

AUGUST 2022 – News for Octavia residents

## RESIDENT NEWS BULLETIN

Keeping residents updated and informed



### Message from Octavia's Chief Executive

With the current extreme pressures on household budgets due to the rising cost of living, it is more important than ever that we continue to provide responsive and reliable services and support people as much as we can.

If you are facing financial hardship or are worried about paying your rent, the ability to buy food, or pay for your essential household bills, please contact us. We have services and can access other support that may be able to help. There is more information about this in this bulletin.

We are ambitious to continually improve our services to meet changing needs and residents have a crucial role to play in this. We need residents to tell us what we are doing well, where we need to improve and what really matters to you. We have been working with groups of residents recently to explore how we can provide more opportunities for you to influence our work.

We are now taking these findings forward by refreshing our residents' panel and setting up a new panel to help guide how we respond to complaints.

We are recruiting to these panels and you can find out more about these opportunities further in this bulletin. Please consider applying and get in touch with us if you want more information about what the roles involve.

Finally, I am sure you are aware that Covid cases in London have been increasing again. This infection is likely to be with us for some time, so I urge people to take care and please continue to follow all government-advised precautions to keep yourself, your friends and family, and your community safe.

**Sandra Skeete**



What do you think of this news bulletin?

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

### Contact us

Repairs: 020 8354 5500 (including emergency out-of-hours)  
 Contact team: 020 8354 5500 | [info@octavia.org.uk](mailto:info@octavia.org.uk)  
[www.octaviahousing.org.uk](http://www.octaviahousing.org.uk)

## Important information about your rent statements

We have been experiencing technical problems with the My Octavia app that has caused usability issues for some residents. This includes problems with people accessing their rent statements through the app.

Following a discussion with our resident involvement group, Your Voice, we have taken the decision to remove access to the app until further notice, while

we investigate the issue. As an interim measure, we will be posting rent statements to all residents every two months. This is the first of these mailings and your latest statements are enclosed.

We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and we will keep you updated on when the digital service will resume.

## Making it easier for you to influence what we do

We want to create more ways to better involve residents in developing our services. We have been working with residents to develop a new strategy to give you more influence in helping us deliver good quality services that meet your needs.

Though many residents (70%) said in our last resident survey (April 2020) that they are satisfied that Octavia listens and acts on their views, many (74%) also wanted a greater opportunity to tell us how we can better support them.



## Responding to your feedback

In response to this, we have been working closely with groups of residents, together with the resident engagement specialist organisation, TPAS, to find out what we need to do to get more of you involved in influencing how we operate, develop, and improve our services.

The consultation was extremely useful and informative. It included residents who have previously been involved with us. It also included many residents who have not participated in discussions before. We are grateful to all of you who took part, for generously volunteering your time. Through this exercise, we were able to learn what you feel and think about our work, where you would like to see improvement and how you would like residents to be involved.

### The discussions identified some key areas for improvement:

- The need for a consistent customer experience when residents contact us
- Better use of your data to improve your service experience
- More opportunity for you to be consulted on changes
- More partnership working with residents on service developments

### To take this forward, we have agreed a new Resident Influence Strategy for Octavia, which has the following priorities:

- **Improving engagement with residents:** Refreshing our residents' panel, and offering more engagement options to make it easier for you to get involved and provide more opportunities for us to work in partnership to improve our services.
- **Strengthening communication and insight:** Working with you to create a residents' charter and being transparent about our performance against it. We'll also make better use of data to understand your experience of our services so we can improve them without always having to ask.
- **Ensuring a 'resident first' culture across Octavia:** embedding good quality customer service, engagement and continuous improvement as standard, enabling you to influence all aspects of our work.



## Help create better services for everyone and apply to join a residents' panel

These are exciting times for Octavia. We are getting ready to launch our new Resident Influence Strategy, which is aimed at improving the way we work with you to design and deliver better homes and services.

Your views matter to us. That's why we are refreshing Octavia's residents' panel and setting up a panel focused on complaints. Both these panels will help us learn from your experiences.

Octavia's residents' panel will have oversight of all the different ways in which we are consulting with residents and enabling you to influence and help improve our services. It will also be our main resident forum for direct consultation. The new complaints panel will act as an advocate for residents. It will review complaints and how they are handled and be invited to recommend resolutions and areas for improvement. Together, the panels will ensure the voices of Octavia residents are listened to and acted upon by us.



"Being a part of this journey has helped me to influence new ideas and represent residents by engaging and influencing how Octavia operates. I have learnt so much in my role, made new friends and know that I have influenced change." Octavia resident and Your Voice panel member, Keith (pictured)

We are now recruiting people to join these residents' panels. If you are interested in getting involved and would like to collaborate with others to ensure your voice is heard, visit [www.octaviahousing.org.uk/be-involved](http://www.octaviahousing.org.uk/be-involved) to find out more about the roles and how to apply.

If you would rather contact us by phone, call us on **020 8354 5500** and ask to speak to the Resident Involvement Team and we will arrange for further information about the roles to be posted to you.

## Base summer 2022 programme for young people

We still have a few spaces available for our summer activities for young people, run from our Base youth club at The Reed community centre in North Kensington.

All activities are free to attend, but a completed membership form and pre-registering is required. All activities take place at, or start from, The Reed.

### Mondays

- **08/08 - Dreamland Margate:** A trip to the seaside to visit the Dreamland theme park, 09:30 - 18:30 (for ages 10-15s only)
- **15/08 - Crazy Beads Jewellery Project:** 11:00 - 17:00 | (for ages 10-14s only)

### Tuesdays

- **09/08 - Base 2022 Ressie Training Camp:** Trip to Westway Climbing Wall, 11:00 - 16:00 | (10-14s only)
- **16/08 - Crazy Beads Jewellery Project:** 11:00 - 17:00 | (for ages 10-14s only)
- **23/08 - Adrenalin Rush Laser Tag:** A trip to AR Laser Tag in Chiswick, 11:00 - 16:00 | (10-14s only)

### Wednesdays

- **10/08 - A trip to the Legoland theme park in Windsor:** 10:00 - 18:00 | (for ages 10-14s only)
- **24/08 - Come Dine With Base Cooking Comp:** Test your cooking, baking and team work skills and win prizes, 11:00 - 16:00 | (for ages 10-14s only)

### Thursdays

- **18/08 - Crazy Beads Jewellery Project:** 12:00 - 19:00 | (for ages 10-14s only)
- **25/08 - A trip to London Zoo:** the world's oldest zoo in Regents Park, 11:00 - 16:00 | (for ages 10-14s only)

### Fridays

- **12/08 - Go Ape:** a trip to Go Ape's aerial course in Battersea 11:00 - 17:00 | (for ages 10-15s only)
- **26/08 - Base End Of Summer Party 2022:** movies, games, pizza and the Base summer video game competition 11:00 - 16:00 | (for ages 10-15s only)

To book a place with the summer programme, contact Conor Lynch at [conor.lynch@octavia.org.uk](mailto:conor.lynch@octavia.org.uk), 07985 692369. Find out more about Base at: [www.octaviafoundation.org.uk/base](http://www.octaviafoundation.org.uk/base) | Find us on Insta at: [www.instagram.com/weareoctavia](http://www.instagram.com/weareoctavia)



# Worried about meeting your essential household bills?

With household bills rising, most people are facing a reduced budget and some residents will be faced with difficult choices, like paying for food or going without hot water.

## You may be impacted by:

- rent and service charge increases
- increases in food prices
- energy price rises
- National Insurance contributions increasing by 1.25%

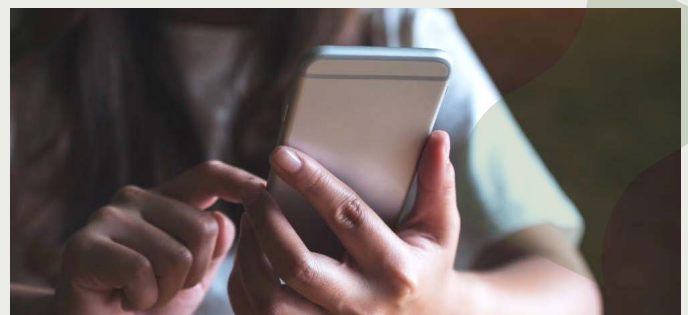
If you have been affected by these changes, or other changes to your finances, and are struggling to pay your rent and other essential bills, we can provide help and advice.

We can support with making new benefit claims and challenging benefit decisions, help you manage your debts and, if you need it, help you with access to food. We can also help you with

finding new or better-paid employment. We know this is a challenging time for many people so speak to us if you need some support. If you are struggling - we are here to help. Call us in confidence on **020 8354 5500 Monday to Friday 9.30 am – 4.30 pm.**

For more information about Octavia's money and benefits advice and support, go to: **[www.octaviahousing.org.uk/financial-support](http://www.octaviahousing.org.uk/financial-support)**

To contact our employment and training team, contact **Kyrsha Haynes** on **07931 170771.**



## New online service for resident parking

We are launching a new online portal for resident parking in September.

The new web service will allow residents to apply for, renew and cancel their resident parking permit, without the need to contact us directly. The service will be available 24/7, all year round. You will also be able to use it to pay for visitor parking.

We'll be writing to all residents who currently have a parking permit over the next few weeks to provide details about how to sign up to the portal. We will also be demonstrating the portal to people in schemes in September.

**Paper permits will continue to be available for anyone who needs them.**



For more information about parking services, please call **020 8354 5500.**

## Support our charity shops



Our charity shops are open seven days a week and are a great place to shop for individual and affordable fashion items.

If you are looking to refresh your wardrobe without breaking the bank, why not take a look at some of the great quality, pre-loved clothes and accessories on offer at your local Octavia store.

Clothing donations from individuals and organisations are also always welcome. You can drop them off at any store, or if you have ten or more large bags to donate, we can arrange to come and collect your donations from you.

Funds raised from our charity shops go towards supporting our community projects.

To find your local Octavia store opening times, go to: **[www.octaviafoundation.org.uk/store-finder](http://www.octaviafoundation.org.uk/store-finder)**

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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