

## Latest updates for residents at Acton Lane

**December 2023**



### Contact centre opening hours and service over the festive period

As always, we aim to provide you with a good service at all times including over the festive period.

Date	Office opening hours*	Contact centre opening hours
Friday 22 December	9am to 1pm*	8am to 1pm
Monday 25 December	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 26 December	Closed	Closed
Wednesday 27 December	9am to 5pm*	8am to 6pm
Thursday 28 December	9am to 5pm*	8am to 6pm
Friday 29 December	9am to 5pm*	8am to 6pm
Monday 1 January	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 2 January	9am to 5pm	8am to 6pm

Our offices and contact centre will be open as usual from Tuesday 2 January 2022. Usual office opening hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm and our contact centre hours are 8am to 6pm. If you have an emergency repair while we are closed, please contact us on **0300 373 3000** and you'll be directed to our out of hours repairs service.

\*Please note, our Hertford office will close at 12pm on 22 December and only our Wembley office will be open from 27 to 29 December.

### Try out our new digital assistant for customers

We've launched our digital assistant for customers which gives you another convenient way to raise or get an update on repairs, check your account balance, or make a payment. The digital assistant comes in the form of a chatbot which you can find on our website and your My Network Homes online account.

The digital assistant is available at any time of the day, seven days a week. It will help you with your enquiry by giving you options to select so it can support you as quickly as it can. During set times, currently Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm, if it's unable to answer your query or help you to complete your service request, it will give you the option to chat online to one of our customer service advisors.

You can try out the digital assistant the next time you want to raise a repair, check your account balance or make a payment. Simply open the chatbot feature by clicking on the purple 'Chat with us' bubble on our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk)

## Neighbourhood Team

We would like to introduce you to Shantel Anderson, your neighbourhood officer, who will be managing your estate. Please see 'important contacts' for ways to contact Shantel.

## Sign in, sort it with a My Network Homes account!

Have you heard about My Network Homes, your online account with SNG? With an account, you'll be able to:

- Check your rent balance and pay your rent
- Report a repair
- Ask us a question
- Report anti-social behaviour
- View your repairs history
- And much more!

If you have a tenancy with us, you can register and set up an account. All you need is the email address you have given us (the email address we have for you on our system), your first and last name and your postcode. To find out more visit [www.networkhomes.org.uk/mynetworkhomes](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/mynetworkhomes).

## Upcoming estate inspections

The next estate inspections will take place on:

Day	Date	Time	Meeting point
Friday	2 February 2024	11am	Renown House Front Communal door

If you would like to join Shantel Anderson, your neighbourhood officer, during the estate inspection or discuss a specific issue, you can arrange to meet her on the dates above by contacting her on **0300 373 3000** or email [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk)

## Estate inspection findings

Your neighbourhood officer, Shantel Anderson, has identified the following issues:

Issue identified	Location	Action taken	Any other notes
Misuse of bin store	Leyland House bin store	Preparators served with notices	
Items left in communal areas	Halifax House and Leyland House	Warning letters sent to preparators	

## Rubbish disposal



We have been having a serious issue of residents dumping their rubbish on the ground of the bin room as well as leaving bulk items in the bin room which is a misuse of the space and fly tipping. We are proactively working to stop this type of anti-social behaviour at Acton Lane and are using CCTV to identify who is doing this. We will make a recharge to residents we can identify who dump rubbish at Acton Lane. If you're concerned about this and you are aware of who is damaging where you live, you can make a report in the strictest confidence to our Customer Service team using the anti-social behaviour form on our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/asbform](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/asbform)

Household waste that is placed inside the wrong bin or bulk household furniture dumped inside the bin room will not be collected. When this does happen, we have to arrange for the removal of contaminated waste and such household items which we will then have to claim back from you by adding the cost we incurred for doing this to your service charge. Please ensure you place your rubbish in the correct bins available and make your own arrangements for the removal of your bulk household furniture. The contact details for Brent Council are on their website at <https://wasteservicesportal.veolia.co.uk/BrentBulkyWaste> or you can call them on 0208 937 5050.

## Please take recycling seriously

Recycling contamination remains a major problem and occurs when materials are sorted into the wrong recycling bin (placing a glass bottle into a mixed paper recycling bin for example), or when materials are not properly cleaned, such as when food residue remains on a plastic yogurt container.

### What happens if I put the wrong things in my recycling bin?

If you put the wrong items in your recycling bin, the Council may not collect your bins. Sometimes things like nappies and food waste could spoil the rest of the recyclables and mean a whole load may need to be disposed of and not recycled.



Due to contamination of the recycling and the council then refusing to collect the bin, we have to arrange for our contractors to dispose of the bins at a cost which will be **service chargeable to all residents**. It is important to recycle properly to avoid such unnecessary additional cost to you.

#### How to prevent recycling contamination

1. Rinse your containers as soon as they're empty and before placing in the recycling bin.
2. Sort your recycling materials.
3. Check the recycle material list to see what is accepted and how to sort it.
4. Follow your local council's recycling guidelines.
5. Remind other residents about the recycling guidelines as their actions could cause your recycle bin not to be collected by the council if it's contaminated.

If you live in a block of flats, you should have access to communal recycling bins. These will have labels that clearly show what you can recycle.

## Pest Control

We have a planned preventative maintenance pest control contract in place for your estate. This means that internal and external areas are baited by Nightshift Pest Control Ltd eight times a year. In addition, rats and mice within your homes are covered under the contract. To report a problem with rats or mice, please contact Nightshift directly by email at [office@nightshiftpestcontrol.co.uk](mailto:office@nightshiftpestcontrol.co.uk) If it is an emergency, you can phone them on 01892 871008. All other pests are your responsibility to remove.

## Pigeons on your estate and around your home

There's a high cost each year to local authorities and housing associations to clean, repair buildings, and provide pest control proofing. If you feed pigeons around your home, you are encouraging them to roost and perch nearby. Pigeon droppings are acidic and can erode stonework, resulting in long term costly damage. The feeding of pigeons also attracts rats and mice, which take any uneaten food and can also cause a health risk to you and your family. Please do not feed pigeons anywhere on your estate.

Certain scents repel pigeons, such as cinnamon, peppermint, essential oils, vinegar, perfume, onions, garlic, cumin, cologne, ghost peppers and even jalapenos. Pigeons have a strange relationship with cinnamon. Because of its pungent scent, it becomes a good deterrent, and its natural medical properties help to cure various pigeons' diseases.

Prevention is better than cure. You can purchase netting cheaply online or at most DIY stores to prevent pigeons from perching.



## Cost of living help

Rising cost of living is a key concern for people nationwide and it can be overwhelming to keep track of what can be done to ease the impact of increased outgoings. We want to make it easy for residents to access useful advice and support that can hopefully reduce the rising cost of running your home this winter.

### How we can help

- **Support with claiming benefits**

We have a Welfare and Benefits Advice team at SNG that can support you with claiming benefits. The team has helped residents claim more than £1.5million each year for the past three years and £2.4million last year. This includes housing benefit, Universal Credit, disability benefits, pension credit and carers allowance. We can also help with Discretionary Housing Payment applications. In some cases, we can help gain grant funding.

If you would like to speak to the team, please call **0300 373 3000** or email them at [welfareadvisors@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:welfareadvisors@networkhomes.org.uk).

- **Charitable fund**

If you have had a change in circumstances that has reduced your household income or you're experiencing financial difficulties, you may be eligible to receive support from us through our charitable fund. The most common ways we support people through the fund is by providing food vouchers, beds and white goods. We've also helped with small electronics, energy vouchers (prepayment meters with a card or key only), and school uniforms.

You can find out more information and apply to our charitable fund by visiting the charitable fund page on our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/charitablefund](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/charitablefund).

- **Cost of living hub**

We have a cost-of-living help section on our website where you can access the support we provide, top tips and information about support from external organisations. You can find it in the advice section or directly at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/costofliving](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/costofliving)

### Support from your local council

- **Brent Council cost of living help and advice**

For tips to support you through the rising cost of living you can visit Brent Council's cost of living support hub at [www.brent.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help-and-advice](http://www.brent.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help-and-advice)

## Condensation, damp and mould

Too much moisture in your home can lead to damp and mould. Excess moisture can enter your home in several ways and the most common causes are from condensation and penetrative or rising damp. If too much moisture builds up and is left untreated, mould may start to grow.

There are a few things you can do to help reduce excess moisture in your home. Here are some tips to try out:

- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when they are in use. This helps prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to get condensation.

- Avoid drying washing on your radiators, or if you do, then dry it in the bathroom with the door closed and window open.
- Use saucepan lids when cooking.
- Put a small amount of cold water in the bath before you turn on the hot tap.
- Place furniture slightly away from the wall. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.
- Wipe down condensation or water (including on window ledges and sills) with a cloth every morning, and ensure it is wrung out and dried properly between use.

To find out more ways to reduce excess moisture in your home, information on the causes of damp, mould or condensation, how to tackle it and how we manage these issues, visit the condensation, damp and mould page on our website at [www.networkhomes.org.uk/condensation](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk/condensation).

## Anti-social behaviour (ASB) toolkit

We've developed a toolkit to help you identify ASB and understand the steps you need to take if you're experiencing it. The toolkit covers a range of issues including drug use or dealing, hate crime and noise nuisance. You can find the toolkit on our website at [networkhomes.org.uk/asbtoolkit](http://networkhomes.org.uk/asbtoolkit).

For ASB that occurs out of office hours you can call Brent Council Environmental Health Team on 020 8937 1234 to report such incidences.

Some incidents are a criminal offence. If you're experiencing or see ASB that is immediate danger to you or others, please call the police on 999 before reporting the incident to us. You can also report some crimes such as knife crime anonymously to Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**. We know that it can be difficult to pick up the phone but sharing what you know with Crimestoppers anonymously can help to make our communities safer. You can find out more about Crimestoppers at [crimestoppers-uk.org](http://crimestoppers-uk.org).

## Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) – no items in communal areas

We have a zero-tolerance policy on items left in communal areas. Our FRA action plan also applies to car park areas and will be enforced without exception. Our policy means that we have removed and will continue to remove items found in communal areas without notice. We will dispose of any items we remove as we do not store/keep items.

Shared communal areas include stairways, lifts, landings, hallways, and car parks. Please ensure you do not leave any items in these areas including shoes, shoe racks, prams, pushchairs, bicycles, children's toys, plant stands etc. Items stored in shared areas are a hazard as they can prevent people from leaving the building safely in a fire.



## Stay put fire safety strategy for your building

**The fire strategy for your building is a stay put policy.** This means unless you're directly affected by a fire, told by the emergency services or a SNG staff member to evacuate, you should stay in your home. Remember if you do need to evacuate because of a fire, do not use the lifts. Close the door behind you and safely make your way out of the building before calling the emergency services on 999. If you require assistance developing an escape plan, please contact our Fire Safety Team on 0300 373 3000 or email at [firesafety@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:firesafety@networkhomes.org.uk).

## Important contacts

If you have any **issues with communal cleaning or grounds maintenance service**, call Pinnacle on 0330 332 0845 or email [networkhomes@pinnaclepsg.co.uk](mailto:networkhomes@pinnaclepsg.co.uk).

Shantel Anderson is your Neighbourhood Officer who manages your estate. You can contact Shantel by phone on 0300 373 3000 or by email at [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk)

If you need to report a repair, check on the progress of an existing repair or need any other information get in touch by:

- Your My Network Homes account – [www.mynetworkhomes.org.uk](http://www.mynetworkhomes.org.uk)
- Phone – **0300 373 3000**
- Email – [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk)

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