Heads-Up

Your quarterly Look Ahead customer newsletter. Autumn 2026

A message from Peter, this edition's Guest Editor



Hello, and welcome to Heads-Up. I'm Peter, and I'm delighted to be your Guest Editor. In this issue, we want to tell you about your rights as a social housing tenant, including the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) and the second phase of Awaab's Law.

We also want to show you what Look Ahead has been doing to improve since our last routine inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and since you gave us your Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) feedback.

Telling Look Ahead how you feel is important, I learned this first-hand. I was a customer at Look Ahead's Slough Hostel for two years, and the support I had was fantastic. The staff there encouraged me to get involved, first with quality checking, and then I joined the Tenant and Landlord Panel (TALP).

At TALP, we tell Look Ahead what it's like to live in their homes and give honest feedback. This helped me rebuild my confidence. Meeting senior staff and the Regulator at TALP showed me that people want to understand our experiences and listen to us, not just "tick boxes."

The confidence I got from taking part has helped me a lot in my life. I've since managed to secure a Civil Service job in Salisbury, where I'll be moving soon. If this sounds good to you, contact **gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk** to learn more about TALP.

To sign off, I'll simply say, happy reading, and, whether you celebrate Christmas or not, I wish you a peaceful, restful and joyful time over the festive season.

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FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about opportunities like these, speak to your support worker or email the Co-Production Team at gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk

Cuppa CORNER

SEAN'S STORY

My volunteering story began when I met Ferdinand from Look Ahead's Co-Production Team who was working with with Islington Mental Health Service where I live. He asked what I'd like to get involved in, and I told him I was interested in working on the phones, answering emails and sharing information.



Ferdinand told me about an opportunity to volunteer with Look Ahead's Customer Contact Centre team at Head Office. Shah, one of the team, helped me get started and showed me what to do. I made notes so I could refer back to them as I learnt.

I now volunteer every Thursday from 11am to 5pm. A lot of my work involves data entry to help the team keep their records up to date. My first task of the day is called 'completions'. This means recording completed repairs on the system so the contractors we work with can get paid. I've also been helping with invoices. I'm getting lots of positive feedback from the team, which feels good. My ambition now is to get a job with the Repairs Team.

Alongside my regular tasks, I've also helped interview a new team member.

I really enjoy volunteering with the team. There's a lot of camaraderie, and we have some laughs along the way.

SHARHEENA'S STORY



Sharheena (centre right) and members of the Heads-Up Editorial Team

You may remember me as a Heads-Up guest editor from before. But this time, I'd like to share what Barnsley Street Neighbourhood Mental Health Centre in Bethnal Green means to me. I've been coming since it opened, but never imagined it would become such a big part of my life.

Spending time with people here has helped me manage my emotions, face challenges and feel less lonely. The staff make a real effort and always ask how I'm doing.

Six months ago, I started leading a pampering group, offering hand and foot massages, helping translate between Bengali and English, and pointing people towards support. We planned to meet monthly, but it's gone so well that we now meet weekly. Many friends I've met at Barnsley Street or from my volunteering at Mind come along.

Helping others helps me too. Seeing someone smile makes me smile, and knowing I'm making a difference means so much.

I used to sit quietly and listen. Now I'm more confident and outspoken. People ask how I've come out of my shell. Getting involved has helped me do just that.

£20 HIGH STREET VOUCHER

We want to hear your stories. Send your story to **gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk** – **if we publish it, we will give you a £20 voucher.**

Congratulations Aman!

A huge congratulations to Aman who has raised an amazing £857 for Look Ahead by running the 2026 Oysho Royal Parks Half Marathon.

Aman is a customer at Look Ahead's Tower Hamlets Young People service, and having benefited from support himself, Aman wanted to give something back. His fantastic fundraising will be used to benefit customers in our services. Well done, Aman, and thank you to everyone who supported him!

Aman said: *"I want to go again, I want to help more young people and I want us to do it together. Today I know I can be faster, it is my first half marathon but I am happy and I want to say thank you to everyone who supported me."*



Aman after finishing the half marathon.

What's going on?

Across Look Ahead, customers have been enjoying a range of activities and celebrations, from Halloween to Black History Month, to making their own art.





Spooktacular! Halloween decorations at **Campbell Road Young People Service.**



Parrots, painted by a Look Ahead customer.

(more on next page)



Customers from **Luton Road Learning Disability Service** enjoying some Halloween painting activities.



Customers at **Lester Court Learning Disability Service** enjoyed a pyjama party.





Customers and staff came together at **Warwick Road Homelessness Service** and **Lambeth Long Term Mental Health Service** to mark Black History Month around the theme Honouring Our Communities.



Customers at **Richmond Mental Health Service** celebrated Diwali.



Pelham Road Learning Disability Service launched their new Garden Pod activity space for customers to enjoy. The pod was built with support from contractor **Glendale**.

To send us your art and photos, and learn more about opportunities to get involved, speak to your support worker or email the Co-Production Team at **gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk**

What you need to know about our **Regulator inspection results**

This summer, the Regulator of Social Housing inspected Look Ahead to make sure we are doing our job properly and providing you with good homes and services.

The Regulator looked at three areas and gave us three grades:

C2
for Consumer
how we look after your home and provide services to you.

G2
for Governance
how Look Ahead is run.

V2
for Viability
how we manage our money and plan for the future.

Consumer – your home and services

This looks at the things that affect you most directly. This includes whether your home is safe and well-maintained, how we respond when things go wrong, how we deal with complaints and how we involve you in decisions.

This was our first Consumer grade and we received C2.

The Regulator recognised good work in repairs and maintenance, dealing with complaints fairly and promptly, and giving you meaningful opportunities to have a say and influence what we do.

The Regulator also found areas where we need to improve.

We need to do more to show and evidence that damp and mould cases are dealt with within legal timescales. We also need better information about your individual needs, so we can communicate with you in the right way and make sure our services meet your needs.

We have already started work on these areas through our Landlord Improvement Action Plan. This includes improving how we track cases, report on safety and record information about your needs.



Governance – how Look Ahead is run

This looks at how Look Ahead makes important decisions, checks how well we are doing and makes sure senior managers are doing what they should.

We received a G2, the same grade as last time.

The Regulator confirmed that we meet its governance requirements. It also recognised improvements in how we manage our finances, carry out independent reviews and make sure we provide value for money.

We are continuing to improve. This includes looking at the skills and experience on our Board and giving Board members better information about the safety of your homes, particularly around damp and mould.

This will help our Board check that we are making the improvements we have promised and that they make a difference to you.

Viability – managing our money for the future

This looks at how well we manage our finances so that Look Ahead remains financially sustainable in the future. It includes making sure we have enough money to invest in the resources and equipment we need, maintain our properties and continue providing homes and support services to customers.

We received a V2, the same grade as last time.

The Regulator confirmed that we meet its financial requirements and that our financial plan shows we have enough funding to deliver our future business plans.

We still need to keep a close eye on our finances. This includes making sure we achieve the income we have planned, collect money owed to us promptly and manage our costs carefully.

By regularly checking our financial performance against our plans, we can identify pressures, take action quickly when needed and continue providing homes and support services.

Want to know more? To read the Regulator's full judgement, scan the QR code with your phone.



Your rights under the **Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements** (STAIRs)

The Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) gives our tenants new rights to information.

STAIRS aims to give you greater access to information about how we manage your homes and our housing services, helping to improve transparency and accountability.

Since 1 October 2026 we have published key information in our STAIRs Publication Scheme on our website. You can find out about how we run Look Ahead, spend money and provide housing. You can also see how well we are doing our job, how we engage with tenants, our policies and how you can raise concerns.

From 1 April 2027: You will be able to ask us for information that we haven't already published about how we manage your homes.

You can do this by contacting our Information Governance Team on **IG@lookahead.org.uk** or by speaking to your support worker or housing officer. The team expect to respond to most requests within 30 days.





Find out more

You can see the information we've published in our STAIRs Publication Scheme on our website by visiting:

lookahead.org.uk/transparency-and-publication-scheme
You can also do this by scanning this QR code.

Awaab's Law Phase 2

Awaab's Law: keeping your home safe

From 30 November 2026, Phase 2 of Awaab's Law extends protection for social housing tenants in England beyond damp and mould to more serious hazards, including:

- **Dangerous temperatures**
- **Falls**
- **Fire**
- **Electrical faults**
- **Structural risks**
- **Hygiene problems**

The law may not apply to you if you occupy your home on a licence. But it does apply if you hold a tenancy. If you're not sure please check with your support worker or housing officer. Even if the law doesn't apply its important that you report safety concerns as quickly as possible.

What must Look Ahead do?

If the law applies and we (or your landlord if you are not a Look Ahead tenant) are responsible for the hazard, we must:

Investigate and make emergency hazards safe within 24 hours of becoming aware of them.

Investigate potential significant hazards within 10 working days.

Provide written findings within three working days of completing the investigation.

Complete safety work within five working days of the investigation ending if a significant hazard is found.

Arrange suitable alternative accommodation at our expense if we're not able to make your home safe within the deadline.

We must also arrange further work to prevent hazards returning and keep you informed.

Your rights

Tell us how the problem affects your household, including any additional needs you or anyone who lives with you have. You can also complain if you are unhappy and seek advice from the Housing Ombudsman.

Report a problem

Call **0333 010 4600**
(Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm).
For emergency repairs, call this number at any time; **do not email**.

For non-emergencies, email **repairs@lookahead.org.uk** or use our online report form on our website at: **lookahead.org.uk/customer-hub/repairs-and-maintenance**

You can also access the repairs form by scanning this QR code with your phone.

Give your address and describe the fault.

Your support team can help.

Please report problems straight away.

MEET HARI, LOOK AHEAD'S CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER



Hari Punchihewa, Look Ahead's Chief Financial Officer, talks to customers **John** and **Sharheena** about his role, what brought him to the organisation and life outside work. He also explains how financial decisions support Look Ahead's long-term future and customers.

SHARHEENA: ***WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT LOOK AHEAD, AND WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO JOIN?***

HARI: I spent most of my career in large private-sector banks and corporates, helping to create value for shareholders. As I got older, I wanted to use my experience to give something back to the community by helping charities and non-profit organisations.

I first took a couple of interim roles to help drive transformation in the charity sector, and the last of these was at Action for Children. I really enjoyed using my experience to make a difference and help those organisations become more sustainable, so they could continue their charity work. When I was approached about the opportunity at Look Ahead to lead finance transformation, I did not hesitate. I have now been here for three years.

JOHN: ***IN PLAIN ENGLISH, WHAT DOES A CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER DO?***

HARI: There are three key areas: managing our cash, making sure we have the right financial policies and controls in place, and financial planning and reporting.

We need to make sure Look Ahead has enough money at the right times to pay staff salaries, suppliers, lenders and taxes. We also need to maintain the financial strength of the organisation and meet the requirements of banks, regulators and auditors. This includes managing borrowing and investing of funds.

I also lead our financial planning, from preparing the annual budget to long-term planning. This means making sure we invest in the resources we need while controlling costs and balancing our income and expenditure. We also maintain accurate financial records and regularly report on our financial performance. All of this helps us make good decisions and demonstrate to the Board, regulators and other stakeholders that Look Ahead is well-managed, financially stable and sustainable.

SHARHEENA: ***WHAT DOES A TYPICAL WORKING DAY LOOK LIKE?***

HARI: It's a real mix. I have internal and external meetings, review our performance information and daily cash flow, prepare reports and speak with different stakeholders. If something needs action, we need to respond quickly.

I also monitor what is happening in the economy, financial markets and our sector. This helps us respond to developments that could have a negative impact on Look Ahead, while looking for ways to make our finances work more effectively and efficiently. I keep the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team, Board and committees informed.

JOHN: ***WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR JOB, AND WHAT IS MORE CHALLENGING?***

HARI: I enjoy seeing customers, staff and the wider organisation benefit from the decisions we make. I also enjoy seeing carefully developed plans delivered smoothly and the organisation becoming financially stronger.

The difficult part is having to control costs and make some tough decisions. We cannot fund every request, even when we like an idea, so we have to make careful choices

SHARHEENA: ***HOW ARE CUSTOMERS CONSIDERED IN FINANCIAL DECISIONS?***

HARI: Customers are our most important stakeholders. Before making a decision, we always ask how it will affect customers and what support may be needed. We are focused on providing high-quality services to our customers. We have also created support funds in the past to provide additional help when it is needed.

JOHN: ***WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?***

HARI: I enjoy Chess and Sudoku, and I am a big cricket and rugby fan. I've had a season ticket for Northampton Saints Rugby for 25 years and very rarely miss a home game! I support Arsenal Football Club too. It was great that both Saints and Arsenal became premiership champions last year. Even though I am not very good at it, I try to play a round of golf every week. Going back some time, I've also volunteered for few years as the financial adviser to the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

PANEL UPDATES

Why the Tenant and Landlord Panel (TALP) matters: John and Jo in conversation





John is a customer and TALP member, and Jo is a Board member and TALP Chair. They came together to talk about the panel, and why it's important.

John remembers a time when he would ***"keep things bottled up and not talk about them"***. He now sees how important it is to speak up when something isn't right. ***"If you don't report repairs and you've got a problem, how are you going to get it sorted out?"***

His experiences now motivate him to make things better for people who may not be ready to join a meeting like TALP. He wants the panel to help ***"make sure things are easy for them"*** to maintain their tenancy.

For Jo, TALP provides ***"that connectivity between the board and real life"***. It helps make sure what matters to you reaches the Board, rather than decisions being made ***"in isolation"***.

That connection was seen during Look Ahead's recent Regulator of Social Housing inspection, when inspectors attended our last meeting. John found their presence ***"reassuring and comforting"***, adding: ***"Otherwise it's like, there's your regulations, mark your own homework."***

Jo valued the inspectors and felt they were ***"very respectful"***.

Both recognise that getting involved looks different for everyone. John's advice is to ***"start up slowly"***. You could begin with Heads-Up, TALP, Policy Stars, the Customer Incident Panel or something in your own service.

As Jo says: *"Everybody's got a right to be heard."*

Scan this QR code with your phone to find out more about TALP.

FREE AND CHEAP OUTINGS

Did you know there are lots of free, cheap and discounted places to enjoy across London? Here's a few:



Leighton House Museum,
12 Holland Park Road, Kensington, London, W14 8LZ (west London).
Price: Entry is discounted to £10 for Universal Credit recipients from the usual fee of £14, bring proof.



Winter Wonderland,
Hyde Park (central London).
Open from 19th November to 3rd January.
Price: Entry tickets start from £1.00, book online in advance at:
hydeparkwinterwonderland.com



Mudchute Park and Farm,
Pier Street, Isle of Dogs, E14 3HP (east London).
Price: Free, donations welcome.

Send photos from your outings to **gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk**

NOTICE BOARD

A VITAL MESSAGE FOR BLACK MEN



PROSTATE CANCER

Are you a Black man over the age of 45?

Men like you are twice as likely to die from prostate cancer than white men. But catching it early can dramatically improve outcomes.

Ask your GP about your risk and discuss having a PSA blood test, even if you don't have symptoms.



Want to give feedback or make a complaint?

Tell a support worker or the service manager or contact Look Ahead's Feedback and Complaints Team **feedback@lookahead.org.uk** or call **0333 010 4600**.

SUPPORT WITH NEW SERVICE CHARGES

If you don't receive Housing Benefit and are worried about paying the new Enhanced Housing Management (EHM) and Voids Loss service charges, you can apply for financial support. These are the new charges added to the service charge breakdown in the July 2026 rent increase.

If you want to find out more, apply for support, or get a copy of your rent increase letter, please contact our Income Manager Amanda Mole on **amandamole@lookahead.org.uk**

If you need support to apply, please speak to your support worker or housing officer.

SAMARITANS

Need someone to talk to?

You can call Samaritans for free at any time day or night on

116 123

FUN & GAMES

SPOT 6 DIFFERENCES



A JOKE FOR YOU



Question:
What do you call a donkey with three legs?

Answer:
A wonkey!

QUIZ QUESTION

What do Americans call autumn?

(Answer at the bottom of the page)

Editorial Team: Sharheena, John, Peter, Diane, Kate and Edward.

Look Ahead
CARE, SUPPORT AND HOUSING

lookahead.org.uk

Get involved at Look Ahead:
gettinginvolved@lookahead.org.uk

Email Look Ahead: getintouch@lookahead.org.uk

Call Look Ahead: 0333 010 4600

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Quiz question answer: Fall