

**Work experience does not have to be boring!**



We recently had the pleasure of Paige's company. Paige from Darrick Wood was with us for a week of work experience. Paige said "I did not know what happened behind the scenes at a Housing Association and I thought it would be boring, but it is really not. I have learnt a lot this week."

Although Paige is an aspiring Muay Thai boxer and wants to teach this in the future, she knows that having a back-up plan is sensible and she likes the idea of working in an office and using her already well established computing skills. We received a lovely thank you letter from Paige saying "I have had a very enlightened experience and have learnt more than I thought I would. You all made me feel welcome and excited to come back in every day."

**A big Keniston thank you to Paige who really made an impression on us and proved herself to be a very bright and capable young woman.**

If you know a young person who would benefit from work experience with us, please let Lynn or Vivienne know on 01689 889700.



## Cooking up a storm in the lounge!

Residents recently took part in a cookery course at the Darrick Wood sheltered scheme. The course was kindly funded by the Bromley Adult Education Centre and involved four weeks of tutor Pat Davey providing a variety of interesting recipes and tips on how to cook and eat well for those in smaller households. Residents learnt how to make use of leftover ingredients you would find in your store cupboard and tried new things for the first time such as 'Fish Provençal' which proved to be popular. The favourite dishes of the course however were the 'chicken biryani' and 'balsamic salmon'.

Although demonstration based, residents were able to get stuck in and help with the preparation and at the end were able to share the dishes between them. There was some debate over who had the most on their plate when the food was shared out!

Ann said "There has not been one meal that I have not enjoyed, they have all been lovely"

Residents also said that it would be good to be in a group where you could share your own knowledge and tips



with each other. Despite them all being accomplished cooks in their own right, they still acknowledged that the course brought something new to the table and was something nice to look forward to each week.

If you would like a copy of any of the recipes used, please let Lynn know on 01689 889700 or email [lynnwalsh@kenistonha.co.uk](mailto:lynnwalsh@kenistonha.co.uk).

And if you like the idea of a Keniston cook book, then please feel free to send in your own homemade recipes and tips to be shared.



 **Keniston Housing Association Limited**  
13 Artington Close • Farnborough • Kent • BR6 7UL  
t. 01689 889 700 • f. 01689 889 701  
[www.kenistonha.co.uk](http://www.kenistonha.co.uk)

# Talkback

Newsletter of Keniston Housing Association

Autumn 2017

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or visit our website [www.kenistonha.org](http://www.kenistonha.org)

## It is a busy time for residents at Hornsey Road and Tollington Park in Islington.

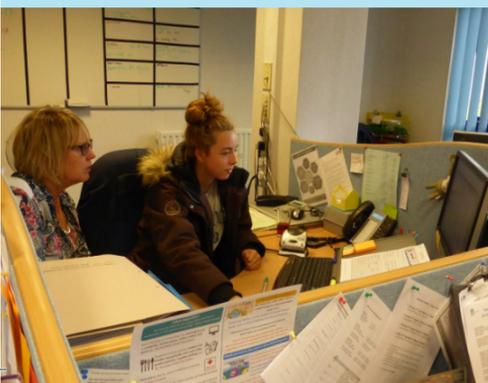
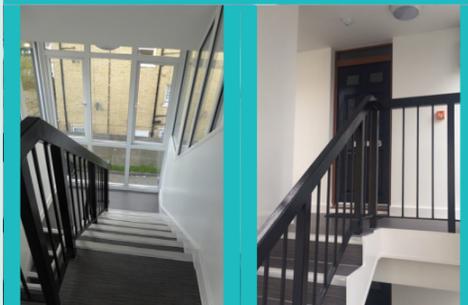
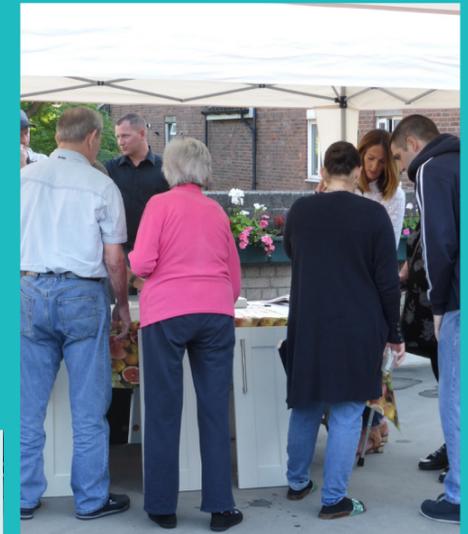
Not only will they soon be getting their shiny new kitchens, Keniston has recently made some exciting improvements to the communal areas using the 'Better Homes, Better Neighbourhoods' fund.

In August, residents were invited to meet with Keniston staff to discuss their choices for the new kitchens. Whilst we were there, we spoke to some of our Tollington Park residents about the improvements that were made to their scheme recently. The feedback has been very positive.

One resident said "We used to have people sleeping rough and taking drugs in the communal area. It did not feel safe entering and leaving the building. Since this area has been enclosed, there is no more of that happening and it is safer for us and our children now. It also doesn't smell in the area anymore, there is no rubbish lying around and it is a lot warmer. The wind used to blow through the communal area. The hallway and stairs are now cleaner, brighter and more pleasant and we also have a new bike store".

Another resident had similar views saying "It is more contained now keeping the wind out, as well as being much safer with the security being excellent. I was initially concerned about how it was going to look, as I didn't want it to feel like a council estate, but I am really delighted at how lovely it is now. The enclosure has stopped the smoking and drug taking that used to happen and we now have disabled access and plenty of ventilation with the windows provided in the communal area. I am thrilled with it."

Keniston previously enclosed the communal stairs at Hornsey Road and provided plants for the roofed area to brighten up the appearance. Many improvements have been made to the different Housing Schemes using the 'Better Homes, Better Neighbourhood' fund. Although this fund is allocated for the foreseeable future, residents are welcome to put forward their suggestions for future improvements that could be made where you live. Just let your Housing Officer know.



## A message from Jonathan, Chief Executive.

It is now over two months since the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, but our understanding of what went wrong still has a long way to go. It is shocking to think that we cannot yet be sure exactly how many people died in the fire. And many of the survivors are still in temporary housing.

Keniston is totally committed to ensuring that all our homes are fully 'fit for purpose' regarding fire safety. We have been working hard to make sure we are doing all that we can. This has included:

- Bringing forward to July this year the fire risk assessment of our two taller buildings – Burnhill House and Silver Court.
- Following up the recommendations made from these assessments – these actions are in hand as a priority.
- Engaging a new company to take forward all our fire risk and health & safety assessments, to be carried out in line with the recommendations of the Chief Fire Officers' Association.
- Over the coming months installing smoke alarms in all Keniston properties that do not already have them.
- Working in partnership with the London Fire Brigade, including jointly visiting both these properties with their fire safety officer to check we are doing everything needed to protect the safety of residents.

We want all residents to be confident that they can feel safe in their homes. If you have any concerns about fire safety, or if you are unsure what to do in the event of a fire, we want to hear from you. Contact Tony Coward, Keniston's Property Services Director, on 01689 889700.

## Communicating with you... by text

We hope you like your new fridge magnet. You can now text us with your repairs from your mobile phone, and we will confirm back an appointment by text. SMS appointment reminders are becoming more popular, not least avoiding expensive aborted call recharges, which can be £45 - £100.

Thank you to everyone who is using the service to tell us about repairs or ask a question about their rent. In order to receive this service, you need to register your mobile number with us now. So if you haven't done so already, save our text number 07376 617616 to your mobile phone. To update the number we hold on file for you, please call us on 01689 889700



## Resident Involvement Review

Do you want to help us ensure we are listening to our residents in the best way and be part of designing a new approach to our resident involvement service for the future? Keniston is committed to continuous improvement and making the best use of our resources to deliver services that residents want. As part of this we will be holding a focus group and carrying out surveys to review our current methods of engagement and help us to reshape and redesign our resident involvement service.

If you would like to have your say on how we engage with our residents, please contact Vivienne Astall on 01689 889700.

## You said, we did!

As part of our Better Homes, Better Neighbourhoods improvement project for 2017, Keniston considers recommendations made by staff and residents to improve where you live.

At Perryfield House, Crawley, we changed a sharp corner on an existing retaining wall with a curve to make parking easier.

At Byers Court we installed new bin store gates to prevent intruders from sleeping in the bin stores.

At Silver Court we laid astro turf on a piece of land which was full of untidy shrubs that collected litter. The area now looks much neater and tidier.

Vivienne Astall, Housing Services Director, said 'These projects are a great example of working together to improve the neighbourhood for the benefit of all. We want to encourage our residents to put their ideas forward to the Better Homes, Better Neighbourhoods committee. If you want to join the committee to help us decide on priorities, please do contact us.'

## Universal credit is on its way

Please contact us to find out when it will be coming to your area.

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment for people in or out of work. It replaces some of the benefits and tax credits that you might be getting now: Child and Working Tax Credits, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support and Housing Benefit.

Even if you are currently working, you could lose your job and need to claim one of the above benefits.

Universal Credit has already presented some significant challenges for residents. Claimants are often caught unaware by the wait – up to seven weeks – between making a claim and receiving their first payment.

We recommend building up credit on your rent account to help you manage.

You can do this by paying £3.85 to your rent account either by setting up a Direct Debit, by payment card or over the phone. To set this up, please contact your Rent Income Officer as soon as possible.

## Two Child Limit

New Rules from April 2017  
The new rules mean that anyone who is receiving or making a new claim for:

Child Tax Credit / Housing Benefit or Universal Credit who has two or more children already included in a claim, will not receive any extra benefit for a child born on or after 6th April 2017 unless one of the exceptions apply.

The new rules can also affect two families who join together to become one family.

The rules are very complex.

Ask your Rent Income Officer for more information.



Darrick Wood Trip

## Summer was a busy time for Keniston residents as they enjoyed outings and estate fun days.



Sunningdale & Perryfield Trip



Tarling Close Ladies Day



Silver Court & Byers Court Fun Day



Darrick Wood Fun Day



Sunningdale Fun Day



Darrick Wood Fun Day