



Cash help for residents

With help from Shian to maximise their income, 16 of our residents have reduced their rent arrears by £28,300 in recent months. They include six residents who benefited from a total of £13,000 in Council Discretionary Housing Payments.

Discretionary Housing Payments, or DHPs, are temporary rent top-ups from your Council. They are designed to help people on Housing Benefit or Universal Credit who are struggling to pay their rent. In some cases, this will be because they are affected by the bedroom tax or the benefit cap.

A successful claim can help you to clear your rent arrears – reducing your debt and stress levels.

Apply for a DHP

If you think you might qualify for a DHP, you can apply to your council. We will be happy to help.

- In Hackney, go to: hackney.gov.uk/discretionary-housing-payments
- To apply for Islington's Resident Support Scheme, go to: www.islington.gov.uk/advice/resident-support-scheme
- In Haringey, go to: www.haringey.gov.uk/council-tax-and-benefits/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-reductions/discretionary-housing-payments-dhp



Shian rent rises in 2023

Shian rents will rise by 7% from Monday 3 July 2023 – in line with the Government's cap.

This represents a cut in our income, because inflation has been running at over 10% for several months. However, we do recognise that it is a significant rise for residents who do not get benefits towards their rent.

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You can trust Taju: he's here to help

Our Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Taju Oyediji has been assisting residents to maximise their income since he joined us last summer.

Taju has helped with applications for benefits, grants from charities and local authorities, as well as sign ups to the Thames Water WaterHelp scheme.

He can help you apply for a Personal Independence Payment if you are disabled. You can apply even if you're working, have savings, or claim benefits.

Taju understands that you may feel unwilling to share your financial details. But he is here to help and will always respect your confidentiality.

Learning from complaints

From April 2022 to March 2023, we received 11 stage 1 complaints.

Eight complaints were about repairs. We responded by:

- getting communal lights fixed
- getting windows to open
- providing an award from the welfare fund to pay for a bed bug treatment
- getting a delayed gas heating repair done
- getting heating and hot water restored to two households, and
- responding to a disrepair claim.

A complaint that an inefficient heat pump is causing a tenant fuel poverty is now being investigated at stage 2 of our process.

We also resolved two complaints about housing services. One tenant did not receive their rent increase letter, while another thought we treated them unfairly.

Finally, another tenant complained about poor cleaning and ground maintenance at their estate. We apologised and sorted this out.

No win, no fee?

Lose, lose for Shian tenants

More and more 'no win, no fee' solicitors are trying to make money out of disrepair cases – with Shian getting repeated phone calls in recent months.

These companies are good at getting tenants to sign up – particularly around damp and mould.

But be aware that if you take on a solicitor:

- your repair problem won't get fixed more quickly – you need to talk directly to us about it
- if we get things wrong, you are unlikely to end up with more compensation, and
- paying your solicitor's expenses can take thousands of pounds out of our repairs budget – affecting the amount we can spend on everyone's repairs.

We genuinely want to help fix problems like damp and mould in your home. So, please:

- report your problem directly to us first – we cannot take calls from a solicitor about repairs you have never told us about



- if you aren't happy with our response, use our complaints system to tell us why – call us, or go to the publications and policies section of our website (www.shian.org.uk) for our complaints form.
- if you exhaust our complaints system, take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman, who can award compensation if they judge we have failed (go to: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

By doing this, you will allow us to continue to invest as much of our budget as possible into good quality home repairs for all our tenants.

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Four tenants came to our Panel meetings in March.

They approved four applications to the welfare fund and heard that our tenancy sustainment officer had assisted 20 people to claim £28,000 since August 2022.

They agreed that we should pause internal transfers for two years to reduce our rent losses.

They asked us to look into simpler car parking arrangements.

The next meeting will take place online at 6.30pm on Tuesday 6 June 2023. Everyone is welcome.

BME Tenants Forum

Two Shian tenants are helping to influence housing policy in London as part of the Tenant Forum set up by the BME London landlords group.

The group, which is meeting up to four times a year, will have direct contact with the National Housing Federation, meetings with the Deputy Mayor of London for Housing and borough council leaders.

Members will also contribute to the co-production of a housing manifesto for London.

Cost-of-living help: update

Energy costs

The cap on energy prices will not now rise until the summer – giving an extra three months at current levels.

However, you will still have to pay more, because the Government has stopped paying £67 each month towards everyone's electricity bills.

Pre-payment meters From 1 July, energy providers will no longer be allowed to charge people with pre-payment meters more than people who have standard meters.

Pensioners Older people will get an extra £300 on top of their normal Winter Fuel Payment – paid in November or December 2023.

Cost-of-living payments

People on low incomes, who get means-tested benefits, will get three cost-of-living payments, adding up to

£900, over the next year. The payments will be made in the spring and autumn of 2023, and the spring of 2024.

If you get disability benefits, you will be given an additional £150 in the summer of 2023.

Shian support funds

Welfare fund We provide one-off payments of up to £200 either to tenants who need essential furniture, or to groups of tenants who want to improve facilities at their estate. Go to www.shian.org.uk/wp2/our-funds-and-awards

Covid financial assistance fund Our financial assistance fund offers grants of £50 to £100 to people affected financially by the pandemic. Call us on 020 8985 7120 to find out more.

Scholarship fund We can award up to £500 to any tenant or their adult child, who is currently on a course. Send us full details to apply.

More help with childcare

What will the new announcements mean for your family?

Free childcare hours

Working parents will get more free childcare hours from April 2024. By September 2025, if you are working, this will rise to 30 free hours a week during term time for pre-school children aged nine months or above.

To count as a working parent, you will need to be working at least 16 hours each week, at the national minimum wage, for at least three months before you apply. The change will not apply to high earners on more than £100,000.

When this applies	Ages 9-23 months	Age 2 years	Ages 3-4 years
Now	No free hours	No free hours for most 2-year-olds	30 free hours for working parents / 15 hours for others
From April 2024	No free hours	15 free hours for working parents	
From September 2024	15 free hours for working parents	15 free hours for working parents	
From September 2025	30 free hours for working parents	30 free hours for working parents	

There may be add-ons

Be aware that although these hours are free, you may be asked to pay towards meals, snacks and nappies.

Childcare and Universal Credit

In the summer, the maximum amount you can claim for childcare will rise:

- from £646 to £951 for one child, and
- from £1,108 to £1,630 for two or more children.

You will no longer have to pay upfront then make a claim back. Some of your costs will be paid upfront.

Working tax credits

The amount you can claim for childcare under working tax credits is not changing.

You can claim:

- up to £122.50 a week for one child, and
- £210 a week for two or more children.

This means that if you have high childcare costs, you may be better off switching to Universal Credit. **But do not make this change without getting benefits advice first.**



Consulting residents

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



Formal consultation

If we change the way your estate is run, or carry out major refurbishment or improvement works, we will consult you. For example, we will consult you on:

- demolition or improvement works
- colours for painting your scheme
- the provision of new services, and
- any changes to our working practices.

We will always consult when something affects a number of tenants. We always write to you to confirm the outcome of any consultation.

For simple matters we may write, email or text you.

We will provide full and accurate information about the matter and, where appropriate, outline any

options or alternatives. You will have at least 28 days to comment, either in writing or by phone.

We will discuss any queries individually or collectively where requested.

For matters that affect your home, we may also hold a general meeting. The meetings will be held in an appropriate venue either at, or close to, your home, and at a time that is convenient to most residents. We will tell you about the meeting at least 14 days in advance.

We may bring relevant literature or displays to illustrate the matter in hand. You will have a chance to ask questions and express opinions both during the meeting and, if appropriate, on an individual basis afterwards.

If necessary, we will hold individual meetings. These will supplement letters and/or general meetings.

The meeting will give you the opportunity to discuss the issue in detail, and how it is likely to affect you personally.

We will write to you following the meeting to confirm what was said and agreed.

If you have ideas for improving your community, such as creating a communal garden or neighbourhood watch schemes, do discuss them with your neighbours. If you need help and advice in putting the idea into practice, contact Shian, who will provide guidance and assistance.

We're listening & responding

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

Remember:

- Tell us about your LAST contact.
- Let us call you back, so we can discuss why you're dissatisfied. (But note that we receive these reports up to six weeks later.)

What you told us

Fairly satisfied with customer service

"They could be more attentive to the calls. When we phone as a customer, be there and answer the phone. No redirecting or transferring the call, or cutting us off. It didn't happen this time, but it does happen."

Very satisfied with customer service

"But Shian could improve if they dealt with incidents in the block straight away."

Very satisfied with repair service

"Honestly, Shian has improved a lot – the maintenance service in this past five years. So, I'm very happy with them."

Fairly satisfied with repair service

"All I will say is they should listen to their customer. Customer service should be their number one priority. They should listen when we complain. We are not complaining because we like to complain. We are complaining as we do not like what we see."

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the repairs service

"What they are not good at is updating work details."

Shian Repairs Tracker Survey

	March 2023	Feb 2023	12 months to Mar 2023	2022-23	2021-22
Ease of reporting repair	90%	100%	94%	94%	92%
Workers' performance	90%	100%	92%	92%	93%
On time	90%	100%	85%	85%	78%
Quality of the work	100%	100%	92%	91%	89%
Right first time	100%	100%	86%	86%	86%
Easy to deal with this time	90%	100%	91%	91%	87%
Overall satisfaction	100%	67%	91%	91%	89%
OK to contact	70%	100%	72%	72%	64%
Number of interviews	10	3	144	144	153

Shian Customer Contact Survey

	March 2023	Feb 2023	12 months to Mar 2023	2022-23	2021-22
Overall satisfaction	86%	0	75%	75%	81%
Ease of contact	100%	100%	95%	95%	88%
Query resolved first time	100%	0	72%	72%	75%
Overall satisfaction with call	86%	0%	79%	79%	81%
Kept informed	86%	0%	69%	69%	78%
Easy to deal with this time	100%	100%	87%	87%	84%
OK to contact	80%	100%	73%	73%	73%
Number of interviews	7	1	97	97	163

Key performance indicators: April 2022 to March 2023

Repairs	No. carried out	Target for 2022-23	Average days to complete	% completed on target
Emergency callouts	76	1 day	1 day	100%
Emergency repairs	89	1 working day	1 day	100%
Urgent repairs	647	5 working days	1.77 days	99.84%
Routine repairs	404	20 working days	5.75 days	100%

Rent	Target 2022-23	Apr '22 to Mar '23
Rent arrears	3.1%	2.97%
Rent collected	100.5%	98.57%

Fire door safety notes

If your flat opens onto a communal area, your front door has to be a fire door designed to withstand fire for at least 30 minutes. Fire doors also reduce the circulation of smoke.

Why fire doors are important

In a fire, a fire door can help to protect escape routes, by keeping any fire in a contained space. They help to slow the escape of toxic smoke into corridors and other flats. By slowing the fire and smoke, people have more time to escape, there is more time for the fire and rescue service to attend, and tackling the fire will be easier.

Fire doors are fitted with a self-closing device. Either the door edge or the door frame will have strips that swell up when heated, sealing any small gaps in the event of a fire. They may also have cold smoke seals (which look like small brushes) to provide extra smoke protection.

All fire doors and self-closing devices should be regularly checked and maintained to ensure that they are operating correctly.

Fire door do's and don'ts

- DO let your door fully close, every time you use it.
- DO tell us immediately if your door doesn't close by itself – you shouldn't need to pull it closed. We will need to adjust it.
- DO let us know if any part of your door, door frame or self-closing device gets damaged.
- DO tell us if any of the fire/smoke seals or brushes are missing or loose.
- DO tell us if you have a letter box in your flat door and if any of the smoke seals or brushes around it are missing or loose.
- DO let us know if any fire doors in the corridors of your block are faulty (for example, a door closer is broken, the door isn't fully shutting, the frame is damaged or a glass panel is broken).
- DON'T remove any smoke seals or smoke brushes.



- DON'T remove or disconnect any self-closing device.
- DON'T alter any fire door in a way that could reduce its fire resistance.
- DON'T drill any holes in the flat door to fit door furniture.
- DON'T prop or wedge open any fire door.

Fire safety do's and don'ts

- DO test your smoke alarms weekly. You should have one for every level of your home.
- DO replace batteries when needed, or call us if your mains-powered alarm isn't working.
- DO plan your escape route.
- DO tell us and your local fire and rescue service if someone in your home might not be able to escape.
- DON'T obstruct any escape routes from your home with rubbish or personal items. Under our zero tolerance approach, we will remove any items we find.

Keeping homes safe and in good condition

Over the next two years, our specialist consultants will be carrying out checks at a sample of our homes to check on the condition of our stock. This helps us to plan our major works programmes.

We will also continue to inspect homes as part of our ongoing health and safety work.

Please be ready to give access to our consultants to help with this vital maintenance work.



Shian
Housing
Association
Ltd

Contact us

Phone 020 8985 7120

Fax 020 8985 7031

Email 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



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, order hot water/heating repairs as you do all other repairs.

If you live elsewhere, contact K&T Heating Services on 020 8269 4500 and select option 1.

Other repairs during office hours
The best way to order your repair is online using the MyTenancy portal at shian.mytenancy.co.uk

However, you can also email us (non-emergencies only) at: repairs@shian.org.uk

Out-of-hours emergencies
Phone (24 hours) 020 8985 7120