



## Christmas closing dates

Our staff will be taking time off from Thursday 24 December 2020 until 9am on Monday 4 January 2021.

### How to contact us during the festive period

If you have a genuine repairs emergency over the holiday, phone **020 8985 7120** and select the appropriate options from the out-of-hours menu. You will then be diverted to a mobile phone.

For urgent housing matters, call our housing phone line on **020 8985 7120** and select the appropriate options. You can then leave a voice message and one of our team members will contact you in due course.



# Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

**We can truthfully say that we have never had a year like 2020.**

As we faced the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, we had to rethink our ways of working to put the safety of our residents, staff and contractors first. We had to work from home and deliver services using new technology to keep people safe, and offer our residents as much support as we could.

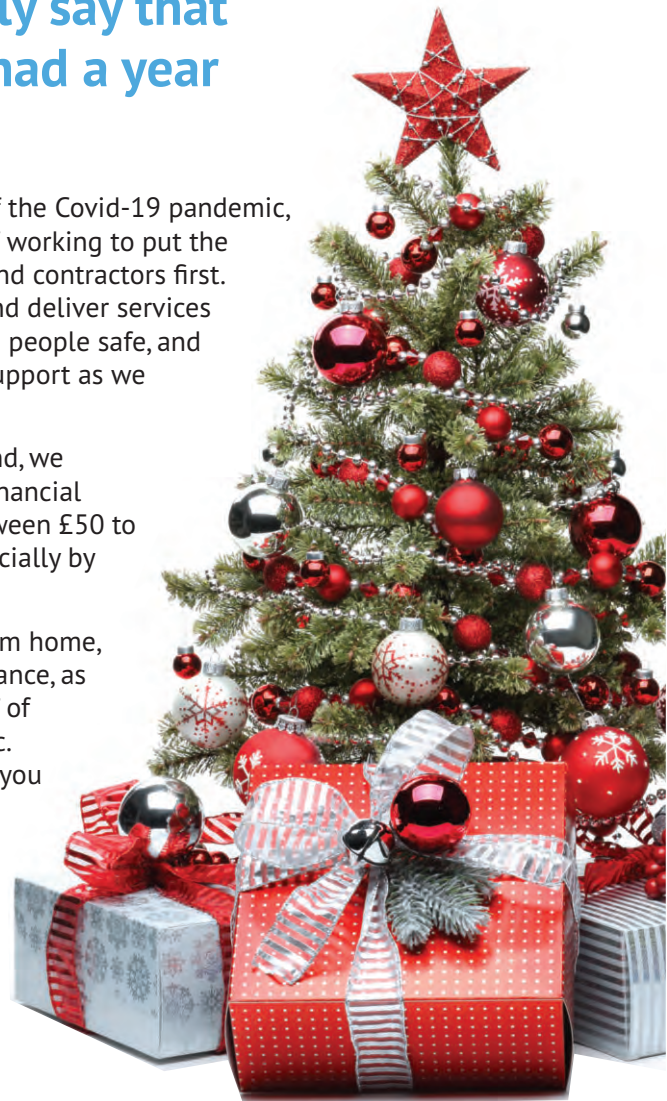
In addition to the Welfare Fund, we introduced a new Covid-19 Financial Assistance Fund, offering between £50 to £100 to people affected financially by the virus.

Our team are still working from home, in line with Government guidance, as we deal with the 'new normal' of living alongside the pandemic. However, we are still here for you if you need our help.

Wishing you every happiness and success for you and your family.

Happy holidays and New Year.

**Minara Sultana**  
*Director of Operations*



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## Keeping residents safe from fire

We prioritise your safety and have a rolling programme of fire risk checks and works.

We urge you play your part, by keeping to some simple rules.

- Keep communal areas clear of all clutter and belongings.
- Don't leave rubbish in communal areas.
- Don't store shoes, appliances, prams, bikes or furniture in stairwells, corridors or on balconies. They would create a hazard for residents in an emergency – in particular for children and older people.
- **Above all, do not smoke in communal areas.**

You can find more detailed advice on our website at [www.shian.org.uk](http://www.shian.org.uk)



## Still closed to the public

In line with Government guidance, our office remains closed and our staff are mostly working from home.

We are providing repairs as normal and have continued to carry out all health and safety and compliance work throughout lockdown.

Please make sure you give us access for your gas check. Our contractors are working in a Covid-safe way.

Please let us know if you are sick or self-isolating, so that we can make an appointment for a later date.



## A gift from Shian's Covid Welfare Fund

To show our support in these difficult times, we plan to offer a gift from our Covid Welfare Fund to tenants who need it.

Before Christmas, we will send out a link, so that tenants in need can apply.

We are doing this because we know that many of you are struggling during the pandemic and we want to make a difference.



## Prioritise paying your rent

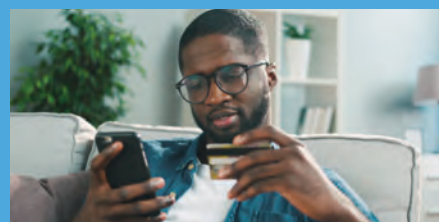
Since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, we have fully understood that some residents may need additional support, especially when it comes to paying their rent.

If you have any concerns about paying your rent, please phone us on: 020 8985 7120, or email us at [housing@shian.org.uk](mailto:housing@shian.org.uk)

### I have other pressing bills to pay, can I stop paying my rent?

No, this is likely to result in future problems for you. Rent is a priority bill because failure to pay may put your home at risk.

If you call us, we can give you support and advice on what to do about your bills, and refer you for further support if required.



### I have rent arrears, what should I do?

Please talk to us straight away. We will listen and give you help to work out an affordable payment agreement, so that you can pay off your arrears.

Remember: we are here to help.

## Don't dump on your estate

Residents who dump large items, as well as flytipping by people who come onto your estates to offload their rubbish, both add to your service charge.

Please call the council to get your large items collected. Don't make everyone else pay.



# Revised complaints code

In line with new rules brought in by the Housing Ombudsman, we have reviewed and revised our complaints code.

Comparing our existing policy to the new best practice, we began by updating our definition of a complaint to:

*"An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents."*

We also confirmed the following.

- Our complaint exclusions are fair – the most recent example was a tenant complaining about something that had happened the previous year.
- We provide a number of ways to complain and allow you to ask a representative to complain on your behalf.
- Our complaints policy and procedure are available online.
- We regularly tell you about our complaints process – for example, on the website and in this newsletter.
- Our tenant services officers can fully handle complaints at stage one, while our Operations Director handles them at stage two. Most complaints (80%) are resolved at stage 1.
- We explain how you can take your complaint further at each stage.
- Our final response sets out your right to take things to the Independent Housing Ombudsman if you aren't happy.
- We keep a record of all letters and emails about repairs and while we are investigating, we keep you updated.
- We acknowledge and log your complaints within five days, and we resolve complaints on target.
- We have met Housing Ombudsman targets where appropriate.
- We have changed policies and procedures in the past, as a result of a complaint.

- We share complaints lessons with the Board, residents and in the annual report.

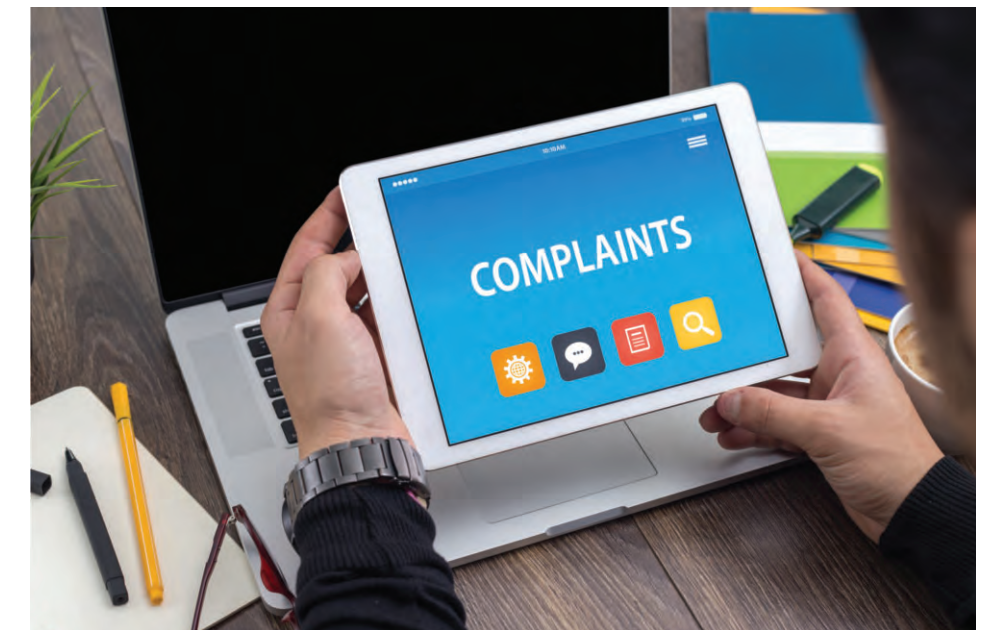
Following the review, we have:

- begun sending letters at each stage, clearly setting out our position
- added our complaints response

times to our key performance indicators

- decided to use a new complaints satisfaction survey, to check how you feel about the way we handled your complaint.

To download our complaints policy and procedure, go to our website at [www.shian.org.uk](http://www.shian.org.uk)



## Key performance indicators: April to October 2020



Repairs	No. carried out	Target for 2020-21	Average days to complete	% completed on target
Emergency callouts	26	1 day	1 day	100%
Emergency repairs	49	1 working day	1 day	100%
Urgent repairs	270	5 working days	1.5 days	100%
Routine repairs	145	20 working days	4.1 days	100%
Rent		Target for 2020-21	Achieved to October 2020	
Rent arrears		4%		5.32%
Rent collected		100%		100.7%

# Electrical safety



## Electrical checks

We need to carry out regular electrical safety checks on wiring, switches, light fittings and sockets. We do this every five years in communal areas. We are also introducing a programme of 10-year safety certification in your homes.

We will contact you when your electrical safety check up is due. Please give our contractor access to carry out these important checks. If you don't we may have to take action to gain entry to your home.

## Electrical hazards

Some electrical hazards are easy to spot, including:

- frayed, cut or damaged leads
- cracked or damaged cases on plugs and appliances
- burn marks on plugs, leads or appliances
- blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers, and
- damaged plug sockets or light switches.

## Electrical do's and don'ts

- **DO** report electrical problems straight away.
- **DO** follow manufacturer's instructions when using appliances.
- **DO** use an RCD (Residual Current Device) when using electrical equipment outdoors.
- **DO** remove plugs from sockets carefully. Pulling out a plug by the cable puts a strain on the plug which can be dangerous.
- **DON'T** repair your own electrical installations or appliances – or attempt to repair damaged or worn-out wiring, switches or lights.
- **DON'T** bring portable mains-powered appliances into the bathroom.
- **DON'T** use any appliance that has a worn flex.
- **DON'T** use any electrical appliance with wet hands.
- **DON'T** attempt to repair or replace damaged or worn out wiring, switches or lights yourself.

## Your questions answered

### I've broken a plug socket, can I fix it myself?

It is unsafe for anybody other than a NICEIC' accredited engineer to carry out electrical repairs. Please contact us to discuss any broken sockets immediately.

### I think I may have an electrical fault in my home

Call us immediately if you think you have a fault with your wiring, sockets or switches.

### When was the last check on my home?

We carry out checks every time a new tenant moves in and then no more than every five years after that. You are welcome to call us about when your next check is due.



# We're listening & responding

Thank you for taking phone calls from Acuity – our independent survey company.

### Remember:

- Tell us about your LAST contact with us – not problems you have had in the past.
- Let us call you back, so we can sort out things out if you're dissatisfied. (But be aware that we receive these reports up to six weeks later.)

### You said, we did

In recent weeks, your feedback has led to some direct service improvements.

### Repairs service

We will soon be introducing Fixflo – an app for your phone or computer that allows you to book a job using a simple, image-based diagnosis of your repair, available in 40 languages.

You can use the app to order repairs 24/7 and you can upload pictures, videos or audio messages to tell us about the repair. As well as being convenient for you, the system should make first-visit fixes more likely.

We have also agreed to investigate more thoroughly before issuing a repair order as rechargeable to you.

### Online services

**My Tenancy 2**, the updated version of My Tenancy, is now available at <https://shian.mytenancy.co.uk>

Our online portal lets you view your rent balance, weekly charge, repairs records and important documents. You can also update your contact details, pay your rent and report repairs for your home.

**8/10 for repairs service**

The only issue is with their policies. Certain things they will not repair.

**6/10 for customer service**

There is always room for improvement. I do know them and have a good relationship with most of the staff. However, sometimes they do not follow up on things properly.

**10/10 for repairs service**

They came on time. They tidied up after themselves. They put a sheet over my chairs to protect them from the paint when they were painting the window sills.

**10/10 for customer service**

Everything was quick and hassle free.

**10/10 for customer service**

There has been a marked improvement in the last year. I feel this is due to change in staff attitude. Queries are much more likely to be resolved in the first call. I have been a tenant for a number of years and when I first moved in the service was extremely poor.

*Comments are from residents who spoke to Acuity recently.*

### Shian Repairs Tracker Survey: Overview October 2020

	Oct 2020	Sept 2020	Change %	Year to Oct 2020	2020-21
Ease of reporting the repair	95%	92%	+3%	94%	93%
Workers' performance	91%	88%	+3%	92%	91%
On time	95%	92%	+3%	91%	96%
Quality of the work	82%	96%	-14%	87%	87%
Right first time	82%	92%	-10%	85%	86%
Overall satisfaction	82%	96%	-14%	86%	86%
Number of interviewees	22	25		182	113

### Shian Customer Contact Survey: Overview October 2020

	Oct 2020	Sept 2020	Change %	2020-21
Overall satisfaction	85%	85%	0%	86%
Ease of contact	92%	100%	-8%	87%
Query resolved first time	69%	54%	+15%	67%
Overall satisfaction with call	77%	100%	-23%	88%
Number of interviewees	13	13		88

# Coronavirus: Financial support update

For the most up-to-date details, go to the [gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website or [www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com)

## 1 Furlough scheme

The restarted furlough scheme will cover 80% of your wages, up to £2,500 per month, until the end of March 2021. Your employer can opt to top up the remaining 20%.

## 2 If you're self-employed

If you are self-employed, the third grant is now open for you to claim. You must do this by 29 January 2021.

Grant 3 covers from 1 November to 31 January and is worth 80% of your average monthly profits. The grant is capped at £7,500.

A fourth grant will cover from 1 February to 31 April 2021. The details will be announced later.

### You are eligible for the third and fourth self-employed grants if:

- you reasonably believe your income will be **significantly reduced** (and you will be able to prove it at a later date)
- you qualified for the first two grants, and
- you are still trading and intend to continue.



## Universal Credit update

### There are changes to Universal Credit during the pandemic.

The standard rate of Universal Credit has been raised by £20 a week during the pandemic. This addition is due to end in April 2021.

You are now expected to be actively preparing for work (child under one year) or seeking work. However, you should not go in person to the JobCentre Plus offices unless you receive an appointment.

Claimants aged 16 to 24 can take up a six-month work placement

with pay. Contact your Jobcentre Plus coach for more details.

The minimum income floor, which affects self-employed people, has now been suspended until April 2021.

If you or your partner are going back to work, you must record this in your online Universal Credit journal. But don't cancel your claim, as you could miss out on your final payment.

If you need advice about claiming Universal Credit, call us.

## benefits

### New claims for Universal Credit

If you have less money than usual, you may be able to claim the standard rate of Universal Credit and additional amounts towards your rent and expenses.

Try this 10-minute benefit check to see what you can claim: <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/benefits-check/>

Make your claim online at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit>

There is a five-week wait for your first payment, but you can ask for a loan.

For advice, call us on **020 8985 7120**.

## Discretionary Housing Payments

If your Universal Credit or Housing Benefit don't pay your full rent, you may be able to claim a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) from your council.

DHP funds are particularly designed to help people who are affected by the benefit cap, or who are losing benefit because of the bedroom tax. You do not need to repay a DHP.

During the pandemic, we have been able to help several tenants successfully claim a DHP. If you are struggling to pay, contact us and we will help you to look at your options.



## Tenants' Handbook: Section 3

# Your rights & responsibilities Part 2

Key information about your home and our services, taken from Shian's Tenants' Handbook. You will also find up-to-date details on our website at [www.shian.org.uk](http://www.shian.org.uk)

### Leaving your home for an extended period

We can agree to special arrangements if you need to be away from home for a period but intend to return. For example, you may have to go into hospital or make an extended visit to friends or family in another country. You must tell us if you expect to be away from your home for more than one month and tell us your reasons for going away and the date of your return, who if anyone will be occupying your home, how the rent will be paid while you are away and how you can be contacted in an emergency.

You are still responsible for paying your rent while you are away.

We may take action to evict anyone living in your home in your absence unless you have informed us first. If you are likely to be away for more than 12 months, we may expect you to give up your home and cannot guarantee to re-house you when you return.

### Tenancy fraud

If you provide false information in order to obtain a tenancy, or if you let out your home and live elsewhere, this is tenancy fraud. If we discover tenancy fraud we will take court action to recover the property and may take action against the tenant under the Fraud Act, including the recovery of proceeds.

We carry out checks to detect fraud, including visiting properties to confirm that the legal occupant is living there. We appreciate your cooperation in these checks.

If you are aware of a Shian property that may be sub-let, let us know.



### Assignment

You can assign your tenancy if you wish to exchange with a tenant of another housing association or local authority.

You must first secure the written permission of Shian, which will not be unreasonably withheld.

There are other circumstances where your tenancy can be passed on or transferred to someone else. For example, a court could order you to transfer the tenancy to your husband or wife as part of a divorce or separation settlement.

### Succession

If you are the sole tenant and you die, your tenancy can be passed to a partner who was living with you at the time of your death, or another close relative, who has been living with you for more than 12 months at the time of your death. This is called succession and you can rest assured that we will do all we can to help you in these circumstances. The tenancy agreement can only be passed on through succession once.

### Taking in lodgers

You will need to have written authorisation from Shian if you wish to take in a lodger. You will need to provide us with their name, age and sex, and which part of your home they will occupy. You cannot have a lodger if it results in your home becoming overcrowded. Your tenancy agreement tells you how many people are allowed to live in your home. Before deciding to take in a lodger, remember:

- Your welfare and council tax benefits may be affected.
- Your lodger will have no security of tenure.
- You are responsible for the behaviour of your lodger in your home. Your tenancy will be at risk if your lodger causes a nuisance to neighbours or breaks any other of your tenancy conditions.
- You are not allowed to move out of your home and sub-let the premises to somebody else, although you can sublet part of your property.

To be continued

## Stay safe this Christmas

The Government is allowing Christmas bubbles of up to three households from 23 to 27 December. You must also travel within this period.

However, public health experts are clear that Christmas as normal offers a high risk for catching coronavirus. So here are some tips for minimising the risks.

- If you're in a high-risk group, meet online or phone instead.
- If you're not in a high-risk group, consider mince pies and presents in the garden or a walk together. Keep your distance, even outdoors. If Carol singing, stand even further apart.
- Consider self-isolating for up to 14 days before Christmas. If everyone in your bubble did this, you could mix more safely.
- Try not to see everyone at once. The bigger the group indoors, the bigger the risk.
- Make your home more secure by disinfecting touch points, wearing a mask, keeping 2m apart and using separate bathrooms.



**Above all, ventilate your home by keeping windows and doors open.**

- Be ready to say no – to a hug or an invite indoors.
- Keep any visits short. Fifteen minutes counts as close contact.
- Christmas lunch would mean removing face masks, sitting and chatting – all high risk activities. If you do eat together, don't face each other. If you have space, keep households apart. Ask people to bring their own plates and cutlery, and to wash them up themselves.
- Planning a midsummer get-together instead would be the safest option of all.



HM Government **NHS**

### KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE FROM OTHERS

WE CAN HELP CONTROL THE VIRUS IF WE ALL STAY ALERT

**STAY ALERT • CONTROL THE VIRUS • SAVE LIVES**

HM Government **NHS**

### LIMIT CONTACT WITH OTHER PEOPLE

WE CAN HELP CONTROL THE VIRUS IF WE ALL STAY ALERT

**STAY ALERT • CONTROL THE VIRUS • SAVE LIVES**

HM Government **NHS**

### STAY AT HOME AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

WE CAN HELP CONTROL THE VIRUS IF WE ALL STAY ALERT

**STAY ALERT • CONTROL THE VIRUS • SAVE LIVES**



Shian Housing Association Ltd

### Contact us

Phone 020 8985 7120

Fax 020 8985 7031

Email [info@shian.org.uk](mailto:info@shian.org.uk)

SMS texting 07535 269 269

Opening hours Weekdays 9am to 4.30pm (except Wednesdays – 12.30pm to 4.30pm).



Website [www.shian.org.uk](http://www.shian.org.uk)



Skype Shianha

Facebook [shian@shian.org.uk](https://www.facebook.com/shian@shian.org.uk)

Twitter [@shian\\_housing](https://twitter.com/shian_housing)

Write to us

**Shian Housing Association**  
76 Mare Street  
Hackney E8 3SG

### Report repairs

**Hot water and heating repairs**  
If you live in Dorothy Smith Lane, Joshua Court or Reedham Close, contact Shian's repair number

All other residents, contact K&T Heating Services on **020 8269 4500** and select option 1.

**All other repairs (including emergencies)**

Phone (24 hours)  
**020 8525 7641**

**Non-emergencies only**

Identify and order your repair online – to help save time and money  
[www.shian.org.uk/repairs.html](http://www.shian.org.uk/repairs.html)  
OR Email [repairs@shian.org.uk](mailto:repairs@shian.org.uk)