

ASH-SHAHADA
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

QUARTERLY TENANT NEWSLETTER
Issue 03 · Winter 2026

—— ASH-SHAHADA HOUSING ASSOCIATION

The ASHA Voice
Winter 2026

Staying warm, eating well and looking after one another — your guide to the colder months, for tenants across Lambeth, Southwark, Croydon & Birmingham.

03 **Keeping Warm** — Health, safety & your home
06 **Winter Kitchen** — A warming winter recipe
08 **Seasonal Food Guide** — Winter fruit & veg
10 **Help This Winter** — Money & local support

——FROM THE TEAM

Welcome to your *winter edition*

As the days grow shorter and colder, this issue is about what matters most at this time of year: **a warm, dry and safe home, good food on the table, and knowing where to turn for help.**

Inside, you will find cold-weather health advice, home-safety checks, your rights if damp or mould appears, a warming winter recipe, a guide to winter fruit and vegetables, free holiday clubs for children, and the financial support available this winter.

The Ash-Shahada Team

——WINTER DATES TO NOTE

Oct – Mar	**Warm Home Discount** — £150 off electricity bills for eligible households.
From 1 Nov	**Cold Weather Payments** — £25 for each 7-day spell of freezing weather, if eligible.
30 Nov	**Awaab's Law** extends to more hazards, including excess cold.
Christmas	**Free holiday clubs** and meals for eligible children — book early.

——IN THIS ISSUE

03 **Keeping Warm, Keeping Well** Cold-weather health advice
04 **A Safe Home This Winter** Security, fire & heating safety
05 **Damp and Mould** Your rights and how to report
06 **Creamy Chicken Rice Soup** This season's featured recipe
07 **Community Cohesion Event** Lambeth, 11 November
08 **Winter Fruit & Veg Guide** What's in season and why it's good
09 **Families & Community** Holiday clubs, food banks, ESOL
10 **Help with Money This Winter** Payments, grants & advice
11 **Your Estate** Cleaner blocks & festive waste
12 **Contacts & Christmas Hours** Who to call and when

——ASHA NEWS



Our newly refurbished hostel in Tulse Hill is now open

The hostel offers **furnished rooms** with modern shower rooms and a shared kitchen, designed for comfort, safety and convenience.

- **Tulse Hill** — South London
- **Furnished rooms** — Bed, wardrobe & fridge
- **Modern shower rooms** — Newly fitted
- **Shared kitchen** — With gas cooker

To apply, visit **ash-shahada.org** or call **020 4581 7585**

——SEASONAL HEALTH

Keeping warm, *keeping well*

Cold weather can be harmful to health — especially for older people, young children and anyone with a long-term condition. A few simple habits help everyone stay well until spring.



Who is most at risk

- ✓ People aged **65 and over**
- ✓ Babies and children under 5
- ✓ Pregnant women
- ✓ People with a long-term health condition, disability or mental health condition
- ✓ People on a low income who struggle to afford heating

Keep your home warm

- ✓ Heat the rooms you use regularly to **at least 18°C**
- ✓ Keep bedroom windows closed at night
- ✓ Draw curtains at dusk to keep the heat in
- ✓ Wear several thin layers rather than one thick one
- ✓ Have regular hot meals and drinks through the day

Protect yourself

- ✓ Get your **flu and COVID-19 vaccines** if you are eligible
- ✓ Keep a few days' food and any medicines in stock in case icy weather keeps you indoors
- ✓ Wear shoes with a good grip when it is icy outside
- ✓ Check on older neighbours or relatives living alone — a quick call can make a real difference

▲ Signs of hypothermia

Adults: shivering; pale, cold, dry skin; slurred speech; slow breathing; tiredness or confusion.

Babies: cold to the touch, floppy, unusually quiet and sleepy, or refusing to feed.

If you think someone has hypothermia, call 999 or go to A&E. For other urgent health worries, call NHS 111.

£ Worried about heating costs?

You may be entitled to the Warm Home Discount, Cold Weather Payments or the Winter Fuel Payment. See **page 10** for details.

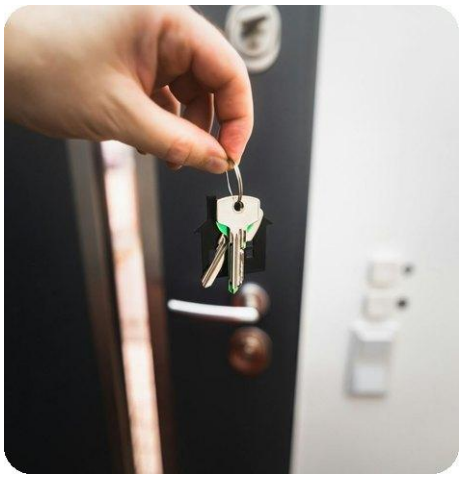
For free advice on saving energy and keeping your home warm, call the government helpline on **0800 444 202**.

Sources: NHS — "Keep warm, keep well" and "Hypothermia".

——YOUR HOME

A safe home *this winter*

Darker evenings and more time spent indoors mean it is worth checking that your home is secure and that heating and appliances are working safely.



Security during shorter days

- ✓ **Check locks and doors.** Make sure doors and windows close and lock properly.
- ✓ **Keep entrances well lit.** Report any faulty communal or entrance lights to us.
- ✓ **Secure valuables.** Don't leave bikes, tools or parcels outside overnight.
- ✓ **Close the door behind you.** Don't let people you don't know into the building.

Report it to us: broken locks, faulty doors, damaged windows or lighting faults — please contact the office as soon as possible.

● Fire & heating safety

- ✓ Test smoke alarms regularly and report faults
- ✓ Never use an oven or gas hob to heat a room
- ✓ Don't block radiators, vents or flues
- ✓ Keep heaters away from curtains and furniture
- ✓ Keep fire exits and communal hallways clear

▲ Carbon monoxide

You cannot see or smell carbon monoxide. Warning signs include headaches, dizziness, feeling sick, tiredness and confusion.

If you suspect a leak, open windows, turn appliances off, go outside and call the **Gas Emergency line: 0800 111 999**.



● Stay warm for less

Bleed radiators that feel cold at the top, so heat circulates properly.

Block draughts under doors with a draught excluder or rolled towel.

Open curtains on sunny days and close them at dusk to trap the heat.

No heating, no hot water, or a repair that affects your safety? **Contact us straight away** — out of hours, call **07947 245412**.

——YOUR HOME, YOUR RIGHTS

Damp and mould: *tell us early*

Winter is when condensation, damp and mould are most likely to appear. They can affect your health and your home, and are easier to fix when reported early. Under **Awaab's Law**, social landlords must act on reported hazards within strict legal timescales.



What happens after you report damp or mould

10
WORKING DAYS
Investigate — after your report.

3
WORKING DAYS
Written summary of the findings.

5
WORKING DAYS
Make safe any significant hazard.

12
WEEKS MAXIMUM
Further repairs must have started.

Emergencies within 24 hours. Emergency hazards — such as a gas leak, a dangerous electrical fault or a major leak — must be investigated and made safe within 24 hours. If your home cannot be made safe in time, you must be offered somewhere else to stay.

How to report

- ✓ Contact our office by phone or email — not via social media
- ✓ Describe the problem and where it is, with **photos** if you can
- ✓ Tell us who lives in the home and about any health conditions
- ✓ Keep a record of what you reported, when and to whom
- ✓ Let us know if the problem gets worse

Reduce condensation

- ✓ Use lids on pans and extractor fans when cooking or showering
- ✓ Dry clothes outdoors, or in a ventilated room with the door closed
- ✓ Wipe windows and sills each morning
- ✓ Keep trickle vents open; leave a gap between furniture and outside walls
- ✓ Keep rooms consistently warm — cold surfaces attract condensation

From 30 November 2026, Awaab's Law extends to further significant hazards, including **excess cold** and heat, falls, structural collapse, fire, electrical hazards and domestic hygiene.

Sources: GOV.UK — "Awaab's Law: guidance for tenants in social housing"; "Awaab's Law in the social rented sector". If you are unhappy with how a report is handled, use our complaints process, then contact the Housing Ombudsman.



——WINTER KITCHEN

Creamy Chicken *& Rice Soup*

A comforting, protein-rich bowl that turns leftover chicken into a filling family meal — ready in around 30 minutes.

Serves 6	About 30 minutes	One pan	Use halal chicken & stock

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp	rapeseed oil
1 medium	carrot, chopped
1 stick	celery, chopped
1 small	onion, chopped
½ tsp	garlic, minced
65g	long-grain rice, uncooked
¾ tsp	dried basil
¼ tsp	black pepper
800ml	reduced-salt chicken stock
3 tbsp	plain flour
150ml	evaporated milk (1 small can)
280g	cooked chicken breast, cubed

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium-high heat. Add the carrot, celery and onion and cook until tender.
2. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute.
3. Stir in the rice, basil, pepper and stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer for about 15 minutes, until the rice is tender.
4. Mix the flour and evaporated milk until smooth, then stir into the soup. Bring to the boil and cook, stirring, for about 2 minutes until thickened.
5. Stir in the chicken and heat through until piping hot.

Recipe adapted from Taste of Home. Food safety: only reheat leftovers once, until piping hot.

Recipes featured in this newsletter are provided for informational purposes only. Please check all ingredients carefully and ensure they are suitable for your dietary requirements and allergies before preparing or consuming any dish.



Photo: Lambeth Town Hall by Reading Tom, CC BY 2.0

YOU ARE INVITED

Join Lambeth's

Community Cohesion Event 2026

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY • REJECTING HATE • BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

DATE	TIME	VENUE
Wednesday *11 November 2026*	**6:00pm** *onwards*	**Lambeth** *Town Hall*

Residents across Lambeth are invited to attend the Community Cohesion Event 2026, an evening dedicated to celebrating our rich diversity, strengthening community bonds, and highlighting the values that unite us.

Join fellow residents, faith organisations, community leaders and local partners for an inspiring evening.

ON THE EVENING

- Live performances by talented local young people
- Community information stalls
- Conversations about building a stronger, safer and more inclusive borough

Lambeth is one of the most diverse boroughs in the UK. At a time when communities across the country are facing increasing levels of racism, intolerance and division, this event provides an opportunity for people from all backgrounds to come together, reject hate and celebrate what we share.

Together, let's celebrate our diversity and build a stronger Lambeth.

——SEASONAL FOOD GUIDE

Winter fruit & *vegetables*

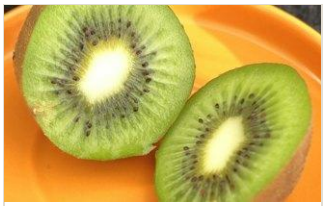
Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables helps your body through the colder months. Many are at their best — and cheapest — in winter.



NOV – FEB

Clementines & oranges

A good source of vitamin C. Easy to peel — a handy snack for school bags.



ALL WINTER

Kiwi fruit

Rich in vitamin C. Cut in half and scoop out with a spoon.



BRITISH SEASON

Apples

British apples are available through winter. Eat the skin for extra fibre.



BRITISH SEASON

Pears

A source of fibre. Lovely sliced into porridge or baked with cinnamon.



OCT – JAN

Pomegranate

Sprinkle the seeds over rice, salads or yoghurt for colour and crunch.



ALL YEAR

Dates

Naturally sweet. 30g of dried fruit counts as one portion — best eaten with meals.



PEAK IN WINTER

Root vegetables

Carrots, parsnips, swede and turnips are filling, cheap and ideal for soups.



STORE CUPBOARD

Lentils & chickpeas

Low-cost protein and fibre. They count once a day towards your 5 A Day.

Your 5 A Day in winter

80g
One adult portion of fresh, frozen or tinned fruit or veg

30g
One portion of dried fruit, such as dates or raisins

150ml
Juice or smoothie — counts as one portion a day at most

Frozen
Frozen and tinned (in water or juice) count too — and keep for longer

Winter greens such as cabbage, kale, Brussels sprouts and broccoli are in season now and are easy to add to soups, curries and stews.

Please note: potatoes don't count towards your 5 A Day, but sweet potatoes, parsnips, swede and turnips do.

Source: NHS — "5 A Day: what counts?". Seasons are approximate and vary by year and supplier.

——FAMILIES & COMMUNITY

Free winter *holiday clubs*

The **Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)** programme runs over the Christmas holidays, offering free activities and a healthy meal for eligible children aged 4 to 16.

Places are mainly for children receiving **benefits-related free school meals**. Christmas sessions are short and places go quickly — check your council's website now.





Lambeth
Clubs across the borough, including SEND provision.
HAF@lambeth.gov.uk

Southwark
Sport, creative arts, science and technology.
HAF@southwark.gov.uk

Croydon
A wide network of local community clubs.
HAFprogramme@croydon.gov.uk



——COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Help close to home

Winter can feel overwhelming. These local services can help with essential needs and help you feel more connected.

COPEF Emergency Food Bank
Weekly drop-in help with food, household needs and other support.
copefts.org

Brixton Soup Kitchen
Hot meals, drinks and somewhere warm to get out of the cold.
brixtonsoupkitchen.com

- **Free English (ESOL) classes**

ELATT — free courses from Entry Level to Level 2, online or in centres across London: **elatt.org.uk**

English for Action — friendly group classes in community centres, including Lambeth and Southwark: **efalondon.org**

HAF source: Department for Education, "Holiday activities and food programme 2026 to 2027". Please check opening times with each service before visiting.

——COST OF LIVING

Help with money *this winter*

If you are struggling with bills, you may be entitled to support you are not yet receiving. Most of the national payments below are made **automatically** — but it is worth checking.

£150

Warm Home Discount

Off your electricity bill, paid between October 2026 and 31 March 2027. Most people on qualifying benefits — such as Pension Credit, Universal Credit or Housing Benefit — get it automatically. If not, contact your energy supplier.

£25

Cold Weather Payment

For each 7-day spell of very cold weather between 1 November 2026 and 31 March 2027, if you receive certain benefits. Paid automatically. Check your postcode at **coldweatherpayments.dwp.gov.uk**

£100–£300

Winter Fuel Payment

For people born on or before 27 June 1960, usually paid in November or December. If your income is over £35,000, HMRC will take the payment back.

Support from your local council

BOROUGH	FINANCIAL HELP	HOUSEHOLD & ENERGY	MONEY ADVICE
Southwark	Southwark Emergency Support Scheme · Council Tax Reduction · Discretionary Housing Payments	Warm community hubs · Southwark Energy Savers · Thames Water help schemes	Citizens Advice · MoneyHelper
Lambeth	Emergency Support Scheme · Discretionary Council Tax Support	Green Doctors energy advice · Age UK Lambeth · Healthy Start	Citizens Advice · MoneyHelper · Age UK
Croydon	Discretionary Support Fund · benefits help and advice	Energy supplier grants · Family Hubs · Age UK Croydon	Citizens Advice Croydon · Money Adviser Network

Not sure where to start?

Free, confidential advice on benefits, debt and bills is available from **Citizens Advice** (citizensadvice.org.uk) and **MoneyHelper** (moneyhelper.org.uk).

Worried about paying your rent? Please speak to us early. The sooner we know, the more options there are — we are here to help.

For free energy-saving advice, call the government helpline on **0800 444 202**.



Sources: GOV.UK — Warm Home Discount Scheme; Cold Weather Payment; Winter Fuel Payment (2026 to 2027). Council schemes change — please check your council's website for the latest details.

——TENANT SERVICES

Cleaner blocks, *cleaner streets*

We want the cleaning you pay for through your service charge to be delivered to the standard you are entitled to — so we have introduced a simple check.



1

Job spec on display

The cleaning specification is posted on your notice board.

2

Cleaner attends, you sign

An available tenant signs the attendance sheet.

3

Accountability

Your signature confirms the standard was met.

No notice in your block? Call **020 4581 7585** and we will put one up.

Winter walkways: report faulty lights and slippery or icy communal areas.



Festive waste & fly-tipping

After the festive season, please flatten boxes, recycle what you can and never leave rubbish in communal areas. Dumping waste is a criminal offence — and clearing it up increases **everyone's service charge**.

1.26M
fly-tipping incidents in England, 2024–25

+9%
increase on the previous year

Unlimited
fine, and up to 5 years in prison

If you see it: don't touch the waste or disturb the site. Note the date, time and place, and take a photo of any vehicle if it is safe. Tell us in confidence, or report to your council.

BOROUGH	HOW TO REPORT FLY-TIPPING	TYPICAL RESPONSE
Lambeth	Online form at lambeth.gov.uk	Around 4 days
Southwark	FixMyStreet app	1–5 days
Croydon	Love Clean Streets app · 020 8726 6200	Around 24 hours

Sources: Defra, "Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2024 to 2025"; Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.33.

——GET IN TOUCH

Contacts & *Christmas hours*



ASHA Office

- **43–45 Coldharbour Lane, London, SE5 9NR**
- **020 4581 7585**
- **admin@ash-shahada.org**
- **Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm**

Emergency numbers (24/7)

Medical emergency	**999**
Urgent health advice	**NHS 111**
ASHA emergency repairs (out of hours)	**07947 245412**
Gas leak or carbon monoxide	**0800 111 999**
Power cut	**105**
No water / water leak (Thames Water)	**0800 316 9800**
Hazardous waste (Environment Agency)	**0800 80 70 60**

ASH-SHAHADA
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Stay warm. Stay safe.
See you in the spring.

Thank you for being part of our community. If you need anything this winter, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

WEBSITE
ash-shahada.org

EMAIL
admin@ash-shahada.org