

THE INFORMED

Spring 2020



Sapphire
Independent
Housing

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Letter from our CEO



Dear Resident,

We are sending this newsletter at one of the most difficult times that many of us can remember. Together, we are facing a truly unprecedented situation. The global coronavirus pandemic is affecting all of us, our families and our communities. It has changed almost everything about our daily lives and it has all happened so quickly.

This is a very worrying time for us all, but at Sapphire we are working hard to keep our services going so that we can support you and provide any urgent help you might need.

Across the country we have seen what communicating and supporting each other can do, for example the "clap for carers" and the neighbourhood support schemes that have sprung up helping vulnerable people with shopping and other urgent needs. My message to you is that at Sapphire, we believe that we can get through this crisis, if we continue to communicate and work together.

This newsletter contains advice and guidance about how to stay safe and well during this difficult time, as well as stories of how our Sapphire residents are going the extra mile to help each other.

If you have any concerns about your license or tenancy, keeping up with payments or anything else at this time, please talk to us.

We will continue to keep you updated on changes to our services and ways in which we can help.

Above all please continue to follow the Government guidance and keep safe.

Heather Thomas
Chief Executive

COVID-19 Government Guidelines and tips

(at date of publication)

Government guidance: STAY AT HOME

Only go out for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)



If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times.



Wash your hands as soon as you get home.

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

It's important to remember – you can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

NHS advice for people at high risk

Coronavirus can make anyone seriously ill, but some people are at a higher risk and need to take extra steps to avoid becoming unwell. You may be at increased risk if you are 70 or older, are pregnant, have a condition that may increase your risk from coronavirus, i.e. asthma, diabetes, kidney, liver or heart disease, or a weakened immune system. If this applies to you, do NOT leave your home. Ask friends, family or neighbours to pick up shopping and medicines for you and leave them outside your door. Stay at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from other people in your home as much as possible



Clean objects and surfaces you touch often (like door handles and kettles) using your regular cleaning products, and clean a shared bathroom each time you use it, for example by wiping the surfaces you have touched.

If you reside in one of our hostels, please let staff know if you have been contacted by the NHS as a person at higher risk and they can support you. If you need help getting deliveries of essential supplies like food, you can register for support on the Gov.uk website: www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable

Self-isolation tips for well-being

- Create a routine and plan your day
- Build physical activity into your daily routine
- Eat well and remember food affects mood
- Connect with people. Phone, text, video calls (Skype, Zoom), email and social media
- Try a relaxation technique
- Practise self-compassion and reflection at the end of the day; maintain a bed time routine to improve your sleep



Finally, if you have access to the resources, take up a hobby – writing, journalling, drawing, sewing, try the free online short courses.

See our website www.sih.org for tips for a healthy diet and indoor exercise tips.

Physical activities you can do indoors

- Cleaning round the home
- Dancing to your favourite music
- Lunges (big steps forward)
- Water bottle weights (recycle those empty bottles and fill them with water. Make sure the lid is secure!)
- High knees
- Jumping Jacks
- Stretches
- Check out the NHS gentle sitting exercises too: www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/

If you have access to YouTube, you can tune into Joe Wicks PE workouts live at 9am weekday mornings. It's just 30 minutes and lots of fun.

Mental well-being and isolation



If your blood sugar drops you might feel tired, irritable and depressed. Improving your diet may help to:

- Improve your mood
- Give you more energy
- Help you think more clearly.

Tips to manage your mood with food:

- Eat regularly and always eat breakfast
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Get in your 5 fruit and veg a day
- Cut down on caffeine.

COVID-19 Sapphire site specific changes

(measures in place to keep residents safe and to comply with social distancing)

We will be reducing face to face contact with residents at our supported accommodation schemes. Key work session may take place over the phone or via email where possible.

Conway House

Training and Resource Centre (TRC) is closed until further notice. Puzzles and fun activity sheets available at reception or on request to help alleviate boredom at this challenging time. Laptops are available to borrow from reception. These need to be signed in and out. Please ask your key worker for further details.

Townsend House

Smoking area in garden is restricted to two people at a time. Each person must stand 2 metres apart by the outdoor cigarette bins.

Bethany House

One person in the lift at any time. Communal areas including laundry room, courtyard, TV lounge and hall are closed between 6pm and 10am. During opening times, only two people are allowed in these spaces at one time.

St Eugene Court

Drop in sessions are on hold. Staff will not be travelling to the scheme unless to complete emergency repairs.

Head Office

Closed until further notice. Communication will be by call, text and email, unless in an emergency.

All sites

When using communal areas including shared kitchens, gardens and reception areas, please maintain a **2 metre** distance from other people.

Sites that have FEAST

We value the importance of our regular home-cooked, communal meals, run by the volunteer organisation 'Feast'. However, in light of the current Covid-19 guidance, we have made some adaptations to minimise risk and keep residents safe.

We have fewer volunteers prepare the meals and they are following strict hygiene rules while in hostel/s. Meals are now served in take-away format, portioned into plastic tupperware ready for distribution.

At **Conway House**, meals are distributed to individual rooms by staff on Thursday evening. We ask that you thoroughly wash the tupperware and return it to hostel staff so it can be properly sanitized and re-used if possible.

At **Bethany House** residents will come to collect meals from the TV Lounge. One resident is allowed in the room to collect their portion at a time. Anyone queuing will be asked to maintain a 2 metre distance from the person in front.

We hope these changes effectively keep the service running while maintaining social distancing as instructed.

Simple steps to stop the spread of Coronavirus



Wash your hands for 20 seconds



Cough or sneeze into a tissue



Avoid touching your face

SAPPHIRE'S RESIDENT SATISFACTION LEVELS

for 1st October 2019 – 31st December 2019



SATISFACTION



Overall satisfaction with Sapphire's services

Target 92%
Actual 100%

COMPLAINTS



Complaints responded to on time

Target 98%
Actual 100%*

REPAIRS



Repairs completed within target

Target 97%
Actual 97%

How our service delivery has temporarily changed for the well-being of residents

We recently sent out a letter to all residents regarding the Coronavirus and the impact it will have on the way we operate. We still want to provide a high standard service and to continue to deliver this high standard we have made some temporary changes. These changes have been made in accordance with the Governments advice for essential travel, essential work and social distancing.

Our timescales for responding to complaints and ASB reports has temporarily changed

Stage	Proposed timescales
'Quick Fix' For either Complaint or ASB	A new stage, where complainant is happy with verbal response and any action taken within 2 working days
Stage 1 Complaint	10 working days
Stage 2 Complaint	10 working days
Stage 3 Complaint	15 working days
ASB complaint	10 working days

Responding to repairs and emergency works

During these uncertain times we are only carrying out essential emergency repairs and health and safety works in rooms/flats. Here are some examples of the emergency repairs and health and safety works we will be responding to: safety, security, health, hygiene issues, e.g. burst pipes/tank, gas leaks, complete failure of electricity supply, re-securing of a property. Gas safety certificates. If you report an emergency repair you will be asked if you or anyone in your household is displaying any symptoms of Coronavirus and have you been asked to self-isolate, these symptoms including high temperature or cough.

*Eight complaints were received and all were responded to on time and resolved within target.

Michaela and Shannon residents interview



Residents of Townsend House were recently interviewed by Michaela Buckoke and Shannon Doran. They asked some interesting questions about what life is like in the hostel, what advice residents would like to

pass on to anyone new, how living at the hostel has given them a chance to socialise, gain more independence and life skills and prepare them for moving on to living independently. Read the full interview on our website www.sih.org

What do you like about living in the hostel? Living with other people and making friends, but also having our own space when needed.

Do you socialise with others in the hostel? Yes, events that are held in the hostel help people to socialise with others that they would not normally talk to.

How do you think you'll cope with living alone? Some of the residents are nervous to live alone... however, the hostel has increased their confidence in themselves.

How has the hostel helped you grow as a person? Residents here have gained more independence and other life skills that will help them in the future.

What advice would you give someone new to the hostel? Accept advice from other residents and not be afraid to ask how things work.

What's your experience been like in the hostel? Meeting new people that you would not normally associate with and that are now close friends.

SCAMS AND YOUR SAFETY



We are aware of scams taking place that can put your health and safety at risk. *We want you to be vigilant during this time.* There are genuine volunteers ready to help, but some people are not genuine and we all need to be careful.

Some scams that we are aware of:

- Strangers posing as doctors and carrying out door knocks to offer free Covid-19 tests. *This is a scam* to try and get into your home. At this time we are not aware of any NHS service or private health practise offering tests on your doorstep. *Do not let any one you do not know into your home.*
- Fake text messages telling you that you have been fined as you have been recorded as leaving your house a number of times. The text message will tell you to click a link. *Do not click the link.* Scammers have spoofed sender details used by legitimate Government text message telling people to stay home, so spoof messages may appear in the same text message thread.

If you are uncertain at any time or you believe you might be being scammed, contact a legitimate service you've used before. Do not call on the numbers provided to you by the possible scammer to verify them, look online or on any letters you've previously received to call the correct service to verify if that person is who they say they are. Do not let anyone into your home you do not know. Do not give out your account details to any service over the phone unless you can verify they are a legitimate service.

STRUGGLING TO PAY YOUR RENT?

Please speak to your keyworker or housing officer for advice and support during these difficult times.

RESIDENTS DAY ON HOLD BUT WILL HAPPEN

You've probably already figured out that our planning for the Annual Resident's Day has been put on hold due to the spread of Coronavirus and the restrictions on social gatherings. However, we want to reassure you that as soon as we get permission to have social gatherings we will start planning for the Annual Residents Day that you voted for.

We are pleased with the response we received from residents so far and have collected as many votes as possible before travel restrictions were put in place. As soon as the restrictions are lifted, we will gather remaining votes from our general needs sites. For now we can share the votes we've counted so far:

Boat ride on the Thames – 41
Day trip to London Zoo – 16
Picnic in the Park – 5

So a boat ride on the Thames has taken a very clear lead. We are all looking forward to hosting a fantastic and well deserved fun day for our residents.

MOVE TO THE BEAT WITH PEACE



On Friday 21 February 2020 Peace Blessing hosted her first move to the beat session with residents and staff of Bethany House. It was an energetic and fun event, smiles could be seen on all participants faces despite the intensity of the work out!



Pancake Day

This year our residents celebrated Pancake Tuesday by making and flipping their own pancakes. They had fun tossing them in the air and the results were delicious!



Shannan's celebratory painting



Congratulations to Shannan Morgan who painted this beautiful image of Townsend House for Sapphire's 50th anniversary. Shannan studied art and design at college and thought this would be a good challenge. You can read her full interview by residents, Michaela and Shannon on our website www.sih.org.

Good deeds feed



- ♥ Thank you to Hugh who supports his neighbours by collecting shopping and the newspaper for them and leaving it at the door. Your help is greatly appreciated.
- ♥ Our communal garden looks so much tidier since Hugh, Pat and Tom took the time to trim the hedges. Thank you all.
- ♥ At Townsend House residents are taking the time to look after each other when they are ill while maintaining social distancing.
- ♥ One resident at Townsend House, our supported accommodation for young people, could not get any pasta due to the panic of Covid-19 and two residents decided to give them their pasta and rice that they did not need.
- ♥ At Townsend House, residents have also been helping staff with odd jobs around the hostel by going to get anti-bacterial and cleaning products to help protect everyone from the virus. They also helped with odd jobs like relabelling the freezer drawers.

Do you know someone who is done a good deed or shown an act of kindness during this difficult time?

We would love to hear from you. You can email theinformed@sih.org, text **07903049588** or call **07903049588** to share your good deed.

You can also get involved with random acts of kindness...

- Arrange to have a cup of tea and virtual catch up with someone you know
- Tell someone you know why you are thankful for them
- Send an inspirational quote to a friend
- Offer to skill share with a friend via video call - you could teach guitar, dance etc.
- Reach out to call a friend, family member or neighbour who is experiencing loneliness or self-isolation
- Arrange to watch a film at the same time as a friend and video call
- Call a friend that you haven't spoken to for a while.



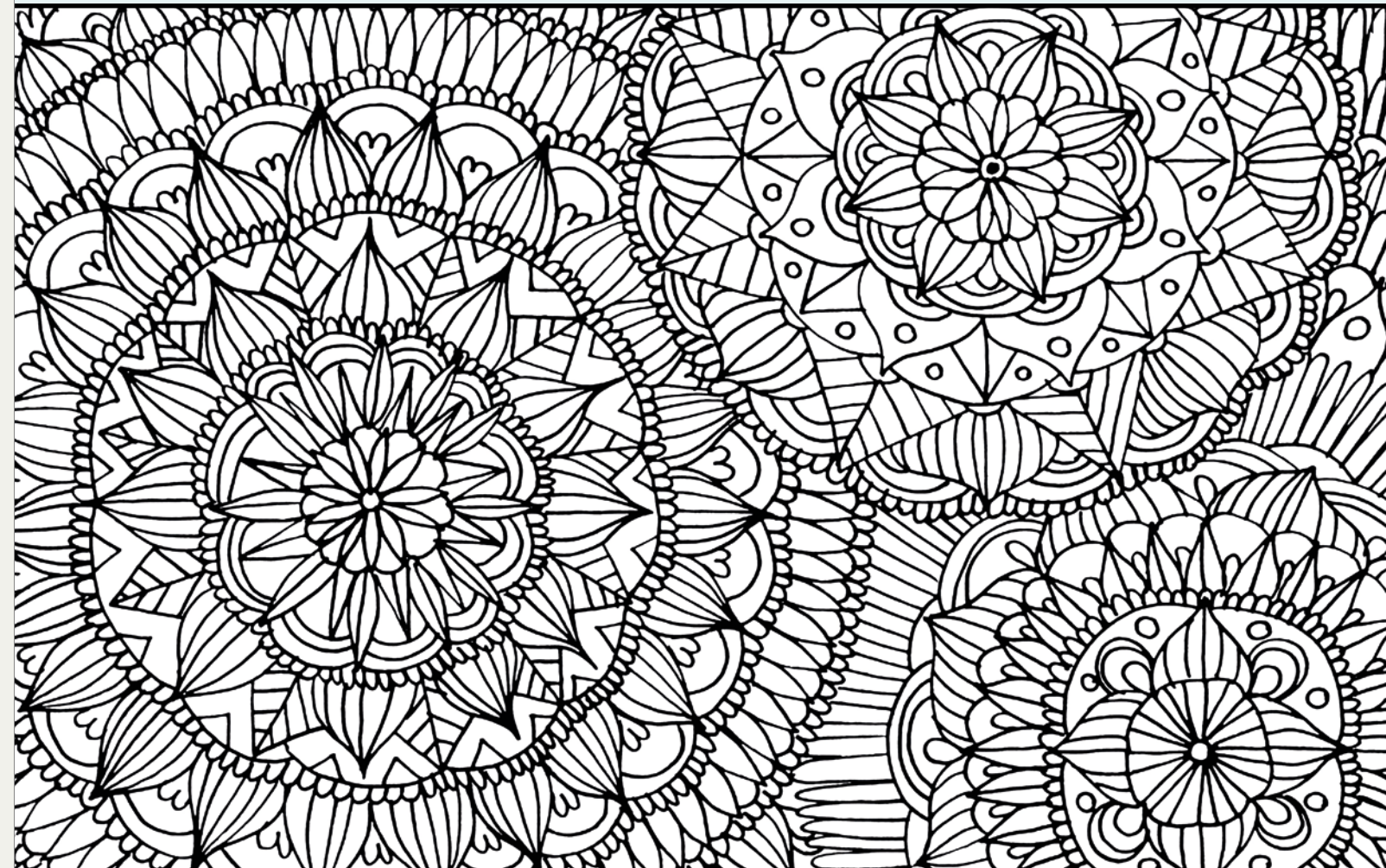
Sapphire WordSearch

Locate the given words in the grid, running horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.



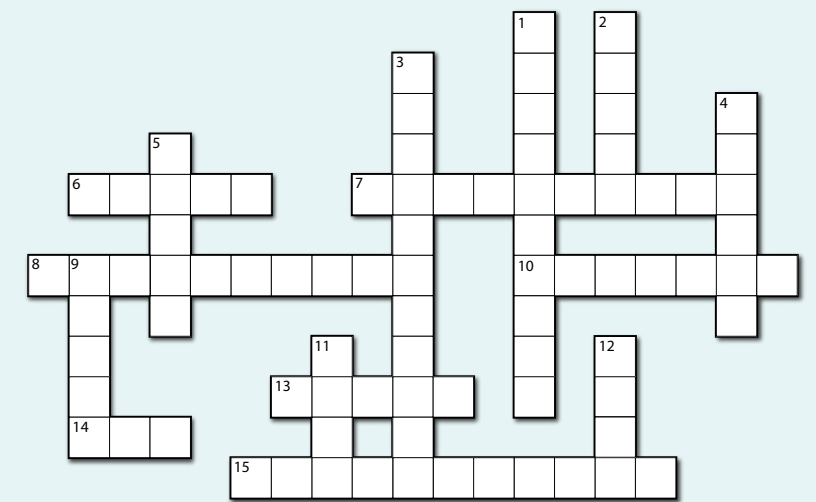
ACTIVE	GLAD	LAUGH	SMILE
BOUQUET	HAPPINESS	MINDFUL	SOCIAL
CHEER	HEALTHY	MUSIC	SUCCESS
CELEBRATE	HOPEFUL	NEIGHBOUR	SUMMER
EXERCISE	JOYFUL	PLAY	SUNNY

Colouring corner



Sapphire Crossword

Test your knowledge on Coronavirus guidelines and Sapphire (answers overleaf)



ACROSS

- 6 Where did Coronavirus originate? (5)
- 7 What the government has told us to do (4,2,4)
- 8 What BBC soap is on hold? (10)
- 10 If we are ill we do this to avoid others (7)
- 13 If you don't have a tissue, where do you cough? (5)
- 14 Social distance in meters (3)
- 15 Sapphire's Newsletter (3,8)

DOWN

- 1 Caution Go Us (Anagram) (10)
- 2 A tickle in your throat (5)
- 3 Sapphire's head office (7,4)
- 4 How many seconds should you wash your hands for? (6)
- 5 Anniversary Sapphire recently celebrated? (5)
- 9 Not together (5)
- 11 One of the colours of Sapphire's logo? (4)
- 12 What part of the body should we avoid touching? (4)

CONTACT US

The Informed is a quarterly publication.

Our next issue will be out in June 2020. 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

Head office

1 Holmes Road,
Kentish Town,
London, NW5 3AA
Tel: 020 7485 8889
Email: info@sih.org
www.sih.org

SUPPORTED SCHEMES

Bethany House

13 Lloyd Square,
London, WC1X 9AR
Tel: 020 7837 3420

Conway House

18-22 Quex Road,
Kilburn, NW6 4PL
Tel: 020 7372 6633

Hepburn Court

Brookside,
Gowar Field,
South Mimms,
Hertfordshire,
EN6 3QE
Tel: 01707 662 667

Townsend House

135 Aycliffe Road,
Borehamwood,
Hertfordshire,
WD6 4HA
Tel: 020 8207 1562

GENERAL NEEDS SCHEMES

Caulfield Court

Baynes Street,
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

12 Kingsgate Road,
Kilburn, NW6 4TB
Tel: 020 7692 7285

Highgate Road

54/56 Highgate Road,
London, NW5 1NU

St Eugene Court

82 Salusbury Road,
London, NW6 6PA

Tara Lodge

Mutrix Road,
London, NW6 4BF

Crossword answers: Across: 6 China, 7 Stay At Home, 8 Eastenders, 10 Isolate, 13 Elbow, 14 Two, 15 The Informed. Down: 1 contagious, 2 Cough, 3 Kentish Town, 4 Twenty, 5 Fifty, 9 Apart, 11 Blue, 12 Face.