

THE INFORMED

Summer 2020



Sapphire
Independent
Housing

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**We'd love to hear from you.
Send your news, stories
and comments to:
theinformed@sih.org**



Each year in June, various events are held to recognise and celebrate the influence and achievements of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender non-conforming (LGBT+) people have had throughout history. Alongside fun celebrations, it is an opportunity to raise awareness of current issues facing the LGBT+ community and beyond.

June is Pride Month because it coincides with the anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall Riots in the United States. In the early hours of June 28, eight police officers raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York. At this time, gay people were regularly threatened and beaten by police and shunned by many in society. However, this night, the bar fought back.

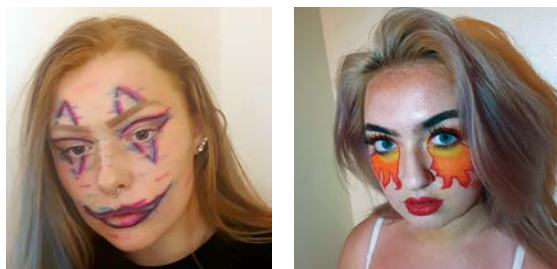
Marsha P. Johnson, a black, transgender activist, and her friend Sylvia Rivera are said to have 'thrown the first stone' – that is, they were the first people to fight back against the police brutality. This sparked two further days of uprising by mostly transgender and queer people of colour, and 'The Stonewall Riots' are regarded as a turning point for gay rights. The first ever Pride parade took place the following year and started outside the Stonewall Inn.

Being black, poor, gay and gender nonconforming, Marsha knew more than most knew what it meant to be marginalised. She was a passionate activist and dedicated much of her life to helping others. Even though the Stonewall riots kick-started this wave of support for the LGBT+ community, there was still a lot of discrimination against them. It was common for young gay and trans people to be kicked out of their family homes by their parents and Marsha and her friend Sylvia founded an organisation to support gay and trans individuals who had been left homeless.

....continued on page 2

www.sih.org

Fabulous artwork for photography, by Sky, on herself and fellow resident Mary Smith.



PRIDE IN WHO WE ARE ... CONTINUED

In the UK, the number of LGBT homeless applicants is on the rise and LGBT people can experience homophobic harassment and hate crimes in general needs housing, and sometimes exclusion in care or sheltered housing. With this in mind, Sapphire Independent Housing actively aim to promote mutual respect and inclusion, and an appreciation of diversity in all areas of our work and throughout our organisation.

We strive to ensure that all our residents and staff are able to achieve their full potential in an atmosphere which is free from prejudice, discriminatory behaviour or fear of harassment as we believe that no individual should receive a less than positive experience using our services or when working for us because of their personal, social characteristics or their appearance.

All staff have mandatory equality and diversity training and have a duty to challenge and prevent any discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour within our services and organisations we work with.

We can all appreciate that this year the world has faced challenges which have meant that physical parades and celebrations for Pride month have not been able to take place. However, we hope all our residents feel safe and proud to be who they are and we hope to celebrate with you soon!

Written by Sarah Wynbourne.

FIRE SAFETY WORKS

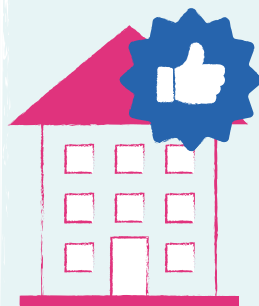


Our residents' safety remains a priority for us and we are continuously working to ensure your home meets safety regulations.

We recently had Fire Risk Assessments carried out at all our sites; and since receiving these reports we have been working to complete the actions based on the assessor's recommendations to make your homes safer. These works have included installing new fire detection and alarm systems in communal areas and in the properties, where recommended. These works are on going and you may notice contractors in your building. We will communicate with residents and provide specific information when works are taking place in your building.

The remedial works to our fire doors across all our properties was temporarily placed on hold due to COVID-19, we are now instructing the contractors to restart these works. Over the coming months contractors will be working at sites to complete remedial and replacement works for the fire doors. Some sites were completed previously, for the remaining sites we will notify residents when the works will begin in your building.

We understand this is a challenging time, we want to say a very big thank you to all our residents for your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these works, please speak to your Key-worker or Housing Officer.



We strive to deliver our repairs, compliance and maintenance service to a high standard, and we welcome feedback to help us improve our service and to recognise good service.

ROUTINE REPAIRS

Due to COVID-19 we adapted our Repairs, Compliance and Maintenance service to ensure our residents health and safety remained the priority; we had to consider the risk posed by COVID-19 for our residents, staff and contractors. This meant we prioritised emergency and urgent repairs and placed routine repairs on hold where possible. This was to reduce the contact between residents and staff and contractors to reduce the risk of Coronavirus being passed on, and to preserve our PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) stock for emergencies and urgent issues.

Prior to undertaking any maintenance job, we checked if the resident was presenting with any Covid-19 symptoms and if they were advised by the Government and NHS to shield due to



being high risk. We introduced the need for staff and contractors to wear full PPE when entering a residents room or flat, this included masks, gloves and aprons; and to maintain the social distance we asked residents to remain in a separate room while the works were being carried out and we ensured the rooms were well ventilated. We have begun addressing the routine repairs that were reported during the peak of COVID-19 in the UK. The contractors and maintenance operatives continue to use PPE to protect themselves and our residents.

SOCIAL DISTANCING



One of the most important ways to stop the spread of Coronavirus was to maintain a 2-meter physical distance from those outside of your own household wherever possible. With this advice Sapphire put measures in place to keep residents and staff safe; we adapted our ways of working with your support. Our staff work remotely wherever possible, meetings are conducted virtually and via telephone; keywork and support sessions are conducted remotely or if necessary, in well ventilated rooms large enough to maintain a 2-meter physical distance.

Keeping residents and staff safe remain a priority for us; so, at this time we will continue to adapt our working practises to maintain the 2-meter physical distance. Sapphire will continue to use the guidance from the Government and Public Health England when deciding how to deliver a good, supportive service while keeping residents and staff safe.

HOW ARE WE DOING?



SAPPHIRE'S RESIDENT SATISFACTION LEVELS

for 1st January – 30th March 2020

SATISFACTION



Overall satisfaction with Sapphire's services

Target 92%
Actual 100%

COMPLAINTS



Complaints responded to on time

Target 98%
Actual 88%

REPAIRS



Responsive repairs completed on time

Target 97%
Actual 99%

We received eight complaints in quarter four. Seven out of the eight complaints were responded to on time. There was a delay responding to one complaint due to COVID-19, this complaint came during the peak of COVID-19 and while we were adapting our ways of working for resident and staff safety.

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.

RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATIONS

Sapphire Independent Housing is committed to working in partnership with all our residents and empowering them to genuinely influence what we do. In December 2016 our Resident Involvement Strategy for 2017 – 2020 was approved and we began implementing our Resident Involvement Action Plan. The Strategy is designed to deliver services which reflect the needs and preferences of residents; maximise the Association's resources and; are compliant with regulatory requirements and good practice. We are preparing to review our Resident Involvement Strategy for the next three years and we want your help.

The resident voice is powerful, and we want to ensure there is always opportunity for your voice to be heard.

Our bi-annual Resident Satisfaction Survey will be available for you to complete in October 2020, to know what's most important to you we need to ask the right questions. We want to

hear back from as many residents as we can. How likely are you to complete the survey? Is there anything we can do to make it easier for you to complete the survey?

Due to COVID-19 we made some temporary changes to our Complaints and ASB timescales and we added a 'Quick Fix' stage. These timescales are in line with the timescales in the sector. We would like to keep these timescales. What are your thoughts on keeping these new timescales?

We have begun looking at how we will maintain your homes for the next 5 years. What's important to you? How do you want us to invest in your homes? Over the coming months we would like to hear your views.

Survey's are available as a paper form, on our website and or can be sent via email. Help us to improve our services by completing the surveys.

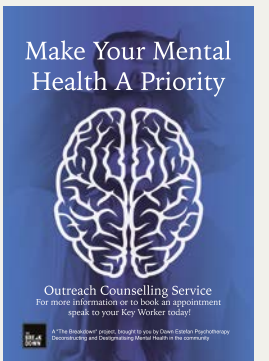
COUNSELLING SERVICE FOR RESIDENTS OF BETHANY HOUSE

At the start of this year Bethany House managers and Psychotherapist Dawn Estefan came together to discuss a wonderful opportunity for an in-house counselling service. The service is intended to provide a neutral and safe space for the residents of Bethany House to engage with therapeutic care. The service aims to address the barriers to engagement of therapeutic care for women who have experienced homelessness; and to promote critical awareness and self-empowerment to enable women to move forward with their lives and prepare for life after Bethany House. We are pleased to say the service which is funded by the Thornton Charitable Trust started at Bethany House in April this year and will

be available to women of Bethany House for 2 years.

This can be a **life changing opportunity** for the women of Bethany House who can be referred by their keyworker. Following a referral to Dawn Estefan the Psychotherapist, clients will be offered an assessment. The clients will be offered 10 individual counselling sessions which take place at Bethany House. We are overjoyed at this opportunity for our residents of Bethany House.

If you are a resident of Bethany House and you want to find out more about this opportunity, please speak to your keyworker.



BLACK LIVES MATTER: A MOVEMENT

The death of black American born George Floyd from Minnesota America on 25 May 2020 and the following protests gained international attention and saw the return of the Black Lives Matter social movement to national headlines. The movement for social justice was founded in July 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullor and Opal Tometi. It started with a 'love letter', a hashtag and an online community.

Social movements are organised groups of people or organisations working towards a common goal to bring about social change. A social movement raises awareness of societal issues, is an opportunity to learn from each other and a time to support one another.

We can recognise that the murder of George Floyd was not an isolated incident of racially motivated violence. Institutional racism, also known as systemic racism, was defined in the Macpherson Report as: 'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin.'

Institutional racism is not unique to America; it is also in many areas of British society and it is racial discrimination that has become established as normal behaviour.

There is much to be said about unintentional, indirect or subtle discrimination which can happen so casually and often without any harm intended in everyday life. They can appear as a compliment or joke, a question, remark or unconscious action which stems from a stereotype. These are microaggressions because they are forms of discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority.

These past few months have been challenging and painful, more than ever we need to support one another and come together against racial injustice locally, nationally and globally. Sapphire is a diverse Organisation in terms of residents and our staff team. We value our diversity and want to do our bit, to stop institutional racism and create a fairer and more just society. We will be sharing our plans over the coming months.

Using The Difficulty, by Rhys ... My Story

Sir Michael Caine was once asked how he had managed to be so successful. He replied *"I have always managed to use the difficulty"*. I have recently had occasion to put this wisdom into practice in my own life.

When I first came to Conway House, I was at an all-time low. Not long released from a lengthy prison sentence, evicted from my flat (due to my chronic addiction to Heroin), socially isolated and alienated, destitute, homeless and broke.

Sometime into my stay, I made the decision to stop using drugs, and give myself another chance. I sought support and focused on my recovery.

After 9 months of sobriety, I approached the Education Training and Employment Coordinator at Conway House and asked for help. Eventually I secured part-time employment interviewing homeless people about their experiences accessing medical care. It was a dream position! I was working with a team of professional researchers based at London universities, in partnership with Groundswell, a Brixton based, national homelessness charity.

I was also referred to St. Giles Trust, a charity that helps ex-offenders get back on their feet. They provided a great deal of both emotional and practical support.

I moved heaven and earth to get to that point, and so did many other people, without whose support and help, I would have been living alone in a hedge by now.

Then COVID happened. And, you've guessed it, my dream job and move-on plans were put on hold. This was a serious potential threat to my 18 months of sobriety, undoing at a stroke, all of that work, sustained effort, and pain.

That was 3 months ago. Yet today, I am re-employed in the same well-paid job that I love, although my interviewing role has moved online.

I am also about to view lovely move on accommodation; I am fit, very healthy, active and most of all, still sober. *Indeed, the future's so bright, I need two pairs of sunglasses!*



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HOMELESS CITIZENS

For some people, homeless citizens are dirty, Smelly and drugs users in England and Wales. Homeless citizens are alcoholics fit to be homeless. Homeless citizens are to be blamed for being homeless. And homeless citizens should be shipped to an Island. But, for Sapphire Independent Housing, Homeless citizens are Kings and Queens. They're welcome to Sapphire Independent Housing. They're supported by Sapphire Independent Housing. Sapphire Independent Housing cares for homeless citizens. Sapphire Independent Housing is for homeless citizens. That's it. Sapphire Independent Housing respects homeless citizens. Homeless citizens get help from Sapphire Independent Housing. So, shame to those who demonise homeless citizens herein. Sapphire Independent Housing is here for homeless citizens. Homeless citizens live well in Sapphire Independent Housing. Homeless citizens shine like stars in Sapphire Independent Housing. Hence the gospel of the contrary to it must get lost by it indeed. Homeless citizens and the rich form our Nothing Hill Carnival. Thus England and Wales thrive by our Nothing Hill Carnival per se. © Mr Allie Smith 04-05-2020

If you would like to submit a poem to be featured in the next issue of *The Informed*, please email theinformed@sih.org

Good deeds feed



♥ Supa

Thank you Supa for being thoughtful and planting seeds to grow fresh fruit and veg in the empty plant bed in the small courtyard.

♥ Shakira

Thank you, Shakira, for taking the time to water the various plants along the courtyard corridor, ensuring the plants stay bright green and alive.

♥ John

Thank you, John, for the support you provide to your neighbours, for always being willing to offer your assistance to St Eugene Court residents.

♥ Rose

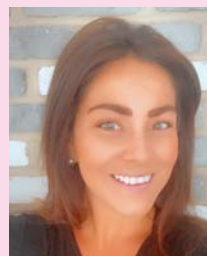
Thank you Rose for sharing your baking recipe book to allow us to put together a recipe pack for the residents of St Eugene Court who may wish to give baking a try.

♥ Dominique

A big thank you to Dominique for taking the time to re-organise the notice board at Bethany House.

Do you know someone who has 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, or text **07903049588** to share your good deed.



Nadia Executive Team Assistant

What are some challenges you think the next generation will face?

Comparing themselves and living by what appears to be 'perfect' on social media. I firmly believe you should be your own inspiration.

Do you have a secret skill? And if so what is it?

I just like being organized!

Do you care more about making money or pursuing happiness?

Pursuing happiness, but for me that does involve money. Money can't buy happiness but if you're comfortable paying bills and stuff you have money to spend.

Do you like to cook?

I love to cook. My favorite dish is lasagna or roast dinner.

If you could meet anyone dead or alive, who would it be?

Marilyn Monroe. She stood up for everything she believed and didn't follow others.

If you could live anywhere where would it be?

Hertford- it's near enough to family and friends but has great nightlife too to enjoy those cocktails!

Who is your hero?

My Grandad who saw the good in everyone. He served in the RAF and worked at Rolls Royce making the engines for the aero planes. He passed away recently so I would love to run the marathon one day to raise money for Parkinson's in his honor.

What is your favorite thing about your career?

I love being an EA at Sapphire... as a smaller organization I get to interact with everyone.

Interview by: Sky Holtum Lewis and Shona Middlehurst



Wisdom Maintenance Operative

What are some challenges you think the next generation will face?

Technology is the future, and perhaps less good morals. It'll be like a fast car without good brakes. Good principles and technology can enhance life.

Do you have a secret skill? And if so what is it?

When I was younger I wanted to be a vehicle designer. I learned to draw and design things because I thought I will need those skills.

Do you care more about making money or pursuing happiness?

For me it has been more to do with happiness. I don't need a lot of money to live and I've seen the problems of pursuing money.

Do you like to cook?

Master chef! I had a girlfriend once who cooked for me and the potatoes wasn't cooked, not a lot was and I got food poisoning! I decided to learn how to cook. Imagine biting into a raw potato!

If you could meet any person dead or alive, who would it be?

I would say Jesus Christ. I know people talk about him in different avenues but in the history of this planet I haven't heard of anyone else who is able to do the things he could do.

If you could live anywhere where would it be?

There are many pleasant places on this planet. I have seen some places in Asia and the water is just really lovely and blue.

Who is your hero?

I would just say my mum because she has done a lot for us and I listen to her. She encouraged me to do architecture because I could draw.

What is your favorite thing about your career?

I want to go into the building business – in this line of work you get all the relevant skills.

Interview by: Sky Holtum Lewis

Read the full interviews with Nadia and Wisdom on our website

www.saphire.org

CONTACT US

The Informed is a quarterly publication.

Our next issue will be out in September 2020. Please send any comments, questions and story ideas to:

TheInformed@sih.org

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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.

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

Townsend House

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Borehamwood,
Hertfordshire,
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London, NW1 0TZ

College Yard

9 College Yard,
London, NW5 1NX

Dunne Mews

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Forde House

129 Queens Crescent,
London, NW5 4HE

Hackett House

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Kilburn, NW6 4TB
Tel: 020 7692 7285

Highgate Road

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London, NW5 1NU

St Eugene Court

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London, NW6 6PA

Tara Lodge

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