

## Update on our services

Welcome to the Summer edition of Tamil Housing News, our newsletter for residents. We hope you are all keeping safe and well. It's great to see positive change on the horizon. We are beginning to see the green shoots of getting back to normal and finally saying goodbye to lockdown. All of us will once again be eager to get out and about, meet up with our friends and families and of course enjoy the lovely weather we've had recently. Please continue to follow all Government and NHS guidance to stay safe, corona virus is still present in our communities and remaining vigilant is still incredibly important.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter, if you have any comments or feedback on the newsletter, get in touch by phone or email. All feedback is valued as it helps us to tailor what you want to see included.

### OFFICE CLOSURE

As our staff are working from home, our office is currently closed.  
Please contact us as usual by **Phone: 0208 493 7160**  
or **Email: [service@tamilhousing.org.uk](mailto:service@tamilhousing.org.uk)**



Here's a brief update on our services:

### PAYING YOUR RENT

**Please pay your rent in full and on time as usual. We rely on your rent to pay for the services we provide.** If your income is affected by COVID 19, call us for advice. We can refer you to debt support agencies, help you apply for benefits/Universal Credit or to complete forms. Never ignore rent demands as we can also arrange affordable repayment plans if you have fallen behind. If you ignore our contact attempts or don't pay your rent, we may take Court action and you could face eviction from your home.

### REPAIRS

We are delivering our repair services as usual but some repairs may be rescheduled due to Covid. For the safety of our residents and contractors, we will prioritise emergency repairs. If you have symptoms of COVID 19 – please tell us when you call. We are still completing essential safety works and annual gas safety checks, please allow access when our contractors contact you.

### COMMUNAL AREAS

Regular cleaning services are continuing as normal, and hand sanitisers are available at Tamil Housing owned schemes.

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### Scholarship Fund NOW OPEN!

Are you or somebody in your household starting university this September?

If so, you may qualify for our Scholarship Fund worth up to £1000! This year will mark our ninth year of successful awards. The scholarships are for those starting their first year at University for any undergraduate degree.

For more information, visit our website. Deadline for this year's applications is **27th August 2021** (terms apply).

### ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We are dealing with ASB as usual. Please report any concerns you have to us. Call the Police 101 non-emergency number, to report suspected criminal activity.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

If you are experiencing domestic violence, we are here to support you. Contact us in confidence on **0208 493 7160** or the **National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 246** or visit [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

# Our Top 10 UC Tips ...

If you're moving to claim UC (Universal Credit) from Housing Benefit or already claiming UC, have a look at our top tips:

**Tip 1: Claim as soon as you can.** UC is not backdated and is only paid from the date you claim. If you don't claim straight away, you could lose money and be liable to pay any missed rent yourself.

**Tip 2: Think Monthly:** UC payments are calculated monthly; you will receive one single payment a month, so you may need to budget to avoid falling short in the middle of the month. Contact us for a Budgeting sheet.

**Tip 3: Think about your Bank Account:** Is your bank account overdrawn? If it is your UC payment will be swallowed up immediately when it arrives, leaving you short to pay your rent. Consider opening a separate basic bank account just for your UC payment. If you are vulnerable or already in arrears – you can request for your UC payment to be paid directly to Tamil Housing, contact us to arrange this.

**Tip 4: You need to make a separate claim** for Council Tax reduction directly to your local Council at the same time you apply for UC. If your claiming UC and your circumstances change, claim your Council Tax support straight away.

**Tip 5: Don't get more than 8 weeks in arrears with your rent:** recovery costs are usually non negotiable with UC. Recovery will start at 20% until your rent debt is fully repaid, so avoid falling into 8 weeks of arrears.

**Tip 6: Your dedicated DWP Work Coach** – make the best use of your Work Coach. They can help you gain skills/training and to find a job. Hours spent with your work coach will count towards your Claimant Commitment Hours.

**Tip 7: Your UC Portal** - Use your UC Portal to make enquiries and to contact UC. Take a screen shot if you want to send us proof of any queries you've raised or responses you've got back from UC.

**Tip 8: Non-dependent deductions** (e.g., for children over 18 years living with you) are very high under UC – **they are £75.53 for the first non-dependent and for the second/any subsequent non-dependent.** This may leave you short with your rent. Therefore, it's up to you to ensure your household members are all contributing or helping you to pay your rent. Remember, as the tenant - the rent is your responsibility.

**Tip 9: Don't forget April** - Your rent will usually change every April, make sure you update your new rent on your UC Portal, or you could fall into arrears.

**Tip 10: Contact us** if you need help with your UC payments. We are here to help.



## The Housing Ombudsman Service



From time to time, we may get things wrong, if that happens, we are committed to listening, learning and putting things right. If you have a concern or complaint, please tell us so that we can investigate this. We have a 2 stage complaints process.

Once you have exhausted our internal complaints process, you have the right to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service, who investigate complaints independently and impartially that involve Social Landlords.

For more information about the Housing Ombudsman Service visit [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk) or call 0300 111 3000.

## Get Involved

If you'd like to get involved in our services, call 0208 493 7160. We would love to hear from you and we have range of involvement activities to suit all ages and can accommodate different time commitments.

## £29,000 Awarded to residents

**Are you in rent arrears? If so, we may be able to help you apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to your local Council.**

During lockdown, we've helped 7 residents to claim £29,000 in DHP awards. One of these residents was Mrs. S, she claimed Universal Credit, but was affected by the Benefit Cap. Despite finding a job, her arrears rose to £5,000 and she feared eviction for herself and her two children. By working with our Tenancy Sustainment Advisor, we successfully supported her with a DHP application which cleared her arrears. She's now in credit with her rent account, pays regularly by Direct Debit, and has a lot more peace of mind about her situation. **Councils have limited amounts of money for DHP applications, so it's important you don't delay in applying**, contact us as soon as possible to see if you qualify.

## Stay Safe Always ask for ID

All the contractors we use to carry out repairs to your home should be wearing a uniform and/or carrying ID from the company they work for.

**Do not let anyone into your home or block if they have no ID, or they not willing to show it.**

**If in doubt, call the Office.**



## Our New Kickstart Employee

**Meet Fardouza Nor, Community Development Officer who is doing a 6-month paid Kickstart job here at Tamil Housing.**

The kickstart scheme is a government funded programme which provides jobs for 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment. We are very happy to say we are participating in this with Clarion Housing Group who are the lead consortium Partner providing 800 new 'Kickstart' jobs.



**KICKSTART  
SCHEME**

[gov.uk/kickstart](https://gov.uk/kickstart)



## Want to make changes to your home?

If you intend to make changes or alterations to your home, under your tenancy agreement you must ask for written permission from us. **Never make any changes or alterations without obtaining our written permission first**, this includes removing any fixtures, fittings (including ceiling lights), doors, walls, erecting sheds, outbuildings or any type of extension.

**Check our Alterations Policy on our website or speak to a member of our staff before you make any changes.**



## Are you a Poet?

**Do you write as a way to relax? We'd love to hear from you if you have a poem to share.**



You can either send us an existing poem or write a new one. Your poem could be about how you've coped with lockdown, acts of kindness from anyone in your local community or even just your personal reflections about the last year. Send us your poem to [service@tamilhousing.org.uk](mailto:service@tamilhousing.org.uk), maximum of 500 words and your poem could be featured in our next newsletter. Good luck, you might be a poet and you don't even know it!

**Deadline for entries is 31st August 2021.**

# Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

Tamil Housing out of hours are from **5.00pm-9.00am Monday- Friday** and also **during the weekend and public holidays (Call our usual number).**

**Tamil Housing** Call 0208 493 7160  
For Tamil housing owned properties, you can also report Heating, Boiler and Hot Water issues only to:  
**K&T Heating on 0208 269 4542.**

We also manage properties for other landlords. If your property is owned by any of the landlords below, contact them directly for any emergency out of hours repairs only;

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>ASRA/PA Housing:</b><br>0300 123 2221        | <b>London and Quadrant (L&amp;Q):</b><br>0300 456 9996     |
| <b>Christian Action Group:</b><br>0199 276 5900 | <b>Metropolitan Thames Valley:</b><br>020 3535 3535        |
| <b>Clarion Housing Group:</b><br>0300 500 8000  | <b>Network Homes:</b><br>0300 373 3000                     |
| <b>Peabody Housing:</b><br>0300 123 3456        | <b>Wandle Housing:</b><br>0300 200 0114<br>or 020 8682 117 |
| <b>One Housing Group:</b><br>0208 821 5300      |  |

## CONTACT US

**Phone:**  
0208 493 7160



**Email:**  
[service@tamilhousing.org.uk](mailto:service@tamilhousing.org.uk)

**Visit:**  
[www.tamilhousing.org.uk](http://www.tamilhousing.org.uk)

**Write to us at:**  
Tamil Housing  
Tamil House, Unit 2,  
Fountayne Business Centre,  
Broad Lane, Tottenham,  
London, N15 4AG.

**You can also use our SMS service to get in touch with us.**

Text one of the abbreviations below to **07984355550;**

- BAL:** Tenant Balance Enquiry
- STO:** Set up a standing order
- CARD:** Request a new payment card

## £100 WINNER

**In each newsletter, one lucky resident wins £100 for paying their rent by Direct Debit.**

The winner this time is **Miss. W** from **Catford**

Direct Debit is the easiest, quickest and cheapest way to pay your rent. You won't have to worry about remembering to pay every month.

**It's easy to register, call us on 0208 493 7160.**

To be eligible for the prize draw, you must make at least 3 Direct Debit rent payments in the last 3 months before the draw and your rent account shouldn't be more than 4 weeks arrears.

## Debt Advice

For free debt advice and help, contact any of the organisations below:

**National Debtline**  
0808 808 4000 [www.nationaldebtline.org](http://www.nationaldebtline.org)

**StepChange Debt Charity**  
0800 138 1111 [www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org)

**Citizens Advice**  
08444 111 444 [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)



## Are you struggling?

Please don't struggle in silence or on your own. We are here to help, call us or email [service@tamilhousing.org.uk](mailto:service@tamilhousing.org.uk)

**0208 493 7160**