



WE ARE GOING DIGITAL!

The next edition of the news letter will be sent directly to your inbox. If you would like to **opt out** of this or still prefer a hard copy, please let us know by emailing admin@spitalfieldsha.co.uk

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Keeping you updated on news in & around Spitalfields



inside sha.

www.spitalfieldsha.co.uk

What we have done since lockdown

We know it continues to be a very challenging time for many of our residents. The health and safety of our residents and colleagues has been our top priority throughout lockdown. We are proud of the dedication; commitment and support from our staff who have continued to work to deliver services to meet our residents' needs and expectations. Our staff have gone the extra mile to support the most vulnerable.

If we have not been able to reach you, please get in touch with us by calling 020 7394 5400, and ask for the Welfare team, alternatively send us an email at admin@spitalfieldsha.co.uk with your address, contact number and a suitable time of day and we will call you back.

Here's a quick overview of what we've done so far:



We have mobilised a welfare team to check on the wellbeing of our residents and their families



We have helped more than 100 people with new universal credit claims



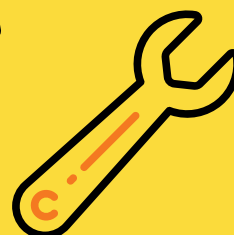
We've answered over 4500 calls



We have made and sent over 3000 calls, texts, emails and letters to our residents;



We have spoken to over 95% of our residents to make sure that they are safe and well



We have raised over 500 repairs



We've verified 156 claims for universal credit

Useful questions answered

GETTING THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT YOU NEED

We understand that this is a difficult time for you. You are thinking about your health and your family. You may also be worrying about money and paying the bills.

The information is changing daily and the FAQs below were correct as at Friday 3rd July.

I'm employed but I'm unwell or having to self-isolate. What does this mean for my money?

Depending on your employer and the contract you're on, you may get sick pay from them. If not, you can claim statutory sick pay. The government has useful information on this here: www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-support-for-employees-benefit-claimants-and-businesses

Claiming sick pay

If you can't work due to Coronavirus, you're eligible for Statutory Sick Pay from day one. This applies from 13 March 2020. Statutory Sick Pay will be paid to anyone staying at home (self-isolating) on government advice, not just those who are infected with Coronavirus

If you need to provide evidence to your employer that you need to stay at home due to Coronavirus, you can get it from the NHS 111 Online. You don't need a "fit note" from your doctor.

Claiming extra support

If you're already getting help from your local authority for Housing Benefit or Council Tax support, let them know of a change to your income. The fastest way to do this is on their website.

If you don't currently get support with Council Tax reduction (help towards paying your Council Tax) then contact your local authority to see how you can get help.

If you aren't getting help with housing costs, it's worth seeing if you're entitled to Universal Credit. You can find out what you're entitled to using this online benefit calculator: <https://www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/Intro/Home?cid=93f48c9e-fa60-4535-82cf-0a60f892afae>

I'm struggling to make a benefit claim, can Spitalfields HA help me?

Of course! We're here to help. Please call our office on 020 7392 5400 and ask for the Tenancy Support Officer and we'll guide you through what you're able to do. We can even refer you to specialist agencies in the borough for further advice. You can request a call back by emailing admin@spitalfieldha.co.uk

I'm employed, but the business has closed due to COVID-19. What does this mean for my income?

Please speak to your employer to make sure they've applied to be part of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

UK workers of any employer who is placed on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme can keep their job, with the government paying up to 80% of a worker's wages, up to a total of £2,500 per worker each month.

These will be backdated to 1st March and will be initially open for three months, to be extended if necessary.

Remember the payment will be net of tax and national insurance contributions as these will still need to be paid.

Apart from claiming benefits what other financial help is available?

You may be able to save money on your utility bills. You can check this via price comparison websites. You can also find information about making sure you receive essential services by registering with your utility company.

Telephone and TV bills can also be high. But if you're out of contract, you may be able to negotiate on price or shop around for a better deal.



I live by myself and have vulnerabilities, is there anyone I can contact?

Tower Hamlets council has set a dedicated phone line for vulnerable residents. You can contact them on **020 7364 3030** to talk about urgent requirements including food supplies and medication.

What about help from foodbanks and other community support?

There is a lot of amazing help out there. Some are accepting self referrals and for others you will need to be referred by a referring agency such as Spitalfields Housing Association. Organisations are providing hot meals for those in need including a delivery service to your home. For further information please contact us.

If you have school age children who qualify for free school meals, the government has announced that it will continue to provide free school meals for your child during the summer break. For more information please contact the school.

I'm self-employed - how do I access the Self Employed Income Support Scheme?

Full information about the Self Employed Income Support Scheme can be found here on the Government website. To make it simple, here's a summary we hope will help.

This scheme will allow you to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of your trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for the next three months. This may be extended if needed.

Your rent is still due. Please talk to us straight away if you are struggling to pay. We are here to help you. Our Income Officer can talk through your rent account and payment options. Please call them on: **020 7392 5400.**

I claim benefits but I am unwell or self-isolating. Will I still get my benefits?

If you receive benefits and are unable to attend health assessments or Job Centre appointments, special arrangements have been put in place. If you tell DWP that you're self-isolating or have been diagnosed with Coronavirus, you will not be sanctioned.

If you claim Universal Credit (UC), your Claimant Commitment will be reviewed to make sure it's still reasonable. If you're staying at home as a result of Coronavirus, your work search requirements will be removed. Contact your work coach as soon as possible. Do this via your online journal or call the helpline on **0800 328 5644.**



I am struggling to pay my bills regularly and stay on top of things at moment, is there anyone I can ask for help short term?

You can contact The Resident Support Scheme on **020 7520 7212**; it's designed to help residents who are in or at risk of crisis and in need of immediate financial support. They help with short-term living costs such as credit food and gas/electric pre-payment metres.

If you need further information or help with the online application, please contact our Tenancy Support Officer.

If you would like to discuss your change of circumstance or require benefit information please call our office on **020 7392 5400** and ask for the Tenancy Support Officer.

MyTenancy

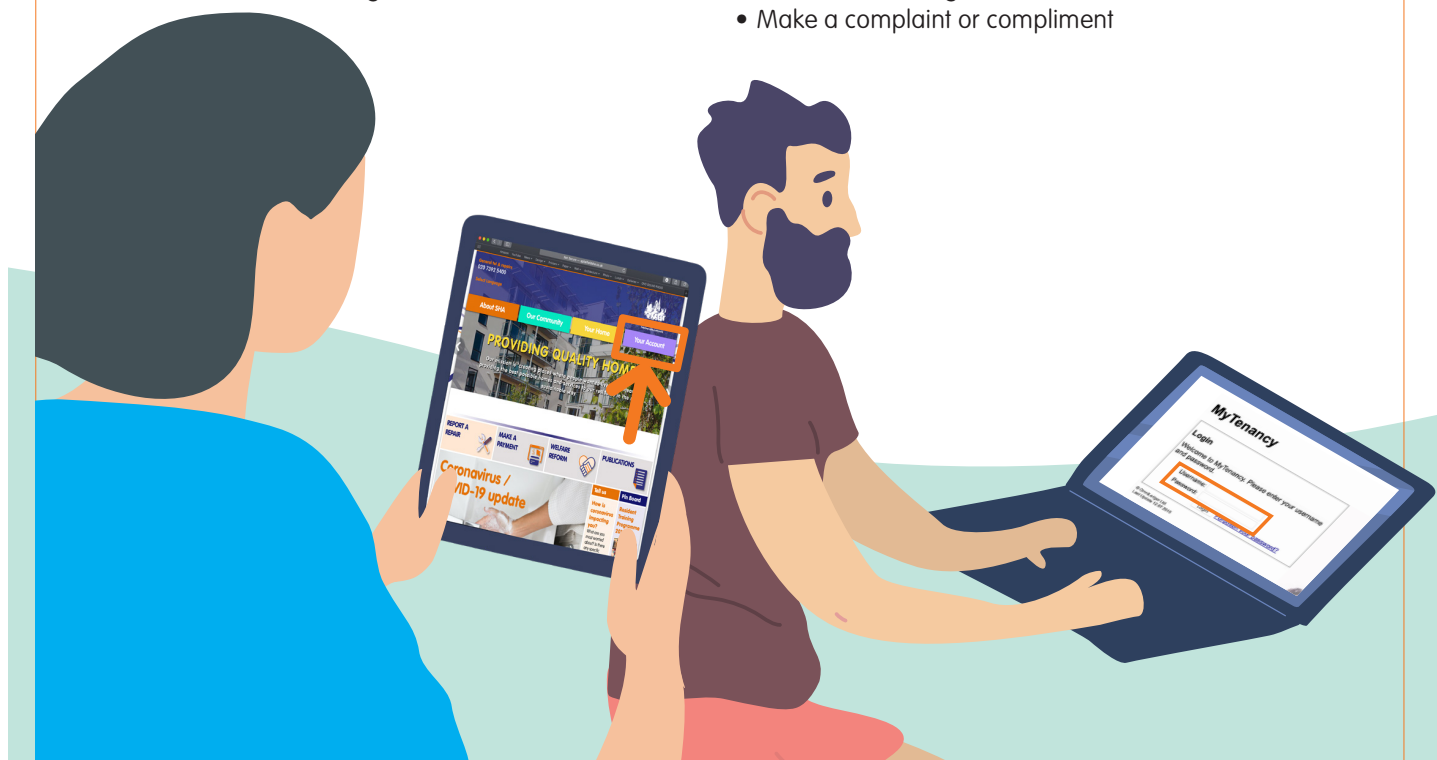
Your online account

MyTenancy is a comprehensive system that allows tenants to access their rent account and other services via our website (www.spitalfieldsha.co.uk) 24/7 and 365 days of the year.

If you have not registered already please contact us on 207 392 5400 or email: admin@spitalfieldsha.co.uk; for further details on how to register.

Key features for tenants are:

- View rent account
- Print statements
- Check and update personal data.
- Request repair works
- View outstanding repair works
- Inform us of changes in circumstances
- Make a complaint or compliment

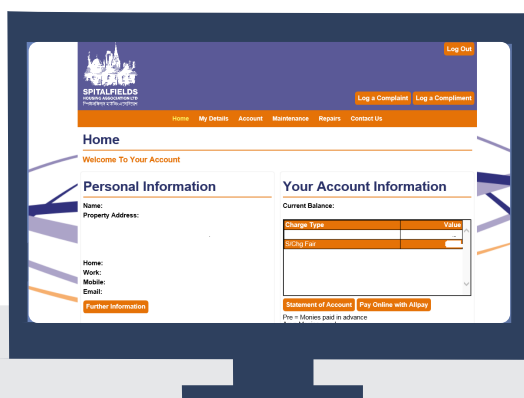


STEP 1

You may access **MyTenancy** through our website: www.spitalfieldsha.co.uk and click on **Your Account** tab

STEP 2

Key in your unique **User Name** and **Password**
Contact us if you do not have these credentials



Once you log in you can gain access to features such as **Account information** and **Statement of Account** etc

Top tips to protect yourself from scams

Please be on the look out for fraudsters taking advantage at the moment. There has been a huge increase in scams.



Be aware of people offering or selling virus testing kits – these are only offered by the NHS. Also watch out for overpriced and fake anti-bacterial products on the market.



If someone pressures you into accepting a service, they are unlikely to be genuine. Check with friends and family before accepting offers of help if you are unsure.



If someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for identification and verify by calling the organisation yourself. Be suspicious of any requests for money upfront.



Watch out for scam messages

Do not click on links or attachments in suspicious texts and emails. Never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for your personal or financial details.

Please help to protect others by not forwarding on unverified chain messages on social media, as they may contain false information and viruses.



Shopping online

Only buy goods from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.

If you are making a purchase from a company or person you don't know or trust, do some research first, ask friends and family for advice before completing the purchase.

For further advice on scams, call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133. To report a scam call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040. Contact your bank if you think you have been scammed.

Useful contacts

Spitalfields Housing Association 020 7392 5400

All general enquiries including reporting a repair and housing services.

LBTH ASB Out Of Service after Hours 020 7364 5015

You can call if you are experiencing anti-social behaviour or are worried about nuisance activity where you live.

LBTH Bulk Refuse Collection 020 7364 5000

You can arrange waste collection for bulky items. Each household can have two free collection a year. The service can only be used for household waste for your own property.

Pest Control 020 7364 5007

Contact the LBTH Pest Control Team if you have problems with pests including; insects, cockroaches, rodents or bed bugs.

LBTH Residents' Support Scheme 020 7520 7212

Help for those in or at risk of crisis and in need of immediate short term financial support.

Solace's 0808 802 5565

Talk to someone about domestic violence.

First Love Foundation Food Bank 020 3069 9877

The charity is working together with LBTH to tackle hidden hunger, by providing emergency food support to people facing difficulty.

Access for contractors



SOCIAL DISTANCE



We are working hard to make sure all repairs and safety checks can continue as normal. If you or any members of your household have any of the known covid symptoms, please let us know straight away. If no symptoms are present in the household,

our contractors are committed to maintain as normal a level of service as possible. Please provide access and ensure that our contractors are able to maintain a social distance and carry out their works as safely and efficiently as possible.

Being a good neighbour

Please take care of your estate and let us know how we can help to maintain the usual standards or if you want to bring something to our attention.

This is especially important, while our officers are not visiting as frequently during this critical time.



Repairs service – keeping us all safe

We are committed to providing as normal a service as possible. There may be some issues or delays where materials or specialist skills are not immediately available and we will keep you informed if this is the case. We will continue to review the situation and carry out repairs and services in line with the Government's longer-term lockdown exit strategy and advice from Public Health England.

We are working very hard to keep you and our colleagues safe.

We will ask you to kindly do the following:

- Inform SHA if you or any members of your household have any of the known covid symptoms or if you are self-isolating;

- Inform our contractors when they arrive at your property to carry out works if you or any members of your household have any of the known covid symptoms or if you are self-isolating;
- Maintain a social distance when contractors are in your property;
- Open all doors and keep them open so that our contractors do not need to touch the door handles;
- If possible, please open windows and doors for ventilation when our contractors are in your property.

We will ensure the following:

- Our contractors will wear PPE before entering your home;



- Our contractors will not attend if they have covid symptoms and we will notify you and rearrange your appointment;
- Our contractors will comply with health and safety requirements and follow appropriate Government guidelines.