter to see our current opportunities.

www.pahousing.co.uk/workwithus

Lucy's Story

at the Job Centre last year, I was instantly drawn to it. The funny thing is, my family and I live in a PA home! I applied through the government's Kickstart Scheme for 16–24-year-olds looking for employment and joined the Tenancy Solutions Team who help to deal with residents' concerns. But then, a long-term apprenticeship role became available within the team, and luckily, I was successful in getting the job.

"I was grateful for the Kickstart role as it was purpose driven, it was connected to where I live, and it taught me a lot about the industry. The role came at just the right time, and everything fell into place after that. This apprenticeship almost seems made for me! I like a challenge, and in this role, I work on totally different cases every day which always keeps things interesting. It's definitely the best job I've had so far!

"I consider my path to be quite unusual. Working for PA and living in a PA property, I get to see both sides of the situation and the impact the staff make."

Lucy Hill

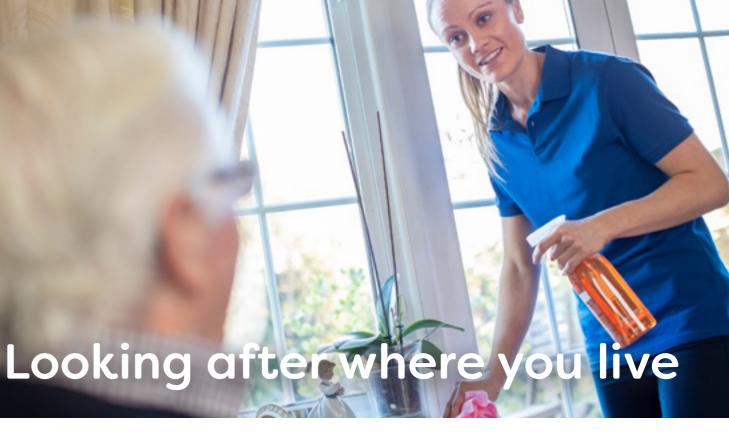
Tenancy Solutions Apprentice



The proposed contractor for each lot is: Across our regions, we've got thousands of trees. Although they make our neighbourhoods look beautiful, Lot 1 Wetton Cleaning Services Limited they take careful management to make sure they don't Lot 2 Wealden Services Ltd get overgrown or cause any problems. So, we've recently Lot 3 Wealden Services Ltd appointed Treeworks Environmental Practice (Treeworks) Lot 4 Interclean Estate Management to help manage them. Treeworks will be carrying out Services Limited surveys across all our communal areas over the coming Lot 5 Clean Green Cleaning Services Ltd months in the lots listed below. These surveys will help Lot 6 Interclean Estate Management us to determine whether any pruning work is needed Services Limited or if any of the trees are causing a nuisance or hazard which will ensure we meet our duty of care for public What do you mean by a lot? safety. The results will all be entered onto a central piece of mapping software which will allow our teams to answer any queries you may have, quickly and easily. When we talk about lots it's just a simple way of

This is different to your Neighbourhood as lots are We also know how important communal cleaning is in keeping where you live looking great, so we're pleased normally much larger in scale. to let you know that we're also coming to the end of All our areas are covered by the six lots, so your home appointing cleaning contractors for all our regions. Thanks to your feedback, we're confident that from the will be included. eighteen contractors who submitted applications, the four Lot 1 Surrey we've whittled it down to are up to the task of delivering Lot 2 West London the high level of service you deserve. We're now into Lot 3 East London the final stages of these agreements and we're hoping Lot 4 South Leicester and Northants that they will start from 1 October 2022 on a three-year Lot 5 Nottinghamshire contract. We'll be back in contact before that date to keep Lot 6 Leicester you in the loop.

If you have any queries about this article or the role of our Estates Team, please get in touch at estates@pahousing.co.uk



grouping areas to make it much easier for us to manage.

Connecting Communities:

Our independent living schemes go online

We've installed Wi-Fi in the communal areas in all our independent living accommodation across the country.

This makes us proud because it means we're at the forefront of something that brings families and friends together through free, accessible, online communication. It also helps to promote and develop the residents' independence as it gives them access to vital facilities in a post-pandemic society. What's more, we're also holding classes and coffee mornings to develop the residents' computer literacy skills.

Independent Living accommodation is designed for people who are over 50 or 55-years-old to live with the reassurance of a 24-hour emergency alarm service. This enables residents to have independence and live life to the full. For example, Mahatma Gandhi House in Leicester provides sheltered accommodation for over 50s. When asked what she used her access to the communal Wi-Fi for, one of the residents, Shama, stated:

- "I download English lessons in the communal space and then I take my phone upstairs to listen to them. You can really learn anything on there, it's like everybody's knowledge is in one place. For example, I watch tutorial videos on YouTube such as cooking videos for new recipes, sewing, knitting, learning henna patterns, and more. The communal Wi-Fi saves me money because I don't have to use as much data on my phone contract anymore.
- "I'm also active on social media I have lots of friends on Facebook and I like to keep up with what my family is doing on Instagram, including my relatives who are still living abroad. Not only do they let us know what is going on in their lives, but we can bring them into our lives here too with photos and video calls. We can show them the friends we live with, our homes, even the weather. My relatives thought it was amazing when I showed them the snow in the winter because many of them haven't seen it in person."













One of her fellow residents, Nita, offered her thoughts too:

- "Like Shama, I watch a lot of YouTube videos. They also help me to do my make-up and, sometimes, I'll put songs on in the communal area that we can listen to together.
- "WhatsApp is useful for me too; it was especially helpful during the pandemic. I use it to contact relations, friends, and I have a list of professional contacts who promote activities to support me. For example, I can contact my Zoom yoga class which helps with my fitness, I go to church group meetings 3 to 4 days a week, and I can access mental health support services if I need them. "Also, while we were still in lockdown, somebody that we know died. So, using the communal Wi-Fi, we were able to be a part of the funeral on a video call and speak to the family because it was at a time when physical attendance was still limited."

A common theme of connecting with the world and overcoming loneliness began to arise out of the responses.

Shama added, "I'm looking forward to learning more because of the greater sense of independence it will give me. It will be nice when we no longer need to ask our children to do these things for us, and we can just get on with them ourselves. I hope that I can learn more about staying safe online – avoiding scams and knowing which websites to trust when spending money." Rani Bola, Sheltered Tenancy Officer, commented on how encouraging the residents' engagement with the Wi-Fi had been so far:

- "It has been nice to see. More residents are spending time outside their flats now which allows them to communicate more and develop friendships within Mahatma Gandhi House. After the pandemic, lots of vital services went online such as the physiotherapists and mental health services that many of the residents access. Even after the pandemic, this can continue to make life easier for the residents and promote their independence.
- "Currently, there is a range of abilities, and those who are more capable online basically help everybody with things like renewing their passports which can be a nice, supportive activity. Subscribing to a streaming service would be a positive idea for the future too, so we can host movie nights!"

By all accounts, the introduction of the communal Wi-Fi to Mahatma Gandhi House has been an astounding success, and this is just one example.

Completing your annual gas safety check is vitally important, and you could be putting yourself and others at risk by not allowing us access.

Properly functioning appliances can also help keep your energy bills down.

Head over to our website to fund out more: www.pahousing.co.uk/gassafety

