

Connections

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

ISSUE 8 SUMMER 2022

Notting Hill
Genesis



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www.nhg.org.uk

@NHGhousing



WELCOME

from Katie Bond

Chief operating officer

Hi, welcome to the summer edition of Connections. We hope you and your families are enjoying this warm weather, but also keeping well and hydrated.

We have recently introduced some structural changes within the organisation. The roles of group director of housing and group director of commercial services have been dissolved and replaced with a new chief operating officer role. I have been appointed to that role and will start in post on 17 August.

In my new role, I will act as a single point of accountability and aid our plans to ensure one standard of housing no matter whether you are a social tenant, a private renter or a leaseholder. As such, I will write these introductions for future editions of Connections.

In this edition, you'll read about chief executive Kate Davies, and her decision to step down after 18 years in the social housing sector. This comes after she was recently awarded a CBE in the Queen's jubilee honours.

You'll also read about the work we have been doing this year to engage residents and maintain healthy relationships. This includes our work with the Resident Voices group to create the Notting Hill Genesis charter, which outlines the blueprint to maintaining respectful relationships between residents and staff.

We also gave residents the chance to help shape our first comprehensive sustainability strategy where residents said they would like more information and education on how you can incorporate sustainable practices into everyday life. We hope the new section, 'Going Green' will help with this.

As the cost-of-living crisis continues, we have put together a range of resources to help in several areas including debt management, loans, energy saving and more. Please be aware, you can always contact your local officer for help should you need it.

I hope you have a fantastic summer, but please remember we are here if you need us.



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We have published our Residents' Annual Report

The Resident Voices group published their first Residents' Annual Report in February of this year. This report is the first of many, created by our residents for our residents, and highlights the Resident Voices' key focuses, challenges and successes over the past 12 months. These reports will be published at the beginning of each calendar year.

The Resident Voices group was set up to act as a representative hub for residents, where experiences and feedback can be gathered, listened to and acted upon. Meeting quarterly, the group is made up of the chairs of our resident-led involvement groups, resident members of our group board and committees, and senior leadership staff.

Residents instigate service improvement projects based on the feedback they have received. For more information on what the group have been up to, you can check out their blogs page on our website.

The Residents' Annual Report highlights the benefits of collaborative working between residents and staff, showing us that we can improve services and homes most successfully when we work together. The Resident Voices group would like to thank Colin Burns, a Notting Hill Genesis resident who kindly led on the design of this report.

If you have any questions about the report or would like to know more about the Resident Voices group, we'd love to hear from you! Please get in touch at involvement@nhg.org.uk

The Notting Hill Genesis charter

To foster good relationships between staff and residents, we worked collaboratively to understand and capture what good relationships look like. The charter positively frames the relationships staff and residents wanted. Our relationship is based on five key principles:

Staff will:

Residents will:

1 Responsive and reasonable

We will support each other to resolve queries. We will be mindful of each other and give each other space to find solutions.

Support residents with their queries and help them, even if they don't have the answer by referring them to the appropriate person or department. We'll champion them within Notting Hill Genesis.

Be mindful that staff may not be able to solve their problems or answers their questions straight away, giving them space to do so.

2 Dependable and patient

We will trust each other through consistency and transparency. We will be patient with each other.

Do what we say we will and follow up. Regardless of the issue, we'll acknowledge you, and agree a timeframe to keep you updated.

Be patient and allow staff to come back to them in the agreed time and about the agreed questions and issues raised.

3 Compassionate and respectful

We will always treat each other with respect and compassion.

Act with respect and compassion when engaging with residents and when in their home.

Act with respect and compassion when engaging with staff.

4 Tolerant and inclusive

We will recognise each other as individuals and work to understand each other's needs and circumstances.

Recognise residents as individuals, understand their needs and not judge their circumstances. Staff will act with compassion and treat residents with respect.

Treat staff members as individuals and understand their circumstances and not judge them. Residents will treat staff members with respect.

5 Empowering and communicative

We will always use clear communication. We will encourage open conversations with each other to resolve issues as easily as possible.

Support residents to get things done easily; self-serve, signpost them to the right services and report issues as quickly as possible and encourage open conversations with us to resolve issues.

Help make things easy, by working with staff to resolve queries and issues through clear and open communication.

Together

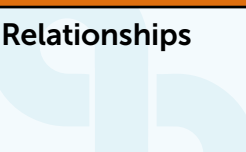



with tenants

**Strengthening relationships
between housing associations
and residents.**

An update

It's been over a year since we adopted the Together with Tenants charter and we've continued to ensure we meet the commitments we signed up to. Here's a snapshot of the progress made since our December update:

Together with Tenants pledge	What have we achieved?
Relationships 	<p>We are pleased to say the Notting Hill Genesis Charter has been launched to help maintain good relationships between our residents and staff.</p>
Communication 	<p>Residents are more involved in reviewing communications and ensuring key messages are delivered effectively.</p> <p>Based on resident feedback, two key projects have recently started, led by members of our Resident Voices group. These are focused on welcoming new residents into our communities, and our void and letting standard. Email involvement@nhg.org.uk to find out more.</p> <p>The resident involvement team have recently completed a consultation with residents and staff and created a new webpage, toolkit and guidance materials for those looking to set up residents' association. We're also working on a staff pack to ensure local officers can support residents in the same way.</p>

Voice and influence	<p>Residents have been heavily involved in developing a resident involvement strategy for the next five years which will be published soon. The new strategy looks to ensure resident involvement is inclusive, connected and measurable, so residents can clearly see the impact that their time and commitment has had on the services they receive.</p>
Accountability	<p>The opportunities residents have to scrutinise and hold us to account are being reviewed and tested, and the terms of reference for our Resident Voices group will be reviewed as the group approaches the end of its second year.</p>
Quality	<p>The Resident Asset Management Steering Group remains an integral part of the Resident Involvement Network and we are looking at ways to strengthen this link when developing the new resident involvement strategy. Most recently, the group have been reviewing statements from our homes standard, which defines the standard required of all existing Notting Hill Genesis homes and provides the criteria for future planned investment.</p>
When things go wrong	<p>Resident complaint reviewers continue to be an integral part of our complaints process and will now have a representative on our Resident Voices group to ensure that we are capturing as much feedback as possible from our residents.</p> <p>MyAccount has been improved so that residents can raise their complaints themselves and include all the details they feel necessary.</p> <p>We are passionate about giving our residents a voice and working together to deliver services and homes that residents can be proud of. Thank you to all residents who have worked with us over the last year, and who have been involved in helping to create our new Resident Involvement strategy, which will be published this summer.</p>

Series two of the *Every Kinda People* podcast is out now

The second series of our podcast *Every Kinda People* – focusing on the amazing stories of extraordinary people living in Notting Hill Genesis homes – was launched on Thursday 23 June.

The podcast features a group of 12 diverse and lively residents, including artists, musicians, DJs and writers who all share a passion for music.

Similar to the first series, each podcast features a resident sharing their live stories and experiences through a musical timeline. Some of those who featured in this series include:

- **Drusilla** – an 85-year-old artist who spent her life hanging out with bohemians and fellow artists, still paints now, recorded her own music album on independent record label Cherry Red records and modelled for Vogue.
- **Dean** – a West London DJ and music collector involved in the 90's rave and hip-hop scenes, speaks passionately about his love of music and growing up in multicultural Kilburn.
- **Caleb** – a semi-professional footballer from Nigeria who is now a member of Say It Loud Club, a group set up in 2010 to support



Pictures from the launch event

We were so proud of the fascinating stories captured in our first series of Every Kinda People and always knew there were more residents out there, but we have been overwhelmed by how many amazing lives we have captured. Thank you to all our brilliant volunteers who were so engaged in the project and whose involvement, has made this series even more special.

Mandy Worster, volunteer programme manager

LGBTQ+ refugees, with whom Notting Hill Genesis works closely. Caleb is a Say it Loud ambassador and captain of their football team.

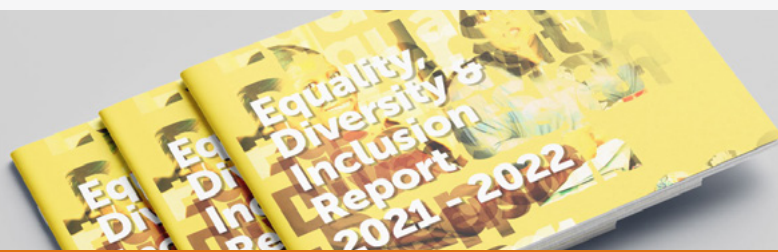
- **Hilda** – now in her 90s, she sang across Scandinavia as part of a group called The Good Companions, has spoken in schools about her experiences in the war and has been interviewed by Ruby Wax on TV.

This series, we partnered with arts and education charity www.digital-works.co.uk who trained and educated volunteers in the art

of podcasting and interviewing. Lorraine, who volunteered in the programme said, “before this programme, I don’t think I actually listened to a single podcast in my life, I just never thought it would be my thing...and now I realise podcasts are a wonderful thing.”

The second series can be found on at www.mixcloud.com/everykindapeople alongside the first season, which was released in 2020.





We've published our annual report on equality, diversity and inclusion

We are proud to share with you our ED&I and wellbeing report for 2021/22, which reflects on our achievements and shares key data that shows both our progress and areas for improvement.

Our approach to ED&I is more than simply equality; it includes cultural background, gender diversity, work experience, race, age, sexuality and much more.

Over the past 12 months, we have been running various activities and programmes to promote inclusion and support our diverse communities. Our first residents annual report (See page 4) was published this year, created by our Resident Voices group.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE KATE DAVIES CBE SAID:

At every level, with commitment and vigour, we want to celebrate and include the diverse views, experiences and enthusiasm of both our resident and employee communities. This report summarises all the work that we are doing towards ensuring we are truly representative and reflect the communities we serve.

The report highlights the group's key focuses and successes for 2021 – a massive well done to our resident involvement team for their work in ensuring this could happen. You can also read about all the great work across our regeneration schemes.

Our ED&I action plan for 2022/23 incorporates residents and staff focuses equally, and there is a clear commitment for a separate ED&I residents' strategy to be created this year. We look forward to collaborating even more with those living in our homes throughout 2022.

A portrait of Kate Davies, a woman with long white hair and glasses, wearing a white jacket. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Our chief executive Kate Davies has decided to step down after 18 years

Kate, who was awarded a CBE for services to housing in June, started with legacy organisation Notting Hill Housing Trust on 21 June 2004.

Since overcoming significant initial challenges, the organisation has gone from strength to strength, becoming Notting Hill Genesis in 2018, now owning and managing more than 66,500 homes across London and the south-east.

Kate said: "I am proud to have led Notting Hill Genesis for so many years and am confident I will be leaving the organisation in a strong position to continue to thrive.

"My focus has always been on providing great services for our customers and giving them a home to be proud of, and while we don't always get things right, I know the culture we have here will ensure we get better and better."

Over the last 18 years, Kate has overseen large-scale development programmes across all tenures, the creation of what we now know

as Folio London, a new housing management model where every household has a named local officer to provide advice and support and a merger that created one of the largest housing associations in the country.

She has also had a long-term commitment to diversity, supporting the careers of women and people of colour, both of which are reflected in the make-up of our executive board.

"I want to say a huge thank you to all my colleagues at Notting Hill Genesis, and the wider sector, who have been so supportive over the past 18 years," Kate added. "It has not always been an easy ride, but it has been a job I've always enjoyed, in a sector I am so passionate about."

Kate will remain in post, until we recruit a replacement for her.



A day in the life of a chief executive

Continuing in our series where we look into a typical day of various roles within the organisation, we met up with chief executive, Kate Davies CBE.

Why and when did you join Notting Hill Genesis?

I joined the Notting Hill Housing Trust 18 years ago as chief executive. I could see the trust was doing great work in London - providing long term affordable homes and shared ownership.

What can a typical day(s) look like?

I don't really have a typical day. I work in the office four to five days a week. Two mornings a week I have coffee with the executive team and everyone shares what is happening and any problems that are concerning them.

We work together to try and solve issues like floods, fires, IT failures, staff shortages, planning events,

news, etc. Fortnightly we have a formal three-hour meeting together with written papers to agree the business needs of the organisation. I supervise nine people, so I see most of them every six weeks for an hour or so. I am responsible for the work of the board and meet fortnightly with the chair and about monthly with the other board members.

I also meet or speak to key stakeholders and partners as the organisation's spokesperson. For example, I recently went to see a modular housing factory, and an estate where we have had a lot of problems with the local MP, residents' groups and our on-site teams.



Kate Davies at Grahame Park

What do you find the most rewarding?

The best bit of my job is recruiting, training and leading our staff, and doing all I can to help them provide great homes and services. I also enjoy seeing new homes going up – every new home is a fresh start for someone, and that really makes a difference.

What are the frustrations?

The job can be frustrating – things I would like to fix at once can take ages; and there is often not enough money to do a really great job, so we have to compromise.

What do you do in spare time?

I have five children and six grandchildren. I like making things – clothes, painting, cooking, woodwork and textiles. I love travelling abroad and camping in the UK. I am learning Spanish and hope to be able to travel more once I retire.

One thing you would like residents to know about a being a chief executive

I do read every letter and email that comes to me, but I can't fix everything myself. I delegate power, authority and budgets throughout the organisation – right down to the frontline housing officer – so they can serve the residents in the best way.



G15 award is a huge honour

On 12 May, we received a special award from the G15, a group of London's largest housing associations, for going above and beyond in improving diversity.

Staff collecting the award

The first ever G15 Ethnicity in Housing Awards event, hosted in the Museum of London Docklands, recognised ethnically diverse people in the housing sector.

It included a Kandyan dance performance, a message from UNIFY, and a speech from guest speaker Dr Shola Mos-Mogbamimu (founder of Women in Leadership Publication and author of 'This is Why I resist').

Shortlists for the awards had been announced in advance, but we walked away with a surprise UNIFY Special Recognition Award, in honour of the work we've done with them since 2016, and the great strides we've made to improve diversity in our organisation.

Kate Davies said: "It was a fantastic event that was made more special

by winning this award. Improving diversity and making sure our senior management is more reflective of our staff and residents has been a key focus for us in recent years and I'm proud the progress we've made is gaining recognition both internally and among our peers.

"Congratulations to all our colleagues who were shortlisted, as well as one of our engaged residents who has given up so much time to help improve services for those living in our homes."

Colleagues from Notting Hill Genesis had been nominated in the Future Leader, Supportive Colleague and Lifetime Achievement categories. Meanwhile, Cultural Energie, our staff network for ethnically diverse staff were nominated for best Staff Racial Equality Action Group.



Get involved

Our resident involvement team helps you to provide feedback and work with us to identify challenges and ways to improve the services you receive. There are many ways you can get involved, including committees, boards and focus groups.

If you are interested in getting involved, but are not sure what opportunities are available, you can browse our resident involvement page on the website, or email involvement@nhg.org.uk.

Would you like to support our London Marathon runners?

Thank you those who have signed up to run the London Marathon and raise money on our behalf. If running the event is not for you, but you would still like to be involved and support from the side-lines, we'd still love to hear from you.

We are recruiting a group of volunteers to help support our runners on the day. If this is something you'd be interested in, please register your interest at fundraising@nhg.org.uk.



unlocked
resident art show

**Calling all
creative
residents!**

Our bi-annual art show, Unlocked, is back this year, and submissions for artwork are open.

Selected artists will have their work exhibited and auctioned off in an amazing central London gallery this November. The proceeds will be split between the artists and our Hardship Fund.

To participate in the Unlocked exhibition, **please send up to five images** of your original artwork by Wednesday 31 August to unlocked@nhg.org.uk alongside your name, contact number and full address.

Please note, each digital file size is to be no larger than 4MB.

Applicants will be informed by email if their application has been successful by **Friday 9 September 2022**.

The exhibition event will take place between 3- 9 November at Koppel X Gallery, Piccadilly Circus.

Please do not send your physical artwork to us at the submission stage.

More information on how to apply and FAQs can be found on our website.



While many people often hope that nothing will happen to their furniture, belongings or decorations, sometimes things can go wrong unexpectedly.

Notting Hill Genesis can help you obtain home contents insurance easily and at a price you can afford.

With the National Housing Federations' (NHF) My Home Contents Insurance Scheme with Thistle, residents can protect their belongings against loss or damage caused by such things as fire, theft, flood, storm, escape of water and subsidence.

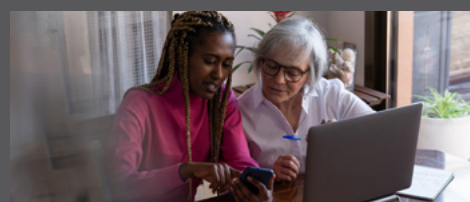
To find out more, see the information pack on our website, or contact your local officer.



Right to Buy for housing association residents

You may have heard recent announcements from the Prime Minister proposing to extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants. The government are still working on the details of the proposals, in consultation with the National Housing Federation, to establish how this will work in practice and there is not yet a date for implementation of any changes in this area.

We will communicate further with you when we know more details and you can find more information about Right to Buy, and other options for buying with Notting Hill Genesis, on our website



Click Silver self-referral for tech support

Do you need more confidence in using tech? Contact your housing officer and ask for a referral to Click Silver, a project that will help you get to grips with tech like mobile phone and laptops/tablets.



has a new offer for our residents

Goodgym consists of local groups of runners who work to make life easier for vulnerable residents by helping with day-to-day tasks. They have recently reduced their minimum age requirement so people aged 50 and above can use their services.

In addition to food and medicine deliveries, gardening and DIY tasks, runners can also assist with IT support and a variety of other tasks listed below. If you are struggling and feel like you would benefit from these services, please contact your housing officer for a referral.

GoodGym can accept the following mission requests for those aged 50+

- Food shopping
- Collecting a food bank parcel
- Prescription/medication deliveries
- Tasks to facilitate hospital discharge
- Changing light bulbs and smoke alarm batteries
- Key cutting depending on landlord permissions
- Laundry collection/delivery
- Posting parcels/letters
- Electricity/gas top ups
- Gardening for safety/access/significant wellbeing reasons
- Outdoor garden painting - fences etc
- One-off dog walking
- Face to face welfare checks
- Technology support
- Furniture moving
- Furniture assembly/exercise bike assembly
- Sorting/packing belongings
- Putting rubbish in outdoor bins
- Window cleaning (ground level only or they must open inwards)
- Taking down and re-hanging curtains
- Help with decluttering
- Taking bags of clothes etc to nearby donation/charity bins
- Re-hanging a door (provided no power tools are needed)

Missions we cannot accept:

- Anything for someone younger than age 50
- Personal care' - changing sheets, cleaning, hoovering etc.
- Taking the older person somewhere outside their home
- Sitting service - looking after an older person while a carer/partner goes out
- Helping the older person exercise
- Collecting click and collect shopping deliveries
- Electrical or plumbing work.
- Connecting ovens, washing machines etc.
- Landscape gardening.
- Removing knotweed, (this requires specialist removal)
- Indoor painting
- Anything involving power tools (e.g electric drills)
- Feeding pets while people are away/in hospital or taking pets to the vet
- Anything involving driving or moving items from one location to another via vehicle

Supporting those with

HIDDEN disabilities



Our resident health and disability panel works to ensure we are always considering residents with disabilities in our policies and training.

The panel contains representatives of our disability staff network, Parallel, to help raise awareness of non-physical disabilities among staff and residents alike and to ensure these individuals are heard within the organisation.

The sunflower lanyard discreetly indicates to people around the wearer including staff, colleagues, and health professionals that the person has a hidden disability and may need additional support, help or a little more time.

How did the initiative begin?

The sunflower lanyard initiative was established in the UK in 2016, by the staff at Gatwick Airport after they realised some passengers had a non-visible disability and needed extra assistance.

So, they came together to find a system to make it easier to help support these passengers. This led to a discussion with several different teams and charities, and they came up with the sunflower lanyard.



Why the sunflower?

Without a visual sign, it can be difficult for others to recognise, admit, or even understand the daily barriers faced by people living with an invisible disability.

So, they wanted a discreet sign which was plainly visible from a distance as well as being joyful and dynamic. So, the sunflower was suggested because its bright, shows positivity, strength as well as confidence and is universally known.

Since its implementation, the sunflower lanyard has been adopted globally in countries such as: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, USA and the UAE.

How can you show your support?

To request a lanyard, go to <https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com>

You can also download one of these sunflower badges to add to your email footer. The green badge is for those who wear the sunflower to show that they have a hidden disability.



The white badge is for those who want to show their support those who have a hidden disability.



If you would be interested in getting involved with our health and disability panel, please contact involvement@nhg.org.uk for more information.





FINANCIAL SUPPORT

With the cost of living steadily increasing, we want to make sure our residents have all the support they need. Our extensive support services page on our website has a range of useful information and links to our partners who can provide further support on a variety of topics.

Here are a few of our partners and their services:

Money A+E

All residents have special access to receive an online or telephone one-on-one budgeting and financial education course to help with managing your money, through an organisation called Money A+E.

Money A+E provide money advice and educational services to help you make the most out of your income. Participants will be allocated a money coach who will offer confidential one-to-one debt, money guidance and support sessions to help you regain control of your finances. For general enquiries, call 0208 616 3750 or speak to your local officer for a referral.

Money management

Money Saving Expert is a great resource you can use to help gain some clarity on a range of financial issues. They have a free budget planner available to download if you need assistance with budgeting and saving.

Debt advice

If you are struggling with debts, feeling overwhelmed and not sure where to go, you can access anonymous debt advice through **Debt Free London** by ringing 0800 808 5702.

Pocket Power

We are working with Pocket Power, a social enterprise who supports people on low incomes. Pocket Power provides a phone service that can help you switch to better deals on household bills and apply for discounts you may be eligible for.

Pocket Power addresses the key barriers to switching:

- **Technology** – By offering a phone service, they can reach people who wouldn't use switching websites. They can also answer any questions about what tariffs and contracts mean.
- **Time** – Pocket Power look at all household bills within one short, simple call.
- **Trust** – The customers are referred to Pocket Power through housing associations who already have an established relationship with their residents.

Household bills typically cost £2,600 a year. Pocket Power have saved households on average £420 a year, reducing their bills by 16%. At the moment there is a focus on ensuring eligible households apply for the Warm Homes Discount.

To find out how you can reduce the cost of your household bills ring 020 3997 615.

Employment support

Smart Works

Smart works is a charity that supports women looking to return to employment. They provide a two-tiered approach by firstly coaching, and teaching interview skills help you become more confident. They also provide interview clothing, so you are dressed for the part and feeling your absolute best during your interview.

If you are female, unemployed, and looking to return to work, have a look on our website for referral information or contact your local officer.

Central London Works

Central London Works supports people living in specific boroughs to make sure they have the skills and support needed to gain employment, independence and become productive employees.

They work with a range of health professionals, employment specialists, self-employment specialists and local community organisations to help overcome barriers and find the right job.

This is a flexible service with face to face and online support.

To apply, or check your eligibility, contact your local officer or head to our support services page.



MANAGE YOUR ENERGY COSTS

Electricity and gas price rises over the past decade have increased the cost of energy bills for everyone. Here are some ways you can manage energy costs at home.

Switch energy supplier – Keep an eye on energy supplier prices to make sure you are not paying too much for your electricity and gas. There are many websites that can help you check whether you are getting a good deal and to switch energy supplier if not. The following websites can help you switch:

- uSwitch
- Which?
- Energy Helpline
- Big London Energy Switch
- Compare the Market

Read your meter regularly – Check your meter reading against your bill, especially if it is an estimated reading, to make sure that you're not being charged for more energy than you've used.

Pay by direct debit – The cheapest way to pay your energy bills is by monthly direct debit and many energy companies offer discounts

to customers who agree to pay this way. Some energy companies also give a discount if you opt for paperless online billing instead of receiving bills in the post.

Get a dual tariff deal – Buying both gas and electricity from one company is the cheapest way to pay. This is known as a 'dual tariff'.

Save energy

The energysavingtrust.org.uk website is an excellent place for advice and guidance on saving energy in the home.

Shine-london.org.uk is a free energy advice service that offers telephone advice by trained energy advisors to help reduce utility bills and tackle energy debt. Shine is targeted at older people, people with disabilities, low-income households and families with dependent children.



Always remember that if you need a helping hand, our partners at the London Plus Credit Union are offering residents a special 'save as you borrow' loan to meet costs. We are also offering an £80 savings bonus to top up your savings when you finish the loan.

If you are eligible**, you can borrow up to £500 over a 52-week term. An automatic £1 per week will be set aside to a savings account and on the basis you repay the loan set within the loan agreement, we will top up your savings by an additional £80. This is all administered through

the London Plus Credit Union who are fully regulated, responsible lenders.

The save as you borrow Loan

- No credit checks
- £500 over 52 weeks at £11.16pw with an additional £1pw savings
- Total cost of credit £573.76 (£500 + £79.98 Interest)
- Repayments by child benefit only
- Notting Hill Genesis will pay an additional lump sum of £80***

Call 0207 471 2620 for more information on how to apply.

**Loans are subject to eligibility and affordability assessments. Terms and conditions apply, 34.5% APR.

***Savings bonus is only offered to tenants where they have met the repayment as set out in the loan agreement. This is a time limited offer and is subject to availability. A credit union is a financial institution authorised and by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Firm No 473340

GOING GREEN

In March, we sent out a survey gathering your views on what we should focus on while developing our first comprehensive sustainability strategy. Some of your points, such as better insulation are issues that can take a while to be addressed.

However, many of you also said you'd like more information and education on sustainable practises you can incorporate into your everyday lives. This new section 'Going Green' will be featured in future editions of Connections to help inform and educate you on a range of sustainability issues.

Continue reading to find out more about what and how to recycle, and how to start growing veg indoors.

When is your rubbish collected?



For those who aren't aware of when and how often your rubbish and recycling is collected, have a look at www.gov.uk/rubbish-collection-day. Just input your postcode and it will let you know when your rubbish and recycling bins are being collected. You can also ask your local officer about bringing in more recycling services.

If you have large or bulky items that won't be collected with your regular rubbish, consider calling a rubbish collection service. You can call Junk Hunters on 08002335865 or Rubbish Taxi on 03330160905 for a quote.

Tips on what and how to recycle

Recycling, in theory, is very simple, but it can be overwhelming if you don't know where to start. Here are a few tips from Junk Hunters on how and what to recycle:



Recycle ALL plastic bottles

From drink bottles, to food bottles and even beauty product bottles – they can all go into your recycling bin! You can also recycle tubs and pots that are plastic as well.



Flatten cardboard

If you have any empty boxes, flatten them. This allows you to store more in your recycling bin.



Recycle paper materials

You can recycle all types of paper materials, from envelopes, birthday cards to phone books, catalogues and wrapping paper. All types of cardboard can also be recycled as well – including drinks cartons and toilet roll tubes.



Create a separate area for recycling

Keep a section free in your kitchen for recycling materials – a box or a bin will do. This makes it easier to separate garbage from useful recycling materials.



Metallic items = useful items

Metallic items, like kitchen foil, cans, tins and even aerosols are recyclable and should never be thrown away.



Get rid of junk mail...the right way

You should recycle all paper materials, including mail you receive in the post. A handy tip is to keep a carrier bag near to your letterbox, so you can quickly dispose of junk mail.



Community Garden is up and running in Grahame Park

Over the past two years, we have worked with Groundworks to put together a community garden for Grahame Park residents after a consultation revealed they wanted a garden area to use and look after. We also worked with local organisations, including The Loop and Quinn, to put together a garden that served the local community.

Local residents were invited down to the Grahame Park concourse in late May to be introduced to the newly finished community garden just outside the community centre. The launch was organised in collaboration with Groundworks, Colindale Communities Trust, The Loop @ Grahame Park & Peoples Co.

The launch event was a great opportunity for residents to view the garden, learn about the different plants, and give ideas for future additions to the garden. We also recruited volunteers for the gardening group who will take responsibility of maintaining and general upkeep of the garden to ensure it continues to thrive.



Launch event of the new community garden at Grahame Park

The event also consisted of gardening and art activities, games, a live DJ and face painting which all proved very popular with everyone who attended. We also had consultants who gathered feedback from residents about the upcoming renovation of the local park (Heybourne Park).

Local councillors from Colindale ward also attended and got involved to show their support for yet another project that we funded in the local community.

Overall, it was a successful event, and we had a great turnout (along with great weather). The garden has continued to thrive since, if you're ever down on Grahame Park, be sure to pay us a visit.

Getting started with indoor gardening

Here are **five quick fire tips** on maintaining houseplants.

1. Remember, plants need more water during the summer and less during the winter.
2. Not all indoor plants need fertilisers, so be sure to do some research beforehand.
3. Light, light, and more light!
4. Most houseplants thrive in humidity. Invest in a humidifier or group your plants together.
5. Be sure to refresh the soil every so often and cut off regrowth.





Notting Hill
Genesis



Love Where
You Live

New fund to help growing communities

We recently launched the Love Where You Live Fund to improve the social and economic wellbeing of communities we serve. Our themes are focused on:

**Building financial
resilience**

**Health and
wellbeing**

Digital inclusion

Who can apply?

Charities or not-for-profit organisations (NGOs) may apply for funding. Each application will need to be supported by a staff sponsor e.g. a local officer. Sponsors will advise the community partner and will be responsible for promoting the project to residents.

What can money be used for?

Funding is for projects that help residents and their communities in accordance with the themes above. Examples of projects we have already funded include the Money A&E budgeting project and the SPACE baby bank.

The application process

Small grants of under £5,000 can be applied for by staff and Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) and funds can be paid to recognised TRAs and/or verified businesses.

Applications for small grants can be submitted at any time.

Larger grants between £5,001 and £20,000 will need a partner to deliver the project and a sponsor to support it.

Partners are external organisations with experience in bidding for funding and delivering projects. They will be responsible for delivering the service to residents directly, collating information and providing case studies.

Applications must be completed and submitted by the partner organisation who, if successful, will receive the funding following due diligence checks.

Please email lwylf@nhg.org.uk for further information or have a look at our website.

Singing praises of our choirs during Dementia Action Week

In May, we took part in Dementia Action Week, a national event to help improve the lives of those living with dementia. This year's theme focused attention on the importance of early diagnosis.

As part of various events in care and support, the Notting Hill Genesis staff choir were invited to sing with members of the Penfold Street extra care choir for people living with dementia.

The morning started off with greetings and light refreshments before we delved into the performance led by choir master Jack Bazalgette.

Jack has been working with our dementia choir for three years, keeping sessions going online throughout the pandemic, bringing a lifeline of joy and community to some of our most vulnerable residents within the shared unit at Penfold.

We were also treated to a piano performance by one of our residents, Ian, who is living with dementia and was a professional



Staff and residents singing together

musician. He said, "Playing the piano for the choir made me feel on top of the world!"

We had an amazing time visiting Penfold and singing with the choir. Music crosses borders and boundaries and it was beautiful – and emotional – to see music being used to engage with people living with dementia. Jack does a brilliant job with the choir, and we felt so privileged to be a part of it."

**STAFF CHOIR MEMBER
STACEY ANNOH-ANTWI**

Summertime fun with the kids

The school holidays have arrived and parents across the country are racking their brains about how to keep their kids occupied without breaking the bank, especially with the current cost of living crisis. Here are a couple of ideas to help you out this summer:

Nature walks – There are amazing parks all over the country where you and your kids can have great fun playing games on counting and naming birds, insects, or flowers they can spot along the way.

Sports days – Join up with a few friends and their kids to create a mini sports day with a homemade picnic and ribbons.

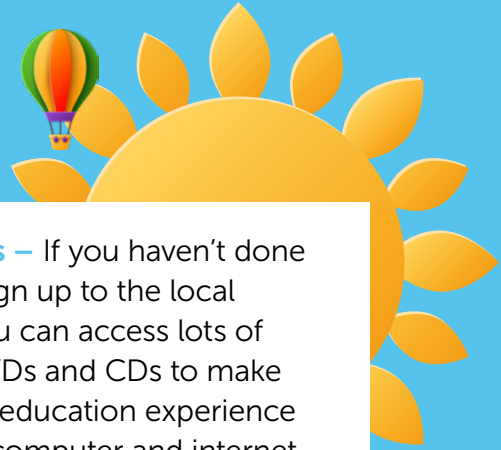
Great British bake – off days – Use up ingredients you already have in your cupboards and get the kids to create a menu and a step by step recipe guide for treats the whole family can enjoy.

Book days – If you haven't done already, sign up to the local library. You can access lots of books, DVDs and CDs to make a fun, but education experience with free computer and internet access. Often in the summer holidays, libraries have special events for children too.

Museums days – Immerse the kids into the world of science, history, and art by planning trips to museums and historical site. Most of these are free to enter.

Crafting days – Get some paints, pencils and paper from discount stores and clear a space to let you and your kids' artistic flare go wild. Use it as an opportunity to create an activity calendar for the holidays so everyone can be excited for the days ahead.

If you would like to take advantage of dozens of free events in London for kids over the summer, take a look at websites such as Visit London where there are lots of information about what's on for children in the school holidays.





Getting ahead of the back to school craze

Before you know it, it'll be time to get the kids ready to go back to school.

We've put together a list of top tips to help you save when back to school season kicks in as the ongoing list of expense pile up.

Try shopping at home

While there's usually a big list involved when getting your kids prepared for the school year, not everything needs to be brand new. Search through your home and you might find that you have a lot of school supplies or hand me downs from siblings that are still in good condition. This will help to keep costs down.

Check for sales

There's nothing more annoying than buying something, and seeing it discounted in another store. Take the time to check which stores have sales on and compare prices to find the best price and quality items.

Certain stores might tease this in advance by offering multi-buy deals if you get in now, so try to keep yourself up to date.

Budget, budget, budget

Make a rough calculation of how much the total costs will come to and set yourself a savings goal for the next few weeks. Spreading out the cost by saving a little every week will feel easier than forking out all the money all at once.

Label all their clothes

It's no secret that kids lose things constantly; jumpers, bottles etc. The easiest way to solve this, is by labelling all their belongings. Whether that's by using a marker to write their initials, or by ordering cheap name labels that can be sewn or ironed onto their clothes. You'll save yourself a lot of money in the long run.



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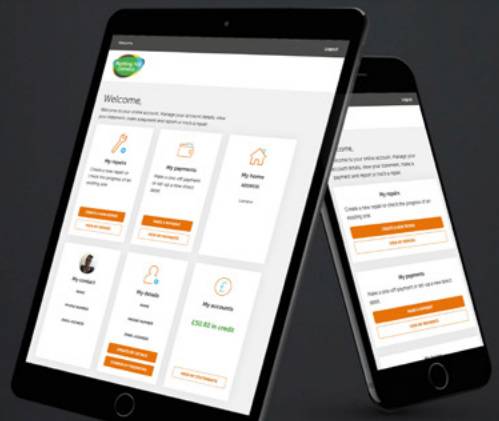
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Notting Hill Genesis

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