



# Winter Newsletter

October to December 2025

Issue#6

Winter 2025

As the days grow shorter and the chill of winter sets in, we are here to keep you informed, supported, and connected. This edition brings together practical tips for staying safe and warm, community resources, and important updates from ASHA. Whether you're looking for advice on home security, energy-saving ideas, or local support services, you'll find everything you need right here.

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Thanks for being part of our journey  
this year!

We are excited to keep growing and reaching new  
heights together next year.



# Winter Home Safety

## Home Security During Shorter Days

As daylight hours decrease, it's important to keep your home secure and well-lit. Here are some practical tips:

- **Check locks and doors:** Ensure all doors and windows have sturdy locks and are in good condition.
- **Outdoor lighting:** Install motion-sensor lights or keep entryways well-lit to deter intruders.
- **Secure valuables:** Avoid leaving items like bikes or tools outside overnight.



## Heating and Fire Safety Checks

- Keep fire exits clear at all times.
- Do not store items in communal hallways.
- Test smoke alarms regularly and report faults promptly.
- Ensure heating systems are serviced and working efficiently.
- Use heating safely. Avoid blocking vents and never use ovens for heat.



## Tenant Responsibilities

- Report any broken locks, faulty doors, or damaged windows to your housing officer immediately.
- Keep communal areas clear of obstructions for safety and emergency access.
- Avoid blocking radiators or vents to ensure proper heating and ventilation.
- Ensure proper ventilation to avoid Damp and mould.

## Seasonal Tips & Advice

Winter brings unique challenges, so a little preparation goes a long way.

- Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Keep emergency numbers handy.
- Stock up on essentials like batteries and blankets.

If you experience urgent issues such as no heating, no hot water, or repairs that affect your safety, please contact ASHA immediately. We are here to support you.



# Comfort & Warmth

Winter is the perfect time for cozy meals and warm homes, but it's also important to stay healthy and safe during the cold months. Here are practical tips to keep you comfortable and well.

## Energy Saving Tips

Stay warm without high bills using the following tips:

- Heat rooms you use most to at least 18°C.
- Close curtains at night and open them during the day for natural warmth.
- Block drafts with draft excluders or rolled towels.
- Wear several thin layers instead of one thick layer.
- Keep bedroom windows closed at night to prevent heat loss.
- Check for energy support schemes in our Cost of Living section.

### Keep Moving

Avoid sitting still for long periods; light stretches help circulation.

### Eat Well

Warm meals and drinks maintain body temperature.

### Safety First

Your safety is paramount. Follow our tips on page 2 to keep yourself safe.

### Stay Ready

Stock up on food, medication, and essentials in case of severe cold.

## Cozy Up with Moroccan Harira Soup

### Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (optional)
- 1 can crushed tomatoes
- 1 can chickpeas, drained
- ½ cup lentils, rinsed
- 4–6 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 tsp ginger, 1 tsp cinnamon, ½ tsp turmeric, salt & pepper
- Optional: lamb/beef cubes, vermicelli/pasta
- Fresh parsley/cilantro, chopped
- Lemon wedges to serve
- Flour + water slurry

### Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Brown the meat (if using): Heat olive oil in a large pot and brown lamb or beef cubes on all sides. Remove briefly if needed.
2. Sauté aromatics: In the same pot, cook onion, celery, and garlic until soft.
3. Add tomatoes & spices: Stir in crushed tomatoes and spices; simmer for a few minutes.
4. Add legumes & stock: Mix in lentils, chickpeas, and broth. Return browned meat to the pot. Simmer until everything is tender (~20–30 mins for quick version; longer for tougher cuts).
5. Optional additions: Add pasta or vermicelli near the end; cook until done.
6. Thicken & finish: Stir in flour slurry if using, add fresh parsley/cilantro, and serve with lemon wedges and crusty bread.



# Your Home Care

## Preventing Damp & Mould

Damp occurs when excess moisture builds up in your home, and mould often follows, creating health risks like allergies and breathing problems. Common causes include poor ventilation, condensation from cooking or drying clothes indoors, and inadequate heating.



Ventilate regularly. Open windows for short periods to let fresh air in.



Avoid drying clothes indoors. If possible, use a tumble dryer or dry clothes outside.



Keep rooms warm. Consistent heating helps prevent condensation.

## Open Days (Wednesdays, 10–2)

Report issues to us. If you notice persistent damp or mould, visit our Open Days (Wednesdays, 10–2) for advice or contact ASHA for urgent repairs.

## Managing Drought

Drought means a shortage of water resources, which can affect homes and communities even in cooler months. Climate change and overuse of water contribute to reduced water availability, so managing water usage is crucial.



Turn off taps. Don't leave water running when washing dishes or brushing teeth.



Fix leaks promptly. A dripping tap can waste thousands of litres a year. Report to us immediately



Join Community initiatives. Join local water-saving campaigns to protect resources for the future.

## Report leaks to us immediately

We are here to resolve any emergency issues arising due to water leaks. Report to us if you see anything so that we can resolve it as soon as possible.



# Community Support

Community support is vital, especially during the winter months when challenges can feel overwhelming. That's why we have included services like food banks and free English lessons in this section to help with essential needs and encourage greater involvement in the community. These resources are here to make your life easier and ensure everyone feels connected and supported.

## Copef Training Skills - Emergency Food Bank

Free drop-in sessions weekly to assist with food, household fund, homelessness and other support services.

[Visit Their Website](http://www.copefts.org/services/food-bank/)

<http://www.copefts.org/services/food-bank/>

## Brixton Soup Kitchen

Brixton Soup Kitchen is open to the public daily for hot meals and drinks, and just somewhere to get in out of the cold!

[Visit Their Website](https://brixtonsoupkitchen.com/)

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## Free English (ESOL) Classes for Tenants

Learning English can make everyday life easier; helping you talk to neighbours, fill out forms, apply for jobs, support your children at school, and feel more confident.



**ELATT:** Offers free ESOL courses (Entry Level to Level 2) in London. You can study online from home or attend classes at their centres across the city.

- Sign up online: [elatt.org.uk/apply-courses](http://elatt.org.uk/apply-courses)
- After registering, you may be invited to an assessment to place you in the right class.
- Learn more: [elatt.org.uk/about/our-training](http://elatt.org.uk/about/our-training)



**English for Action (EFA):** Provides friendly group classes in local community centres across boroughs like Hackney, Southwark, Greenwich, Lambeth, and Tower Hamlets. Classes are informal, accessible, and often suitable for adults with children.

- Find out more: [efalondon.org](http://efalondon.org)



# Cost of Living Support

## Financial Assistance and Household Support

This section highlights the financial assistance and household support available across Southwark, Lambeth, and Croydon for residents requiring household support.

### Financial Support

#### Southwark:

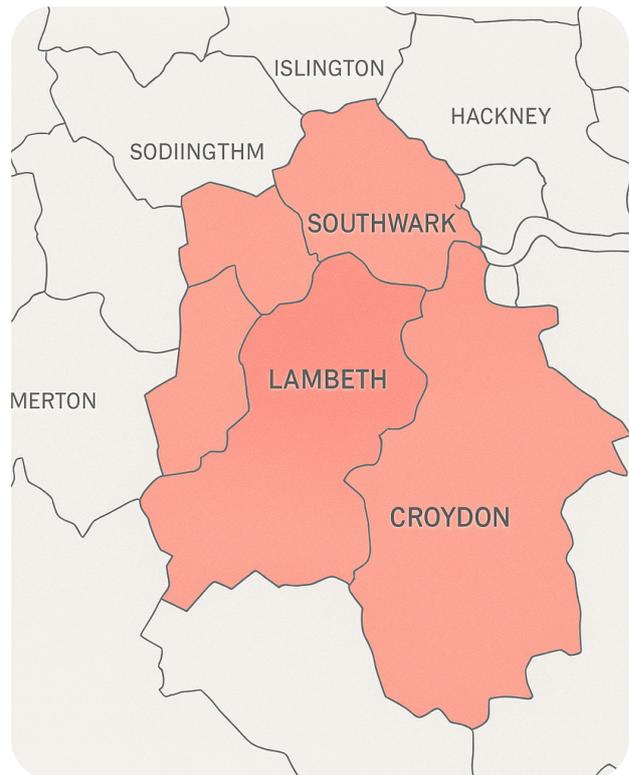
- Better Living Fund
- Southwark Emergency Support Scheme (SESS)
- £50 council tax payment

#### Lambeth:

- Emergency Support Scheme
- Discretionary Council Tax Support
- Hardship Payment (DCTSHP)

#### Croydon:

- Discretionary Support Fund
- Energy supplier grants (Ovo, E.ON, EDF, Octopus)
- Cold Weather Payment
- Winter Fuel Payment



### Household & Wellbeing Support

#### Southwark:

- Warm community hubs
- Thames Water's Water Help scheme

#### Lambeth:

- Alexandra Rose food vouchers
- Healthy Start card for food and milk
- Free school meals for eligible children

#### Croydon:

- Age UK Croydon
- Citizens Advice Croydon

### Money Advice

#### Southwark:

- Citizens Advice
- "Worrying About Money" guide
- Money Helper
- Southwark Community Support Alliance

#### Lambeth:

- Citizens Advice
- Money Helper
- Age UK support

#### Croydon:

- Citizens Advice
- Money Helper
- Age UK support
- Croydon Money Adviser Network



[View Southwark Support Services](#)

[View Lambeth Support Services](#)

[View Croydon Support Services](#)



# Cost of Living Support

## Energy, Family & Debt

### Energy Support

#### Southwark:

- Southwark Energy Savers (Citizens Advice): help with reducing energy use, checking eligibility for financial support, and applying for help with arrears.

#### Lambeth:

- Green Doctors: free advice on home energy efficiency, reducing bills, and staying warm.
- Age UK Lambeth: home energy checks and handyman service.

#### Croydon:

- Grants from energy suppliers (Ovo, E.ON, EDF, Octopus).
- Cold Weather Payments and Winter Fuel Payment (eligibility-based).
- Warm Home Discount scheme.

### Family Support

#### Southwark:

- Best Start Family Hubs
- Southwark Family Council
- Parent Peer Advocate Program

#### Lambeth:

- Better Start Children's Centres
- Lambeth's Digital Family Hub
- Community Early Help Service

#### Croydon:

- Family Hubs (Start for Life)
- Early Help Family Solutions Service
- Young Croydon Directory

### Debt and Financial Support

#### Southwark:

- Southwark Emergency Support Scheme (SESS)
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Discretionary Housing Payments

#### Lambeth:

- Benefits Advice Services
- Directory of Local Advice Services
- Guide to Benefits Available

#### Croydon:

- Household Support Fund
- Benefits help and advice
- Discretionary Support Fund



# ASHA News & Updates



## Annual Report Highlights

Our latest annual report is now available, showcasing key achievements and progress over the past year. Highlights include:

- Increased community engagement through support programs and work placements.
- Expansion of housing services and improved tenant satisfaction.
- Continued commitment to sustainability and safe living environments.



## New Hostel

We are excited to announce the opening of a new hostel in Croydon, designed to provide safe and comfortable accommodation for those in need. This facility offers:

- Brand new amenities and secure living spaces.
- Modern living & excellent connectivity in the heart of Croydon



## New Staff Introduction

Meet Nasir, our new warden, who you will see visiting your properties on and off for estate and property management. Their role will focus on:

- Ensuring tenant safety and wellbeing.
- Providing guidance and assistance for day-to-day housing needs.



## Office Closure & Out-of-Hours Service

**Our office we close for holidays from 24th Dec 2025 to 2nd Jan 2026.**

As we approach the end of the year and the holiday season, please note that if you experience any emergencies over the Christmas and New Year period while the office is closed, contact our on-call contractor Aftab on 07852 122339.

For national emergencies (available 24/7):

- Gas Leak: 0800 111 999
- Power Cut: 105
- No Water: 0800 316 9800