

New website launched

We are delighted to announce the launch of our brand-new website, which you can access at: www.odu-dua.org

Our new website is designed to give you quick access to useful information about our services.

What's new?

The website is now more user-friendly, with a clean and clear design that makes it easy to find what you need.

The up-to-date information on the site, includes:

- our new Tenants Handbook (go to odu-dua.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Odu-Dua-Tenants-Handbook-WEB-2024.pdf)
- our new Guidance on Repairs (go to odu-dua.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Odu-Dua-HAs-Guidance-on-repairs-WEB-2024.pdf)
- tenant leaflets offering guidance on health and safety issues, damp mould, and managing on a low

income – as well as some notes about how Odu-Dua is navigating the current cost-of-living crisis

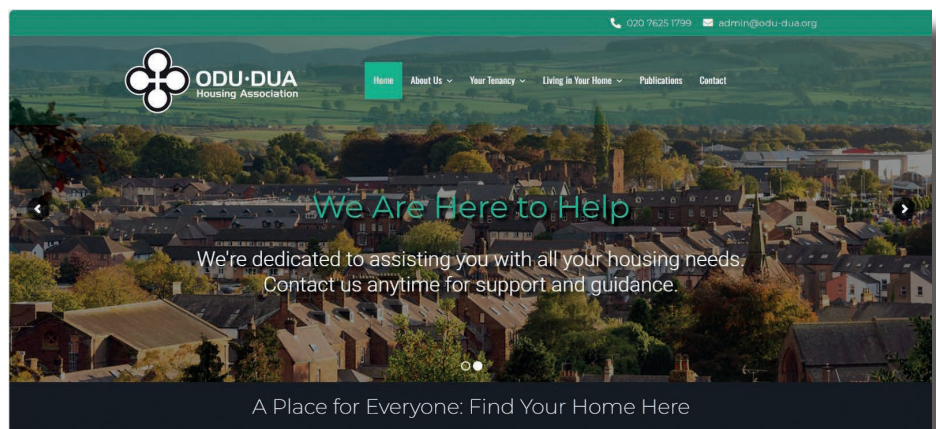
- our complaints policy
- our newsletters, and
- our annual reports.

What do you think?

We value your feedback – we want to hear from you as we continue to improve our services. We would

really like to hear from you after you have used the new website. Your suggestions and comments will help us to make further improvements.

As we make service changes, we appreciate your patience. Our goal is to improve your experience as our tenant, and the new website is a big step in that direction. We will continue to develop the site further, by adding new features.



Our pet policy... and microchipping

We are happy for our tenants to own pets – but you must follow our rules.

Before taking on a pet, you must first ask for permission, by completing our 'request to keep a pet' form.

If we give you permission, we will ask you to complete a pet ownership agreement, which sets out our conditions. If you break them, for example, by not looking after your animal properly, or allowing it to damage property, we can withdraw our permission at any time.



If you own a dog or a cat, the law says you must get it micro chipped. This is new for cats.

Since coming into force on 10 June 2024, all cats over 20 weeks' old must be chipped, with their details stored in a national database. Micro chipping costs around £25, though you may find charities able to fit a

micro chip for less. In either case, once your pet is chipped, you will need to keep your details up to date – for example, if you move.

Micro chips are a permanent and reliable form of identification. For pet owners they also greatly increase your chances of finding a lost or stolen pet.

Tenant phone surveys

Following last year's tenant survey, we are reintroducing phone surveys, so that we can collect feedback on our two core frontline services: repairs and your contact with staff.

We want to hear about your experiences of using our services, so that we know where to make improvements.

We are using an independent organisation, Acuity Research & Practice, to carry out our phone surveys. If you get a phone call from Acuity, you can be assured that this is authorised by Odu-Dua.

Shian Housing Association: acting on our behalf

We receive calls from time to time from tenants when they have been contacted by staff from Shian Housing Association.

This is to remind you that Odu-Dua's Board entered into a strategic

alliance with Shian in June 2023. We explained this in our July 2023 newsletter – let us know if you need another copy.

Our partnership with Shian is continuing and their staff may contact you – for example about your repair, or about the work we need to do to comply with health and safety regulations. This is fine because they are acting on behalf of Odu-Dua.



Make the most of your home swap

If you need to move, we recommend considering a home swap.

Our tenants look to move for a number of reasons. They may need a larger home or want to downsize (especially if this is affecting their benefits), or they may have changed their job, have children starting school, or need to move closer to relatives.

Although you can apply to go on our transfer list, as a small association with a limited number of homes becoming available, we always encourage tenants to look at other rehousing options. Some of our tenants have successfully moved by making a mutual exchange – swapping their homes with other social housing tenants.

HomeSwapper

Odu-Dua is signed up to HomeSwapper.co.uk, which means that you can register for their online swapping service for free.

If you find a suitable swap, we will



expect you pay any outstanding rent arrears before we allow you to go ahead.

When you register with HomeSwapper, you have to be proactive. You need to log on to the site regularly, because additional homes become available every day.

You can boost your chance of finding the right exchange by:

- refreshing your online advert by adding plenty of photos of your home (make sure you tidy up first!)
- including good descriptions
- listing local facilities, and
- staying flexible on the areas and types of home you will consider.

Most of all, don't give up. The more people you contact, the more likely you are to find a swap.

What a good advert might look like:

Large, bright, one bedroom ground floor flat in purpose-built block. Spacious living room with garden access, for private use.

- Newly fitted kitchen
- Good size bathroom
- Large double-sized bedroom with fitted cupboard
- Central heating
- Communal parking
- Less than 5 minutes' walk to Kilburn underground station (Jubilee line) and 8 minutes' walk to Kilburn High Road overground station.
- Good bus links (routes no: 6, 16, 46, 98, 187, 332, 414)
- Five minutes away from the High Street and Sainsbury's supermarket, banks, post offices, library, GP, dentist, sports leisure centre



- Less than 5 minutes' walk to the local park
- In the catchment area for Manor Primary school, which is rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted

Go to the HomeSwapper website at www.homeswapper.uk to find out more about the site and how to register.



Free childcare: the new rules



Working parents of children from nine months old can now apply for 15 hours of free childcare.

The help you can get depends on the age of your child, and whether you are working, or receiving certain benefits.

You must apply before the start of the term when your child is eligible – do this as soon as possible. You will get a code to give to your officially registered childcare provider.

Free childcare hours are designed to be used over 38 weeks of the year –during school term time. However, some providers will stretch them over 52 weeks if you use fewer hours per week.

For more details about free childcare for working parents, go to: www.gov.uk/check-eligible-free-childcare-if-youre-working and for free childcare if you claim benefits, go to: www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds-claim-benefits

When this applies	Ages 9-23 months	Age 2 years	Ages 3-4 years
Since April 2024	No free hours	15 free hours for working parents and for parents claiming certain benefits*	30 free hours for working parents and 15 hours for parents on certain benefits*
From September 2024	15 free hours for working parents	15 free hours for working parents and for parents claiming certain benefits*	30 free hours for working parents and 15 hours for parents on certain benefits*
From September 2025	30 free hours for working parents	30 free hours for working parents and 15 hours for parents claiming certain benefits*	

**These benefits include: Income Support; both versions of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA); Universal Credit (if your earned income is £15,400 a year or less after tax); the guaranteed element of Pension Credit; Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit (if your household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax); and for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.*

Benefit claims: keep yours up to date

You must keep your benefit claim up to date – or you could be accused of benefit fraud.

Changing circumstances

Make sure you continue to get the correct amount of benefits by promptly reporting any changes in your circumstances. If you fail to do this, or give incorrect information, your claim could be stopped or reduced. You could also be investigated for benefit fraud.

You need to report changes, if any of the following apply to you, or other members of your household.

- You find or leave a job, or work different hours.
- Your income goes up or down (this includes any pension, savings or investments you have, as well as your salary or wages, or the benefits you claim).
- You, or someone else, gets married or divorced, or starts/ends a civil partnership.
- Someone in your household has a baby.

- People move into or out of your home (for example, your partner or a child).
- You plan to go abroad for any length of time.
- You are going into hospital.
- You start or stop education, training or an apprenticeship.
- There are changes to your medical condition or disability.
- You change your name or gender.

For a complete list, go to: www.gov.uk/report-benefits-change-circumstances

Benefit fraud

If you deliberately claim benefits falsely, you are committing benefit fraud. This can happen if you:

- fail to report a change in circumstances, or
- provide false information.

If you are suspected of benefit fraud,

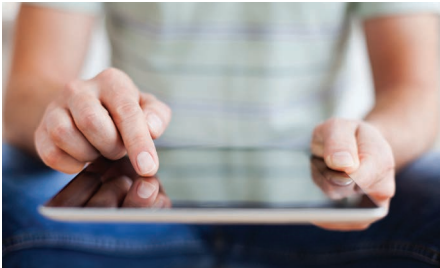
you will be contacted by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), or your local authority.

During the investigation, your benefits may be suspended. You will receive a letter telling you this.

You might get a visit from fraud investigation officers, or they may ask you to attend an ‘interview under caution’, to discuss your claim.

The fraud investigation officers will collect facts about your case and decide whether to take further action.

If your benefit claim is suspended for any reason, please contact the office as soon as possible.



A fresh look for your rent statement

You may have noticed that your recent quarterly rent statement looked different.

We have upgraded to a new system and we hope you find it clearer and more user-friendly.

- Column 1 = the transaction date
- Column 2 = the transaction type
- Column 3 = who made the payment
- Column 4 = your property code
- Column 5 = payments you made
- Column 6 = your weekly rent charge
- Column 7 = the balance – ‘Pre’ means you are paid ahead, while ‘Arr’ means you are in arrears

Ms Daisy Jones Flat 23 Odu-Dua House Camden London NW6 6ER						JON500
						ODUDHO23
					Thu 25 July 2024	
COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5	COLUMN 6	COLUMN 7
01/04/24	Prior balance					297.93 Pre
01/04/24	Week 1 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	237.16 Pre
08/04/24	Week 2 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	76.39 Pre
15/04/24	Week 3 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	84.38 Arr
22/04/24	Week 4 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	245.15 Arr
23/04/24	Std Ord	JONES	ODUDHO23	710.00		468.85 Pre
29/04/24	Week 5 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	304.08 Pre
6/05/24	Week 6 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	143.31 Pre
13/05/24	Week 7 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	17.46 Arr
20/05/24	Week 8 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	178.23 Arr
23/05/24	Std Ord	JONES	ODUDHO23	710.00		531.77 Pre
27/05/24	Week 9 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	371.00 Pre
06/06/24	Week 10 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	210.23 Pre
10/06/24	Week 11 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	49.46 Pre
17/06/24	Week 12 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	111.31 Arr
24/06/24	Week 13 charge		ODUDHO23		160.77	272.08 Arr
24/06/24	Std Ord	JONES	ODUDHO23	710.00		437.92 Pre
	Balance					437.92 Pre

Key performance indicators: Apr to Jun 2024

Rent	Target 2024-25	April to June 2024
Rent arrears	3.25%	3.07%
Rent collected	100.5%	97.11%

Using the repairs service

This is to remind you that our repairs service is now managed by our partner housing association, Shian.

To order a repair, you should phone our usual office number (020 7625 1799), then select Option 2.

The repairs team are on hand to answer your calls:

- between 9am to 4.30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and
- between 12 noon and 4.30pm on Wednesdays.

To report an emergency repair outside these hours, you should call the office and select option 5. This will direct you to our emergency service, which is managed by Pinnacle.

To report a non-emergency repair outside office hours, you can also send an email to repairs@odu-dua.org – reporting a repair in this way also allows you to send photos and videos.

Please don't send your repairs orders to any of our other email addresses.

The law on smart door bells

You should respect your neighbour's privacy if you set up a smart door bell system at your home.

Smart door bells are gaining in popularity as a form of home security. You may have seen adverts promoting them on the TV and on social media.

Although these door bells are fairly new, the law applies the same rules as for CCTV cameras.

You don't need legal permission to set up CCTV or a smart door bell, but both are covered by data protection legislation.

As the owner of the door bell, you are automatically a 'data controller'. This means that you are responsible for any images you capture.

You need to respect other people's right to privacy and avoid capturing information beyond the boundaries of your property. You may have to put up a sign stating that recording is taking place and why.

You cannot legally mount a smart door bell camera in a position that looks through into your neighbour's gardens or windows. If your neighbour is concerned that you are capturing images of them, they have a right to ask to see those images.

You should follow guidance



published by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), which can be found at: ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/domestic-cctv-systems-guidance-for-people-using-cctv

Not happy with your neighbour's door bell?

If you think your neighbour is breaking the rules, you can complain to the ICO.

The ICO can write to ask your neighbour to resolve things – perhaps by putting up signage, or responding to your data protection requests. However, they are unlikely to take additional action.

Your best option is to try to speak to your neighbour first, to see if you can resolve things between you.



Phone:
020 7625 1799

Email:
repairs@odu-dua.org
housing@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

Non-gas 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

Email repairs@odu-dua.org, OR phone 020 7625 1799 (option 2) to be directed to the team at Shian HA

Phone 020 7625 1799 (option 5) to be directed to Pinnacle

Phone 020 7625 1799 (option 3) to be directed to K&T Heating, 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