



Southwark Homes

Autumn 2023

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residents who
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Your magazine from Southwark Council

Southwark
Council
southwark.gov.uk

DO YOU HAVE A SPARE ROOM

TO FOSTER A CHILD?

Open your door to change a life

 @lb_southwark  facebook.com/southwarkcouncil  @southwarkcouncil

Children in Southwark urgently need foster carers.

0800 952 0707 | southwark.gov.uk/fostering
Support 24/7, training and allowance provided.

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Welcome...

**Councillor Stephanie Cryan,
Cabinet Member for Homes,
Communities and Finance**

Dear Resident,

I hope you, your family and friends are well and you had a relaxing, fun summer break.

With school term starting I know many of you will be back from summer holidays and planning for the year ahead.

We are doing the same here, and we have been listening to what you have told us about what's most important for you in your homes.

We are the largest social landlord in London, and we look after 55,000 homes. It's a big job, but we work hard to take care of your homes. Last year we carried out around a quarter of a millions repairs, with 80-90% done to your satisfaction.

But we know that we need to do more, and better. In this magazine, I have set out our promises to you to improve our repairs service, in a way that will make a tangible difference you will notice. We continue to carry out our estate action days across

the borough to offer a more personal, local service and make it easy for you to approach us.

With winter and colder weather just around the corner, we know many of you will be concerned about energy bills and high prices again this winter. We spent over £30m during the cost of living crisis to help over 100,000 Southwark residents meet the higher cost of energy, food and other essentials. We have also launched our Southwark Energy Savers advice service in partnership with Citizens Advice Southwark. This service provides free advice and support to anyone who lives or works in Southwark and is worried about the cost of their energy bills.

And we are still here to offer our support with our local welfare assistance scheme. You can find out more details of how to apply, along with other helpful information, in this magazine.




We will keep you updated on all our work to protect, improve and enhance your homes, services, and local area. Thank you for sharing your views, supporting our work and playing your part to support your community.

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Keep in touch

You can contact the magazine at **southwark.life@southwark.gov.uk** and include *housing magazine* in the subject heading, for more regular updates on council news and events, follow us on social media at

 facebook.com/southwarkcouncil
 @lb_southwark
 Instagram.com/southwarkcouncil

Contact us

Have you enjoyed reading this magazine? We'd love to hear your comments and feedback. If there are any specific topics you would like us to cover, or you have any staff or Southwark residents in mind you would like us to feature, please get in touch by emailing **southwark.life@southwark.gov.uk** and include **Southwark Homes** in the subject heading.

The Southwark Homes team

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Electrical Testing What are we doing?

Keeping your homes safe is our priority. We do electrical testing in our high rise buildings every five years to make sure everything is safe, secure and up to current standards. We will need to come into your home to test the fuse board and your switches and sockets. It normally takes between two and four hours.

We normally do this a block or street at a time. You'll get a letter from us with the dates we're in your area, and you can call or email us to tell us when is best for you. Don't worry if you're away or working, we can always come back at a better time.

If there is anything that needs repairing we will do this at the time. Sometimes if it's a bigger repair or it isn't really urgent we'll book at time to come back that is convenient for you.

Once we've finished testing, we'll give you a certificate called an EICR or Electrical Installation Condition Report. This tells you what we found when we tested, if we've done any works and it confirms that your electrical systems and wirings are all safe.

We want to work with you to access your home and check the electrics are safe. If you have any concerns, or want to talk to us about your specific needs, you can contact us on the details below.

You can also use these contact details to get in touch after we've sent you your letter to tell us the best date and time for us to come to your home.

Electrical.testing@southwark.gov.uk
0207 525 5999

Thank you in advance for helping us to keep you and your home safe.

Help us to prepare Southwark for the changing climate



This summer, right across the globe, extreme weather has had a devastating impact on communities – whether through fires, heat, drought or flooding.

The climate emergency is making these events more likely here too, like last July when we experienced 40-degree heat in the UK for the first time – leading to schools closing, hospital operations being cancelled and the busiest day for the London Fire Brigade since the Second World War.

National projections show we will be experiencing more extreme weather like this as well as flooding, risks to our water and food supply and new pests and diseases. We have to respond to the science and act urgently to prepare Southwark for the future – and we want to hear from you about how we should do that.

Fill out our short survey at www.southwark.gov.uk/resilience-survey to let us know how things like overheating or flooding have affected you in recent years, what has helped you during those periods, and what action you would have liked to have taken but you couldn't.

Save money by borrowing instead of buying

Did you know Southwark now has its first Library of Things at Canada Water Library? This is a place where you can borrow useful household items you do not need to use often – like carpet cleaners, drills, or projectors. Instead of splashing out on something that will spend most of the year cluttering up your cupboards. You can rent it for a few hours, saving money, space and helping the environment.

There's also a no-questions-asked 25% discount available for anybody who needs it. Have a look at the items that are available and make a reservation at www.libraryofthings.co.uk/canadawater



STREETS FOR PEOPLE LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

Over the next few months, we will be coming out to talk to residents about changes you would like to see in your neighbourhoods, such as more trees, green spaces, cycle hangars, seating, or more space to play and socialise in.

This is part of Streets for People, which sets out how we will improve the air we breathe in Southwark, address the climate emergency, and make our borough even greener and safer.

Tell us what you would like to see in your neighbourhood, at www.southwark.gov.uk/streets-survey



Repairs - Our promises to you



1. A quality repair, completed right first time

You told us you want your repair done right first time

We will work hard to make sure your repair will be completed to a high standard and on the first visit. For more complicated jobs where this is not possible, we will make sure you understand why and what the next steps are.

When will you start to see a difference? 2023



2. An exceptional customer experience

You told us you want us to make it easier to report an issue and be kept updated

We will deliver excellent customer service that puts residents first.

When will you start to see a difference? 2024

3. Your voice will be heard

You told us you want more say in how your repairs are done

We will give you the chance to feedback at all stages of your repair. If you aren't satisfied with the service, we will speak to you and put things right.

When will you start to see a difference? We hope you will have seen improvements already and we will continue to keep you updated on the positive changes we are making together.



4. We will invest in your homes and try to prevent problems happening

You told us you want us to prioritise your homes, and become a leading council for repairs.

We will build our repairs service to become an industry leader in repairs and maintenance, ensuring your flats and houses are safe and well-cared for. We will identify issues before they get too serious, with a more proactive approach to repairs delivered by a quality, local service.

When will you start to see a difference? Our programme of visits will be well underway by spring 2024

We will also make sure our repairs service brings wider benefits for local people by:

- Investing in local people to be the repairs workforce of the future, employing local apprentices and using local businesses and suppliers



Useful contacts



To report a repair: www.southwark.gov.uk/repairs 020 7525 2600

Tenants & Residents Associations (TRAs) are groups of residents who work voluntarily in partnership with us to help make their neighbourhood a better place to live. For more information on TRAs or how to set one up, call **020 7525 3326**.

The Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations (SGTO) is an independent voluntary organisation representing tenant and resident groups in Southwark, run by tenants. Contact the Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations (SGTO) on **020 7639 6718**.

Emergency housing repairs

An emergency repair is when there's immediate danger to you or the structure of the building. In an emergency we'll make the situation safe; we may need to return another day to complete the full repair.

All emergency repairs need to be reported by phone by calling **0800 952 4444** or **020 7525 2600**.

Other useful numbers

If you have a gas / carbon monoxide leak, call the National Grid **0800 111 999**.

If you have lost your gas or electricity supply you should contact your individual supplier to determine if the issue with your meter or account.

If you are experiencing a power cut in your area, call UK Power networks **0800 316 3105**.

If you have no drinking water in your area, call Thames Water **0800 714 614**.

ESTATE ACTION DAYS



We do Estate Action Days to tackle repairs on our estates across the borough.

Our repairs teams set up a drop-in service where you can:

- Report a new repair to us
- Follow up a repair you have already reported to us
- Book a repairs appointment
- Speak to our communal repairs officer about any repairs needed in communal areas on your estate
- Speak to our technical quality officer about damp, mould or any other complex issues
- Get to meet some of our repairs teams, operatives and trade apprentices
- Complete feedback forms about a repair you have experienced and suggest ways we can improve

Event date	Estate	Area
Wednesday 6 September 2pm - 8pm	Nelson Square Gardens Roland Hill House Helen Gladstone House Vaughan House	North
Wednesday 20 September 2pm - 8pm	Nunhead Estate	South
Wednesday 4 October 2pm - 8pm	Rye Hill Estate	South

Wednesday 18 October Newington Estate Central



A helping hand around the home

If you need small repairs carried out in your home, we can help.

You must be over the age of 60, or any age with a disability, and live in Southwark. There is an hourly rate charge, depending on your financial circumstances. There are no call-out charges or hidden extras.

Examples of the tasks we can help with:

- Installing grab/hand rails
- Moving furniture
- Fixing curtain rails
- Changing locks
- Minor carpentry work
- Draft proofing
- Building flat pack furniture
- Changing light bulbs
- Small plumbing jobs
- Repairs
- Fixing or installing garden fencing

Contact us to find out if we can help with any other tasks you might have around the home.

We can supply materials or can use materials that you have purchased.

For more information visit www.southwark.gov.uk/handyperson or call 0207 525 1863



Could a smaller home be the right fit for you?

If you are a council or housing association tenant with one or more spare bedrooms, moving to a smaller, cheaper home could be possible through Smart Move. You could get up to £1,000 for each bedroom you give up.

Why downsize your home?

- You have had your housing benefit reduced.
- Your children have grown up, left home and you no longer need the extra bedrooms.
- Your heating bills have gone up and you are finding it harder to heat your home
- You are finding the stairs difficult.
- You would like to move nearer to family or friends.

What are the benefits of downsizing?

- Once registered you will be placed in priority Band 1 to choose your new home. This is the highest priority band and you will have a much better chance of getting the home you want.
- If you're a council tenant you will get an incentive payment of £1,000 for each bedroom that you give up. You will also get a moving

allowance to help with relocation costs. If you are a housing association tenant you will need to discuss with your landlord if they offer an incentive payment through their own internal scheme. (*please note that the incentive payments will be paid into your old rent account if you have arrears).

Households above the pension credit age can still hold onto an additional bedroom if needed. For example, if you are moving from a three-bedroom home but only need one bedroom, you can still apply for a two-bedroom home. If you are below the pension credit age you can only get a property that meets your needs following changes to housing benefit rules.



Five friends who downsized their homes

Jean Bartlett, Pat Davies, Donna Grant, Doreen Stockwell and Pat Hobrough all downsized and moved into new homes from the Aylesbury Estate. All five friends had lived on the estate for around 50 years.

All five were occupying three-bedroom properties, and have now moved into brand new two-bedroom flats in an over-55s block on the estate.

Doreen said, "Moving here was the best thing that's ever happened. You see people's faces when they walk into the building, they're dumbstruck with it".

Jean said, "I didn't settle in as quickly as some of the others. It's a big change and I still miss my garden, but overall I'm really pleased that I moved and that we had so much input into the new homes here".

Donna said, "Moving home is a massive upheaval, I had no idea how much stuff I had to sort out. But now I'm here it's the start of a

new chapter and I don't miss my old home in the slightest".

Pat said, "My favourite thing about my new home is that it's like a hotel, I feel like I'm on holiday. When it's nice weather you can open up the balcony door first thing in the morning and let the sunlight in".

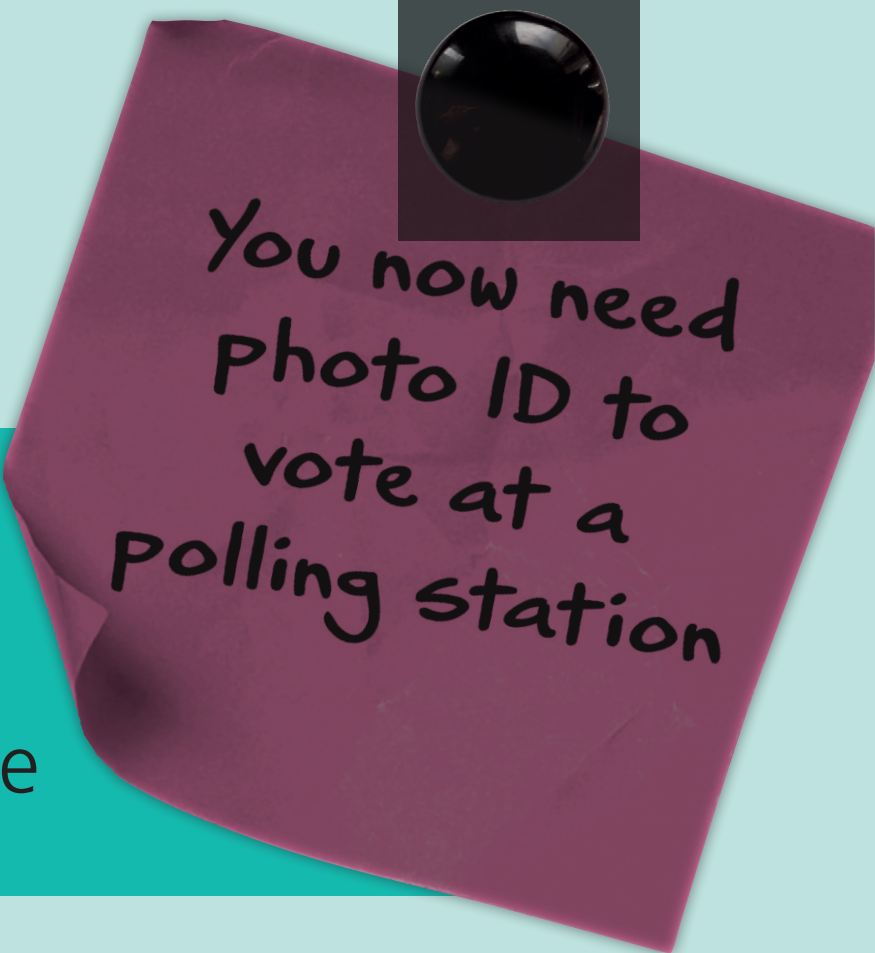
Jean said, "It's important to carefully consider whether downsizing is right for you. It really depends on the property you move into, so you have to go and see it and make sure it's right for you. It's a completely personal choice, but we feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to move into these flats".

To register for Smart Move, you will need to complete an online housing application form.

For more support with Smart Move please contact the Housing Choice team by emailing HousingChoiceTeam@southwark.gov.uk or calling the Housing Advice Line on **020 7525 5950**. Our frequently asked questions page on our website may also answer any other questions you may have.

Make sure you have the right photo ID to vote

From May 2023 you will need to show photo ID to vote in a polling station



You now need photo ID to vote at a polling station

No ID? You can apply for a free voter ID certificate

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID

#NoVoteNoVoice #VoterID

 @lb_southwark  facebook.com/southwarkcouncil  @southwarkcouncil



AYLESBURY ESTATE



The Aylesbury Estate in Walworth is one of our largest estates in the borough, and is home to around 7,500 residents. The estate was built between 1963 and 1977 and is undergoing a major redevelopment programme to provide new, modern, fit for purpose homes and enhance the area.

The redevelopment will see 3,575 new homes and 7,800 sqm of employment, retail, healthcare and community spaces built over the coming years. Our Aylesbury Estate Masterplan aims to create new neighbourhoods that is less closed off from the surrounding streets and communities of Walworth.

The size and scale of the Aylesbury Estate means that the redevelopment will take place over many years and is split into a number of phases. The map below shows where these phases are and who is managing each area.

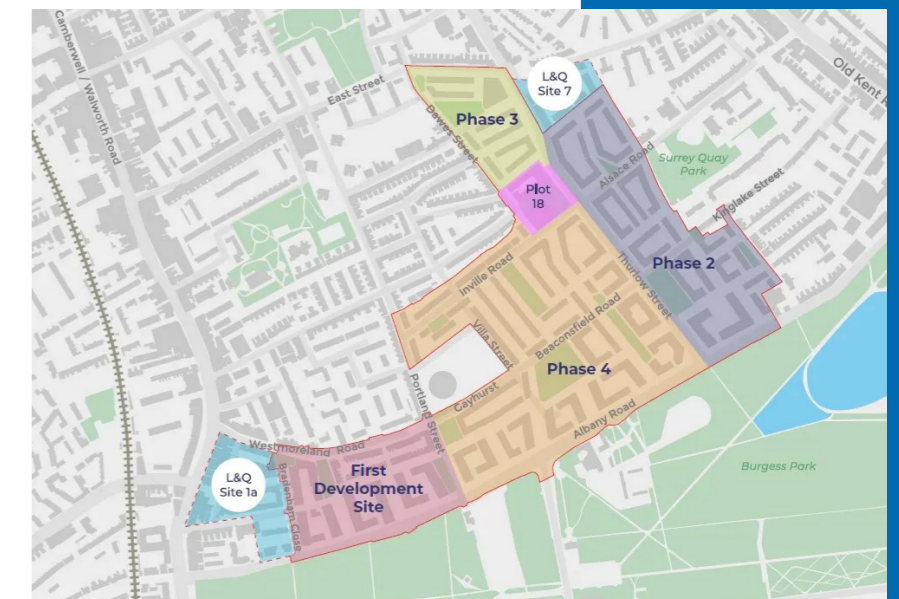
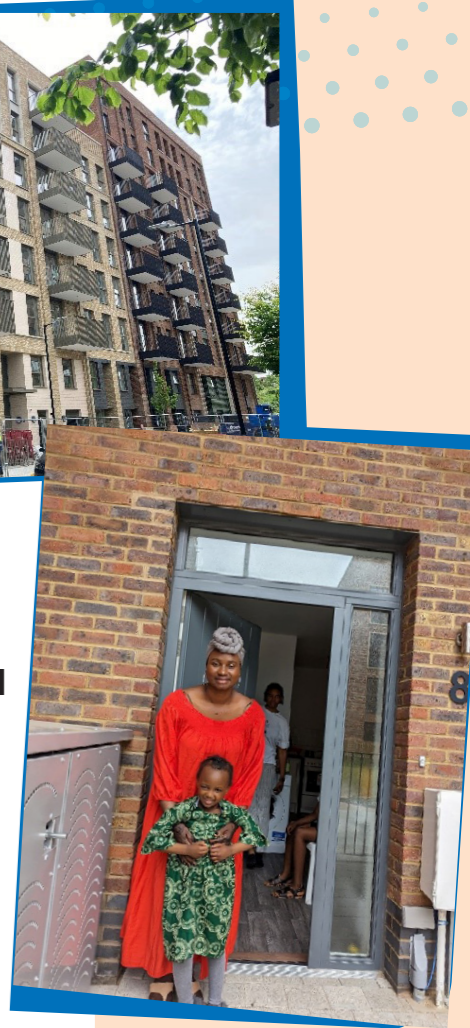
The First Development Site (FDS) is further divided into three areas – A, B and C. These are the areas in between Albany Road, Portland Street, Bradenham Close and Westmoreland Road. The council is providing the new homes at FDS A and B. The development at FDS C is being managed by Notting Hill Genesis.

Miss Umu Kabba, who recently moved into one of the new homes, said, “We are very happy with our new home, the kids love it and we’re really comfortable

here. It’s a vast improvement on where we were living before.”

FDS A is now complete, with 229 new council homes, a new community centre and playground now ready for residents to move into and enjoy.

We are also building another 352 new council homes at FDS B on the estate. The first of these homes are expected to be finished in spring 2024 and the entire site should be completed by autumn 2025.



Supporting our residents with the cost of living

We have spent over £30m during the cost of living crisis to help over 100,000 Southwark residents meet the higher cost of energy, food, and other essentials (from autumn 2021 to spring 2023).

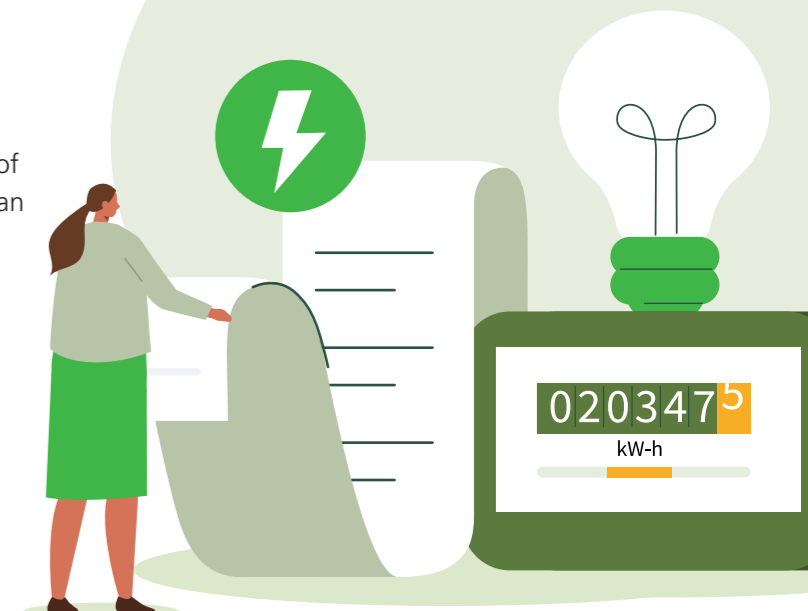
This year we have set aside more than £11m to continue supporting residents through a new Cost of Living Fund for 2023/24. Households on low incomes who are most vulnerable to the impacts of the rising cost of living will receive the most support.

If you have children in a Southwark school who are eligible for statutory free school meals because of low income, the Cost of Living Fund will cover the cost of Holiday Free School Meals for every school holiday period this year up to and including Easter 2024.

If you live in a home banded A, B, or C for council tax (most council homes are in one of those bands) and you were liable for council tax at that address on 1 April 2023, you will have received extra help (£60) to pay for higher energy bills following the withdrawal of Government energy bill support in April. Support is targeted at those living in homes that are lower in lower council bandings because they are much more likely to have a lower income. We will provide other targeted support this autumn and winter.

Last autumn and winter we worked with dozens of community partners – including the Southwark Group of Tenant Organisations, to widen access to last year's Cost of Living Fund. Those community partners referred more than 17,000 people through a Community Referral Pathway. Support worth £1.5m in total was distributed in the form of Post Office vouchers worth £100. A new pathway will open this October and residents will also be able to apply for support.

If you are facing an emergency now and you are unable to meet the cost of essentials, you can apply to our local welfare assistance scheme SESS online at www.southwark.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/emergency-support or calling 020 7525 2434.



FREE Internet help for Residents

Did you know that we offer free digital support for our residents in community centres across the borough?

Our local volunteers can help you answer questions about using digital devices such as phones, laptops and tablets. They can also help you to use the Internet, and show you how to save money or access services quickly.

Using the internet can make life easier in a range of ways – you can save yourself time and money by booking appointments or tickets online, checking transport information before and while you travel, and ordering deliveries or services to your home.

By chatting with a local volunteer you can get advice and guidance in an informal setting with no need to attend a course. All our drop-in sessions are a chance to have a friendly talk with someone on a one-to-one basis.



We hold drop-ins at the following centres:

- Rotherhithe Community Centre
- Surrey Quays shopping centre
- The OBC Youth Centre Bermondsey
- The Age UK Healthy Living and Learning Centre, Bermondsey
- Docklands Settlements Rotherhithe
- Blackfriars Settlements Waterloo
- The Green Community Centre, Nunhead
- The Thomas Calton Centre, Peckham
- The Dene Community Centre Peckham
- Bells Gardens Community Centre Peckham
- St Faith's Community Centre North Dulwich
- The Albrighton Centre, East Dulwich
- The Southwark Pensioners Centre, Camberwell
- St Jude's Community Centre, Elephant and Castle

To book an appointment please call our digital inclusion team on 07783 776 066.

Housing survey – have your say

Between **Monday 11 September and Saturday 14 October**, Acuity, a market research firm, will contact 2,250 tenants to carry out an eight minute phone survey. This will help us understand your experiences as tenants, and help us improve our housing services. If you receive a call please do take the time to answer the questions, and have your voice heard.

Go to www.southwark.gov.uk/news/2023/sep/southwark-council-housing-services-tenant-satisfaction-survey to find out more.

Emergency contacts

If people are injured or if there is a threat to life you should call **999**. Please only use the following numbers in a genuine emergency, where there is an immediate threat to health or safety.

Emergency housing repairs

An emergency repair is when there's immediate danger to you or the structure of the building. In an emergency we'll make the situation safe; we may need to return another day to complete the full repair.

All emergency repairs need to be reported by phone by calling **0800 952 4444** or **020 7525 2600**.

Other useful numbers

If you have a gas / carbon monoxide leak, call the National grid **0800 111 999**.

If you have lost your gas or electricity supply, you should contact your individual supplier to determine if the issue with your meter or account.

If you are experiencing a power cut in your area, call UK Power networks **0800 316 3105**.

If you have no drinking water in your area, call Thames water **0800 714 614**.

Homelessness

If you are worried about becoming homeless or you are homeless already please get in touch with Southwark council's housing Solutions service, as soon as possible by calling **020 7525 4140** or visiting the **Southwark Homesearch Centre, 25-27 Bournemouth Road, Peckham, SE15 4UJ**.

If you require emergency homelessness advice, assistance and support before 9am and after 5pm Monday to Friday or during the weekends, please telephone **020 7525 5000** and choose **option 3**.

For any other out of hours emergency

Call our switchboard number **020 7525 5000 option 2** for environmental services and **option 3** for other services.