



## Grove Park proposed transfer

**Introducing Phoenix Community Housing**

December 2020



This document provides an introduction to Phoenix Community Housing. We include information about what we offer as a landlord and outline opportunities for residents to become involved in developing our services and influencing how Phoenix is run.

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# A word from our Chair and Chief Executive

We are delighted to introduce you to Phoenix Community Housing.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss what we can offer, and so that we can understand your priorities for your homes and the services you would receive if you are happy for us to become your housing association.

## Why Phoenix?

We were created in 2007 after residents voted to create their own new and resident-led housing association.

*All of the 157 promises made to our residents  
13 years ago have been delivered.*

Phoenix offers:

- Proven experience in developing thriving homes and communities
- A resident-led, community focused approach
- The Green Man community building minutes from Grove Park
- Experienced leasehold management team delivering services to over 800 home owners
- In-house repairs, caretaking and environmental services teams
- Award winning community regeneration and financial inclusion activities and services
- High levels of tenant and home owner satisfaction
- Shareholding membership for any resident over the age of 16
- An exciting programme of activities and events available to the whole community
- An expert team to keep you safe in everything we do.

We look forward to discussing how we can work together to agree new service standards along with current Phoenix residents and deliver the best possible quality services for the future.



**Jim Ripley**  
Chief Executive



**Anne McGurk**  
Phoenix Chair

# Introduction to Phoenix

We are proud to be a not-for-profit, resident-led housing association, registered with the Regulator for Social Housing.

We currently own and manage more than 6,000 homes, including 800 leasehold properties, in south London and are the first housing association in London to use the community gateway approach.

This model encourages and empowers all our tenants and home owners to get involved, take part in our decision-making and become shareholding members.

Tenants and home owners elected by residents are the largest group on our Board, and there are opportunities for residents to get involved and to shape our plans and future priorities throughout Phoenix.

We are based at The Green Man on Bromley Road, SE6. While this is currently closed to the public due to coronavirus restrictions, in normal circumstances our offices are easily accessible and open to all residents. The community building also includes a café, branch of the Lewisham and Bromley Credit Union, a training kitchen and venue spaces available for hire.

*"If you're not happy with how things are, get involved, speak to people,*





## Introduction to Phoenix - continued.

In our first decade, we invested £158million to ensure all of our residents' homes exceed the national decent homes standard, and we achieved top ratings from our regulator following an in-depth assessment in late 2016.

The first residents moved in to our first development of new homes in late 2017 – an extra care scheme specially designed for older people. Works are on site at a number of locations, including a shared ownership development in Bromley. In 2018 we secured £60million investment to build a significant number of new homes to help tackle the housing crisis.

We have been listed as one of the UK's top 10 landlords five times running by 24housing magazine. We've won numerous awards and accolades, including Outstanding Approach to Tenant Involvement at the UK Housing Awards in 2017, and have Investors in People Gold accreditation.

# Resident-led, residents first

We are proud to be a resident-led housing association. Our residents play a key role in helping us to deliver and improve our services.

Every Phoenix resident can have a say and influence our decision-making.

Tenants and home owners are the largest group on our Board and our rules state that the Chair and Vice-Chair must be residents. We value our residents' involvement and contributions and opportunities to get involved are available at every level.

One of the easiest ways to get involved is to become a shareholding member of Phoenix.

Any tenant or home owner over the age of 16 is able to become a shareholding member. There's no catch, and becoming a shareholder means you can stand or vote to elect resident Board Members, attend and vote at our Annual General Meeting and share in the decision making of Phoenix.

Once you become a shareholder, you can also become a member of the Phoenix Gold Club scheme, which offers rewards in the form of vouchers to say thank you to residents who keep to agreements and help us to offer good, quality services.

*"We're trying to develop services and make sure they're accessible to everyone. The whole reason that Phoenix exists and is successful is down to the trust between residents and staff."*

*Simon Barlow, former Resident Scrutiny Panel member, now Board Member*

In addition, residents can help to improve our services and make decisions by joining one of our resident groups or attending an event:

- Phoenix Gateway Committee
- Resident Scrutiny Panel
- Policy Working Group
- Resident Communications Group
- Working Groups
- Mystery shoppers
- Community events and consultative activities which are an opportunity to get involved.

# Delivering quality services

Our resident-led approach and expertise enables us to deliver strong core services at good value for money.

The Phoenix Standards are an explanation of what residents can expect from Phoenix and go beyond the standards set by our regulator. The standards are developed by our staff and residents and approved by the Board.

Resident satisfaction is an important measure of our performance. We conduct a resident satisfaction survey (STAR) every three years and track ongoing satisfaction. In a survey conducted in the summer of 2020 85% of tenants and 70% of home owners said they were satisfied with our services,

Repairs are delivered by the Phoenix Repairs Service and in 2019-20 91% of tenants were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with their last repair.

We aim to do things properly first time, every time. However mistakes can sometimes be made and we encourage residents to tell us when this happens. We want to resolve any concerns or complaints and resident feedback also helps us to learn from mistakes and improve our services.



# Becoming a Phoenix resident

Phoenix is committed to excellent housing services for all its residents and we are keen to share this model with residents in Grove Park. In this section we outline what a transfer to Phoenix could mean for tenants and home owners .

## Tenancy and lease agreement

You will retain your existing tenancy or lease under any transfer.

## Rent levels

If your home is transferred to Phoenix, your rents will remain at the same level that you currently pay to L&Q. Rents will be reviewed annually according to government policy, which we apply across all our tenanted homes.



Involved residents at our socially distanced 2020 AGM

# Becoming a Phoenix resident—continued

## Home owners

Service charges will be set according to your lease to recover the cost of the services provided.

Home owners will receive an itemised service charge account so that it is clear what they are being charged for. Residents will always be consulted on proposals for any new services before they are introduced.

## Paying your rent

We offer a range of different payment options for rent and service charges, including Direct Debit, online and telephone payments. Residents can access a self-service portal on our website to view and update rent account and tenancy information. We are developing a range of new features for residents who prefer to access services online.

## Our housing management service

You would receive a personal service from a named housing or leasehold officer who will be able to resolve tenancy, leasehold, environmental and cleaning queries. This is enhanced by our close working relationships with statutory partners and agencies to deal with issues.

Our experienced Housing Management team offers an integrated service in relation to cleaning, inspections, grounds maintenance and safeguarding.

We deal with all aspects of tenancy management including resident consultation, rehousing, anti-social behaviour, succession, debt management and the management of vacant properties. Our aim is to support residents to sustain and enjoy their tenancies.



## Opportunities to shape our service

We want to work with you to understand your individual needs and wishes.

We hope to meet all residents during the consultation period. If the transfer proposals progress, we would offer home visits for every tenant in order to assess any housing need and, where appropriate, understand the support residents receive from carers, relatives and other agencies..

We host community and consultation events throughout the year and these provide further opportunities for residents to give their views and further shape and improve the services we deliver to you.

Since March 2020 and the original coronavirus lockdown we have been holding these events in different ways, including a full programme of virtual Summer Fun activities and online Diversity Day discussions.

We hope we will be able to hold more in-person events in 2021 and beyond, in line with ongoing health guidance.

## Additional support for vulnerable residents

We have well established policies developed with and monitored by our residents and a proven track record in supporting vulnerable and elderly residents.

Specific activities include:

- regular estates inspections and visits
- Winter Warmer programme
- safeguarding and cause for concern alerts and reporting
- a handyperson scheme free to residents who are over 60 or who have a disability. This offers help with small DIY jobs in your home.

Our aids and adaptations service is designed to support residents to remain independent in their homes, and we also offer a programme of internal decorations for older residents.

Over the past years our Financial Inclusion service has helped residents access millions substantial amounts of additional income and unclaimed benefits. We can also refer residents to specialist agencies for independent debt advice.



# Phoenix Repairs Service

Repairs are carried out by our subsidiary company, the Phoenix Repairs Service.

We offer an out of hours emergency service which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

In 2019-20 we carried out a total 21,943 day-to-day repairs. Performance highlights included:

- 91% of residents said they were satisfied with their last repair
- 96% of repairs were completed within timescale
- 95% of repairs were fixed on the first appointment.

To order a repair, tenants can contact us for an appointment date and time. We aim to complete repairs in one visit, at a time that is convenient for the resident. We carry out an annual gas safety check of all our tenanted properties. At the time of writing we are also introducing a new online portal — MyPhoenix — to enable all residents to book repairs online.





## Environmental services

We are committed to providing a high quality environment for all residents.

Our caretakers are responsible for looking after shared indoor and outdoor communal areas in our blocks and estates, including:

- cleaning hallways, stairs and landings
- removing litter from grassed areas
- checking and cleaning lifts
- reporting communal lifts
- reporting communal repairs
- removing graffiti
- looking after rubbish chutes and bin rooms.

Our grounds maintenance team take care of all of the green areas and external areas on our estates. If residents report a problem with a green area to us, we will visit the site within two working days.

## Your safety

The safety of our residents is our priority and we take our responsibility for maintaining health and safety standards very seriously, including fire, electrical and gas safety.

Our health and safety team is overseen by a Director and provides regular reports to residents and to our Board. We use an independent fire safety adviser as well as our in-house team to ensure we continue to meet best practice. At the time of writing we are also starting to set up a resident-led Building Safety Group.

## The Phoenix Standard

We are proud that 100% of our homes meet or exceed the decent homes standard. Any Phoenix properties that require major works will be completed to our Phoenix Standard – exceeding requirements set by the governments' decent homes standard.

*"They promised us the earth, and in my opinion, I was given the earth. Phoenix has done everything they said they would – refurbished my home, kitchen and bathroom and put in double glazing. It's a joy!"*

*Patricia Birch. Phoenix tenant. BR1.*

For the future we will be working with residents to plan how we will implement the new Home Standard that is being proposed by the government.

Works to blocks and communal areas will be charged to leaseholders in accordance with their lease. These will be consulted on, costed and planned in detail with you to ensure necessary repair and replacement is carried out.

# Working with you

The proposed transfer is an extremely important project for Phoenix.

Phoenix is setting up a dedicated team that will work with you to develop how our services could be provided to you as your landlord.

We believe the best results are achieved when our staff and residents work together, and we hope you will get involved.

We will be entering into discussions with all tenants and home owners to understand how you would like your environment to look, what facilities you would like to see and how you would like the areas around your homes to be maintained in future.

We hope you will also have the chance to meet with existing Phoenix residents to find out more about the organisation and our model, as well as to develop future service standards.

## Major works

For any future major works programmes, we will work with our contractors to minimise any disturbance or disruption to residents. We provide residents with regular updates throughout any work programme, including regular meetings and newsletters. You will have a named Resident Liaison Officer on hand to provide advice and support.



Environmental works at an amenity green

## Implications for home owners

Our Home Ownership Team has an excellent track record of working with our 800 leaseholders through the decent homes programme and to continuously improve services, reflected by rising home owner satisfaction rates. We work hard to ensure our services, and opportunities for home owners to get involved are accessible.

If a transfer went ahead, home owners' rights and obligations would remain the same. Phoenix would become the freeholder of all buildings instead of L&Q.

Home owners would not be issued with a new lease, and both Phoenix and home owners would be bound by the terms of the existing lease.

With Phoenix as your freeholder, home ownership would have enhanced opportunities in decision making and the management of their properties through representation on the Phoenix Board, through the Home Ownership digital review group and home owner open evenings that are an opportunity to share information and ideas, to influence services provided and to discuss issues relevant to home owners.

Leaseholders who sublet their properties can also benefit from Home Makers, a professional lettings management service and wholly owned subsidiary of Phoenix.

Home owners will be required to contribute to the cost of works to the structure and communal parts of the buildings and estates. All charges would be in line with the terms of the lease and subject to statutory consultation in accordance with Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 as amended by the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.

Home owners would have full details of the planned works and estimated costs of the works before the works begin.

# Additional services

*“To work together to build a better future for our Phoenix Community.”*



We are proud of our resident-led model and the value it could offer to residents in Grove Park. We offer a range of additional services that are available to all Phoenix residents. These include:

**The Phoenix Academy** - a unique, accredited ‘school of social housing’ designed to empower residents to become more involved and to develop resident Board Members of the future.

**Roots into Work** – our employment and training programme open to all Phoenix residents. Opportunities include one to one advice, job club, funded training and apprenticeships and work experience placements with Phoenix and our partners and contractors.

**Financial inclusion** - Expert advice and support to maximise your income and prepare for welfare reforms.

## Additional services

**Community and consultative events** - including the annual Phoenix Festival, Summer Fun, Diversity Day, Community gatherings, open evenings, Chat and Chips and #BeIn (a programme for younger residents aged 16-25). While many of these events had to be postponed or run in different ways in 2020, we hope to restore them fully when it safe to do so.

**Community Chest** – an annual fund of £100,000 for projects that will benefit Phoenix residents. We welcome applications from Phoenix, local groups and charities.

**Digital Drop-in** – weekly digital skills and support sessions at The Green Man.

**Energy advice** – Free advice from our energy champion and energy assessments to reduce your energy usage and bills.

**Regular cultural and leisure activities** for older and vulnerable residents.

**Training and building capacity** - to enable and empower our residents to inform, consult and participate in all areas, including: recruitment, scrutiny, finance, policy, building, development and other groups and Board sub committees.



Any questions?

You can find more about Phoenix by visiting our website or connecting with us on social media.

If you have specific questions about what a transfer to Phoenix would mean, please contact us by calling 0800 028 5700 or email [info@phoenixch.org.uk](mailto:info@phoenixch.org.uk)