

AUTUMN 2022 – Information for Octavia homeowners

UPDATE HOMEOWNER NEWSLETTER

Keeping residents updated and informed



We've published our 2021-2022 annual report for residents

Every year we publish an Annual Resident Report to inform you about our work during the year.

In the report we explain how our services have performed and how the rents we receive have been spent. It also covers how residents have influenced all areas of our work and helped us to improve our services.

We are pleased to report that over the year 2021-2022, performance across our key services was strong:

- We've continued to prioritise fire safety through our building safety programme and developed more homes for Londoners

- We reviewed our complaints process with residents and made changes so that 97% of complaints were efficiently resolved by managers
- We've reached more people in the communities where we work than before, providing opportunities for people of all ages to live better lives through services such as befriending, creative activities for young people, employment and training support

Go to our website to read the report in full:
www.octaviahousing.org.uk

If you would like a copy of the report to be posted to you, please email your request to update@octavia.org.uk

Dealing with your complaints

We are committed to providing residents with an exemplary service. While we always strive to be reliable, responsive, respectful and resourceful, occasionally we may not meet your expectations.

When things go wrong, we welcome the opportunity to listen to and understand your concerns so that we can act quickly to put things right.

Following a review of how we manage complaints which many of you participated in, we have updated our complaints policy to enable you to understand how to make a complaint and ensure we respond consistently, fairly and sensitively to your concerns. We now have a clear two-stage process that provides residents with the opportunity to take things further if you are not happy with our initial response to your complaint.

Our complaints policy aims to ensure we:

- Effectively manage and resolve complaints
- Have a fair and effective complaint escalation and review process
- Learn from your feedback to evaluate and improve our services

We welcome all kinds of feedback on our services, whether you are a tenant or shared owner resident, applying for a home with us, or affected by our work in any other way. Comments and compliments from you help us to keep our service standards high, know in what areas we are doing well, and where we need to improve.

Our complaints roadmap, which can be found on our website [here](#), shows our process for responding to complaints. For more information see:

www.octaviahousing.org.uk/complaints

The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted at info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk



Extending the lease to your home

As a leaseholder, your lease will be for a fixed period. As the lease reduces in length you may find that it will be harder to re-mortgage or sell your home. It is advisable to have more than 80 years left on your lease; any less can affect the value of your flat.

You have a statutory right to extend your lease if you want to, but this can be quite a lengthy and drawn-out legal process. It can also be quite costly.

To help residents who want to extend their lease avoid the time and expense of the statutory route, we have developed an alternative way of doing this through our voluntary lease extension policy, which offers a cheaper and faster route to lease extensions.

It is available to all leaseholders, including shared owners, unless there is a reason why we are unable to offer you an extension under our policy; for example where we are a leaseholder too and our lease doesn't have enough time length to allow this.

If you chose to extend your lease through our lease extension policy you will benefit from a further 90 years added to the term of your lease and you will no longer need to pay ground rent.

To find out more about Octavia's lease extension policy, contact our Sales Services team by emailing info@octavia.org.uk

Cladding surveys

Our in-depth intrusive survey programme on some of our schemes is continuing. Many factors have been considered in carrying out these fire safety checks, including the height of buildings and the materials used in existing cladding.

Unfortunately, this is taking longer than originally envisaged, as we continue to work with our contractors to ensure all required buildings are surveyed. It is important that we get it right and fully understand what, if any, remedial works are required. This will enable us to create plans for the next steps.

Government support for energy bills

The Government has set up two schemes to help people with the increase in their home energy bills through this winter. These are:

Energy Support Scheme discount

Under this scheme, residents who pay for their electricity directly to a supplier – eg EON, Scottish Power, or EDF will receive £400 support. You should have already been contacted by your supplier to confirm how this will work for you.

If you pay by direct debit, you should see a reduction to your monthly direct debit amount. If you have a smart pre-payment meter, a credit should be applied directly to your meter on the first week of each month. If you are in any doubt, contact your supplier for further details.

Residents who pay Octavia for their electricity usage are not covered by this scheme. We are in discussions with suppliers to understand what, if any, support is available and how this will be applied. Once we have this information, we will be in contact with residents it applies to.

Energy Price Guarantee

This scheme limits the price of household gas and electricity, helping to keep the cost down. Residents who are served by heat networks or communal boilers are not covered by this scheme in relation to their gas supply.



For these homes, the business which buys the gas from the supplier may be eligible for some price protection through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme and, if so, they are required to pass this on to residents. For some of our homes, we purchase gas and charge residents for the cost. The way we purchase gas means we are protected and although costs may go up, they will be capped.

For certain homes we act as the billing agent but the freeholder, or managing agent, purchases the gas; for other homes, the energy supply and billing is managed completely by the freeholder or managing agent. We are contacting the agents of these schemes to find out if their gas prices will also be protected under the cap.

The government schemes are very new, and we are still waiting for fuller details – once we have them, we will provide residents with further updates.

More information about Government help with energy bills and the cost of living can be found at: helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk

Online parking portal goes live

On 1 October 2022, Octavia moved to a new online portal system for parking permits. The portal is available via a website link and it hosts a range of benefits, including access to the parking service 24/7, 365 days a year.

To renew or apply for a parking permit, please visit <https://octavia.zatpermit.com/applicant> to sign up to the service. All permits are electronic so there is no need to display a permit in your vehicle. For more information, contact us at parking@octavia.org.uk

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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Contact us

Sales services: sales@octavialiving.org.uk | 020 8354 5500

Contact team: 020 8354 5500 | info@octavia.org.uk

Complaints: www.octaviahousing.com/complaints

www.octaviahousing.org.uk

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What do you think of this news bulletin?

Let us know at: update@octavia.org.uk