

# THE INFORMED

Summer 2023



Sapphire  
Independent  
Housing

## IN THIS ISSUE

	page
What's been happening at Sapphire	2-3
You said – We did	4-5
Activities returning at Sapphire	8
Resident activities return to Sapphire	8-9

## FEATURES

How to cope with hot weather	5
Kevin's story	6
Cost of living support	7
Introducing Rosemary	7
Cassandra's story	9
Damp, mould and condensation	10

If you'd like to be featured in the next issue, please write to us at [theinformed@sih.org](mailto:theinformed@sih.org)



## SUMMER UPDATE AND LOTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO AT SAPPHIRE THIS SUMMER!

As we have now returned to pre-pandemic days, many of the activities that residents enjoyed have now been brought back to Sapphire schemes. Residents meetings and drop in sessions are back on, and a whole host of activities are available for you to take part in.

New activities have also been introduced for residents to enjoy. Staff have been asking what you would like to see happen, and what you would like to do, and listening closely to your answers. See inside for our 'You said, we did' updates.

In response to your requests, coffee mornings have been reintroduced, residents meetings are back on, cooking activities are happening again, and day visitors have been authorised and extended.

If you feel like taking part in some gentle exercise, stress-relief and relaxation, you can now join our new regular yoga and meditation classes! Details inside on these activities and more, as Sapphire schemes embrace the return to group activities and reconnecting with each other in a safe space.



# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT SAPPHIRE?



Christmas may seem like a long time ago ... but we wanted to share this fabulous photo of some of our Townsend House residents enjoying Christmas lunch.



In Conway House, residents took part in a world cup sweepstake in December.

A number of Sapphire staff members were excited to volunteer their services at the Sacred Heart Church in Camden where there are strong links with the residents at Conway House. Staff got involved in tidying and decorating and also helping out at a local food bank in Boreham wood.





In March, residents at Bethany House celebrated **International Womens Day** by creating some wonderful artwork. The theme this year was '**DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality**'.



To mark the **coronation of King Charles III** in May, Bethany House residents took part in a crown making competition over the bank holiday weekend. To celebrate the event, they also had a coronation tea that was enjoyed by all.



# HOW ARE WE DOING?



## SAPPHIRE'S RESIDENT SATISFACTION LEVELS

1st October 2022 until 31st March 2023

**SATISFACTION** 19 surveys were received during the period which ranged from gas inspections, supported housing, before you leave, with 18 expressing they were very satisfied, satisfied, or ok with our service. One did not make comment. As a result, there was a **95%** overall satisfaction with Sapphire Services.



### COMPLAINTS AND REPAIRS



We are now in the process of providing yearly figures for the complaint and repairs surveys which will be reflected in future Newsletters.



## YOU SAID WE DID

We are continuing to listen to residents on how we can improve our service, and these are just a few examples of the action we are taking.

### Bethany House

**You said:** Residents asked for day visitors to be authorized.

**We did:** It has been agreed that three visitors can visit residents with 24 hours advance notice.

**You said:** Residents would like the visiting hours extended.

**We did:** Extended visiting hours, so residents can now have visitors at Bethany House up until 10.00pm each day.

**You said:** Residents wanted yoga sessions.

**We did:** Organise weekly yoga sessions, led by a resident.

### Conway House

**You said:** Residents would like better Wi-Fi connection throughout the building.

**We did:** Install a new Wi-Fi system, which has better connection for residents to use.

Congratulations to our  
six-monthly draw winner



Sapphire resident  
from Caulfield Court



### Fire door entry programme

The fire door remedials program is underway, we are nearly halfway through the program. For residents in the properties we have attended, thank you for your cooperation. Over the coming weeks, we will be contacting the residents of the remaining properties to confirm when we will be attending to carry out the necessary remedial works.



**You said:** Residents would like to make more use of the Training Resource Centre (TRC).

**We did:** Organise a range of daily activities to be hosted in the TRC. The schedule is updated by our ETE coordinator and displayed at reception.

**You said:** Residents would like managers to be more accessible.

**We did:** Host monthly drop-in sessions where residents can speak to managers about any issues, and provide feedback on the service.

### Hepburn Court

**You said:** Residents feel it would be beneficial to have a coffee morning.

**We did:** Coffee morning arranged, including provision for children being able to come along.

## REMINDER: CHANGE TO ROYAL MAIL STAMPS

This is just a reminder that regular stamps without a barcode will no longer be valid until after the 31st July 2023. You can either use up your non-barcoded stamps before this new deadline or swap them for the new barcoded ones.



*Note: Special Stamps with pictures on and Christmas Stamps without a barcode will continue to be valid and don't need to be swapped out.*



**Most of us welcome hot weather, but when it's too hot, there are health risks. During heat waves, more people than usual get seriously ill or die. If hot weather hits this summer, make sure it does not harm you or anyone you know.**

The met office has issued a yellow heat health alert for London during June.

Hot weather can cause people to become unwell through dehydration, heat exhaustion and heatstroke and can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, lung problems and other diseases.

During a period of hot weather, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) advises people to:

- Check on family, friends and neighbours.
- Know the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heatstroke.
- Stay out of the sun between 11:00 and 15:00.
- Exercise or walk your dog at cooler times of the day, such as in the morning or evening.
- Close windows and curtains in rooms which face the sun.
- Wear suitable clothing including a hat and sunglasses if going outside, and apply sun screen.
- Drink plenty of fluids and limit alcohol intake.

For further information, please refer to the link below to visit the BBC article published on 9th June: ► [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-65853411](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-65853411)



## KEVIN'S STORY

***My first time at Conway House was very different to what it is now.*** I came in February 2020, after coming out of a MAPPA hostel. I appreciated the

freedom a lot because it was less intense, but I was still on license (supervision order).

I didn't understand what Conway House had to offer, because I treated the place as somewhere just to lay my head down. I didn't interact with the staff as much as I should have. They tried everything to keep me on track, and in my eyes I was doing just enough to not get recalled back to prison. After a few months, I was hardly there. I wouldn't say it was a bad experience, I just wasn't there to benefit from the support offered.

### **Going back to prison**

While my home address on paper was Conway House, I was spending more time than I should have in Bristol. I got arrested in Bristol and recalled back to prison in November 2020. I was arrested for another matter, but also because I breached my licence for not living or staying at my home address, Conway House.

### **Coming back to Conway House**

***I came back to Conway House as a new man on August the 30th, 2022.*** At first, I didn't want to come back because it felt like I was going backwards in life and starting again – but I looked at the bright side, 'I've been here before, I know the area, and this time I am a brand new person!' I know the staff and it wasn't that bad before, I just didn't use the place properly.

Coming back has been a blessing, it almost felt as if I had never been here before. I guess my mindset was different. Some of the staff I knew from before and some were new. My keyworker back then was Linda and she gave me a warm welcome and a second chance. Linda sees the potential in you where no one else sees it, she also gives you a harsh reality of things and reminds you that you have a choice, you can change and it is important to have self-belief.

### **Lessons learnt**

I have learnt so much throughout my journey and I still feel like I am learning every day. Turning

from a life of crime on the streets to a successful businessman putting his community first. The lessons I have learned have come in all shapes and sizes but the most valuable one I have learnt is patience. Patience is what separates greatness and I stand on that.

### **Support**

The support I receive at Conway is unmeasurable, from the cleaning staff to the key workers. I feel like we are one big family, and I honestly would be lost without them. The authenticity with key workers allows me to open up and trust them with information, so they can advise me on the best resolution. They are not scared to tell me off when I am going off track, and have helped me all along the way with my business, and with my confidence, which is priceless. I feel with Linda, Sharon, and Fiona the bond is different, because they met me in 2020 and can see the difference in me now. They also keep it real with me and give me encouragement and motivation. They make me see why it is important that I make the effort to change, want more for myself, and to not allow the life of crime to define my future. Also because they don't play games, I'm blessed to be around the staff 24/7.

### **New direction social enterprise – changing my life and moving on**

Starting this business has had a very big change in my life. Before I was a career criminal, in and out of custody all my life. I have lived in Camden my whole life, born in the Royal Free Hospital. The business has allowed me to combine my street knowledge with my business knowledge and that is why I love it. Also naming it after my mum is why I am so determined and motivated to make this a huge success. I see no limitation with my ideas, and I feel Conway House is lucky to see the early stages of the business because in two years I will be gone.

I really appreciate the time and support I have received, and being able to make a difference to other young people. I was born in Camden and will start with Camden and I hope to deliver my program across the country, as many other local authorities have expressed interest. The journey has been amazing and this is just the beginning.  
***Thank you, Kevin.***

# LATEST COST OF LIVING PAYMENTS FOR 2023/2024

## New cost of living support from Spring 2023

*Extra payments for disabled people and pensioners*

As the cost of living continues to affect many households, the Government has announced Cost of Living Payments designed to support the most vulnerable with rising living costs.

Over the course of 2023 and into 2024, low income households will be entitled to three **Cost of Living Payments** to help with the cost of living. There is no need to apply, eligible claimants will be paid automatically in the same way as benefit or tax credits.

Those eligible for the **Cost of Living Payment** are recipients of any of the following benefits or tax credits on a certain date:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit

The payment dates as broadly follows:

- £301 between 25 April 2023 and 17 May 2023
- £300 in autumn 2023
- £299 in spring 2024

There is also a separate **Disability Cost of Living Payment** of £150 for recipients of any of the following benefits on a certain date:

- Attendance Allowance
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance for adults
- Disability Living Allowance for children
- Personal Independence Payment
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- War Pension Mobility Supplement

For disabled people on a low income, this payment comes on top of the other cost of living payments. There is no need to make a claim, this will be paid automatically if you are eligible.

This winter, pensioners will also receive an extra one-off £300 **Pensioner Cost of Living Payment**, which will be paid as a top-up to the **Winter Fuel Payment**.

## INTRODUCING ROSEMARY

Rosemary joined Sapphire in a temporary role as Executive Team Assistant in January 2023 and became permanent in May. Sapphire would like to congratulate Rosemary in her new role, and introduce her to the residents.

**Question:** *What's your favourite thing about your career?*

**Answer:** I love to organize, and my role entails managing and diarizing colleagues schedules, which is great. I also enjoy interacting with colleagues, to support and make a difference to their work.

**Question:** *Do you like to cook, what's your go to meal?*

**Answer:** I love any roast, whether its beef, lamb chicken, or pork. If I make a chicken roast, I take off some of the chicken skin, put honey on and grill. It's great!

**Question:** *If you could live anywhere, where would it be?*

**Answer:** Assuming, I was not working, I would like to live in Grenada. I went on a Caribbean cruise a few years ago and went to several islands. Grenada has lots to see and learn about, weather was great and the locals were very welcoming.

**Question:** *What recently made you smile?*

**Answer:** One of my friends was very supportive when my mum passed away, but I call her Stick as similar to a boomerang, she goes and come back at random times.

**Question:** *What are your top tips?*

**Answer:** Be committed to who you are and what you do.





# ACTIVITIES RETURNING AT SAPPHIRE

## RESIDENT MEETINGS AT GENERAL NEEDS SCHEMES

As we have now returned to pre pandemic days, Sapphire has reintroduced residents meetings for our general needs schemes. A recent meeting held in April at St Eugene Court 2023 was well attended.

The Safer Neighbourhoods Team visited and gave out leaflets and tips on crime prevention.

Residents asked for a tap to be installed in the garden to help water their plants and vegetables and for two apricot trees to be planted. Sapphire is in the process of organizing for this to happen.

Residents had the opportunity to take part in a prize draw. Congratulations to the two prize winners, who won a voucher and Easter egg.











For information on the next resident meeting, please see the notice boards, or contact staff.

## GENERAL NEEDS DROP IN

**Head Office** – Drop in on the first Tuesday of each month from 10am-12pm

**St Eugene Court** – Drop in on the first Wednesday of each month from 2pm-4pm.

## ACTIVITIES AT CONWAY HOUSE TRC

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
 <p>Good Work Camden Registrations</p>	<p>2nd May: Manager's Surgery 14:00 - 16:00</p> <p>9th May: Resident's Meeting 15:00 - 18:00</p>	<p>3rd May: Piece by Piece Module 3 and 4 16:00 - 18:00</p> <p>10th May: Piece by Piece Module 1 and 2 16:00 - 18:00</p>	 <p>Art Therapy</p>	 <p>Cooking Workshops</p>
 <p>Arts and Crafts</p>	 <p>City Harvest Food Donations</p>	 <p>Table Tennis</p>	 <p>Good Work Camden Registrations</p>	 <p>Gardening in the TRC</p>
<p>Activities available everyday in the TRC: Table Tennis, Gardening, Arts &amp; Crafts, Music, Quiz Night, Let's Just Talk, Coffee and a Chat, Courses, Training and Development, Morning Workout, Smoothies, PlayStation, Movie Nights</p>				

There's lots happening at Sapphire's TRC Centre. Here's a sample for activities in May. Check the notice board for up-to-date information for what's on and how you can get involved.

We would like to hear suggestions for other activities or events you would like to take place over the summer period. Please contact your housing officer or key worker with your ideas.



## BETHANY HOUSE ACTIVITIES

**Coffee mornings** are back on at Bethany House on Thursday mornings at 11am.

**Food donations** are made on Mondays at 3pm.

**FEAST** has returned on Tuesday evenings.

**Cooking activities** are held every Friday.

For those interested in **Yoga** and **Meditation**, Cassandra is providing free sessions on Fridays from 1pm onwards in the computer hall. She is an experienced yoga teacher, and welcomes residents of all abilities to join her on the mat.



## CASSANDRA'S STORY

Cassandra moved to Bethany House in February 2022. Before her arrival, she was successfully teaching yoga, but started to suffer with anxiety, and stress and eventually lost her way.

When she first arrived, Cassandra had lost all her confidence and was scared and cautious. She started to see how nice the residents and staff were at Bethany House, and gradually began to feel safe in the new environment.

Cassandra is now really happy at Bethany House. She likes the area, and says it is a nice place to live. There is a beautiful garden with plants, and the staff are great. Everyone is so friendly, this makes her feel safe.

Cassandra feels that the services that Sapphire provide are really good and that activities such as excursions are great for the residents. "It's time away where people can relax in a separate environment".



Cassandra has practiced yoga for more than half her life and found it really beneficial for her mental health. Whilst living at Bethany House, she decided to start providing yoga classes for the residents. They have been taking place for four months, and are really successful for both the residents and Cassandras confidence.

Cassandra is taking one day at a time and making plans for the future.

# DAMP, MOULD AND CONDENSATION

There's lots that can be done to prevent damp, mould and condensation from appearing in your home. If it does become a problem, there's also lots we can do to help put things right.

Problems are usually caused when there is too much moisture in the air from doing normal day-to-day things like boiling a kettle, drying clothes indoors, cooking or having a shower.

You might see condensation on your windows in the morning, or after you've had a bath, which is all normal, especially during winter. But if that moisture builds up and can't get out, over time, it can cause damp and mould.

We want you to be safe and comfortable in your home, and if you are concerned about damp or mould, please let us know. Prevention is always better than cure, so if you think you have a problem with damp, mould or condensation, please email us on [info@sih.org](mailto:info@sih.org) or call us on **020 7485 8889** so we can investigate what's causing the issue and see what we can do together to resolve it.

We will arrange for a damp inspection to be carried out for your home.

## **Top tips to avoid damp, mould and condensation:**

Try and reduce the amount of moisture you produce

- Don't boil kettles or pans longer than needed.
- Make sure you cook with lids on saucepans.
- Open windows or use extractor fan (if fitted) when cooking.
- Wipe away condensation from windows and other surfaces.
- Avoid drying clothes on radiators and try to dry clothes outside or in your bathroom with the door closed and window open or extractor fan on.
- Close bathroom doors when bathing.



## **Improve the ventilation in your home**

- Don't overfill cupboards and wardrobes.
- Put furniture near internal walls instead of external walls or against radiators.
- Don't block air vents or air bricks in your property.

- Open internal doors and windows occasionally to allow air circulation.
- Use ceiling fans (if fitted) and keep trickle vents in windows open.

## **Keep your home heated**

- In cold weather provide a low background heat during the day.
- Don't use bottled gas or paraffin heaters.

## **To help keep your home warm, you can also:**

- Tuck long curtains behind radiators.
- Keep doors closed to stop any draughts.
- Open your blinds and curtains when the sun is shining to allow the natural sunlight to warm up a room.

We understand with the rising cost of energy bills you might be worried about putting your heating on. If you're struggling with this, please speak with your Project Worker or Housing Officer, and we will put you in touch with who will be happy to help you with advice and support.

Damp and mould can sometimes be due to an issue with your home. If you have tried our tips but it's not making a difference, please let us know. We may need to carry out some repairs or maintenance. If you are concerned about damp and mould, please get in touch with us. Call us on **020 7485 8889**, or email us at [info@sih.org](mailto:info@sih.org).

When contacting us, it's important that you give as much information as possible. This detail should include:

- The areas of your home that are affected.
- How long these areas have been affected.
- Any leaks or other plumbing issues that are causing the problems.
- If the affected surfaces are wet to the touch.
- If there is any visible discolouring, including black mould.
- Any smells in or near the affected areas.
- Any peeling of wallpaper and paint in or near the affected areas.

We'd also like you to provide clear photographs that show the problem areas. These photos should include:

- Clear, close-up detail of the affected areas.
- A wider view of the affected area within the room.
- Any further photos that show important detail.



# Customer ASB Journey map



## Customer Profile

Residents of a social housing provider, residing in various types of accommodation. Diverse group of residents residing in different types of accommodation.



## Expectations

For the service to be supportive and empathetic to the needs and experiences of the residents. For the Service to provide a safe environment during the investigation.

### 1 A report of antisocial behaviour is made to Sapphire

Reports of antisocial behaviour can be made in the following ways:

- In writing: email, letter, text
- In person to a member of staff
- Via telephone
- Via an advocate or third party
- Online via our website.

*Ensure all residents reporting ASB are treated the same way.*

#### Opportunity

1. The ASB policy and procedure needs to be followed for each investigation. To ensure residents feel listened to and treated fairly, adjustments will be made to meet their needs throughout the investigation.

### 4 Sapphire will offer resolutions

The investigating staff member will work with all persons involved to agree a resolution.

This could include offering mediation, making referrals to Safer Neighbourhood Teams, issuing acceptable behavioural contracts.

The person making the report will be advised Sapphire will not take action, where there is insufficient evidence or where the prime responsibility and power to do so lies with another service, such as the Police or the Local Authority.

*We should be more involved in the resolution process and we should have in put no matter whether their suggestion [can] be met or not.*

#### Opportunity

1. In line with the procedure, we will discuss and agree resolutions with residents to help complete the investigation.

### 2 Staff will acknowledge this report

An acknowledgement email or letter will be issued within two working days with a copy of the Antisocial Behaviour Policy.

The investigating staff member will offer an appointment to meet with the resident to discuss the report and the impact on the resident and risks posed by the ASB.

#### Opportunities

1. Clear information on support available to the resident(s) during the investigation.
2. Explore how residents want to be supported during the investigation i.e. preferred method of communication
3. Meetings could be held about any anti-social behaviour that may or has taken place if requested
4. Communicate updates to residents
5. Utilise ASB Vulnerability Matrix to assess level of risk from ASB.

*The timescales seem quite long, as this means the ASB will be continuing throughout this time. However I can understand why it takes this long as an investigation needs to be thorough.*

#### Opportunities

1. To provide appropriate updates during the investigation to reassure residents.
2. Where appropriate, we will offer interim remedies.
3. ASB investigations should be over a shorter period of time if possible (Policy advises Sapphire will aim to complete the investigation within 10 working days).

### 5 Staff will send an outcome letter

When the resolutions have been agreed, the resident will receive an outcome letter with the findings and agreed resolution.

If ongoing monitoring is agreed and offered as a resolution, the investigator will confirm how long the ongoing monitor will be for and explain what will happen at the end of the monitoring period.

A closure letter will be sent after the outcome letter or when the monitoring period ends.

#### Opportunities

1. Agree a reasonable monitoring period, when appropriate, and ensure follow up calls are made at the end of the monitoring period to confirm the ASB issue has been resolved, then close the case.
2. For isolated ASB issues, when monitoring does not occur, we can provide information to confirm when an ASB case has been closed.

*Residents want staff to be empathetic towards their situation and be understanding of what they have been through with ASB*

*If the person is not satisfied with how the ASB issue has been investigated, they can make a complaint. (See Complaints and Feedback Policy.)*

### 6 If the ASB continues

The agreed resolutions will be reviewed, and if no further in house remedies can be offered, Sapphire may need to consider taking further action.

# CONTACT US

*The Informed* is a bi-annual publication.

Our next issue will be out in Winter 2023. Please send any comments, questions and story ideas to:

[TheInformed@sih.org](mailto: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](http://www.sih.org) and click on publications.

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If you would like this publication in large print please contact Nina Williams on 020 7485 8889

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## PLEASE NOTE

Head Office is open Mondays to Wednesdays by appointment only from 10.30am – 5.00pm.

If you would like to make an appointment, please call **020 7485 8889**.

If you have any emergency repairs please contact the out-of-hours number on **020 7372 6633**.

### GENERAL ENQUIRES

#### Head office

1 Holmes Road,  
Kentish Town,  
London, NW5 3AA  
Tel: 020 7485 8889  
Email: [info@sih.org](mailto:info@sih.org)  
[www.sih.org](http://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

#### Park Place

1 Espalier Gardens,  
London, NW6, 2DQ