

HFI NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2011



**Homes for
Islington**

improving housing through partnership



including
Home Owner
for leaseholder news



News
about
your
Council
home

Highbury House open for business

www.homesforislington.org.uk

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Come along to our public Board meeting

HFI's Board and Performance Management meetings are open to the public.

All meetings take place at 6.30pm at: Highbury House, 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN
Board meetings take place on: Monday 5 December 2011 and 20 February 2012.

Performance Management Committee meetings take place on: Monday 7 November 2011 and Monday 6 February 2012.



If you would like this publication in another language, large print, audio tape, compact disc or in Braille please contact your Area Housing Office.

Welcome from Eamon McGoldrick, HFI Chief Executive

Welcome to the autumn edition of HFI News. In this edition we are focusing on showing you the way we are delivering your priorities, ensuring we are achieving value for money and providing a high quality housing management service.

We would like to thank all tenants who gave up their time to help with the survey and give us their feedback. The findings will now be used to help inform our plans on how we improve services to you.

The independent tenants' survey asked you to let us know your top priorities. You have told us that you want your repairs completed promptly, rent collected fairly and efficiently, anti social behaviour to be dealt with effectively and the opportunity to live on clean well maintained estates. Full details of the survey are available on page sixteen of the newsletter.

HFI is committed to reducing our operational costs while doing all we can to continue to improve our services to you. Over the last two years the number of customers visiting area housing offices has reduced. This is because you are making more use of online and telephone services.

This, combined with the need to make savings means that we have been able to reduce the number of area housing offices from four to three.

On 1 August we re-located two of our area housing offices to Highbury House; reducing our overheads while improving facilities for customers who want to visit.

HFI will continue to provide home visits and outreach support to our vulnerable residents.

Please read the article opposite page for more information and check our website for full details: www.homesforislington.org.uk or you can email us on

hfi.communications@homesforislington.org.uk or phone on **020 7527 4342**.

We would love to hear from you.

Eamon McGoldrick



HFI News by email

Residents have told us they would like the option to receive HFI News by email. Twice a year we send tenants their rent statements and once a year leaseholders receive their annual service charge bills along with HFI News. All other issues can be sent to you electronically if you prefer. If you would like to help us be more sustainable and receive your copy electronically please email us at hfi.communications@homesforislington.org.uk.

Office re-location will make HFI services more efficient and accessible to customers

Lyon Street and Upper Street area housing offices have re-located to Highbury House, Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN.

The Highbury House office provides a more efficient reception and interview area, and offers accessible facilities for customers and staff with disabilities. By end of October we will have a fully accessible new entrance on the Holloway Road.

Highbury House is located across the road from Highbury Pool. The names of Lyon Street and Upper Street area housing offices have also changed to Highbury House West and Highbury House East respectively.



All HFI offices offer a drop-in service to customers or if you phone you can make an appointment.

If you need help with rent arrears please note that all HFI's Income Recovery services now operate from Highbury House. Housing Benefit service is available from Highbury House, Holland Walk and Old Street.

If residents from the **Lyon Street Office** cannot get to the new office or are unable to contact us by telephone or email, additional local surgeries have been arranged at Jean Stokes Community Centre. Jean Stokes Community Centre is further along Carnoustie Drive, opposite the junction with Freeling Street.

Jean Stokes Community Centre Surgery times:
Tuesdays 2.00pm to 4.00pm
Fridays 10.00am to 12.00pm

No appointment is necessary but staff may request you attend Highbury House at a later date if the matter is complicated.

For lots more information on your tenancy please watch our DVD by logging onto: <http://www.homesforislington.org.uk/Your%20Tenancy/index.asp>

Contact Us

Highbury House East

(formerly Upper Street area housing office)
 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN
 email: highbury.house@homesforislington.org.uk
 Tel: 020 7527 5300

Highbury House West

(formerly Lyon Street area housing office)
 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN
 email: highbury.house@homesforislington.org.uk
 Tel: 020 7527 5300

Old Street area housing office

41-47 Old Street, London EC1V 9HX
 email: old.street@homesforislington.org.uk
 Tel: 020 7527 6250

Holland Walk area housing office

85-88 Holland Walk, London N19 3XS
 email: holland.walk@homesforislington.org.uk
 Tel: 020 7527 7480

Home Ownership

5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN
 email: homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk
 Tel: 020 7527 7715

Repairs

To report a repair call **HFI Direct on freephone 0800 694 3344** or **020 7527 5400**
 Online: www.homesforislington.org.uk

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

To report anti social behaviour call the **ASB hotline on 020 7527 7272**
 Online: www.homesforislington.org.uk

Housing fraud

To report housing fraud call **020 7527 7432 (24 hour hotline)**
 email: housing.fraud@homesforislington.org.uk
 Online: www.homesforislington.org.uk

HFI News – some feedback from our readers’ survey

- You like information on available services and information on events and projects happening in your area.
- You want us to save money on production and distribution of our newsletter.
- You want information on important changes relating to your housing provision – locally and nationally.
- You want a balanced focus on community activities and information for children and adults with and without special needs.
- You want to hear about resident led projects – gardening clubs, and how residents have contributed to clean and safe estates.

Service Standards (Local Offers)

During 2010 Homes for Islington asked for your views about setting Service Standards. These Service Standards gave residents firm commitments on how we intend to deliver our services to an agreed standard, quality and frequency.

The Tenant Services Authority or TSA, who is our regulator asked us to set and review these standards with tenants every year.

Since April 2011 we have reviewed our Service Standards against our 2010-11 performance. We have also carried out

focus groups and surveys to ensure that the standards are still appropriate and meaningful to residents.

HFI’s Annual Report to tenants will contain full feedback on all Service Standard performance and will include any changes to Service Standards for 2011-12. The Annual Report will be available to tenants on the Homes for Islington website and in area office reception areas from October.

Before the full report is published, we are pleased to feed back on the performance against some Service Standards.

Standard	Target	Performance April 2010 - March 2011
Tenant and Empowerment Standard		
We will continue to train resident inspectors who will scrutinise areas of HFI and partners performance	We will test two service areas next year	Twelve residents have completed a six week training course and will now undertake estate inspections from October 2011.
Home standard		
Urgent repairs will be completed in 24 hours	Target 97%	15,896 urgent repairs were issued. 14,876 were completed on time. Performance for 2010-11 94%
All tenants will receive a gas safety inspection every year	Target 100%	19,800 properties were inspected during 2010-11. Performance for 2010-11 99.5%
Neighbourhood and Community Standard		
The number of days to re-let empty properties	21 days	Average re-let 20 days
Customer Care standards		
Complaints will be answered within 21 calendar days and we will learn from them how to improve our services	97% of complaints to be answered within 21 days	1,359 stage 1 complaints received 98 Stage 2 complaints received 31 Ombudsman complaints received. Performance for 2010-11 88%
Community Support Standard		
All new tenants will be offered a welfare benefit check and will be visited in their homes within 4 weeks to ensure they have settled in.	All new tenants are offered a four week visit.	960 new tenants offered a visit within four weeks of their new tenancy. Of those, 89% of new tenants were visited.
Value for Money		
HFI and Partners will maximise the collection of rental income to ensure that all residents are paying a fair rent.	98% collection of rental income	98% of rent was collected during the period 2010-11.

Improved services from Kier – our repairs contractor

The new repairs and maintenance contract with Kier which started last autumn included a number of improvements for residents including an increase in the number of weekend and evening appointments; appointment reminders by text and clearer response times for repairs.

- **When you order a repair, an appointment is arranged for Kier our repair contractor to visit your home. Two days before the appointment, HFI direct will text you to check the time is still ok.**
- **On the day of the appointment, an operative from Kier will give you a call when they are 15 minutes from your home to let know they are on their way.**
- **When Kier leave your home, they will leave a card saying what work has been done to your home, who to contact if there is a problem and, if the work has not been completed, what will happen next.**



You can report a repair online at our website www.homesforislington.org.uk or by phoning **HFI Direct** on **0800 694 3344** or **020 7527 5400**.

When reporting a repair, please ensure you give correct contact details to allow the texting service to operate.

Always check the identity of people before you let them into your home.

Resident condensation group – feedback

This group showed that even if a property is in perfect repair order, the building design can make condensation more likely. But there are things that you can do.

Members of the group told us:

"The visit from Andrew was very informative and has helped me to eliminate condensation from my flat."

"I found the group useful and I feel I've learnt a few things from it."

"..condensation is caused by variety of reasons which is now noted and will be taken care of"

"I really appreciated the professional views/ explanations of the project's surveyors."

As winter draws near our key messages remain:

- **use heating for longer avoid cold spots**

- **use extractor fans or open windows to ventilate – but don't over-ventilate**
- **produce less moisture – cover pots, don't drape wet washing around the home**
- **if you spend more than 10% of your income on gas/electricity - call your provider as you may be entitled to a grant or rebate.**

HFI is planning a series of local events in the autumn offering one to one advice, visits, information and giveaways for residents with condensation problems. We will advertise locally and on our website. If you would like to receive information about the events please email us at service.development@homesforislington.org.uk or call **020 7527 4123**.

How to get adaptations done in your home

Islington Council, HFI and Kier work together to help some of our more vulnerable residents have adaptations made in their homes to make life that little bit easier.

The good news is that in the past six months, 97% of you have said you were satisfied with the service provided by Kier doing this work. One resident said, "A thank you to all who worked in my flat. They were polite, helpful and treated me with respect, without causing too much upheaval."

If you feel you require an adaptation to be made to your home, contact Islington Council's information and access team on 020 7527 2299 or by email: access.service@islington.gov.uk

Communal heating – boilers to be switched on

Our contractor will be switching on communal boilers across the borough between 12 September 2011 and 27 September 2011.

Call the Coppers!

There have been a number of thefts of copper wire from our estates recently. Not only is this a nuisance but it can also be dangerous.

Copper is used in electrical wiring, piping and TV aerials. Wires conduct electricity and if interfered with can be dangerous. Not only that, but when TV cabling is removed, it prevents you getting a TV picture. Copper theft is a crime and the costs to residents and HFI of replacing it is more than the scrap value of the metal.

So if you see someone suspicious around electrical wires, pipes or TV aerials, don't hesitate call the Police to report the crime.

Your estates came alive during summer of 2011, the London Fire Brigade, tenant associations, contractors, residents, the Police and HFI staff worked in harmony for all to have fun and enjoy estate and community fun days.

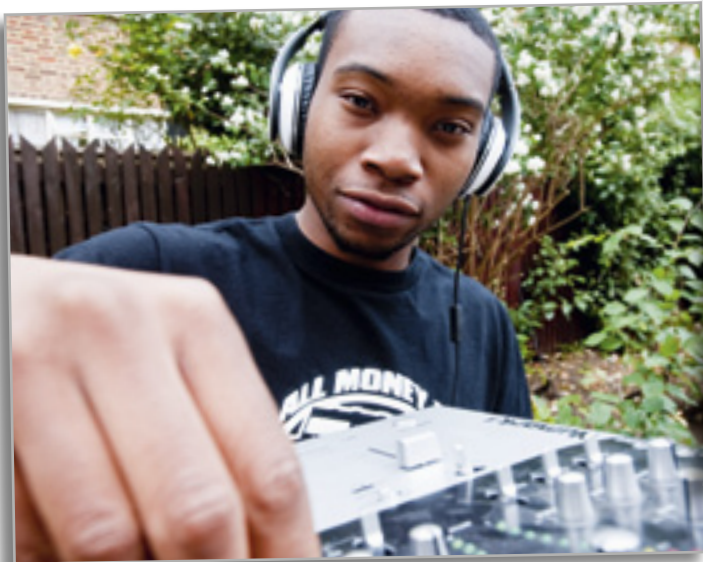
Neighbours have fun in the sun at the Crouch Hall Estate garden party

When the residents of the Crouch Hall estate decided they would like to set up a tenants and residents association they contacted us. One month later with our help they had organised a fantastic garden party on the estate.

Over 150 neighbours got to know one another better, Islington's Deputy Mayor Jilani Chowdhury, Catherine West, Leader of the Council, Councillor Richard Watts and Jeremy Corbyn MP popped in to show their support and chat to residents.

Setting up a tenants and residents association is one way of getting involved and having a say on what happens on your estate. By contacting us we can listen to what is important to you and deliver better services.

If you would like to set up a tenants and residents association please contact the Community and Service Development Officer at your area housing office.



David the DJ



Mo and Sam from the Safer Neighbourhood team join in the fun



Jeremy Corbyn MP and HFI's Chief Executive Eamon McGoldrick chatting to resident



The Deputy Mayor of Islington, Catherine West Leader of the Council and Councillor Richard Watts chat to residents at the Crouch Hall Estate fun day



Fun in the sun

New Orleans Estate residents BBQ

Tracy the Chair of HFI's New Orleans Estate tenants and residents association worked with the residents and HFI to organise a super BBQ and fun day. Neighbours relaxed and chatted in the sun.

The local boxing club and Arsenal football club were invited along to showcase the activities they have available for entertaining youngsters in the summer holiday. There was face painting and a bouncy castle for younger kids and a raffle and massages for older residents.

Celebrate Black History Month this October

This year's Black History Month is just round the corner and there's lots to look forward to. Why not check out some of the performances, film screenings, talks and book readings taking place throughout the month –

all in honour of the positive contributions of black people to our society.

For more information visit www.islington.gov.uk/bhm or contact aisha.forbes@vai.org.uk

street Chance
In partnership with **Islington Council**

FREE STREET CRICKET

**ALL AGES 8-18
ALL STANDARDS
ALL WELCOME**

Islington session:
Where: Kick about area - Crouch Hall Court
When: Mondays 6.00-8.00pm
Coach name: Perry Sophocleous
Coach contact no: 07877 897546
perrysophocleous@cricketforchange.org.uk

20-MINUTE. 20-BALL GAMES. WEAR WHAT YOU LIKE

streetchance.co.uk

Working in conjunction with Essex, Kent, Middlesex and Surrey Cricket Boards.

Learn something new

Islington Council runs free courses ranging from basic maths and english, to computer and job-finding skills. Courses take place in friendly local learning centres all over Islington. They are open to Islington residents, who are 19 or over, unemployed or on a low wage and claiming benefits.

Local resident, Eunice Fonseca took a maths course at Hargrave Park Learning Centre, near Archway. She said:

"I decided to take a course in maths to improve my chances of getting a good job and I'm really pleased I signed up. In just a few weeks, I made so much progress and feel more confident. The tutors here are really friendly - as well as helping with my maths, they given me so much advice and support with my job search."

For more information visit www.islington.gov.uk/acl, or email: acl@islington.gov.uk or call 020 7527 5782.

Good news - actions from HFI's Anti-social Behaviour Team January to June 2011

HFI have 10 concierge offices monitoring 669 cameras on our estates benefitting over 3,500 households. In the six months from January to June we received 171 reports of anti-social behaviour from our 10 concierge offices across the borough. These reports have resulted in 24 new case investigations and 179 individual actions by HFI's Anti-social Behaviour Teams.

During this time evidence provided by our concierges has also been

used in 27 existing anti-social behaviour cases.

As a result, we have:

- **Commenced legal action against 3 tenants**
- **Completed 3 anti-social behaviour contracts with families**
- **Issued 40 warning letters**
- **Completed 20 investigation interviews**
- **Liaised with police on 66 reports**

Don't risk losing your home

HFI accepts that the majority of our residents are law abiding citizens who totally reject the anti-social behaviour and crime that can blight our communities if not challenged. Your conditions of tenancy (or lease) remind you that you, your friends and relatives, and any other person living in or visiting the property (including children) must not do anything which causes or is likely to cause nuisance or disturbance to anyone in the area. This also includes storing or handling stolen goods.



HFI will consider legal action against any tenant or leaseholder who is found to have breached their tenancy or lease conditions.

HFI shortlisted for ASB Action award

HFI has been short listed for an Anti-social Behaviour Award, for our partnership work with the Police, Witness Support Service, tenants and residents associations and Councillors. The case related to large groups of young people gathering in the east of the borough who were observed acting in an anti-social manner. We had reports of noise nuisance and suspected drug dealing with potential gang activity. The general behaviour was one of intimidation leading to residents and pedestrians moving through the area feeling vulnerable and scared.

Through partnership working and close liaison with residents we were able to successfully remove the nuisance. HFI has been invited to present the case at the awards sponsors' Lemos and Crane's annual conference.

How to report ASB

You can report anti-social behaviour (ASB) by:

- **visiting or calling your area housing office during normal working hours**
- **calling the ASB Hotline number 020 7527 7272 (out of hours only)**
- **completing our ASB online form via our website.**

HFI takes all reports of anti-social behaviour seriously. We will take the strongest action against perpetrators of ASB.

ASB Successes

HFI granted an order for possession – Bemerton estate

HFI was granted an order for possession against a resident from the Bemerton Estate. The resident committed 16 thefts from motor vehicle offences in one day all in the locality of his home in June 2010.

HFI granted suspended possession order – Westbourne Estate

HFI was granted a possession order, suspended for two years, against a resident from the Westbourne Estate. A drugs raid in April 2010 found cannabis cultivation on the premises.

Possession order and injunction with powers of arrest – Caledonian Estate

HFI was granted a possession order and injunction with powers of arrest against a resident from the Caledonian Estate. The resident created havoc in his flat and was racially abusive to neighbours. The tenant failed to respond to warning letters or threats of legal action.

HFI awarded outright possession order - Caledonian Estate

HFI has been awarded an outright possession order against a resident from the Caledonian Estate. The resident has a history of noise nuisance, including loud music, disturbance from visitors at all hours. HFI took action following reports from neighbours.

Leaseholder Fair

The 2011 Leaseholder Fair will be held in the Assembly Room at Islington Town Hall on 20 October 2011.

The event will run from 4pm until 7pm.

Staff from Homes for Islington will be available to answer your questions on service charges and major works.

Representatives from Partners, JLT (Council's insurance broker), Broadway Debt Advice Service and Islington Leaseholders Association will also be invited to attend as will members of the council executive.

We will consult on HFI's "Major Works Challenge Process" for leaseholders. This new process is being developed because HFI recognises that leaseholders want a formal process for challenging the quality, cost or necessity of works for which they are charged. We all agree that Leaseholder Valuation Tribunal (LVT) should be the final resort.



HFI Residential

HFI Residential is now available to leaseholders who sublet their properties.

This service offers leaseholders the advantages of using a lettings and property management agent who has full responsibility for all services delivered to our estates and properties.

Letting fee £750.00 plus VAT.

Management fee 5% plus VAT – sign up before 30 September 2011 and pay 4% for the first six months of your contract.

For further information or an informal chat, please contact **Kay Morgan** on **020 7527 7752** or e-mail hfiresidential@homesforislington.org.uk or visit HFI Residential on www.homesforislington.org.uk

New leaseholders

If you are a new leaseholder you should have received a welcome pack from Home Ownership. If you haven't received your welcome pack, or you would like a home visit or just some general advice or information, please contact Home Ownership on 020 7527 7715.



Focus groups

Focus groups are held on a quarterly basis. Leaseholders who register their interest on the Resident Involvement Register are invited to relevant focus groups where our literature and proposed changes to policies and procedures are discussed.

In June, a group of leaseholders commented on a new version of our Section 20 cost breakdown schedule which is still in development. The group told us:

- The layout was easier to understand
- We needed to remove unnecessary abbreviations and acronyms
- We needed to explain missing information
- We needed to supply more detail of works actually completed

The group also commented on the proposed "Major Works Challenge Process" which will be consulted on at the Leasehold Fair. The group told us:

- They want to be able to challenge on quality, completion, cost, necessity and documentation
- They want the challenge process to kick in at various stages
- Ideally the process should be completed in 12 weeks
- More senior managers should be involved

In September 2011 we will be discussing the HFI website, and reporting back in the next edition of Home Owner News. If you have any comments on the website, or there is something you would like to see included please contact **Kay Morgan** at kay.morgan@homesforislington.org.uk



Pay your service charges by direct debit

If you do not already pay your service charges by direct debit why not set one up to spread the cost of your new annual service charge bill.

You can choose from one of four dates – 2nd, 9th, 16th or 28th of the month.

Upon receipt of your first payment we will credit your service charge account with £10.00.

If you would like to pay by direct debit, please contact Home Ownership on 020 7527 7715 to request a direct debit mandate.

Valuing diversity prize draw

Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Campbell of Maryland Walk N18 who won £25.00 in vouchers in our last quarterly prize draw.

The form is available on our website www.homesforislington.org.uk, at your area housing office or homes ownership

Broadway – debt advice service

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, and would like to receive professional advice, Home Ownership can refer you to Broadway.

Broadway is a charity that works in partnership with Homes for Islington to provide support to leaseholders and freeholders who are having difficulty paying their service or major works charges.

All clients referred to Broadway will have a designated advisor who will work with the client to provide a realistic and sustainable



financial plan. You can meet an advisor at their offices, or alternatively an advisor can visit you at home.

To be referred to Broadway please contact **Home Ownership on 020 7527 7715** between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Who to contact

To report communal repairs –
You can report online or call your
area Estate Services team

Holland Walk
020 7527 7447/7416

Highbury House
(ex Upper/Lyon Street)
020 7527 5376/6875

Old Street
020 7527 6250/6232

In an emergency only you contact
HFI Direct on 0800 694 3344

To can report a change of
address or contact details by
letter to the leasehold officer
at Highbury House or
email: [homeownership@
homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk)

Selling your property?

If you are selling your property and currently rent a garage or parking space, please make sure that you advise your purchaser that the garage/parking space is not included in the purchase, and that they will need to apply in their own name once they have moved into the property.

Advise the Customer Services Team at your area housing office of your moving date, and that you will no longer require the space from this time. You must also ensure that you cancel any standing orders or direct debits that you may have in place.

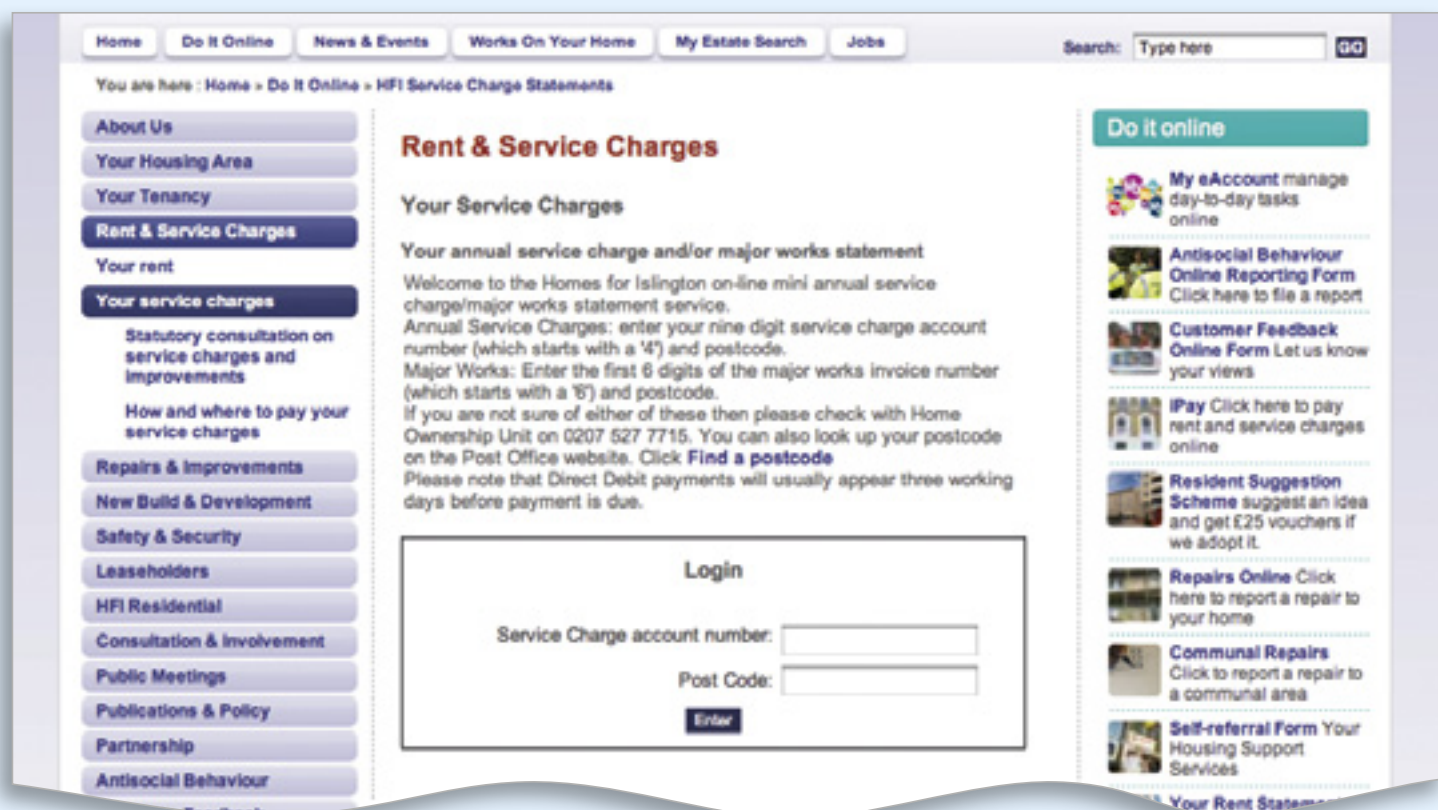


View your service charge statement online

Annual service charges and major works accounts can be viewed online.

You are able to view your balance and up to the last six transactions on your account.

Go to www.homesforislington.org.uk and look at "Do It Online." You will need your account number and your property postcode.



Home improvements

If you are planning any alterations inside your property please be aware of the following;

- You must apply to Home Ownership for permission to carry out alterations to your property, even if you do not require or have already obtained planning permission from the council
- Permission must be sought and confirmed prior to any work beginning.

Once permission has been granted, please think about the impact on your neighbours

and show consideration by ensuring the following:

- Works are only carried out between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday: and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. No work must be carried out on Sundays
- Noise and dust must be kept to a minimum
- No building materials or equipment can be stored in communal areas
- Rubbish must not be left in communal areas, and must be

disposed of responsibly. Please refer to the council's website for disposal of building materials

- Any part of the building that is disturbed must be made good at your own cost.

If you employ someone to carry out work for you, remember to check that they are suitably qualified, and that they have appropriate insurance.

Further information regarding HFI's alteration procedures can be found on our website.

Fuel bills reduced for thousands in council homes

In the last year, over 8,000 council homes in Islington have benefited from one of the largest cavity wall insulation programmes to ever take place in the UK. Properties managed by HFI have profited from cavity wall insulation, thanks to funding secured by Islington Council via the Homes and Communities Agency.

Many homes waste energy through poor insulation, cavity wall insulation helps save energy and cut fuel bills. Eamon McGoldrick, HFI's Chief Executive said: "HFI is thrilled to have had the opportunity

to deliver these works and helping residents save money on their energy bills now and in the future. We estimate that the insulation work could save residents up to £115 on their fuel bills each year and will reduce CO2 emissions by 610 kg - that's the equivalent of boiling a kettle 10,000 times a year."

Cllr James Murray said, "Government cuts and rising fuel bills are hitting Islington's poorest the hardest so this is one way we are putting money back into residents' pockets."



Councillor Murray helps to install cavity wall insulation

Shared ownership



Ciara Holland (pictured with Councillor James Murray and Eamon McGoldrick HFI's Chief Executive) is the first buyer of a new shared ownership home in Islington. The scheme offers residents the chance to get on the housing ladder - whilst raising funds for the council to build much needed new family homes. Ciara a teacher has been renting in Islington for five years.

Offers have been received on the

first ten one-bedroom and studio Council properties, a further 15 will be put up for sale.

Properties are advertised through the council's Home Connections website and on the First Steps home ownership website www.firststepslondon.org

For further information contact HFI's shared ownership team by email: homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk or 020 7527 7527/7709/7705



Artist's impression of new homes at Vulcan Way

Planning permission for new homes at Vulcan Way

Islington Council and HFI have been successful in obtaining planning permission to build 17 new homes. The homes will be built on the site of disused garages. To finance the new social housing, five of the one bedroom properties will be sold on the private market and five will be offered to local residents on a shared ownership basis.



Joanna who moved into her home at Wesley Close recently meets, left to right, Theresa Coyle MBE, Resident Chair HFI Board, Eamon McGoldrick HFI Chief Executive, Lesley Seary Islington Council Chief Executive, Patrick Odling-Smee Islington Council Housing Service Director

Families move into their new homes at Wesley Close

Families recently moved into the five new, three bedroom homes at Wesley Close, on the Andover Estate. The new homes are designed to be energy efficient and are providing new social rented homes for 30 residents.

Changes to welfare benefits

The benefit system is changing and the amount and type of benefits you can claim will change in the future. There have already been some changes to housing benefit this year and changes affecting all types of benefits will come into force between now and 2013.

If you have someone living with you, who is not dependant on you, the amount taken off your Housing and Council Tax Benefit went up from 1 April 2011.

Some of the changes are still being considered by central government, so more detailed information on how the benefit changes may affect you, will not be available until nearer the end of this year.

In the meantime, if you need advice about your benefits please phone **Islington Benefits Helpline** on **020 7527 4990** (option 4 when prompted) for advice.

Also see Islington Council's website at www.islington.gov.uk/advice

Have you insured your belongings?

Islington Council strongly recommend tenants insure their home contents. It is necessary that you take out insurance cover for your personal belongings against theft, fire, vandalism or burst pipes. Islington Council offers home contents insurance created specially for tenants. For further information please phone **020 7527 2000**.

Get your name on the electoral register

In August, Islington Council sent all households in the borough an electoral registration form. It's a legal requirement to complete and return the form to the council – you could be fined if you don't.

If your household's details have not changed you must confirm your details by text message, phone or online – details are on your electoral registration form.

From 7 October, canvassers will be visiting households who haven't returned their forms. They will be able to help you if you need any assistance.

Go to www.islington.gov.uk/voting or **020 7527 3110** for more information.

Islington Fuel Switch

If you've struggled to pay your fuel bills over the last winter or you're considering switching to a green energy supplier, now is the time to be looking to see whether you can get a better deal on your gas and electricity bills.

Islington Fuel Switch can provide you with the best deal even if you're on a pre-payment meter with a smart card, key or token.

To switch visit:

www.islington.gov.uk/fuelswitch
or call for free on 0800 410 1240.

Estate parking applications and renewals

You can apply online for estate parking bays or garages through our website. Click on Estate Parking under "Do it Online" on our front page.

If you already rent an estate parking bay or garage you can renew your permits or garage letting agreements online by registering on My eAccount. Go to the link under "Do it Online".

Estate garages are now available to rent for the storage of personal items, at a cost of £17.43 per week. To apply for an estate garage for storage purposes please contact an Area Housing Office or apply online.

Reuse and Recycle at Bright Sparks



Don't forget take small electrical items for recycling or repair to Bright Sparks
225 -229 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DA.

Opening hours:

Tuesday - Saturday 12:30 pm - 17:30 pm

Thursday 12:30 pm - 19:00 pm

Training and work experience are available. Leave your details at the shop, email diye@digibridge.co.uk or call Diye on **020 7561 5515**.

HFI is talking with Bright Sparks and the Finsbury Park Community Hub to set up a facility to recycle a wide range of items that are left in empty properties managed by HFI.

SHINE – help for vulnerable residents

SHINE is a one stop shop established by Islington Council to tackle fuel poverty and reduce seasonal deaths and hospital admissions in Islington.

Referrals are accepted for any vulnerable resident but the following groups are particularly important

1. those aged over 75
2. low income families with children under 5 years.
3. those with respiratory or cardiovascular disease

A single referral will provide access to a range of services relating to home, health, finance and general support; from energy or benefit advice to a handyman or befriending service.

Your Tenancy Management Adviser can give you more details, refer you to the service or talk to you about any concerns you have about a vulnerable neighbour or friend.

Arsenal Positive Futures

FREE activities on HFI estates



Arsenal Positive Futures is a football project that the Arsenal Football club run in partnership with Homes for Islington across the borough. All sessions are FREE and take place on the following estates after school:

- Andover Estate
- Kings Square Estate
- Harvist Estate
- New Orleans Estate
- Finsbury Estate
- Tollington Estate
- McCall and Hollins Estate
- Westbourne Estate
- Highbury Quadrant Estate
- Michison and Baxter Estate

Please speak to the Arsenal Positive Futures coaches when you see them on the pitches to find out exact times and days or keep an eye on the notice boards near the pitch.

As well as football sessions there will also be other activities such as climbing, go-karting, bowling and residential trips for regular participants. We also run summer clubs and after school homework clubs.

Having fun and making a difference

The emphasis in all our sessions is on having fun but we also like to make a difference. We recently formed an Estates Development Team (pictured right) – which includes young people from across all Islington Estates – which we entered into the Camden and Islington League last season.



A real success story

Many of the coaches on our projects were previously participants. Daniel Boon from Crouch Hall Court (pictured right), volunteered on the scheme before taking his FA Level 1 coaching badge. He now works part time across three HFI estates including his own.



It's not just about the football

On the Harvist Estate we are running a gardening project thanks to funding from the Safer Neighbourhoods Annual Challenge (SNAC), run by the Met Police. In partnership with Groundwork, local young people are growing fruit and vegetables right here in Islington! More recently, 27 young people aged 10-15 who regularly attend our sessions went on a three day residential trip to Stubbers Adventure Centre where they took part in kayaking, banana boating, raft building, jet skiing, tunnelling and team building games.



For more information on free football sessions after school and during the holidays please call Tony David on 0207 704 4155 For more information on the after school homework clubs after schools and during the holidays please call Jack McNicholl on 0207 704 4149 or Dean Miller on 0207 704 4114.

How we are doing - results of the independent tenants' survey

In May this year, an independent face to face survey with over 600 residents on HFI estates was commissioned. HFI is fully committed to providing excellent services for all of our customers. By taking part in surveys you help us to do this.

We would like to thank all tenants who gave up their time to help with the survey and give us their feedback. The findings will now be used to help inform our plans on how we improve services to you.

What you told us

The survey shows that overall satisfaction with housing services provided by HFI has increased from 70% in 2008 to 72% in 2011. This means that tenants satisfaction has improved from 52% 2004-05 (the year HFI was set up) to 72% May 2011.

What is most important to you - You reported to us in the survey

- That work to your homes should be of a good quality, completed quickly and whenever possible on the first visit
- Keeping your estate and communal areas clean and free of vandalism
- Tackling anti-social behaviour (see our anti-social behaviour page for results fo how we have recently dealt with tenants who cause anti-social behaviour)
- Dealing with dog nuisances on estates, HFI have introduced dog penalty notices and new tenancy conditions to deal with people who are irresponsible dog owners

Satisfaction with your home, estate, local area

- 72% feel your accommodation is good value for money
- 71% are happy with the condition of your home
- 81% are happy with communal lighting a rise of 5% since we asked the same question in 2008
- 66% are satisfied with the repair service

Satisfaction with your caretaking services

You told us in the survey that our caretaking service continues to provide a high level of service.

- Helpfulness was rated at 92% up from 87% in 2008
- Keeping external areas clean and tidy at 92%
- Keeping internal areas clean and tidy at 90%

Our customer care promise to you

We are pleased to report that there was an increase in the satisfaction rating in many of our customer care standards.

- Helpfulness of staff has increased to 87%
- Politeness of staff is rated at 88%
- Staff knowledge was at 76% in 2008 and currently stands at 79% in 2011
- You told us that satisfaction with the overall service provided at the local area office is 79%

How we keep you informed and decision making opportunities

- 80% of you told us that HFI are good at keeping residents informed
- 61% of you reported that HFI takes resident views into account

Actions taken from your feedback will be reported in the next issue of HFI News. The full survey report from 2011 and previous surveys can be accessed on the Homes for Islington website www.homesforislington.org.uk / **about us / performance / tenant satisfaction survey.**



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