

Strategic Alliance between Odu-Dua and Shian Housing Associations

A message from Sandra Brown, our Board Chair

Over the last few years, following on from the fire tragedy of Grenfell Tower, there have been a number of changes to regulations in the social housing sector. New regulations in place centre around building safety and conditions on how social housing providers should treat their tenants to ensure safety in their homes, and to ensure landlords meet high standards in areas such as repairs and maintenance. There is also a new charter in place to ensure that tenants' complaints are dealt with swiftly and fairly.

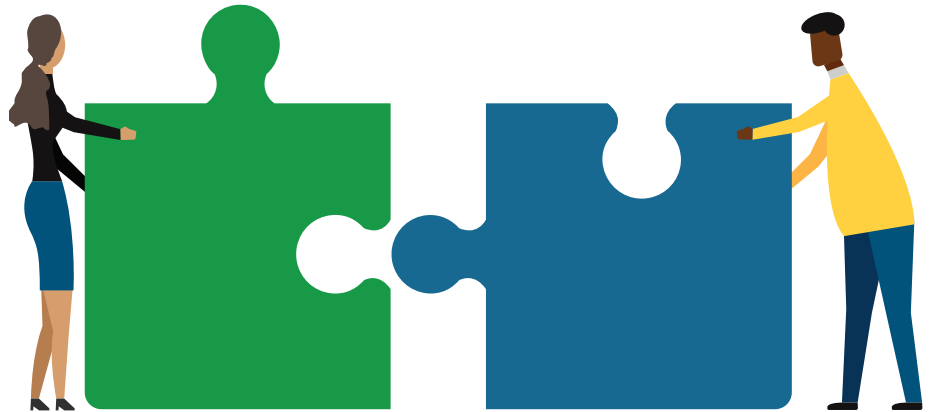
Odu-Dua's purpose is to provide the best service possible to its tenants. We are proud of our roots as a BME landlord and we want to ensure that we continue to provide affordable, safe, good quality homes and places where people are proud to live and enjoy life.

To prepare Odu-Dua for the future, the Board entered into a strategic alliance with Shian Housing Association (www.shian.org.uk) from 1 June 2023.

A strategic alliance is an arrangement where two organisations work closely together and the arrangement is one which fosters good outcomes in a number of ways.

Our alliance is designed to:

- **Improve customer satisfaction**
- **Pool our resources**, so that we benefit from better deals from suppliers and contractors



- **Share expertise** to improve the services we provide.

Our organisations are similar in their visions and are both BME-led. We believe we can work together for the benefit of all our tenants.

You may already have noticed some changes to your services – designed to enhance the work we do. We have highlighted some recent service improvements in this newsletter.

Changes and improvements

One change is that Leslie Lanyan, who has a wealth of experience from 30 years in the housing sector, is now the Chief Executive of both Shian and Odu-Dua Housing Associations.

Shian's staff are now providing a repairs service to Odu-Dua tenants. So, you may hear from staff or a contractor you are not familiar with.

We have produced a set of health and safety leaflets for Odu-Dua tenants. They explain our responsibilities and what you can do to help us meet them.

We are currently also producing a joint Tenants' Handbook and a joint Repairs' Handbook for our two organisations.

Our phone lines have been updated, so that you can use our office number to access different areas of the repairs service by selecting from a list of options. (See the back page.) We also now have a separate email address for non-urgent repair queries, at repairs@odu-dua.org

To speed up repairs, you will be able to email pictures or videos of the repair you need – or text them to a new mobile number we are introducing. This will mean fewer pre-inspections before we send out a contractor. We will also ask our contractors to send before and after pictures of repairs, so that we no longer have to do so many post-inspections. Both of these changes will reduce repair times and the number of appointments we have to make with you.

On page 2 of this newsletter, you can also read about the new tenant surveys we are introducing, which will give you more opportunities to give us your feedback.

We thank you for your patience and co-operation whilst changes are being made and we hope that you will soon see and experience the service improvements.

New staff member for Lithos Road

Simon Bryant has joined us as the new Estate Services Co-ordinator at the Lithos Road Estate, replacing Martine Austin, who has left Odu-Dua.



Pension Credit

Pension Credit is extra money for low-income pensioners. It brings your weekly income up to a minimum amount.

There are two parts to Pension Credit. Some people can get both.

Guarantee Pension Credit tops up your weekly income.

Savings Pension Credit is an extra payment for people who have some savings or income.

You can claim Pension Credit whether or not you are still working. You do not need to have paid any national insurance contributions.

Who can claim?

To claim Guarantee Pension Credit, you must have reached your State Pension age. You can check this out at: www.gov.uk/state-pension-age

To claim Savings Pension Credit, you must be aged 65 or older and have reached your state pension age before 6 April 2016. For more details go to: www.gov.uk/pension-credit/eligibility

Satisfaction surveys: we're listening

We have appointed Acuity, an independent survey company, to track your satisfaction with our services.

Major survey

In August, Acuity will be carrying out a baseline survey of all our tenants, using the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing.

The idea is that every social landlord will ask the same questions, so that we can more easily compare our performance with that of other similar landlords.

The questions are designed to check whether you think we are doing a good job by:

- keeping your homes in good repair
- maintaining building safety
- engaging with you respectfully and helpfully
- handling your complaints efficiently, and
- managing your neighbourhoods responsibly.

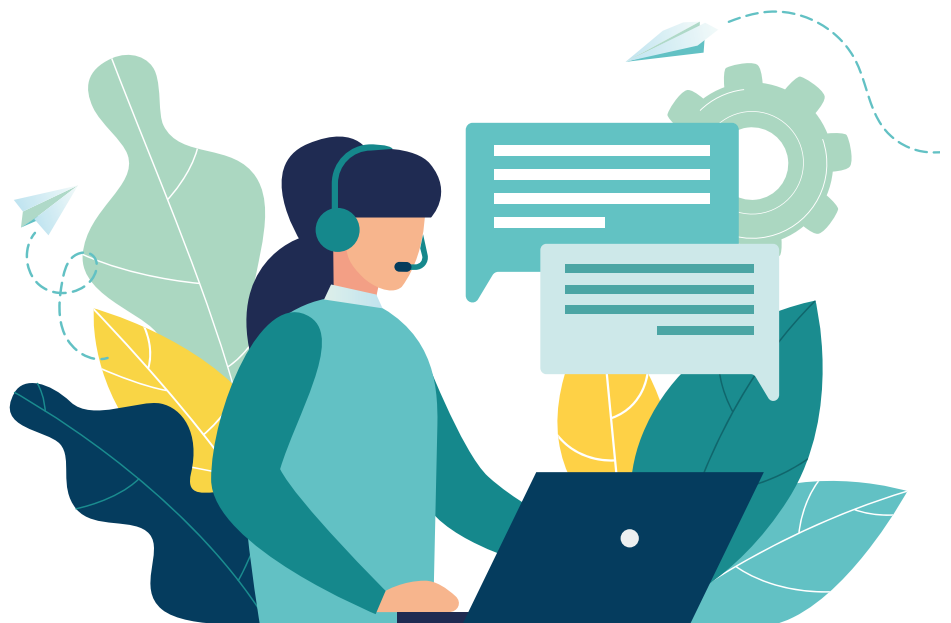
You will be able to complete the survey online. You will also get it through the post and you may also get a phone call from Acuity.

Local service surveys

From September, Acuity will also begin making phone calls to tenants who have recently used our services.

They will ask how satisfied you were and invite you to comment. You can do this without leaving your name – or you can ask us to contact you about any issues you raised (but we will receive their reports up to six weeks later).

Your feedback will help us to track what is working well in two areas: the repairs service and our customer services.



10 tips for staying cool

Take care of yourself during hot weather.



1. Eat regular small meals

Your body warms as it works to process larger meals, so eating smaller portions can help keep you cooler.



5. Keep your feet cool

Soaking your feet in cool water, cools foot and ankle pulse points, taking your temperature down.



9. Use sunscreen

When out, use sunscreen of at least SPF 30 to protect from sun burn. Top this up at least every two hours.



2. Choose cotton

Lightweight cotton clothing is the best option. Avoid dark colours, as these often absorb the sun's radiation.



6. Have a treat

Treating yourself to an ice cream or ice lolly can make you feel cooler almost instantly.

10. Know the danger signs

Heat exhaustion comes with headaches, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, intense thirst, heavy sweating and a fast pulse. If you have these: find a cool place and loosen tight clothes; drink plenty of water; sponge yourself with cool water.

If the symptoms don't improve in half an hour, call your doctor or NHS 111. If things worsen (disorientation, seizures or lost consciousness), call 999.



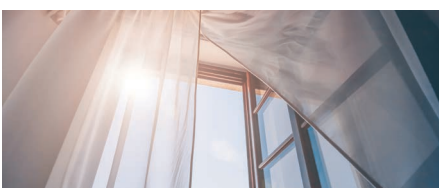
3. Keep hydrated

Sweating and getting dehydrated puts you at risk of heat stroke. Drink cool water regularly to lower your body temperature.



7. Rinse your wrists

Washing either your wrists or the back of your neck with cold water before going to bed can help you to sleep.



4. Create a cross breeze

Open windows and internal doors to create a breeze. (But keep your flat door closed – it's a fire door.)



8. Stay in the shade

The sun is strongest from 11am to 3pm, so head for shade. Indoors, close blinds or curtains in sunny rooms.



Barbecues are not allowed

In line with guidance from the London fire brigade, you must never use a barbecue on your balcony or in any other communal area. This is because barbecue fires can easily spread.

Tips to stay safe from fire

Reduce your household's risk from fire, by taking up the tips listed below.

- **Make an escape plan** – If you live in a block, check whether you are should 'stay put' or evacuate in a fire. Think how you could leave if your normal exit were blocked and make sure everyone knows where door and window keys are kept.
- **Test your fire alarms weekly.** Replace batteries when needed, or call us if a mains alarm is not working.
- **Tell us/your local fire and rescue service** if someone in your home might not be able to escape.
- **Don't leave rubbish or personal items** in corridors, stairways or meter cupboards. They could catch fire or cause an obstruction in a fire (which is why we remove items).
- **Never smoke in bed**, or when you are sleepy. Use deep ashtrays and never throw hot ash in the bin. Keep matches and lighters away from children.
- **Don't leave lit flames unattended.**
- **Don't overload electrical sockets.** Switch off and unplug most electrical appliances at night.
- When cooking, **never leave pans unattended.** If a pan catches fire, DON'T throw water on it. Turn off the heat if you can do it safely. If in doubt, leave the room, shut the door and call 999.
- **Close all doors, especially at night**, to prevent fire spreading.

E-batteries

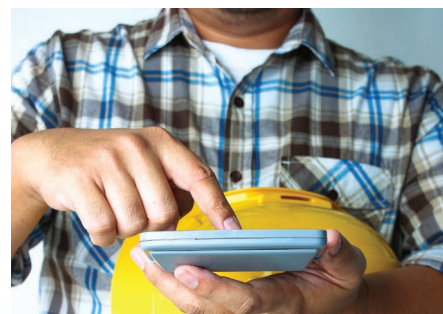
The lithium batteries in e-bikes and e-scooters are the fastest growing fire risk in London. These batteries can cause very serious fires when they fail. You can reduce the risks in the following ways.

Charge them away from escape routes and never overnight or when you are going out.

Check for warning signs of failure (if your battery is extremely hot, starts to bulge or leak, makes a hissing sound, smells strong or takes longer to charge – if you see smoke, it is already on fire.

Never buy secondhand batteries or cheap batteries online – they may not meet UK safety standards.

Don't convert your bike yourself. Get a professional to do this for you.



Don't risk being recharged

We operate a rechargeable repairs policy.

We will pass on our costs if:

- you are not in for your repairs appointment
- you misuse our out-of-hours repairs service, or if
- a repair is needed because an item has been damaged through misuse or neglect.

We will make a charge in these cases because:

- our contractors charge us for missed appointments
- our out-of-hours service is for genuine emergencies – you will not get your routine repair done more quickly by calling the emergency number, but you will cost us more, and
- you are responsible for taking care of items in your home.

Call us for more information.

In the near future, we will be providing a new guide to our repairs service, which will also include more details.



Phone:
020 7625 1799

Email:
repairs@odu-dua.org

Office address:
84–88 Kingsgate Road
West Hampstead
London NW6 4LA

Type of repair

All non-gas repairs during normal office hours

Emergency repairs outside office hours

Gas boiler/gas central heating breakdown (including an out-of-hours emergency)

Gas leak/smell

Total loss of gas/electricity

Total loss of water/external leak

Who to contact

Phone Odu-Dua on 020 7625 1799 (option 2)

Phone Odu-Dua on 020 7625 1799 (option 5)

For K & T Heating, phone 020 7625 1799 (option 3), OR 020 8269 4500 (direct line)

Phone the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999

Call your energy provider

Call Thames Water on 0800 316 9800