

THE INFORMED

Spring 2021



Sapphire
Independent
Housing

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If you'd like to be featured in the next issue, please write to us at theinformed@sih.org

#ChoosetoChallenge



A global celebration. A call to action. A day of recognition!

8th of March is International Women's Day, an annual celebration of social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. At Sapphire Independent Housing we celebrate women's achievements and raise awareness of gender parity and women's equality. This year's theme was **#ChoosetoChallenge**. Will you *choose to challenge and call out inequality*? Will you *choose to challenge inequality, call out bias, question stereotypes, and help forge an inclusive world*?

This year we wanted to celebrate, raise awareness and recognise the day, and our team at Bethany House worked hard to plan and host a covid safe event for residents. The event was hosted in the large communal hall and attendees were invited in two at a time to collect a gift bag of makeup and listen to a speech from our Chief Executive, Heather Thomas on the digital screen. The gift bag was made up of a wonderful donation of Revolution make up, provided by Toiletries Amnesty.

Three simple actions we must all do to protect each other



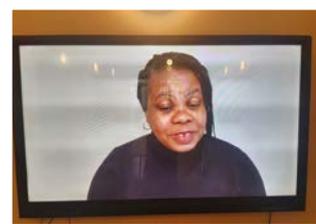
Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds



Wear a face covering in enclosed spaces



Stay at least 2m apart, or 1m with a face covering or other precautions i.e. in a well ventilated room



The event was lovely!



While sadly we were unable to all be together to celebrate this year due to Covid, the residents who attended said the event 'was lovely', and they **#choosetochallenge**.

If you're interested to find out more about International Women's Day (IWD), check out their website www.internationalwomensday.com

Every year, we host the IWD events for residents and if you would like to help plan next year's event, or find out how to join in, please email us at residentinvolvement@sih.org

Did you know International Women's Day has been celebrated since the early 1900's?

Did you know that internationalwomensday.com was launched with the specific purpose of re-energizing the day – a focus which continues to this day – celebrating and making visible the achievements of women while continuing the call for accelerating gender parity?

Did you know 2011 saw the 100 year centenary of International Women's Day – with the first IWD event held exactly 100 years ago in 1911 in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland?

Park Place



We're excited to announce we have recently taken handover of fifteen brand-new homes situated on Kilburn High Road.

These include eight affordable housing family accommodation properties, three intermediate rent properties and for the first time, Sapphire Independent Housing will be the owners of four shared ownership properties.

This was a fantastic opportunity brought to us by L&Q Housing Association and has been a great opportunity for partnership working to purchase these homes.

For the new rental properties, we will be working with London Borough of Camden to house families who are on the housing register.

We are committed to making an investment in new affordable housing around London and look forward to talking to you more about the progress of our new developments. You can also read about our new developments online and find out more on our website <https://www.sih.org/new-homes/>

Resident Wellbeing Survey – Feedback

In November 2020 we invited all residents to complete a resident wellbeing survey. Your wellbeing is a priority to us and due to the challenges of the last year, which resulted in adjustments to our service and our availability, and the support we can offer our residents, we wanted to know how you thought we were doing, and to tell us how you thought we could best support you going forward.



39% of respondents reported their **mental and emotional wellbeing had gotten worse** between March 2020 and November 2021, while **23%** of respondents reported their **physical wellbeing had gotten worse** in the same period. **58%** of respondents had **felt anxious** during March and November, while **42% felt sad and isolated**, and **38% felt confused**.

We also asked if the coronavirus pandemic had affected respondents' relationships with their friends and family, and **60%** of respondents reported it had **affected their relationships**.

This has been a difficult year for everyone, and it significantly impacted on how Sapphire engages, supports and works with our residents. Feedback from the survey told us how satisfied you were with the changes we implemented. For example **81%** of respondents were **satisfied contractors were wearing correct PPE** while 17% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; and

92% felt work carried out by our **Repairs and Compliance team was always carried out safely**.

57% of respondents said they felt **ASB in their scheme had improved** between March and November 2020 and only 4% felt it got worse.

We asked what you think would help you trust that Sapphire is making decisions in your best interest and you said **'more resident meetings'**, **'more consultation with residents for your views on future projects'** and **'to continue updating residents on what is happening'**.

We are very proud and humbled by the positive feedback we received, and we want to say thank you for your support. Overall 98% of respondents said they were satisfied with Sapphire as their landlord. This feedback was shared with staff across our organisation and your recognition of our staff's hard work during this challenging time is greatly appreciated.

We are discussing the feedback and ideas you provided in our leadership meetings and will be exploring your suggestions for activities you would like to see in your schemes. We will be keeping you informed on suggestions such as educational programmes and round table gatherings for sharing and networking; mindfulness sessions; basic computer skills; cooking sessions; and organisation wide events like Sapphire Day and our Annual Residents Day.



This lovely painting of our TRC Centre at Conway House was submitted by one of our residents. If you would like your artwork to feature in the next issue of The Informed, please drop us a line at theinformed@sih.org

HOW ARE WE DOING?



SAPPHIRE'S RESIDENT SATISFACTION LEVELS

for 1st October 2020 – 31st December 2020

SATISFACTION



Overall satisfaction with Sapphire's services

Target 93%
Actual 97%

COMPLAINTS



Complaints responded to on time

Target 98%
Actual 86%

REPAIRS



Responsive repairs completed on time

Target 97%
Actual 100%*

We had fourteen complaints during this period. Twelve were responded to on time, and two complaints required more time.

Due to COVID-19 we had to adapt our repairs and maintenance service to ensure the safety of staff, residents, and external contractors.

All feedback we receive from you is used to monitor and improve the services we provide. You don't have to wait to be given a survey you can go online at: www.sih.org to provide your views and feedback at any time.

*Repairs data is subject to validation

Congratulations to our Quarterly Draw Winners

Gas Safety Survey draw winner: Ruth Abraham

Maintenance Satisfaction Survey draw winner: Chanel Araujo



Health and Fire Safety



You will be aware this past year we have been carrying out essential health and safety works including Fire Safety works across our sites. We want to thank all our residents for their understanding and cooperation while we carried out these works.

These works are presently on going and you may be contacted regarding these works over the next few weeks. As these are essential works the Government guidance says we can continue to carry out these works and they produced a guide for workers to follow to minimise risk wherever possible. The guide advises those carrying out repairs and essential works to wash their hands more often than usual for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing,

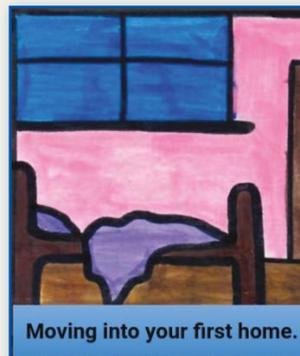
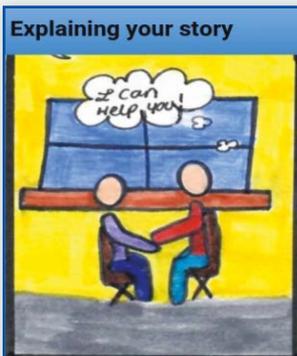
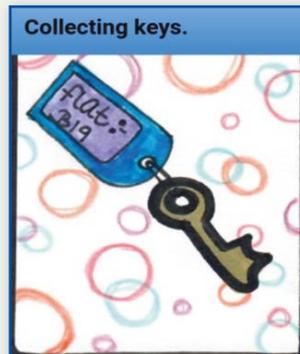
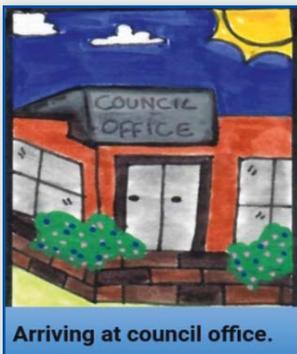
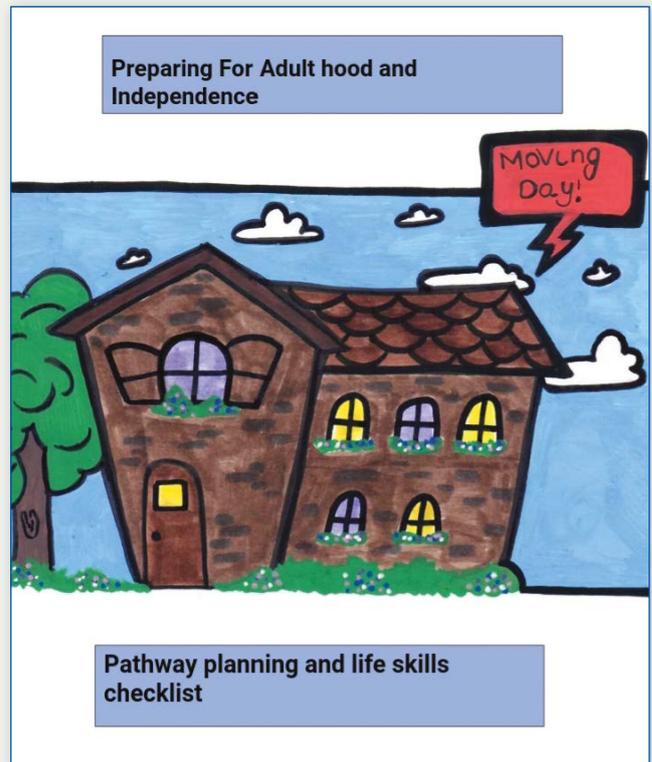
sneezing and blowing your nose; reduce the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue and throw the tissue in a bin immediately, then wash your hands; clean regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people; communicating with households prior to any visit to discuss how the work will be carried out to minimise risk for all parties; and maintaining social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable) as far as possible.

We will continue to follow this guidance and we are available to discuss any concerns our residents have about essential works being carried out in your homes.

Preparing for Independence: The Handbook

I really enjoyed creating the handbook as I felt like I had a choice with what went into it and what the main points were. The original book that we had was very outdated and some of the pages weren't really relevant to us in helping us to learn about moving on. I really enjoyed getting to create the pictures in the book as I feel like they make it much more interesting and exciting to work on and look through.

We created this in lockdown, so it gave us the chance to really understand what needed to be in the book and the effort to create it in the best way we could. The team was really easy to work with, there were five of us and a member of staff. This made putting the book together a lot easier as we helped each other finalise pieces, as well as having fun along the way.



Now the book has been completed, looking through it has made me realise how many things I was unaware or unsure about. I have learnt important things along the way. The bonus is I have been part of creating this wonderful book. Now I'm excited for other residents to try their best and complete the book!

We had help from my key worker in creating the moving on/preparing for adulthood book she guided us through the book, helped us leave in or take out parts we didn't need and gave us ideas we could potentially put in the book. Without her help I don't think it would be as good! For that I am very grateful.

Article and pictures by Shannan Morgan



CONSULTING RESIDENTS ON SAPPHIRE'S NEW CORPORATE PLAN

A Corporate Plan is a document that is used to communicate an Organisation's mission, values and objectives. Corporate Plans are normally set over 3 to 5 years.

Sapphire is renewing its Corporate Plan. The new Plan will run from 2021 to 2026 and will set out our mission, our values and our objectives or priorities for the next 5 years.



We are keen to hear the views of our residents on the new plan before it is finalised. We would like to hear residents' views on:

Mission Statement

Our current mission is *"to improve lives and value people"*. We would like to strengthen this and would like residents' views on two options.

Our values

Accountability, integrity ownership and respect. We like these values and want to keep them. We want to hear your views on whether you agree.

Where we work

Should we stay working in the London areas we currently work in Brent, Camden, Hertsmere and Islington or should we look to work in new areas e.g. East London or South London?

Who we house and help

We would like your views on whether we should prioritise helping single people, families or both groups?

Finally, we would like to hear your views on how far Sapphire has helped you achieve your aspirations and your thoughts on the future.

We would love to hear your views and have enclosed a separate short survey which we are asking residents to complete.

There is a prize draw which we hope will encourage you to take part.



The Service Charge Review

At the start of March 2021 all residents were sent their annual rent notification letter. In this letter we wrote to tell you we will be completing a full review of our service charges we have charged you in recent years. The purpose of completing this review is to ensure our residents are getting value for money.

When we have completed the review, we will communicate transparently with residents, about our findings and any changes we propose to make for the weekly charges in future.

Staff continue to work from home wherever possible and our head office remains closed. Because of this, we expect the review to take some months to complete. It is our intention to communicate to our residents later in 2021.

Understanding Unacceptable Behaviour

During these uncertain times we understand that there are likely to be some days that are more difficult than others, and some moments where people may feel angry or upset. At Sapphire we want our residents to feel at home, to feel that you are safe, secure, and listened to. It's also important for our staff to feel safe at work, this includes ensuring staff are appropriately supported in carrying out their duties.

In recent months there have been incidents involving abuse of staff and residents and we want to use this space to explain what unacceptable behaviour is; how unacceptable behaviour impacts staff and residents; and ways we can manage unacceptable behaviour.

The Housing Ombudsman say "Behaviour may become unacceptable if it is so demanding or persistent that it places unreasonable demands on the landlord and impacts the level of service that can be offered to others."

We consider unacceptable behaviour to include verbal abuse, aggression, violence; unreasonable demands; overload of letters, calls, emails or contact via social media; and unreasonable persistence.

We supports residents to express their dissatisfaction in a way that is safe for them, for other residents and for staff. We can support residents through mediation; by making reasonable adjustments that makes it easier for residents to engage with the service; by working

with other agencies supporting our residents with the residents consent and; by working with a person our resident feels can represent them.

If unacceptable behaviour occurs, in the first instance we will discuss why this behaviour is unacceptable with the person and, ask them to consider their behaviour and allow them time to adjust their behaviour. If after this, the unacceptable behaviour continues we will issue a warning to advise the individual that we will be taking formal actions if the behaviour continues.

If the individual's behaviour does not change, we will take formal actions. Examples of formal actions include, but are not limited to, providing a single point of contact; limiting contact to a single form i.e. to writing, email or telephone only; limiting contact to certain times or to a limited number of times per week or month; declining to give any further consideration to an issue unless any additional evidence or information is provided. Please be aware that where physical violence or harassment occurs, we will contact the appropriate services i.e. the Police, and we could take legal action.

Both residents and staff can find out more about unacceptable behaviour on the Housing Ombudsman website <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/guidance-notes/managing-unacceptable-behaviour-policy/>

Easter Nest Krispy Cakes

Ingredients (makes 12):

150g dark chocolate, 50g butter, 2 tbsp honey, 100g rice crispy cereal, 2 x 80g bags of mini eggs

Method:

1. Line a 12 hole muffin tin with muffin cases
2. Break the chocolate into small pieces and place in a large microwave safe bowl
3. Add the butter and honey to the bowl, then pop it into the microwave and heat in short bursts of around 30 seconds, stirring in between, until all the chocolate has melted
4. Mix well to combine the ingredients, then add the rice crispy cereal to the bowl and mix till the cereal is completely coated



5. Spoon the crispy mixture into the muffin tin, dividing equally between the 12 cases
6. Press down gently in the centre of each crispy cake with the back of a spoon to make a rough nest shape
7. Working quickly, use the back of the spoon to make a small hollow in the top of each cake, then decorate each crispy cake by popping 3 mini eggs in each hollow
8. Once finished, pop the nest crispy cakes in the fridge to chill for an hour or so until set

CONTACT US

The Informed is a quarterly publication.

Our next issue will be out in July 2021.

Please send any comments, questions and story ideas to:

TheInformed@sih.org

For a PDF version or any previous issues of *The Informed* please visit the Residents' section of our website www.sih.org and click on publications.

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If you would like this publication in large print please contact Megan Smiley on 020 7485 8889



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DON'T FORGET

Head Office is closed until further notice due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

If you would like to contact us during working hours (Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm), please call our head office number **020 7485 8889**.

If you have any emergency repairs please contact the out-of-hours number on **020 7372 6633**. Normal procedures will resume as soon as possible.

GENERAL ENQUIRES

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Townsend House

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London, NW1 0TZ

College Yard

9 College Yard,
London, NW5 1NX

Dunne Mews

57 Leighton Road,
London, NW5 2QH

Forde House

129 Queens Crescent,
London, NW5 4HE

Hackett House

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Kilburn, NW6 4TB
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