

# Rising Star

January 2024



## 1. Happy New Year!

Welcome to the Winter 2024 Rising Star! We are kicking off the year by giving you lots of essential information about your homes and what's been going on with PBHA. We have information about property improvements, information about repairs (in and out of hours), an explanation of our House Proud pledge and more! We also have information on our spring courses, a more detailed breakdown of our participation ladder, and the dates for our upcoming Tenant Conferences.

If you have some ideas or want to get involved in creating the Rising Star, please contact Oli on [ohawley@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:ohawley@peterbedford.org.uk) or on 020 3815 4052

## 2. Drop-in support

Our **drop-ins** for help with ASB, general needs tenancy, and/or income are continuing throughout 2024. Shanika and Bozana will be at the hubs **every other week** to help with any queries or support. To book your place, please get in contact (details below).



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These sessions are at:

- **Clissold** hub every other **Wednesday** – next one being 7th February,
- **Isledon** hub every other **Friday** – next one being 16th February
- **Kingsland** hub on **Thursdays** weekly all sessions are from 11am-4pm.

**ASB and General Needs Drop-ins:** Please contact **Shanika Dowdie**, Housing officer/ ASB Lead by email [housing@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:housing@peterbedford.org.uk) or call 02038154033.

**Income Drop-ins:** Please contact **Bozana Douglas**, Income Officer by email [housing@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:housing@peterbedford.org.uk) or call 020 3815 4034

## 3. Property Improvements and Information

### Fire Detection System Upgrades

We are happy to let you know that we will be upgrading the fire detection system at 24 of our buildings in Hackney and Islington. Our approved fire alarm contractor Lightside will be carrying out these upgrades and some tenants have already had letters sent. Works commence on 22/01/24 and should be completed by 29/03/24. Please look out for communications from PBHA and help work with us by providing access into your flat so that works run smoothly and get completed.



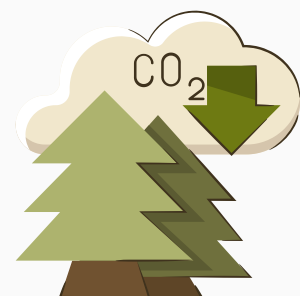
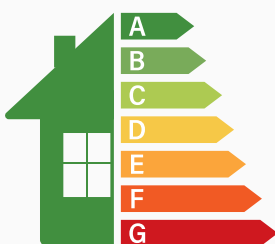
### Managing Condensation in Your Home

PBHA are working hard with tenants to manage and reduce condensation in their homes and have put together a 'Managing Condensation in Your Home' leaflet and starter pack, including non-electric dehumidifiers, mould wash and deterrent spray with gloves and cloth and a roll of draught excluder. It is important to remember to keep air vents in your home unblocked and trickle vents to your windows open. Condensation if not managed, can lead to mould growth which can affect your health and damage property. If you are having trouble managing condensation levels in your home, contact our repairs team ([repairs@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:repairs@peterbedford.org.uk)) to see if our gift starter pack can help.

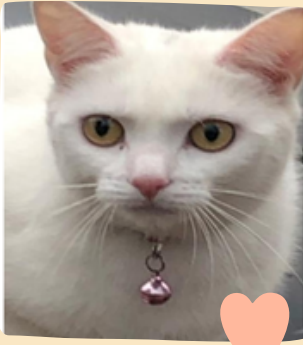


### Decarbonisation progress

Our plans to decarbonise 34 homes are progressing well. With 50% funding from the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme, we will be able to improve the energy efficiency of some of our coldest homes, benefitting 62 tenants. In-depth surveys and air-tightness tests have now been conducted and a specialist consultant is now planning the works that are needed to raise the energy efficiency of each home to EPC level C. Works will commence in 2024 and be completed by the spring of 2025.



## 4. Hello and Goodbye!



Daisy Eaton (she/her)

### What is your role and why might tenants/participants come to you?

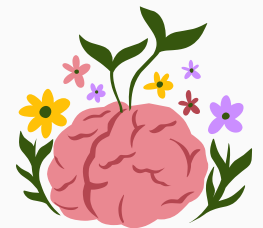
Hello! I am an Enhanced Housing Management Worker for Islington- This means I support PBHA Islington Tenants with tenancy issues, this may be rent issues, antisocial behaviour, or repairs and maintenance concerns. Additionally I can support tenants with signposting for extra support needs or for help with training and employment, or benefits. I am the EHM worker for 22 Islington Tenants.

### Tell us a bit about your working background.

For the last two years before joining PBHA in November 2023 I worked in a Homeless Persons Hostel, assessing the referrals that came in and being the first point of contact for people experiencing homelessness to come for assessment to help get them off the streets and into temporary accommodation.



Prior to this I worked in supported accommodation for people with mental health diagnoses and learning difficulties as a support worker, and then a team manager for over 10 years.



### What drew you to PBHA?

When I saw the job advertisement I Googled Peter Bedford Housing Association and I liked the feeling I got about them, they looked to be a community who cared about reducing homelessness and giving people a second chance, something that really resonated with me



### Do you have any fun facts/things that interest you?

Apparently my lookalike is a Cat called Elsa! So it is pretty lucky that I love Cats!

We would also like to welcome the following new staff to PBHA:

- Fadesola Adetosoye (EHM Hackney)
- Carolina Guerra Moral (EHM Newham)
- Zara Mathura (EHM Hackney)



## 5. Rent Increases

Each year we review our rental and service charges. You will receive a letter in early February to consult with you about our proposed charges for April 2024 – March 2025. You are welcome to contact us and give your views on the proposed new charges by 25th February. You will then receive a notification letter, giving at least one month's notice, to confirm your new rental and service charges for the year. For this upcoming year, the **core rent increase is 7.7%**.

Service charges are specific to your home and pay for the actions we have to take to keep your home in good and safe condition. They do not cover repairs. Your service charges include some or all of the following:

- Housing management and EHM Workers
- Servicing and maintenance of systems: fire alarm, electrical wiring, Portable Appliance Testing and CCTV
- Communal services such as cleaning, gardening, stairwell electricity
- Council tax and administration
- Building improvements
- Furnishings and white goods
- Locks & keys
- Damage caused by tenants
- Landlord charges (where we are not the landlord)

If you would like services such as gardening and communal cleaning and do not currently receive them, please let us know.



## 6. Reporting Repairs and Housing Emergencies



If you have any repairs related issues please contact the repairs telephone line on 0203 815 4123 or email [repairs@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:repairs@peterbedford.org.uk) between 09:30 and 17:30, Monday to Friday.

For all non-repair calls during normal working hours please contact your Key Worker or the main switchboard on 0203 815 4100 or email [admin@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:admin@peterbedford.org.uk) between 09:30 and 17.30.

In the event of an out of hours repairs or housing emergencies please contact the main switchboard on 0203 815 4100, between 17:30 and 09:30 Monday to Friday, All day Saturday, Sunday and Bank holidays.



Please be informed, that this is for emergencies only and currently, we do not offer call out in cases such as being locked out. You are welcome to purchase spare keys, to leave with a trusted person in case you lock yourself out of the property, or order and install a key safe box.

## 7. House Proud Pledge

Peter Bedford has signed up to the House Proud Pledge Project. It demonstrates our commitment to LGBTQ+ resident equality and support. It has been developed by House Proud, the University of Surrey, Stonewall HA in association with residents, staff members and housing leaders. It is so important that our LGBTQIA+ residents are free to be themselves in their own homes without fear of prejudice. Sadly, LGBTQ+ residents continue to experience discrimination in their everyday lives, including in relation to their housing.



Houseproud's research found that 60% of trans respondents did not feel that their neighbourhood was a safe place to live and one in five gay men reported modifying their home in some way (e.g. moving pictures or books) to hide their sexual orientation from a visiting repairs operative or housing officer. A third of respondents also felt that their housing provider was not able to deal effectively with issues like harassment.

We are committing to:

1. Make sure that LGBTQ+ residents can have input at executive/strategic level
2. Increase LGBTQ+ visibility
3. Initiate a programme of staff training to improve understanding of LGBTQ+ lives.

If any tenant would like to find out more about the scheme, please do reach out to Oli Hawley.



## 8. You Said, We Did

The Property Panel has resumed recently with good tenant input. This is a really useful platform from the perspective of the Property team. The next meeting is on 30th January 2pm at Clissold Hub and we welcome more tenants to join. PBHA has passed on tenant feedback that they were pleased with contractors

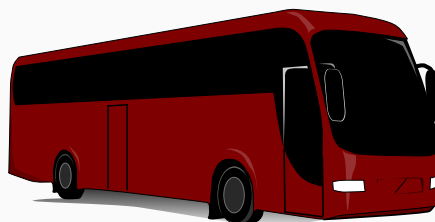
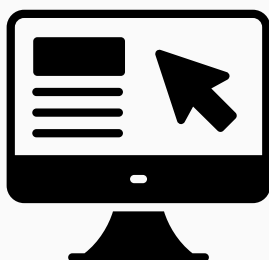
We have held events in response to feedback from tenants:

- Kings Coronation: Afternoon tea and screened on television
- Trip to Hastings:

We are aiming to get the service charge breakdown published online on the tenant portal. If this is not possible, it will be issued in the rent increase letters in February.

We are publishing rent statements more frequently and have moved to monthly for people who cannot access the Tenant Portal.

We are rolling out the Tenant portal from January 24. This gives online access to report a repair, make a complaint and see your rent statement. We hope to get most tenants on the portal by the Summer.



Going forward, we are working to update the website so it is more tenant friendly, and to hold quarterly house meetings and annual Neighbourhood meetings to keep tenants up to date on events and PBHA services.

## 9. Learning from Complaints

Complaints about housing associations have really increased in the past few years. PBHA works with the Housing Ombudsman if we cannot resolve complaints. We look at complaints every year to see what we can learn, including speaking to the Board (with someone on the Board to lead this).

Our response times to complaints has improved in 2023 with the average response time falling to 10 working days from 24 days in 2021. 83% have been upheld or partially upheld this year.

Following complaints, over this past year we have:

- Improved our accuracy for texts around arrears.
- Increased length of stay for supported housing to 3 years (Hackney and Islington).
- Kept tenants better informed about the length of their stay.
- Removed master keys from contractors.
- Increased the number of inspections on the quality of completed repairs.
- Required the Out of hours service to properly notify us of all calls.
- Added an automatic response from the Quality inbox with details of response times whenever a complaint is received.
- Resolved that all issues raised in a complaint in writing will be investigated unless the tenant explicitly asks for this not to be done (some were not investigated if the tenant did not explain them when we met).

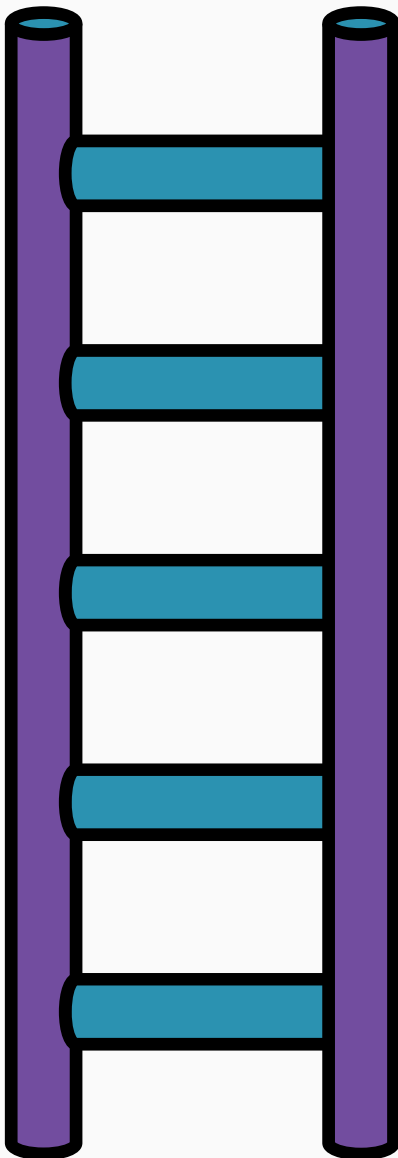
Going forward, we intend to:

- Review the screening and allocation process for tenants.
- Review how to respond to criminal damage and review the policy around this.
- Start issuing deadlines to those who make complaints to get feedback for this so we can meet the Ombudsman's strict timelines.
- Address the issue of service responsiveness and improve our adherence to the Service standards.
- Review the ASB policy to see if it reflects the Psychologically Informed Environment and whether it promotes empathy and personalised contact.

## 10. Participation Ladder

Listening to and working with tenants to deliver better services is a core part of PBHA's ethos. To define what this looks like, we have developed a 'Participation Ladder'. This ladder has five 'rungs', each describing the extent to which tenants are involved within PBHA.

We aspire to become Tenant-led and believe that currently we have reached the 'Involved' rung of the ladder. Here is a summary of the rungs of the ladder:



### 1. Tenant-led

Tenants have influence across PBHA, inform key decision-making and help set priorities for service delivery. Tenant involvement is consistently applied.

### 2. Tenants Influencing

Tenants beginning to influence service delivery at PBHA. Their views are heard from top to bottom in the organisation and have some influence over decision-making.

### 3. Involved

Participation – Tenants can make suggestions and influence outcomes.

### 4. Consulted

We ask tenants/participants for feedback on our ideas and encourage people to make their own suggestions for improvements. The final decision remains with the organisation.

Service users are asked what they think but have limited influence.

### 5. Informed

An important first step to involvement. The emphasis is on a one way flow of information. It does not include a channel for feedback.

Service users are told what is happening but have no influence.

PBHA aspires to reach the top rung of the ladder, 'Tenant-led'.

If you have any views on this ladder, we would be very glad to hear them. In particular:

- **Do the descriptions make sense and are they clear?**
- **What else would you like to see?**

Please contact Chris Deacon by emailing [cdeacon@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:cdeacon@peterbedford.org.uk) to share your views.



# 11. Make & Meet Activities

Spring 2024

**An inclusive, creative, and supportive learning environment, focused on reducing loneliness and isolation. Our Make & Meet Space brings people together through free courses, activities and events. Everyone\* is welcome! We support people to enhance their skills, build their confidence, and explore their potential.**



## COMPUTER SKILLS FOR WORK & LEARNING

Contact us about classes starting in May 2024

For learners who wish to seek, gain and retain employment within an office environment. Are you interested in networking & marketing, learn to use Canva to further your skills.

**Days/Times: Tuesdays 10am (6 weeks)**

## DRAMA WORKSHOP

Contact us for classes starting in April 2024

Play drama games, devise scenes, and work on scenes. Come along to build your confidence, improve your public speaking, and develop your performance technique in a safe and creative space.

**Days/Times: Wednesdays at 1pm (6 weeks, with a 1 week break)**

## MONEY MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Contact us to join the group starting in May 2024

Get advice on your money matters and budgeting skills. Learn to make better decisions about debts, spending and saving.

**Days/Times: Tuesdays 1pm**

## DIY FOR BEGINNERS: INTRO TO FURNITURE MAKING

Contact us about classes starting in April 2024

This is a beginners introduction to furniture construction methods. Make a small stool from scratch and learn skills that you can apply to other furniture making or DIY.

A great introduction to working with wood!

**Days/Times: Mondays at 1.30pm (8 weeks)**

## PEER SUPPORT LUNCH GROUP

Contact us if you would like to join the group!

Come and join us for an activity and a free lunch, to chat or just to be around people. We offer something different each time, e.g., cooking, gardening, and visits to museums.

**Days/Times: Thursdays 1pm**

*Sessions take place at Iseldon Canteen  
179A Iseldon Road- Finsbury Park*

## OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING

Contact us for classes starting in April 2024

Develop a range of practical drawing skills, learn about proportion, perspective and improve knowledge of colour theory. Explore various techniques and mediums to create forms and textures.

**Days/Times: Thursdays 1:30pm (7 weeks)**

## CREATIVE FINE ARTS

Contact us about classes starting in May 2024

Explore your creativity, with access to a range of materials and expert guidance in a fun and relaxed setting. Learn and be inspired by poplar art movements!

**Days/Times: Wednesdays at 11am**

## BOTANICAL ART & GROW YOUR OWN GARDEN

Contact us for classes starting in April 2024

Grow your own herbs, create a glass globe for air plants or a succulent terrarium. We will also be getting experimental with using cyanotype printing techniques to create art using botanical finds from the local area as well as learning the art of botanical drawing.

**Days/Times: Fridays 10:30am (6 weeks)**

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING: RESILIENCE COURSE

Contact us about classes starting in May 2024

Learn about the skills & tools needed to cope with stress. Practice self-compassion and emerge from challenges feeling stronger.

**Days/Times: Thursday's 1pm (5 weeks)**

**\*Our free courses, coaching and training programmes are open to adults 18+ living within North East London, who are on benefits or low income. PBHA is an inclusive organisation and is keen to support those that are at risk of loneliness and isolation. This may include people with lived experience of homelessness, and mental health conditions, disabilities, autism and other impairments. Please contact us to learn more about course eligibility.**

Find out more on our website, or by contacting  
020 3815 4100 / [learn@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:learn@peterbedford.org.uk)

## CHOIR

Contact us for classes starting in May 2024

We welcome any level of experience, come and learn new songs, meet new people, and improve your singing technique, in a welcoming environment.

**Days/Times: Wednesdays at 1pm**

## 1-1 DIGITAL SKILLS COACHING

Contact us to get matched with a Digital Champion!

Get tailored support with a digital champion to improve your digital skills. Topics include emails, shopping online, online forms, file management, and more!

**6-8 sessions lasting 1 hour each**

## PARTICIPATION & COPRODUCTION SESSIONS

There are lots of ways for you to connect, express yourselves, have your say, and take an active role in making decisions and shaping services. Get in touch with us!



## INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE SESSIONS

Contact us to book your IAG session!

With our expert advice and guidance, understanding and positive attitude, you will be able to:

- identify realistic but ambitious goals and learning options that suit you
  - get support in making a decision about your future
  - build your confidence and motivation about your future
    - increase your chances of completing education and training, or maintaining work
    - improve your odds of getting a job
- 1 session lasting 1 hour**

## WELLBEING & SUPPORT SERVICE

Contact us to get matched with a Wellbeing and Support Volunteer!

Our Wellbeing and Support Service offers the chance to

- be supported to explore your community and meet new people
- set and work on goals
- improve your mental and physical health
- be supported to attend appointments and events
- talk to someone regularly

## VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering at PBHA is a great way to meet people and develop or learn skills.

We're always looking for enthusiastic, positive and supportive people to join our mission to tackle social exclusion.

We are recruiting the following positions:

- **Digital Champions** - support people with their digital skills.
- **Wellbeing & Support** - support people to feel less alone through befriending or one-off meets.
- **Gardeners** - work with lead gardener, Anna, to tend to our community garden.
- **Reception/Admin** - you will be supported to gain reception and admin skills.



Visit our website to find out more about us:

[www.peterbedford.org.uk](http://www.peterbedford.org.uk)

Contact us on:

020 3815 4100 /

[learn@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:learn@peterbedford.org.uk)



## More Information:

Our class sizes vary from 8 to 10 learners per session and will take place at our wheelchair accessible Kingsland Hub Venue.

Some sessions will be available at our Isledon Hub, near Finsbury Park Station. We can also deliver some of our programmes externally in partnership with local organisations - contact us for more information.



Find us at:

**Kingsland Hub,  
242 Kingsland Road,  
London E8 4DG**

## 12. Feedback from recent events

We had a successful **Tenant Conference in November 2023** where staff and tenants from across PBHA were able to come together to discuss priorities and any issues PBHA should be aware of. Some of the key themes from this were:

- The importance of good communication and making sure PBHA uses different ways to get in touch.
- Reviewing the out of hours service and making sure tenants have this information (see section 6).
- Working with tenants to develop our coproduction vision to make it clearer

In response to the need to communicate in different ways, we are **launching a PBHA Instagram account** for all things participation! This will advertise upcoming events, panels, courses, and other opportunities to get involved at PBHA. To follow the account, search for the handle: **@pbha.get.involved**

The **next Tenant Conferences** are scheduled for:

- Wednesday February 21st 4-6pm in Newham.
- Wednesday April 24th 12:30-4pm in Clissold
- Wednesday 26th June 6-8pm at the Kingsland Hub



If you want to see a **full copy of the minutes** and action plan, please email [ohawley@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:ohawley@peterbedford.org.uk) .

To see off 2023, we had our **Tenant and Participant Festive Party**. Staff and tenants gathered together to share a meal, share stories, and listen to festive music together. Our kitchen service fed over 40 people, many of whom came along to our games and activities afterwards. Lisa led people through the music and film quiz before we went on to a karaoke competition! We ended the day with a festive sing-along before everyone took a goodie bag and made their way home. Thanks for everyone who came along and to all who attended an event in 2023 - hope to see and some new faces this year!



## 13. Upcoming events

The last event planned in this financial year (until April) is our **International Women's Day Celebration** on the afternoon of Friday 8th March at The Isledon Canteen.

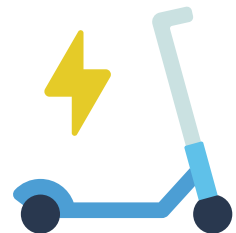
If anyone wants to get involved in planning this event or has any ideas for the events over this coming year, please get in touch with Oli (he/him) on 020 3815 4052 or by email: [ohawley@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:ohawley@peterbedford.org.uk) .

## 14. E-bikes and E-scooters

The London Fire Brigade is raising awareness about the serious risk of fire from e-bikes and e-scooters being charged in people's homes. Please follow this advice:

- They must not be stored in communal areas, including escape routes such as hallways or stairwells
- Never leave them charging whilst you sleep
- Use the correct charger for your battery and the correct battery for the vehicle
- If the battery over-heats during charging, replace it
- Unplug your charger once the battery has charged

Any electric bikes/scooters stored in common parts will be removed from the property without notice.



Further information, including the warning signs that your battery is a fire hazard can be found here: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/lithium-batteries/electric-scooter-and-electric-bike-batteries-spotting-the-risks/>

## 15. Newham New Projects



Following on from our scheme housing 21 former rough sleepers in Newham, we have recently opened two further projects in the borough to house a further 10 people. One project is a six-bedroom home for young LGBTQ+ people; the other is a block of four self-contained flats for people with mental health support needs. PBHA are providing the housing management at both projects in partnership with Stonewall Housing and Look Ahead Care and Support who are providing support at one project each. We are very pleased to be providing more good-quality homes to people in need.

## 16. Keeping Yourself Safe From Cuckooing & Financial Abuse

Cuckooing is when someone befriends a person with the intention of taking over their property, what might start as someone posing as a friend or carer, might quickly become someone using your property for their own needs. It is sometimes called "Home Invasion" and can involve:

- Taking over or using the property to take drugs
- Taking over or using the property for sex work/human trafficking
- Taking over or using the property to store weapons
- Taking over the property as a place to live
- Taking over the property to financially abuse the homeowner/tenant
- Using the property to manage the "workforce" of drug runners and to carry out acts of violence. This is sometimes called "County Lines".



This can very quickly escalate into anti-social behaviour, not only causing problems for tenants who have had their home taken over but for other tenants and neighbours living in the same building. If you see a change in activity and suspect cuckooing then please report it to your Housing Worker or flag to Shanika Dowdie: [housing@peterbedford.org.uk](mailto:housing@peterbedford.org.uk)

### Keeping your money and belongings safe:

Please seek help and advice if someone is:

- Taking your money or belongings or you feel pressured and can't say no
- Using money for your care on themselves
- Persuading, tricking or threatening you for money, your things or your property
- Making benefit claims in your name for money you never see
- Trying to make you change your will
- Preventing you from working
- Moving in or refusing to leave your home
- Or if what someone is suggesting could be a money scam on phone, email or at your door - if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

**REMEMBER - Anyone can do these things, whether they know you or not. It could be a family member, a friend, neighbour, carer or stranger!**



If you are worried that you or someone you know is at risk, please inform your Housing Worker or contact the Police. They will investigate and ensure the person gets the best course of action to meet their needs. This can be done:

- Online
- By calling 101
- In person at your local police station



Remember to always call **999** if you or someone else is in immediate danger.