Housing for Women

CONNECT

The newsletter for Housing for Women residents **Summer 2026**

Summer Edition



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Domestic Abuse Services

For over 40 years, Housing for Women has been supporting women and children in London escaping domestic violence and abuse.

Awaab's Law: Keeping homes safe and healthy

New regulations strengthen protections for residents

Residents now have stronger protections against health and safety hazards in their homes under the Hazards in Social Housing Regulations, known as Awaab's Law.

Since October 2025, social landlords such as Housing for Women have been required to investigate and address serious hazards, including damp and mould, within set timescales. From October 2026, these requirements will extend to other serious hazards, including excess cold or heat, fire risks, electrical dangers, structural issues and hygiene concerns.

We are committed to meeting these requirements and keeping residents safe. Please ensure that you provide access to your home and report any hazards as soon as possible, so that we can investigate and act quickly.

We are also increasing transparency under the **Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs)**. From October, we will begin publishing more information about our services, performance, governance and key policies **(see page 8 for more details)**. We will provide regular updates as further information becomes available.

TIP:

REPORT HAZARDS EARLY SO WE CAN INVESTIGATE AND ACT.

Key Dates for Your Diary

+ **August 2026:** Alison Muir joins Housing for Women
+ **October 2026:** New STAIRs transparency requirements begin
+ **October 2026:** Rent and service charge changes take effect
+ **April 2027:** Residents can submit formal STAIRs information requests

Rent and service charges: What happens next?

Service charge costs under review, with updates coming later this year

We are currently reviewing rents and service costs for 2026/27. Our aim is to keep charges fair, improve transparency and help you understand what you are paying for.

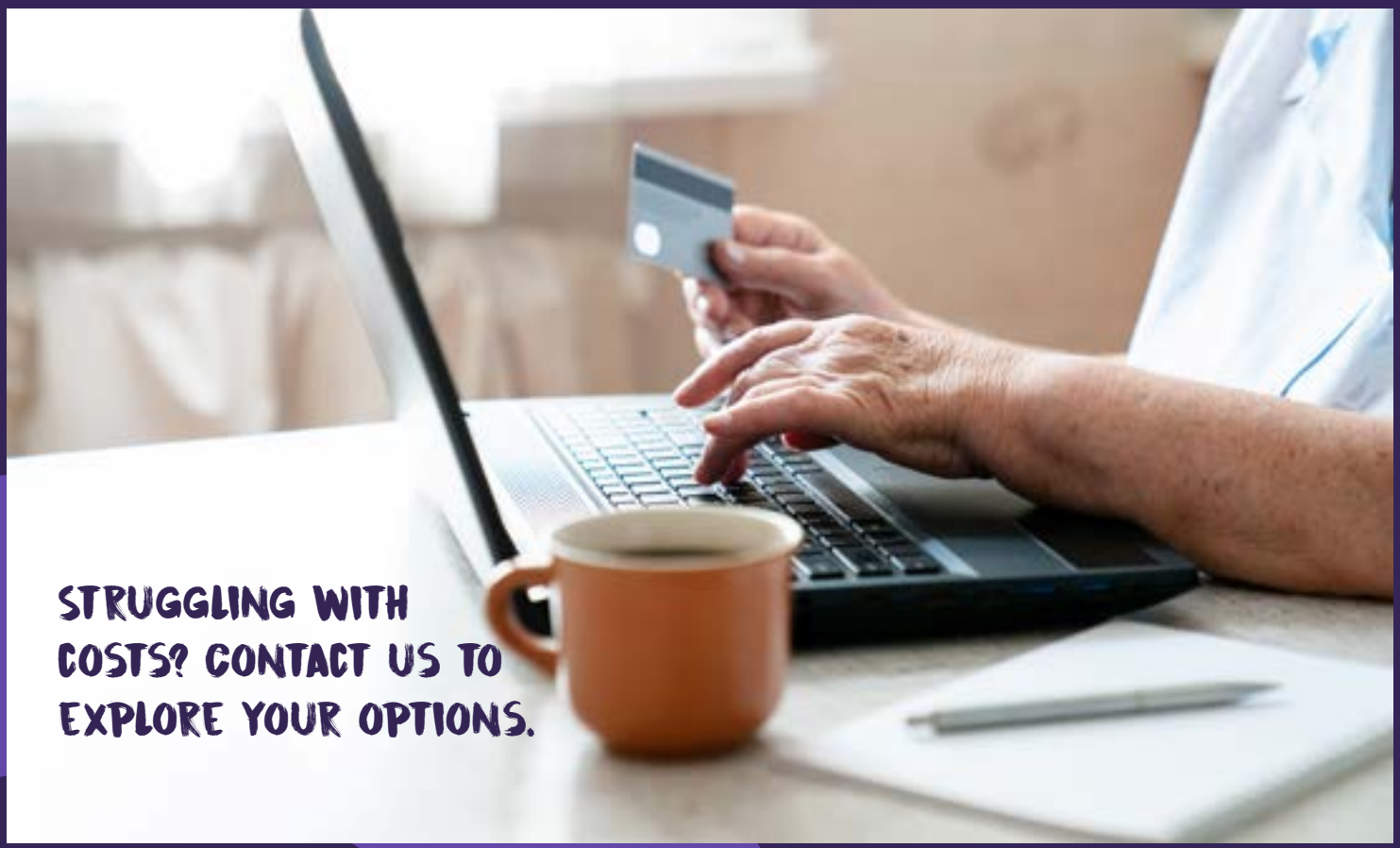
Resident feedback is helping to shape this review. We have heard that some residents would like service charges to be clearer and easier to understand, so we are reviewing how charges are calculated and how information is presented.

Service charges help pay for shared services such as cleaning, grounds maintenance, building safety checks, shared staffing and waste management. As part of this review, we are looking at how we can balance affordability with the quality and reliability of the services residents receive.

You should have received a letter explaining your rent and service charge arrangements for 2026/27, along with a service list and cost breakdown. This information will show what services are provided and how charges apply to your home.

Unless you are a fair rent tenant, any changes will take effect from October, giving you time to review the information and plan ahead.

If you receive Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, some service charges may be covered. If you are concerned about paying your rent or service charges, please get in touch. We can talk through the support and advice available.



Introducing Alison Muir, Housing for Women's new Chief Executive

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I'm delighted to introduce myself as the new Chief Executive of Housing for Women. Even before starting, I was struck by the organisation's proud 90-year history and the lasting difference it has made in women's lives. Throughout my 25-year career in social housing, local authorities and charities, one lesson has stood out: the importance of listening.

I want you, who rely on Housing for Women, whether in our homes or supported housing services, to feel genuinely heard. Your experiences and insights will help shape our future, and I am committed to being open about where we need to improve and working with residents to make positive changes.

A key part of this commitment is creating opportunities for you to speak directly with me. From 25 September, I will hold telephone appointments on the last Friday of every month, between 9am and 5pm for you to feedback your concerns, ideas for improvement or share positive experiences. I want to hear from you!

Please email **communications@h4w.co.uk** with your name and telephone number. We will then contact you to confirm your 30-minute time slot, and I will call you.

I look forward to hearing from you and working together to shape the future of Housing for Women.

With my very best wishes,

Alison Muir "



BOOK A CALL TO SPEAK DIRECTLY WITH ALISON BY EMAILING US AT COMMUNICATIONS@H4W.CO.UK

Greater transparency is on the way

STAIRs will give residents greater access to information

You will soon have new rights to access information about Housing for Women through the Government's **Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs).**

These changes are designed to make social housing more transparent and give residents easier access to information about how services are delivered, how decisions are made and how money is spent.

We welcome the introduction of STAIRs and the opportunity it creates to be more open about our work. From October, we will begin publishing more information online about our services, performance, governance and key policies. We will continue to update this information so residents can access the latest available information.

We know that access to clear information helps residents understand our performance, ask questions and contribute to conversations about how services are delivered. By making more information available, we want to support residents to stay informed, share their views and play an active role in shaping services.

Greater transparency helps build trust, strengthen accountability and support meaningful engagement between Housing for Women and our residents.



CHECK OUR WEBSITE REGULARLY FOR UPDATES ON SERVICES, PERFORMANCE AND POLICIES, HELPING YOU STAY INFORMED AND INVOLVED.

How resident feedback is driving service improvements

Your feedback plays an important role in helping us improve our services. Between April 2025 and March 2026, the Housing Ombudsman made 32 findings relating to Housing for Women, many linked to repairs and our previous repairs and maintenance contractor.

The Ombudsman's review, together with feedback from you, highlighted areas where we could do better. We've used this to improve services and residents' experiences. We know there is more to do and will continue listening, learning and making changes that make a real difference.

What you told the Ombudsman:

- Complex cases, including rent arrears, anti-social behaviour and long-standing repairs, could be frustrating and difficult to resolve.
- Repairs communication was not always clear or timely.
- Some agreed actions were not followed up.

Actions we've taken...

- Introduced weekly complaints review meetings to make sure issues are progressing and actions are completed.
- Started regular reviews of complex cases to help us resolve concerns more quickly and consistently.
- Updated our complaint response letters so information is clearer and easier to understand.
- Improved how we record complaints and follow-up actions on our housing management system, helping us track progress more effectively.
- Increased oversight of Ombudsman cases so we can share learning across teams and continue improving our services.



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SHARED FEEDBACK OR RAISED CONCERNS. YOUR FEEDBACK HELPS HOLD US TO ACCOUNT AND SHAPES THE IMPROVEMENTS WE MAKE. BY LISTENING TO YOU AND LEARNING FROM YOUR EXPERIENCES, WE CAN CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OUR SERVICES AND ENSURE OUR RESIDENTS FEEL HEARD, RESPECTED AND SUPPORTED.



A plan to improve landlord services

Our 2026-2028 improvement programme puts tenants at the heart of change

We know there are areas where we need to improve, and we are committed to making those changes with our residents.

Our new **Operations Service Improvement Plan for 2026-2028,** sets out the actions we will take over the next two years to improve services. The plan has been shaped by resident feedback, complaints, performance data and day-to-day experience.

Together, these insights have helped us identify the areas that matter most to residents. Over the next two years, we will focus on improving repairs, strengthening complaint handling, communicating more clearly, and meeting building safety requirements consistently. This will support the delivery of our Customer First Strategy.

We are also investing in our people and systems to support these improvements. This includes additional staff training, more opportunities for residents to influence services, and better use of data to measure progress and respond where improvements are needed.

Being honest about what is not working as well as it should is an important part of improving. We will share a summary of the plan on our website and provide updates every six months so residents can track progress.



TIP: GET INVOLVED AND HELP DRIVE CHANGE.

Celebrating 90 years of Supporting Women

Housing for Women recently celebrated an incredible milestone, marking 90 years of supporting women and their families across London.

On 9 June, supporters, partners, volunteers, fundraisers and friends gathered at The Living Room, City Hall, to celebrate our journey and the positive difference we've made in women's lives since 1935.

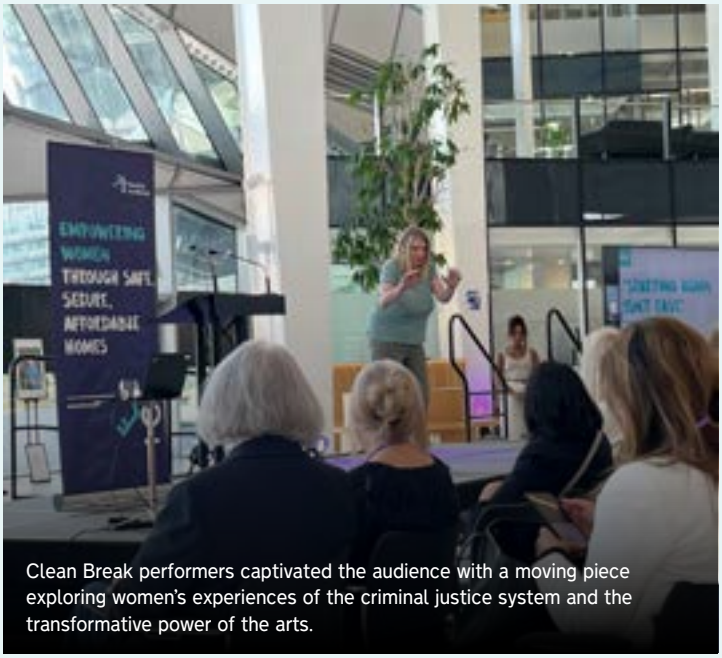
The event featured inspiring speeches from our Chair, Susan Kane, and CEO, Zaiba Qureshi, who reflected on our achievements over the past nine decades and shared their hopes for the future. They highlighted the history, strength, resilience and determination of the women who have shaped our story and continue to inspire our work every day.

Guests also enjoyed a screening of our latest Supported Housing film, showcasing the life-changing impact of our services. A powerful performance by women from the Clean Break theatre company offered insight into the experiences of women affected by the criminal justice system and showed how creativity can help transform lives.

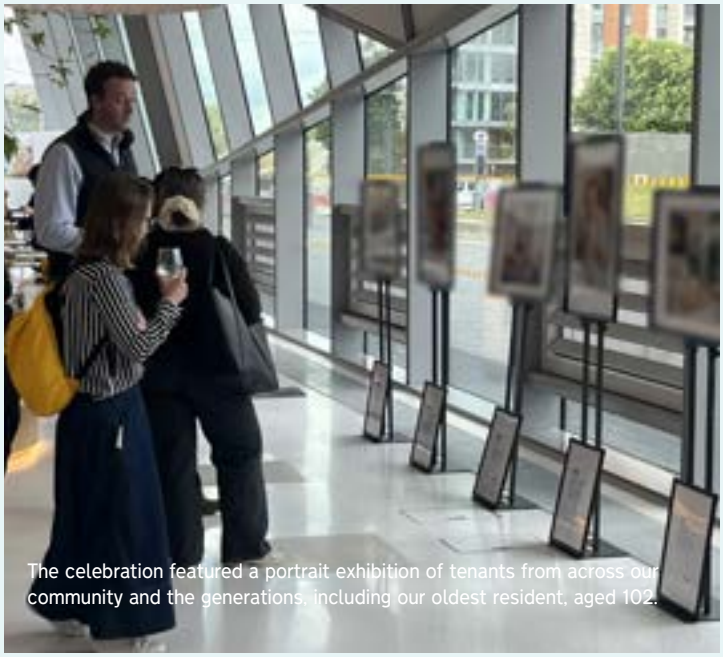
Celebrating our communities through creativity and connection, the event featured a portrait exhibition of tenants from across our neighbourhoods, including our oldest participant aged 102, alongside artwork created by women living in supported housing.

With food, refreshments and opportunities to connect, the event reflected the strength of the Housing for Women community. It was a proud moment to honour 90 years of supporting women across London and to look ahead to the future.

> "THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS BEEN PART OF OUR JOURNEY. TOGETHER, WE ARE CONTINUING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE."



Clean Break performers captivated the audience with a moving piece exploring women's experiences of the criminal justice system and the transformative power of the arts.



The celebration featured a portrait exhibition of tenants from across our community and the generations, including our oldest resident, aged 102.

Your voice matters: Tenant panel update

Tenant involvement remains a priority, and we'll be sharing next steps soon

Last year, many residents told us they were interested in helping to shape the future of Housing for Women through a new Tenant Panel.

We were delighted by the positive response and grateful to everyone who expressed an interest. Unfortunately, a period of staffing changes meant we were unable to move the project forward as quickly as we had planned.

We would like to apologise to residents who have been waiting for an update and thank you for your patience. Your involvement remains an important part of our future plans. We believe a Tenant Panel and other occasions could provide valuable opportunities for residents to influence decisions, review performance information and share ideas about how services can be improved.

Your knowledge and experiences are incredibly important, and we remain committed to creating meaningful opportunities for customers to influence and have their voices heard. Working with you, we will explore how the panel will work and the role it will play in shaping our services. We will share further details with you in our next newsletter.

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> THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW OUR HOMES AND SERVICES BEST ARE THE RESIDENTS WHO LIVE IN THEM AND USE THEM.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

We're always looking to improve our services, and resident feedback helps us understand what's working well and where improvements are needed.

To support this, we work with Acuity, an independent research company, to carry out our annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey. Feedback from previous surveys has helped shape service improvements, and we're keen to hear whether those changes are making a difference.

Your responses are completely confidential. Acuity shares survey results with us anonymously and will not identify you unless you give permission.

What happens next?

During the week beginning 21 September, Acuity will contact selected residents by phone or post and invite them to take part in the survey. Once the survey is complete, we'll share the results and the actions we'll take in response through our website and future newsletters.

> YOUR FEEDBACK HELPS SHAPE OUR SERVICES, SO LOOK OUT FOR YOUR INVITATION AND TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE YOUR SAY.

Looking after our shared spaces

Working together to create clean, welcoming communities

Our shared spaces are important to all of us. By working together, we can help keep our entrances, stairways, lifts, landings and bin stores clean, safe and welcoming for everyone who lives here.

Our cleaning contractors regularly clean and maintain these areas, and we continue to monitor standards and respond to issues that residents raise with us.

We know that keeping communal areas in good condition is a shared responsibility. Residents can help by using the correct waste and recycling facilities, disposing of rubbish responsibly and keeping communal areas clear of personal belongings. These small actions can make a big difference to everyone who lives in our communities.

Recently, we have seen an increase in rubbish being left in communal areas and around some of our estates. We are working with residents and the local council to tackle this issue and improve the environment around our homes. Where necessary, we will follow up on reports of persistent misuse of communal areas in line with tenancy agreements.

If you notice overflowing bins, fly-tipping, blocked walkways or other cleanliness concerns, please let us know. Your reports help us identify issues quickly and work with the relevant teams to resolve them.



Report cleanliness issues using the Tenant Portal.

Join us for estate walkabouts

Have Your Say About Your Estate

We're excited to be organising joint estate walkabouts at your block soon, and we'd love for you to get involved. These visits are a great opportunity for residents, Housing for Women staff and contractors to come together, take a look around communal areas, discuss any concerns, and explore ideas for making our estates even better places to live.

Your views and experiences matter. By sharing your feedback, you help us identify what's working well, address any issues, and shape future improvements for the benefit of the whole community.

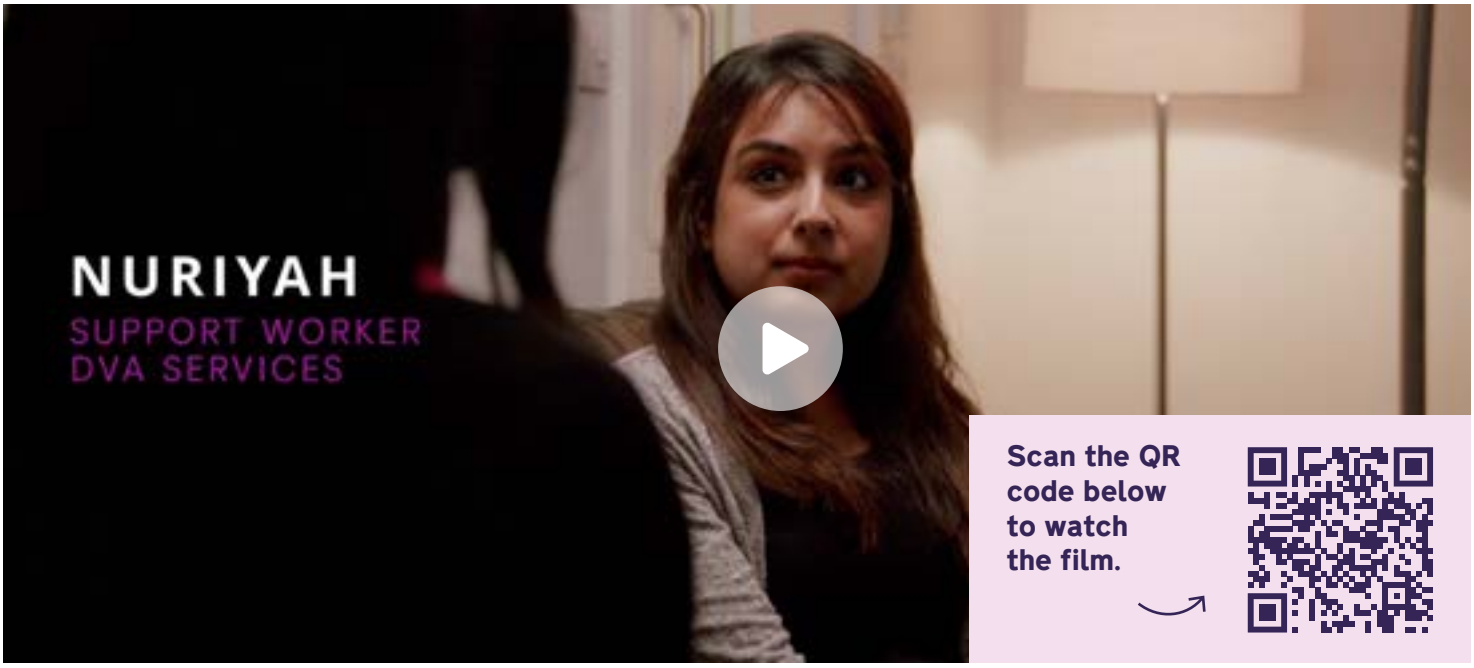
LOOK OUT FOR DETAILS ON YOUR BLOCK NOTICE BOARD AND COME ALONG TO JOIN THE CONVERSATION.

Our supported housing film is here

We're pleased to share a new film featuring the experiences of women who have worked with Housing for Women's supported housing services.

Every woman deserves safety, stability and the opportunity to move forward on her own terms. Through the voices of women who have accessed our services, the film explores what safe housing, practical support and trusted relationships can make possible. It highlights experiences across our domestic abuse refuges, SafeSpace for women trafficked into the UK, and ReConnect+ for women leaving prison.

IF YOU NEED URGENT SUPPORT FROM ANY OF THE FEATURED SERVICES, PLEASE CONTACT US ON 020 7501 6120.



Scan the QR code below to watch the film.

Keep your details up to date

Working together helps us provide a service that meets your needs.

Please check that we have your email address and phone number. Keeping your details up to date helps us share news, opportunities, service updates and changes that may affect you.

We also welcome information about any communication preferences or medical needs. Sharing this information helps us make reasonable adjustments, improve accessibility and communicate with you in the way that works best.

It also helps us respond more effectively and ensure you receive information and support when needed. Thank you for working with us.

You can update your details quickly and easily through the Tenant Portal.

Stay connected with your tenancy, whenever it suits you

Have you used the Housing for Women Tenant Portal yet?

The Tenant Portal gives you quick and secure access to tenancy services, 24 hours a day, so you can manage things at a time that works for you.

Using the portal, you can: check your rent balance, make payments, report repairs, update your contact details, share feedback, make a complaint or recognise a member of staff who has provided great service.

Many residents already use the portal to stay informed and manage their tenancy in a way that suits them.

We are continuing to improve our digital services with residents' needs in mind. Your feedback helps shape these improvements, ensuring services remain responsive, practical and accessible.

When routine requests and updates are managed online, our teams can respond more quickly and spend more time supporting residents who need additional help.

The Tenant Portal is one of the ways we're working with residents to create services that are accessible, secure and convenient. We want it to be easy for you to access our services, whether online, over the phone or by speaking to us.

Scan the QR code to access the portal. To register, click Register, choose Tenant, enter your details, then click Register to create your account.

Make rent payments simpler with direct debit

A hassle-free way to stay on top of your rent

We know that keeping on top of household bills can sometimes be challenging, and we're always looking at ways to make managing your tenancy easier.

Many residents choose to pay their rent by Direct Debit because it gives them one less thing to think about. Once it's set up, rent payments are collected automatically on an agreed date, helping residents keep track of payments and reduce the risk of missing one.

Direct Debit can also make budgeting simpler, as you know exactly when your rent payment will leave your account each month. If you're looking for a more convenient way to manage your rent, we're here to help you explore whether Direct Debit is the right option for you.

THE PROCESS IS SECURE, RELIABLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD TO ARRANGE.

Go to the Direct Debit website for more details.

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KEEPING YOU INFORMED

We always want to ensure we deliver great homes and services for you; in fact, it is one of our key goals. An important way we do this is how we communicate with you. This includes giving you essential information and keeping you up to date.

Newsletter

Each quarter, we publish Connect, our residents' newsletter. We'll email you a copy, post it on our website, and share it on our social media channels. We no longer print Connect as part of our commitment to reducing our environmental impact. **If you require it in different format, including another language, a printed copy, braille, large print, or Easy Read**, please email communications@h4w.co.uk or call 020 7501 612

Annual Review

Each year, we share our Annual Review, looking back at what we've achieved together with residents, key stakeholders and funders, and the impact of that work over the last twelve months. In the latest edition, available now on our website, you can read about key projects and improvements, hear directly from tenants and service users about their experiences, and explore performance figures that show how we're working to deliver value and improve services for our customers.



Our website

Our website is a useful place to find information about living with us and accessing the services you use. You can explore ways to get involved in your community, manage your tenancy through our Tenant Portal, and keep up to date with the latest news and updates from across our organisation and neighbourhoods. **Find us at: www.hfw.org.uk**

Social media

Our social media channels are another way to stay connected with what's happening in your community. We share Housing for Women updates, local information and housing sector news on **Instagram** and **Facebook**. Follow us on **LinkedIn** for updates on our work, partnerships and impact.

What is 'Connect'?

Connect is your newsletter, and we'd like it to reflect the issues, stories and information that matter to you. If there's something you'd like us to cover in a future issue, or if you'd like to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Contact our Communications team at communications@h4w.co.uk or call 020 7501 6120.

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Housing4Women

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