

Heating & hot water update

Wyndham, Comber & Brandon Network

Introduction

Your home is one of 17,000 that Southwark Council provides heat and hot water to through our heat networks. It's a huge task but it's really important to us that our residents have warm homes and hot water. We know that at times our systems don't work as well as they should, which is why we have set up a Southwark-wide resident working group to look at what we need to improve. It's also why we are spending £17 million this year to maintain, repair and improve our heat networks.

This newsletter tells you a little more about our work to improve the heating and hot water on your estate, and our wider plans to make sure all our heat networks are reliable, affordable and sustainable.



Improving your heat & hot water

The Wyndham, Comber and Brandon heat network serves 1,280 homes across a wide range of blocks on the estates. We know last winter was difficult for residents in terms of the heating and hot water service. To prevent problems in the future we are working to improve both the boilers and the wider network.

Rebuilding your boilers

The poor service on your estate last winter was largely due to the failure of three of the four boilers. The network is designed to run on two boilers and has a further two as back up. When three failed at once we had to install temporary boilers to work alongside the one permanent one that was still working.

Since then we have replaced one of the failed boilers, building a brand new boiler within the existing housing. The network is therefore back to running on two permanent boilers as it is designed to be, with the temporary boilers still in place as back up. Work is also underway to rebuild the other two boilers so they can provide back up in the future. We also now have remote sensors in place that will provide instant updates to our engineers of many issues so they can attend as soon they happen.

For information about work on the boilers contact John.Marengi@southwark.gov.uk / 0207 525 2902

Renewing your wider network

As well as working to improve the boilers, we will also be carrying out major works to improve the whole network. We are currently consulting on these works, including a formal Section 20 notice consultation with leaseholders. The proposed works include:

- Replacing some of the old pipework to prevent leaks
- Changing the network so most of it can run at a lower pressure which will further reduce the risk of leaks
- Separating the network into independent zones so any future leaks affect homes on just one part of the network rather than all 1,280 homes
- Improving the way heat and hot water are supplied to the Wyndham towers so they come back more quickly and reliably after any outages

For information on work on the network contact:
Bola.Odusanya@southwark.gov.uk / 020 7525 7184.

Working with residents on your estate

We are committed to working with residents on your estate to make sure we get the improvements to your heat network right. As well as working with your Tenants and Residents Association we have also set up a Residents Project Team to oversee the detailed works, for more information on this contact:
Bola.Odusanya@southwark.gov.uk / 020 7525 7184.

The switch from summer to winter

All of our heating networks are now in winter mode. The switch from 'summer' to 'winter' happens when the outside temperature drops over a five day period. It is then switched back when the outside temperature rises in the spring. This year the changeover happened in early October.

When things go wrong

Despite all the work and investment going into our heat networks, things do sometimes go wrong. We want to make sure you get a quick response to any problems. To help ensure this we have updated your heat network so it now sends alerts to our staff and contractors so they can attend automatically in many cases. We have also put in place extra capacity so we can make sure repairs are completed quicker.

If you do experience problems with your heating or hot water you can call our 24 hour Contact Centre on:

0800 952 4444 or 020 7525 2600

Our new procedure for managing problems with our heating and hot water networks that are affecting more than one home is:

- Call from Tenants and Residents Associations officer or a ward councillor - repair raised immediately
- Call from resident - Our Contact Centre staff will contact other tenants within your block to confirm if they also have heating or hot water issues.

In any emergency situation where heating to your home is lost in winter, we will provide you with temporary heaters.

Live updates on your network

By Text: We send text message updates to all residents about outages affecting your block. You can sign up for these by calling the Contact Centre on 0800 952 4444 or 020 7525 2600

Online: Our website is updated every two hours with details of current outages, you can see these at: www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/repairs/communal-breakdowns

By Phone: We also update the message you hear when you call our Contact Centre every two hours with details of current outages.

Continuing to improve all our networks

In addition to the work already happening to improve the heat network on your estate, the council is also developing a Southwark Heat Networks Strategy and an accompanying investment plan. This will set out the long term approach the council will take to ensure the reliability, affordability and environmental sustainability of our 120 heat networks. This is due to be agreed at the council's Cabinet meeting in March.

As part of this work we recently held the first meeting of our Southwark wide Heat Networks Resident Working Group. This group brings together representatives from Southwark's main resident groups with officers and councillors and will be looking at the practical things we can do to improve the lives of the residents who depend on our heat networks. For updates on this and other housing issues, sign up for our Southwark Life Housing e-newsletter by logging into your MySouthwark account and updating your subscriptions. If you don't have an account you can register at www.southwark.gov.uk/mysouthwark/SignUp

Thank you

We know how difficult it can be when your heating and hot water does not work properly. Please be assured we are working extremely hard to bring about permanent improvements to your heat network. Thank you for your patience while we work to get these improvements right.