

## Expanding our base



We have recently revamped our digital media offering at BASE Pimlico, adding 2 new music production stations, a new iMac, 4 new android tablets, a full PA system, studio monitors and DJing equipment to our existing array of film production, photography and recording equipment. Our new Youth Programme Manager, Conor Lynch is planning to add to the existing inventory and launch a schedule of exciting creative projects for young people aged 7-25 for the second half of 2016.

If you or someone you know is interested in taking part or would like to know more information about this or the other regular workshops and sessions at BASE then please email [base@octaviafoundation.org.uk](mailto:base@octaviafoundation.org.uk) or call 07985 692 369.

## Benefit Cap

The Benefit Cap threshold will be lowered this autumn in line with the government's 2015 summer statement. The Benefit Cap is the total amount of allowed benefits a household can claim and London residents will see this reduce from £26,000 to £23,000 a year. The cap will also reduce for single people from £18,200 a year to £15,410 a year.

Everyone else will see their benefits cap reduce to £20,000 a year. If you or your partner have been in employment for at least 50 weeks out of the 52 weeks before your last day of work, you will be exempt from this cap. This means if you lose your job, you have 2 weeks to start a claim before losing this exemption.

From Autumn 2016 the Government will introduce exemptions for people who claim Guardians Allowance, Carer's Allowance and the Carers' element of Universal Credit.

If you think you might be affected by these changes or have any questions please contact your Income Officer for more information.

## Calling young artists



The YO! London project has been inspired by the Humans of New York blog, which tells the inspirational stories of the everyday people of New York.

YO! London seeks to replicate a similar catalogue of images for the life of Londoners. However, the Octavia Foundation have put a twist on it. We want to get representations of Londoners from the eyes, ears and lenses of the youth of London. Armed with a camera phone or a camera, any young person living in London (under 25) can capture London as they see it, through the characters and scenes that speak to them.

The idea is for the layers of London to be put on display for the world to see. All you have to do is take photos of the people who have a story to tell, or a significant moment and then write it down and submit it to us. Selected images will be displayed at the Tate Britain on the 19th May 2016.

Examples include performing something for the first time, mastering a trick on a skateboard, the feeling of walking out of an exam - it can literally be anything. If you have a story to tell about this city then we would love to hear from you. Please email your contributions to [digitalmedia@octavia.org.uk](mailto:digitalmedia@octavia.org.uk) or call 020 8354 5534.

## Our performance

We closely monitor performance in all areas of our work in order to improve. A summary of how we are doing in key areas is below. We are doing well in a number of areas, and will be looking to improve on how quickly we let void properties.

Performance indicator	February 2016	Target	Rating
Rent arrears as % rent due (general needs)	5.19%	4.8%	☹️
Rent collection as % of rent due (general needs)	99.93%	100.1%	☺️
Standard voids – average re-let time in days (year to date)	25	20	☹️
% of emergency repairs completed within target time	100%	99%	☺️
% of urgent repairs completed within target time	98%	98%	☺️
% of routine repairs completed within target time	99.6%	98%	☺️
% responses to anti-social behaviour reports within target time	100%	95%	☺️
Average speed of phone calls pick up in seconds (switchboard)	5	14	☺️
Average speed of phone calls pick up in seconds (repairs line)	17	14	☹️
% responses to complaints within target time	100%	99%	☺️
Satisfaction with Octavia's overall service (from completed repairs survey)	90%	95%	☹️

Please contact us if you need any part of this information in Braille, on audio tape or explained in a different language.

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EDITION 24: SPRING 2016 - Simple, up-to-date, important news for Octavia residents

# UPDATE NEWSLETTER

## THE LONG TERM PERSPECTIVE



As a world city London is always going to be a challenging place in which to provide affordable housing. So much so that it is possible to look back to when Octavia Hill was writing in the 1880's and see that even then she talked about the need for more homes. But although this is a long standing problem the current housing situation in London is seriously bad.

Prices – both for buying and renting, have been rising to levels which are simply unaffordable for large groups of people while at the same time many of the new developments in London have been sold to overseas investors. In the regulated sector Local Authorities are increasingly under pressure. They are soon to be required to sell off their "high value" homes (which might be quite a large

percentage in the areas where Octavia operates) and to charge higher levels of rents to those households with an income of over £40,000. And while neither of these provisions will apply to Octavia they will have an impact on the overall supply of homes in the areas where we operate.

With all this in mind it is a good thing that each of the mayoral candidates recognises there is a problem and that in inner London this will not be solved by the "Starter Homes" which the Government are proposing. All the candidates recognise that what we really need is far more long term, secure, affordable housing for rent but the ideas for how that is going to happen are still very thin on the ground.

From my perspective most progress would come if more was done to require a fixed percentage of affordable housing as part of every single planning consent for new homes. At the moment there is still too much flexibility for developers to negotiate exceptional settlements for individual schemes which means we get fewer affordable homes on each site than we should. It is only by building more, and resisting the temptation to sell off high value inner city homes in favour of more on the outskirts of London that we will keep the mixed communities that make London such a good place to live.

*Grahame Hindes, Chief Executive*

## What do you think of this newsletter?

Let us know at: [E.update@octavia.org.uk](mailto:E.update@octavia.org.uk)

## Contact us

Repairs: T 0800 479 0011 (freephone)  
Customer Services: T 020 8354 5500 E [info@octavia.org.uk](mailto:info@octavia.org.uk)  
W [www.octaviahousing.org.uk](http://www.octaviahousing.org.uk)



## Using new legal powers to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour

We were recently successful in obtaining a 5 year Civil Injunction with a Power of Arrest. Civil injunctions are aimed at preventing individuals from engaging in ASB and are part of new legal remedies given to Social Landlords, in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The case was brought against an adult household member after repeated incidents of aggressive, intimidating and threatening behaviour towards Octavia staff and nuisance behaviour affecting other residents.

After hearing the evidence for all sides, which included staff and residents attending court as witnesses, the judge granted the 5 year Civil Injunction with the Power of Arrest.



## Changes to how we manage Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) & Neighbour Disputes (ND)

We recently changed the way we manage reports of Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbour Disputes.

The changes mean we now have two dedicated Investigation Officers who lead on investigating ASB/ND & Tenancy Fraud casework. These issues can be complicated and can take up considerable time. Having two officers who are dedicated only to these issues means that anyone experiencing or involved in cases of this nature will have one contact who will specialise in managing this process and keeping them informed.

To access this new service you can

contact our Customer Contact Team on 020 8354 5500, who will put you through to the relevant Officers.



## Important information about our Privacy Policy and how we share your information

It's important we keep your contact details up to date because it means that we can get in touch with you if there is an emergency. You can update your information at any time via our website or by contacting your Resident Service Officer.

We collect information that concerns our relationship with you such as your name, date of birth, photographic ID and your contact details. We will process your information fairly and lawfully and ensure that we keep it secure.

We only ever share your information with third parties to enable us to provide our services to you or if we have a legal duty to do so. You can see the full policies on our website at [www.octaviahousing.org.uk](http://www.octaviahousing.org.uk). Alternatively we can also send you a copy of our factsheets on; how we use your personal data, website privacy policy, or accessing your files. Please email [info@octavia.org.uk](mailto:info@octavia.org.uk) to request for these.

## BE INVOLVED

Contact Anna de Souza, Resident Involvement Manager: 020 8354 5674 or [anna.desouza@octavia.org.uk](mailto:anna.desouza@octavia.org.uk) or visit our website.



## Ducane joins Octavia Housing

We are pleased to announce that as of 31 March 2016, Ducane Housing Association officially joined the Octavia Group.

In practice, services to residents will not be affected but it will enable us to build many more affordable homes for London. Ducane owns 206 homes located on Du Cane Road in West London. Originally formed in 1972 by the Royal Postgraduate Medical School to house their postgraduate students, they now provide affordable accommodation for both key workers and families in the area.

A number of Ducane board members will also join Octavia committees and one will sit on the Octavia Board.

If you have any questions about the merger, please get in touch with Rachel Harrison at [Rachel.harrison@octavia.org.uk](mailto:Rachel.harrison@octavia.org.uk) or 020 8354 5500.



## SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY 9 JULY 2016



Come and enjoy a free fun day out, meet other Octavia residents and staff at our annual resident event, Your Space on Saturday 9 July. This year, we are holding the event at the new venue of Westminster Academy on Harrow Road. Activities include; a photo booth, family portraits, face painting, music, arts and crafts, a magician, smoothie making, nail art, seated chair and hand massages, comedy session and a film workshop for all ages. There will be a hot meal for every resident and a chance to win some exciting prizes in the prize draw. We will be sending you an official invitation in mid-June. In the meantime, if you would like more information then please visit our website [www.octaviahousing.org.uk](http://www.octaviahousing.org.uk) email [be.involved@octavia.org.uk](mailto:be.involved@octavia.org.uk) or call 020 8354 5674.

## Welcome to our Customer Contact Team



In March, we opened the phone lines to our new Customer Contact Team.

We understand that a 'quality' service to most people means that their enquiry is dealt with fully at the first point of contact and so we are continuing to invest in staff training and technology to ensure we can deliver a better service and the Contact Centre Team can respond to more enquires at the first point of contact including:

- Basic advice on all services
- Rent account information including balances and if Housing Benefit has been received on your account

- Up to date rent statements
- Fast payment options via debit/credit cards (Visa/MasterCard/Maestro)
- Replacement rent payment cards
- Advice about exchanging your home (mutual exchanges)
- Support in registering residents for a transfer using 'choice based lettings'.
- Web PIN access codes to allow residents to use their secure online 'My Account' services portal
- Car parking permit requests and enquiries

Overtime we will also be adding to the list of tasks we can manage through this team as well as our digital services and mobile working, to continue to improve our service for residents.

## OCTAVIA FOUNDATION'S APPRENTICESHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS OPEN DAY ON 14TH JUNE 2016



### Apprenticeships:

- Aged 16-24
- Not in full time education or employment and not a graduate
- Able to work 35 hours per week including study at college for 12 months
- Salary is £10,125 per year

### All candidates must:

Be an Octavia tenant or live/ have studied in Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham or Brent and live in social or council housing.

For further information, please contact our Employment Team on: 020 8354 5686 or [kyrsha.haynes@octaviafoundation.org.uk](mailto:kyrsha.haynes@octaviafoundation.org.uk)

### Internships:

- Aged 21-28
- Are a graduate with a 2:2 or above degree
- Available 18 hours per week for 12 months
- Salary is £10 per hour

## Become a volunteer befriender and change lives



- Do you like working with people?
- Would you like to develop your experience and skills?
- Or maybe you simply want to make a difference in your community?

You might just be our next volunteer befriender.

Octavia Foundation has expanded its befriending service into the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The project supports older and vulnerable adults in the borough.

Being a befriender with us is a fantastic opportunity to make a difference to reduce the loneliness that so many isolated or older people feel. We match volunteer benders to spend an hour a week with a befriender and we ask for a commitment of six months.

Befriending can involve a range of activities from having a chat to going for a walk. We need our volunteers to be empathetic, reliable and supportive. If this sounds like you please get in contact.

If you are interested in finding out more about the role please email [raksha.gadhvi@octavia.org.uk](mailto:raksha.gadhvi@octavia.org.uk) or call Raksha on 0208 354 5532