

Take a look at HFI's new website!

On 13 September 2004 Homes for Islington's new website went live. Homes for Islington recognises the growing importance to residents of easy access to information and service via the Internet, so has produced its website in record time. We hope it will increasingly help to answer your questions and give you better access to HFI staff and HFI services.

More of you are using the Internet

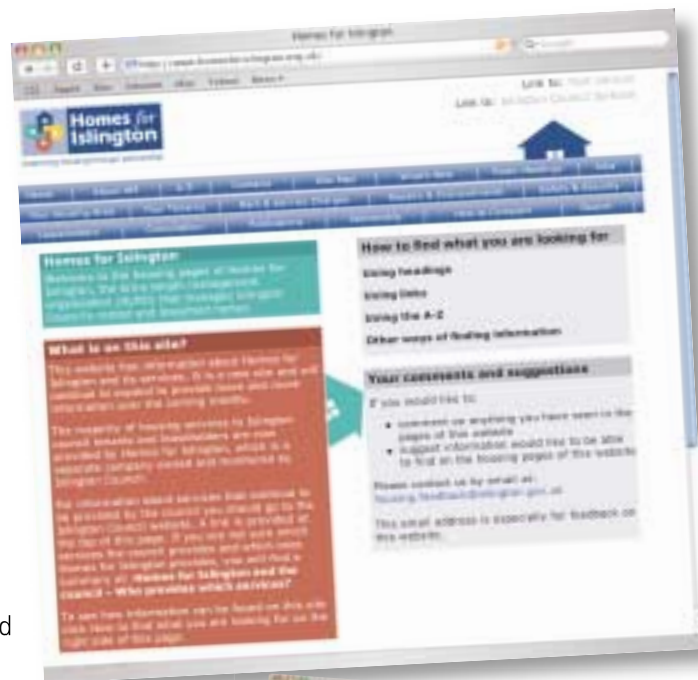
In the 2004 tenant satisfaction survey it was found that 40% of tenants have access to the Internet and 34% said they would like to contact us via email. In common with trends throughout Britain, we are confident that these proportions are growing, so that a website is one of the most important ways to communicate with tenants and leaseholders. Those of you who do not have access to the Internet from your own computer can visit any Islington library and use the computers that are there for public use.

The information you need

The Homes for Islington website is already packed with useful information of relevance to tenants and leaseholders and the content is growing daily. We are committed to keeping it up to date, so you will see additional content from day to day when you visit the site.

Services online

You can report repairs online if you are in the Boleyn Road, Central Street, Holland Walk, Isledon Road or Upper Street housing areas. Homes for Islington plans to increase online access to services, because we appreciate how important this convenient way of getting service is to so many residents.



The site provides direct contact information

This includes direct email addresses to HFI staff and special sections. The good thing about email is that it is quick and easy to do and you have an immediate record of your email and all follow-up correspondence.

Easy to find information

In addition to an ordinary search, the site provides a key words index that we call the A-Z, which will help you find the information you need. This index is being expanded over the coming weeks. Under Your housing area you will find a number of ways to locate information about services available from your area housing office. The top of each page states its content clearly and there is plenty of useful linking to help you to find additional information on the HFI site and elsewhere.

Your feedback

Homes for Islington wants the website to be relevant and informative for residents. To help us stay on track, there is an email address on the home page for contacting the website. We look forward to suggestions and other feedback from you.

Visit the HFI website at www.homesforislington.org.uk

HFI selects its Chief Executive

Eamon McGoldrick has been appointed on a permanent basis to the post of Chief Executive of Homes for Islington (HFI).



Eamon has been involved with Homes for Islington from the ground up, initially as part of the senior management team of the former Islington Council Housing Services department and, more recently, as HFI's acting chief executive.

Homes for Islington will be all the more effective for having an executive leader with his strong background in housing and such a deep commitment to making HFI one of the top providers in the UK of services to residents.

Chair of HFI, Ann Lucas, who made the announcement on 17th September, said

“*The Board Appointment Panel interviewed the four shortlisted candidates for our permanent Chief Executive.*

I am delighted to be able to tell you that our unanimous decision, and by a clear margin, was to appoint Eamon McGoldrick.

This is another significant milestone for Homes for Islington and the Panel is confident that we will now move forward even more positively continuing the good progress that we have already made.

I am sure you would want to join me in congratulating Eamon on his success **”**.

A new look for HFI offices



When you next visit one of the area housing offices or the Home Ownership office, you may notice a change. Since the offices were due for redecoration, Homes for Islington has decided to do the job in its new colours. Instead of the familiar green trim and signage, you will see a colour scheme dominated by Homes for Islington's blue. There will be new signage

and an opportunity to rationalise information display areas. We hope everyone will find the offices much improved. We include here some pictures from the Holland Walk area office, where these works have already been completed.

And good news for residents as HFI tops London housing league in MORI poll

In a recently independent poll, conducted by MORI for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Homes for Islington's services came out at the top of the league in London. The purpose of the poll was to discover how satisfied residents in boroughs across London are with council housing services. Homes for Islington, Islington's arms length management organisation (ALMO), delivers the bulk of housing services for Islington Council residents. Forty-two per cent of Islington residents - seven per cent higher than any other London borough - said they were satisfied with their housing services.

The MORI poll reinforces the results of Islington's own 2004 tenant satisfaction survey, which found that overall council tenant satisfaction was 52%, up from 50% in the previous year's survey. Eamon McGoldrick, HFI's chief executive, says that this vote of confidence from residents, combined with the MORI poll outcome, shows that Homes for Islington is on the right path towards raising standards even higher.

Homes for Islington appoints asset management advisor



Homes for Islington (HFI) has appointed Faithorn Farrell Timms (FFT) as their asset management partner after a lengthy selection process.

FFT will work with Homes for Islington providing expert advice on collecting and maintaining information on the housing stock that will be used to help develop HFI's improvement programme over the coming years. FFT will also be validating HFI's progress towards achieving the government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

FFT have considerable previous experience of working in Islington and have a local office in the borough. Colin Farrell is FFT's Senior Partner who will be leading the partnership with HFI.

“FFT is pleased to be working with Homes for Islington to develop their stock condition information and monitoring its progress towards compliance with the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. We look forward to the challenge and to helping HFI as much as possible in their efforts to achieve the necessary 'Best Value' rating to secure the money needed to invest its housing stock.”

IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT YOUR NEWSLETTER

The new format

Homes for Islington News will have a new format, starting with this issue. We found that much of the area news that we used to publish in separate area editions was actually relevant across the housing areas. So we decided to combine the newsletters into one edition for all areas. However, we have not forgotten that there is some special local news, so there will be local supplement inserts included to give you news that relates especially to your area. This new newsletter will also be more economical to produce than previous ones and more news for less money is good news.

Lyon Street area residents to receive the newsletter

For the first time we are including residents of the Lyon Street area on the mailing list for this newsletter. Since it has now been agreed that the Lyon Street housing area will be managed next year by Homes for Islington, we thought it was a good idea to begin sending residents HFI's newsletter. We discussed this with Hyde Northside and they agreed. If you live in the Lyon Street area, you will continue to receive your area news from Hydeside Broadside as usual until the changeover takes place.

Feedback

We hope that the news and information we provide in this newsletter will be useful and of interest to you. To make sure we keep it relevant, the editors of the newsletter are planning ways to get feedback from readers. These will certainly include a readership survey in the New Year. In the meantime, we invite you to contact us by writing to the editorial team or to any one of the editors with your comments or suggestions. See details below.

Your new editorial team

The editorial team now includes two editors, William McGarvie and Phillip Boothby, who are both council tenants. We hope they will help us to keep the newsletter relevant. In the future we will also have a guest editor, a different board or sub-board member

for each issue, to ensure that they all have the opportunity to play a part in producing the newsletter.

The full editorial list is as follows:

Victoria Keens,	HFI Communications (Lead Editor)
Christopher Donovan,	Partnership and Performance Officer, Upper Street
Edward Richards,	Partnership and Performance Officer, Holland Walk
Fabian Mugodhi,	Resident Involvement Officer
Jason Hapgood,	Project Officer
John Michael-Lane,	Partnership and Performance Officer, Isledon Road
Lee Farrow,	Partnership and Performance Officer, Boleyn Road
Mary Caudron,	Partnership and Performance Officer, Central Street
Philip Boothby,	HFI Board Associate Director, Managed Properties Sub Board (tenant)
Stuart Phillips,	Home Ownership Team Leader
William McGarvie,	HFI Board Director (tenant)

To contact the editorial team or any one editor, write to:

Homes for Islington News Editorial Team at: Highbury House, 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN.

You can telephone any of the Partnership and Performance Officers by telephoning their area housing office. An email address for the newsletter will be set up in the near future. In the meantime, HFI staff members can be emailed using the following formula: **firstname.lastname@homesforislington.org.uk**. We will be happy to pass on messages to the non-staff editors.

This newsletter will be on the Homes for Islington website under the Publications main heading.

The web address is www.homesforislington.org.uk

Homes for Islington Housing Officer Paula Alleyne celebrates with one of Islington's oldest tenants. Lotty Nolan, a resident of Sekforde Street EC1 for over 70 years, turned 101 earlier in the year. Lotty has lived in the area all her life and told us "I don't feel old at all!" Fellow Central Street resident Caroline Austin of President House celebrated her 103rd birthday this year. Caroline has also lived in the area all her life and, after being recently unwell, we wish her a full and speedy recovery.



ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – HELP US COMBAT IT!

All five offices managed by Homes for Islington now have antisocial behaviour message lines. You can leave a message at any time of day or night and it will be checked the next working day. You do not have to leave your name, address or phone number but any information you do leave will be treated in the strictest of confidence. It is always worth reporting anything you know, including names, nicknames and descriptions of anyone who may be guilty of antisocial behaviour.

The numbers are as follows:

Boleyn Road 020 7527 8346
Central Street 020 7527 6247
Holland Walk 020 7527 7477
Isledon Road 020 7527 6567
Upper Street 020 7527 5346

If you are a resident in the Lyon Street area, contact your housing officer or ring the reception on 020 7527 6880 to report any incidents of antisocial behaviour.

**In emergencies please call the
police on 999**

Help us combat Antisocial Behaviour
**Call your CONFIDENTIAL & ANONYMOUS
messageline now!**

If you have seen any antisocial behaviour help us to help you by leaving a message anytime of day or night on the number for your area:

 Boleyn Road 020 7527 8346	 Central Street 020 7527 6247
 Holland Walk 020 7527 7477	 Isledon Road 020 7527 6567
 Upper Street 020 7527 5346	

NOTE: In emergencies please call the police on 999

HELP FOR WITNESSES

Help is at hand in incidents where support would be helpful to victims and witnesses.

Contact Islington Victim Support

tel: 020 7272 0784 fax: 020 7281 1415, email: info@ivss.demon.co.uk

or The Witness Service

tel: 020 7506 3207 fax: 020 7700 7261, email: witnessservice@islingtonvictimsupport.co.uk

Dramatic rise in fuel bills

Energy efficiency key to tackling problem for Islington residents



Domestic energy bills are set to soar by an additional £26 million a week following plans announced by British Gas to increase residential gas and electricity bills by an average of 11%. Islington householders are being urged to

protect themselves against gas and electricity price increases by introducing simple energy efficient measures into the home, which will help reduce energy bills.

The 11 per cent price increases will add around £67 a year to the average household's energy bill. But by adopting key energy efficient practices Islington householders could reduce their energy bills by up to £200 a year — improving the warmth of the home in the process.

Islington Energy Centre can give advice on how to switch fuel suppliers to reduce fuel bills or switch to a green supplier.

Financial grants are available in Islington to help meet the cost of making homes more energy efficient. For free independent advice and information on discount schemes and grants contact Islington Energy Centre on 0800 512 012, log onto www.saveenergy.co.uk or visit Islington Energy Centre at 159 Upper Street, N1 1RE open Monday to Friday 9:00 - 17:00.

National Fraud Initiative

Later this year the London Borough of Islington will again be participating in the National Fraud Initiative, a data matching exercise co-ordinated by the Audit Commission. This will involve comparing extracts of individual records from our Housing Rents, Payroll, Pensions and Housing Benefits systems with similar data held by other local authorities and public organisations across the country in order to prevent and detect fraud.

The last exercise, undertaken two years ago, helped to identify fraud and overpayments to the value of £83 million nationally.

Islington Council is legally obliged to provide the relevant data under section 6 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. The data will be extracted from the council's systems in October this year and forwarded to the Audit Commission to be matched. The results will be investigated confidentially by the various investigations departments within the council. For further information contact www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nfi

Gardening is good for you...and for your neighbourhood!



Mr. Smith, pictured here, who lives at Hilldrop Crescent, is one of many residents whose gardens enhance the estates and neighbourhoods of Islington.

While gardening is a pleasurable pastime for most and a real passion for some, it is worth noting that it also improves areas, making them friendlier and safer, as well as more attractive.

Gardens have the opposite effect on an estate or neighbourhood of graffiti or dumped rubbish, so, the more gardeners, the better for everyone.

In coming issues of this newsletter, we would like to explore easy ways to help people contribute, through gardening or by other positive means, to making where they live better for themselves and their neighbours. We will be looking at ways that can help you garden, whether you have access to a window box, a balcony or a garden plot.

We welcome contributions from residents. For your trouble, Homes for Islington News will give a **£50 voucher** to any contribution on this topic from an HFI resident (in any of the six housing areas) if it is featured in any of the next three issues. You can contact us by writing to Homes for Islington News Editorial Team, HFI Communications, Highbury House, 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN or contact any of the editors mentioned on the Editors list in this issue.

New freepost address for leaseholders

Leaseholders can now contact the Leaseholder Forum or their area representative using a new freepost address. This replaces the drop-off boxes at the area housing offices. The new address is:

**Islington Leaseholder Forum,
FREEPOST NAT20609, London N5 1BR**

New partnerships deliver better homes

Homes for Islington has launched a ground-breaking new method of working with contractors which involves partnerships between the organisation, contractors, council tenants and residents.

Beginning in November 2004, new framework contract arrangements for projects will allow Homes for Islington, its contractors and residents to work together. The aim of this team approach is to improve the delivery of works to residents' homes through the establishment of long-term relationships. Under this agreement, 17 contractors, known as constructors, have been appointed to work with Homes for Islington on cyclical maintenance and housing improvement works.

Ann Lucas, Homes for Islington Board chair said: "We are very pleased and proud to introduce this partnership agreement. Residents now have a genuine opportunity to get involved in the improvement of their homes and living environment. We look forward to a strong working relationship with each of the selected constructors as they develop a sound understanding of residents' needs.

"These new arrangements will help ensure consistently high standards while encouraging and rewarding good constructors by offering continuous work. They will also provide a significant boost to our efforts to achieve the government's Decent Homes Standard in Islington by year 2010."

The best performing constructors will be allocated more work; any that fail to perform, will not. Performance will be measured on each project and continuously over time against key indicators, including completion times, cost, customer care, creation of local job opportunities and resident satisfaction.

The framework contract arrangements will be used for work on housing estates, such as external painting and associated repairs, internal decorations to communal areas, window and roof renewals and internal works, including installing new kitchens and bathrooms.



Steve Boniface, Director, Diamond Build Plc; HFI Board Director Jason Bingham; HFI Board Chair Ann Lucas sign agreement on Framework Contract Arrangements

HOME OWNERS...

Good news from your Home Ownership Team

Arrears collection

We have been busy this year collecting outstanding charges and unpaid invoices. Maximising income enables Homes for Islington to plan ahead for future improved services. Don't forget that Homes for Islington will take direct action to recover any outstanding arrears. We are pleased to offer interest free arrangements to pay. To use this facility, contact the home ownership officer for your patch area.

Direct debit

For the further convenience of homeowners, we will be introducing a direct debit facility for paying service charges from next year. This method of payment saves you queuing and filling out a lot of paperwork. More information will be sent to homeowners in the near future.

Your new Leasehold Management Team

If you need to speak to an officer concerning any issues surrounding the ownership of your property, please use the table below. We are here to help and assist you with enquiry.

Management Team	Patch area	Contact names	Telephone numbers	
East Team	Boleyn Road	Dionne Fahm	020 7527 7728	
		Zem Selassie	020 7527 7752	
	Upper Street	Lorraine Dunkley	020 7527 7758	
		Naomi Jeffery	020 7527 7725	
North Team	Isledon Road	Alex Evans	020 7527 7739	
		Dean Delamont	020 7527 7756	
	Holland Walk	Christopher Groom	020 7527 7714	
		George Georgiou	020 7527 7759	
		Sharon Coghiel	020 7527 7727	
		Stuart Phillips		
West Team	Central Street	Preety Chundensing	020 7527 7736	
	Hyde Northside	Karen Kennedy	020 7527 7716	
		Anthony Cahill	020 7527 7723	
		Zoe Brodie	020 7527 7718	
		Carole Voller	020 7527 7742	
Major Works	Central Street	Trevor Balnave	020 7527 7712	
	Upper Street	Paul Ewert	020 7527 7781	
		Arun Bhatt	020 7527 7735	
	Boleyn Road	Nancy Palmer/Giulio Bergonzi	020 7527 7853	
	Isledon Road	Ivor Jones	020 7527 7704	
	Hyde Northside	Daniel Arnold	020 7527 7731	

New Homes for Islington concierge scheme

Atmosphere transformed at Peregrine House and Kestrel House

Residents at Peregrine House and Kestrel House are now benefiting from a new, staffed concierge scheme which was officially opened at a ceremony attended by residents, Homes for Islington staff, police and councillors last month.

The new scheme incorporates state-of-the-art digital cameras and new entry doors to improve security for residents of the two high-rise buildings.

Each block has numerous strategically placed cameras covering the lifts, lobbies, roof access, estate grounds and garages, allowing concierge staff to monitor movement in and out of the estate.

Although not a crime hot spot, the blocks had suffered from antisocial behaviour among some of its residents and visitors. Lifts were defaced and fouled, non-residents would loiter in the block and the upper balconies were used by base-jumpers for their sport.

Now, residents gain entry to the buildings using fob keys and visitors are buzzed in by residents using the entry system. Upon entering either of the buildings, residents and visitors are greeted by a concierge in the newly redesigned lobby, which also features plants and improved lighting. There are four concierge staff who are on duty from 8am to midnight Sunday - Thursday and 10.30 am until 2.30 am Friday and Saturday. They have a direct communications link to the police and emergency services.

State-of-the-art computer systems allow the concierges to monitor all entries into the buildings and record any instances of crime or anti-social behaviour, which can be shared with police. The community contact police officer, Barry Leach, or one of his community support officers, makes regular visits and consults with the Senior Concierge Manager Petrit Laurence on any action that needs to be taken for crime prevention or to follow-up on criminal activity. Officer Leach says the living situation at

the two buildings has "improved massively", and he credits the new concierge and CCTV system at each for that. "The system is great! Every home should have one," he says.

The cost of maintaining this service is partly borne by the residents who overwhelmingly voted in favour of the programme. Mr. Laurence says: "We're working with residents to improve the quality of life in the building."

Residents say that the atmosphere has been transformed. Antisocial behaviour and crime has been reduced, and people feel safer and are taking a new pride in their building.

Resident Jean Trotter, a Tenant Association Committee member says: "You feel more secure, the place is clean and people are starting to respect it more."



Maureen Stroud, Jean Trotter, Jenny Robinson and Georgina Spencer in front and in the rear concierge staff Alex Mensah and Senior Concierge Manager Petrit Laurence.

Rehousing news

Choice-Based-Lettings for all areas

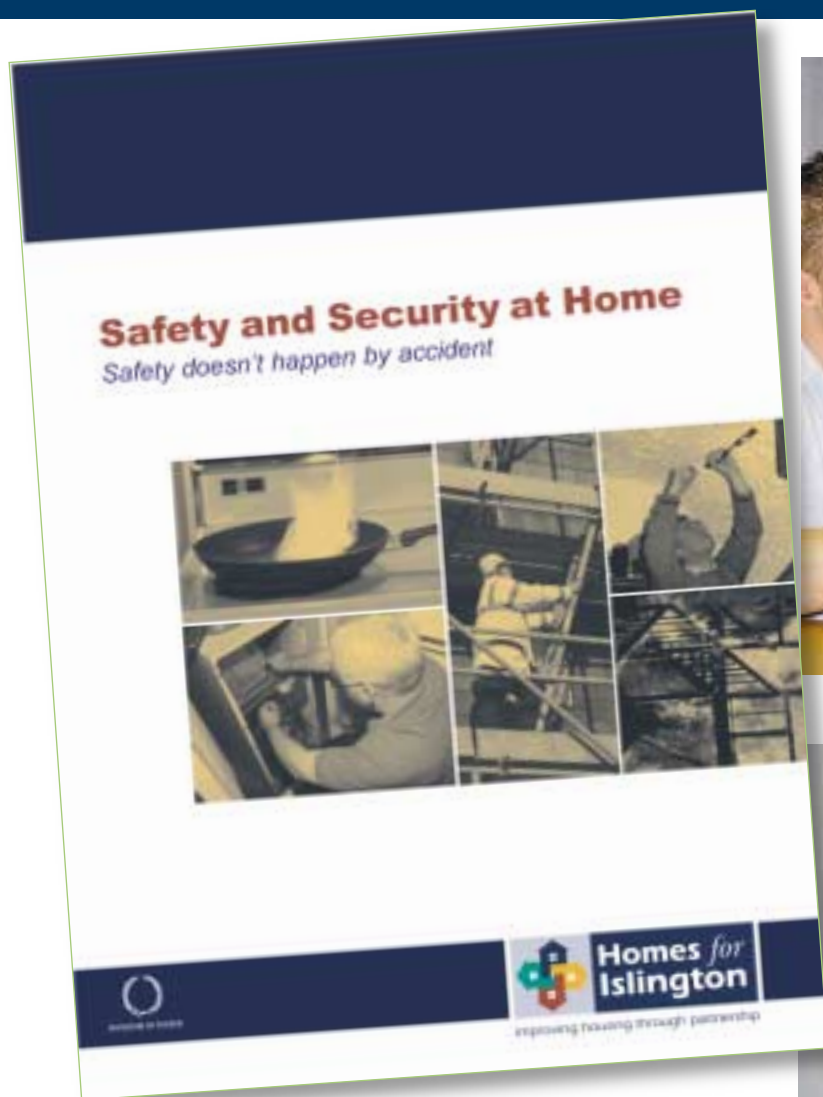
Following the success of the Choice-Based-Lettings, in July 2004, the council has extended the scheme to include all areas of the borough.

Important - Offices moving

The Rehousing Team and the Housing Medical Officer will be moving on the 10th September 2004 to 60 Highbury New Park, Highbury, London N5. Please ensure that, from the 10th September 2004, correspondence for rehousing and the medical officer is sent to the above address.

It should be noted that the Rehousing Team will not be providing an interview service. The Appeals and Complaints Section moved on the 10th September 2004 to 38 Devonia Road, London N1. Please ensure that, from the 10th September 2004, all appeals and complaints should be referred to Dawn Forte Khan at this address.





Keep a first aid box handy.



Always check unknown callers for ID.

BE SAFE IN YOUR HOME!

With this newsletter you should have received a booklet entitled *Safety and Security at Home*. Please read through it, as it contains important information to help make your home as safe as possible.

Some of the areas covered include how to prevent burglaries, what to do when a stranger calls at your door, how to prevent fires and what to do when an accident happens.

There is also information about gas safety and our gas installers. It is important that you read through this section thoroughly as we must make sure that all our gas appliances are tested and approved every year. Gas safety checks are so important to tenants, their families and their neighbours that Homes for Islington is required by law to make annual safety checks in council tenanted properties. Most tenants recognise that gas safety checks are in their interest and are happy to cooperate in giving access to HFI's gas safety inspectors, as they are required to do. Homes for Islington has legal powers to gain access in the

few cases where people fail to keep appointments or will not let safety inspectors in and will be targeting such properties over the coming months. Home owners are responsible for arranging their own safety checks.

If something in your home needs repairing or you would like to book an appointment for a gas safety check you should call Islington Repair Line on 0800 694 3344

If you smell gas call Transco on: 0800 111 999. in this newsletter

Please keep this booklet somewhere safe and easily accessible and refer to it regularly, especially if you are planning to do something you haven't done before. We suggest you keep it in the Key Documents folder we sent you with the last issue of this newsletter. Safety and security information can be found on the Homes for Islington website at www.homesforislington.org.uk. See also the article 'Keep safe - Get serviced' on page eleven.

CHANGES TO YOUR BULK WASTE REMOVAL

Changes have been made to the way we collect your bulk waste.

Upper Street and Boleyn Road Areas

A 12-month 'immediate collection' pilot has been running on estates in the Upper Street and Boleyn Road areas since August this year, replacing the previous 6-weekly cycle of collections. Funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, bulk waste will now be collected from estates within 24 hours, from Monday to Friday when reported by residents or caretakers before 9am. After 9am, it will be collected by the end of the next working day.

If you live in these housing areas and have items for removal, please make sure you notify your caretaker or call your housing office.

Upper Street residents call 020 7527 5380

Boleyn Road residents call 020 7527 8309

Recycling and re-use

Where previously there was no scope for recycling, this new scheme allows for lumber to be safely sorted and stored at a specially built depot on the Marquess Estate. Those items that may be of use can be transferred to one of our recovery, recycling or re-use partners, such as the Kings Cross Furniture Project which provides furniture and household items at low cost or without charge to people in need. In addition, reducing the amount of waste disposed of in landfill.

Central Street, Lyon Street, Holland Walk and Isledon Road Areas

Resources freed up by the immediate collection pilot mean that Homes for Islington can increase the number of collections by



Islington Cleansing Services Ltd (ICSL) from approximately eight times a year to 12 times in the other housing areas. This new four-weekly cycle will help reduce the strain on lumber stores and the unsightly build up of bulk waste on estates. Where three weekly collections were made previously, these stores will now be emptied every two weeks.

Hugh Partridge, resident and Homes for Islington Sub Board Representative for the Central Street area told us, 'residents in this area are delighted that the bulk waste pilot is going ahead in two of our housing areas, with the increase in collections elsewhere, as we have had concerns about lumber building up on estates for some time. We also welcome the positive contribution that these changes can bring to increased re-use and recovery of items to fit in with Islington's commitment to a greater use of recycling.'

At the end of the 12-month pilot period, Homes for Islington will be looking at extending the scheme to each of the housing areas. For more information, contact your estate services team.

If you live in a street property, you can continue to call Contact Islington on 020 7527 2000 to arrange for your bulk waste to be removed.

New estate parking patrol contract

Parking contractors Wing Security Limited have won the new Homes for Islington estate parking patrol contract. The contract evaluation team that reviewed the various competitors for this contract included Islington Council and Homes for Islington managers, Homes for Islington board directors and associate directors and a director of the Federation of Islington Tenants Associations (FITA). The new three-year contract started on 1st October 2004.

Wing Security will patrol nearly 200 council estates throughout Islington, enforcing estate parking restrictions by wheel clamping and removing unauthorised and illegally parked vehicles. They are an experienced parking contractor,

specialising in patrols of housing estates. They also work with a number of other London boroughs and housing associations. For further information on how the estate parking patrols operate please telephone the Homes for Islington Estate Parking Section on 020 7527 8669. Information about estate parking can be found on the Homes for Islington website at www.homesforislington.org.uk.

Applying for a garage or parking space

If you do not already have an allocated estate parking space or garage and would like to apply for one, please contact your local area housing office.

WE ARE LISTENING...

Your comments are important to Homes for Islington. They influence the services we provide and the way we deliver them. For example, your comment could lead us to revise the wording on a form so that it makes clearer sense or it could even lead to a major change in a particular service. Here are two real examples of this.

Not long ago, following the unfortunate death of a tenant who lived alone, after talking with the relatives, we decided to produce a single page of guidance to provide relatives who might find themselves in this position with straightforward advice on clearing the property and returning the keys.

In another instance your feedback resulted in Homes for Islington discontinuing the category of repairs that were known as H3 priority repairs. These were repairs that were urgent but required the contractor to be at the repair address within 24 hours and complete the repair within 72 hours. If a tenant reported the repair around lunchtime this could result in them having to be at home for the next four days. This was inconvenient for some of you with school runs or other arrangements that cannot be changed at short notice. Instead we now offer a choice of either having the contractor attend sometime the day after you report the repair or a definite appointment in three to nine days.

So keep your feedback coming. You, the residents, are best placed

to tell us about HFI services. Please fill in any questionnaires that we provide, such as the annual tenant satisfaction survey and use the comment cards that are available in the area offices, advising a member of staff or writing to us. You can also contact HFI staff in the appropriate departments by email. Contact information can be found on the HFI website at www.homesforislington.org.uk. The more good ideas or suggestions we have for improvement the better the service we will provide.



HFI introduces seven new customers commitments

Homes for Islington's customer commitments have been published in the form of 24 leaflets. HFI's Customer commitments define and explain the standards of service HFI aims to achieve. The standards are monitored regularly.

The newest leaflets cover caretaking, resident involvement, housing support, lifts, temporary accommodation, housing benefit fraud and resident commitments. For full details of all of the commitments on each service area you can pick up copies of the leaflets in your local housing office or look on the Homes for Islington website at www.homesforislington.org.uk.

HFI is always open to your views. We encourage you to fill out the customer comment cards that you will find at your local area office. Your feedback is a valuable tool that enables us to improve the service we provide.



Keep safe - Get serviced!

As agents for your landlord, Homes for Islington is required by law to carry out a safety check of all Islington tenants' gas appliances at least once a year. This is important for your safety and that of your family.

If you have not had your gas appliances and boiler serviced during the last twelve months, contact Islington Repair Line on 0800 694 3344, between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 12 noon on Saturdays, to book your FREE gas service.

You may have recently received a letter with an appointment already allocated. If it is not convenient, please call 020 7527 6282 / 6203 / 6204 to rearrange.

Homes for Islington is committed to making the servicing process as user-friendly as possible and have, therefore, made available more early evening and weekend servicing slots. In addition we shall:

- Arrange an appointment to suit you
- Offer you help if you have any special needs
- Provide you with a record of your safety check

All our operatives are CORGI registered and carry clear identification.

What if I'm a leaseholder?

If you own your property, it is YOUR responsibility to ensure that your gas appliances and fittings are safe.

Gas appliances can only be installed by a CORGI registered installer. For your own safety, your gas appliances should be inspected and serviced annually by a CORGI registered installer. Each year in the UK, hundreds of serious injuries and some 30 deaths are caused as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning due to faulty gas appliances and flues. All of these tragedies could



Your next safety check is due 12 months from the date on your certificate'

be avoided by proper installation and servicing.

If you are a leaseholder and you let your property out, your responsibility as a landlord means that you must, by law, ensure the appliances are checked annually.

If you think you smell gas

Call Transco gas immediately on 0800 111 999 or call Islington Repair Line on 0800 694 3344 who will report it for you.

- **DON'T smoke or use naked flames**
- **DON'T turn electric switches or appliances on or off**
- **DO turn off the gas supply at the meter. If you are not sure where it is, contact us.**
- **DO open doors and windows**

For more information on gas safety or if you are a leaseholder and want to find a CORGI registered installer, see www.corgi-gas-safety.com



Homes for Islington and Caxton working in partnership for the safety of our tenants.

Homes for Islington takes further steps toward the Decent Homes Standard



Work in progress on a new kitchen



In 2000, the government issued a commitment to bring all public sector homes up to a decent standard by 2010. Homes for Islington is already making progress in reaching this target through a wide range of improvement work. This is mainly to the external fabric of homes, but this year it also includes renewal of kitchens and bathrooms in over 300 homes via three pilot schemes. Webster House and Bronte House are included in Contract 3, which is to be undertaken by J Murphy and Sons Ltd.

The work has already begun, with internal surveys being carried out to Bronte House and Webster House. The kitchen and bathrooms project team met with contractors on 15th September to agree a maximum price for the proposed works. Kitchen samples have already been selected, based on the results of the residents' choices gathered when the 'show flats' were running in summer 2003. The samples were presented to the Homes for Islington board on 8th September and evening meetings are planned for the autumn to show residents the results.

A helpful booklet called *Getting it right* will be issued to tenants in Webster House and Bronte House in October. This booklet, together with the covering letter, will explain in detail the planned works and will include contact details for the project manager, contractor and all the other people that will be connected with this work. It will describe what residents need to know about the periods before works begin, during works and when works are completed. There is also a special section for leaseholders.

Homes for Islington recognises that there are a substantial number of properties in need of upgrading, particularly in regard to kitchens and bathrooms. These pilot schemes represent a real opportunity to begin work on these important improvements. The key to continued progress toward the decent homes standard lies in Homes for Islington achieving at least a 'two star' rating from the forthcoming Audit Commission inspection this autumn. Staff and management remain wholly committed to achieving this and the injection of funding inherent in such a rating will be used, together with other funding, to make the necessary improvements.

Get results...get involved

How and why you should set up a tenants and residents association

Homes for Islington (HFI) supports and encourages the development of tenants and residents associations (TRAs). There are currently 86 associations recognised by HFI.

Why set up and association for your area

Tenants and leaseholders may decide that they want a greater say in the way the housing service is run and a collective approach gives them a better chance of getting their views across. There may be a specific issue, such as estate security or major works, or residents might want to organise activities, like outings or events for children, to foster a community spirit.

How to set up a TRA

Residents can contact either the Federation of Islington Tenants Associations (FITA) or the performance and partnership officer (PPO) in your local area housing office. They will arrange an informal discussion where the concerns of local people can be identified, together with ways of encouraging them to participate. The next stage is a public meeting of all interested tenants and leaseholders in the area, which FITA can help to arrange and conduct. At this meeting the residents will adopt a constitution and elect a committee.

Recognition by HFI and grants to TRAs

To be formally recognised by Homes For Islington (HFI), the TRA must adopt a constitution based on the model constitution. The TRA must be open to all members of the community and hold annual general meetings, where committee members are elected. A recognised TRA may apply for a small grant from HFI to cover its initial costs annually

apply for an Administration and Publicity Grant to help with costs of producing information. HFI can offer special training to enable the TRA and its committee to be effective.

Islington's tenants and residents come from a wide variety of cultures and over 100 different languages are spoken across the borough. To help TRAs encourage people from all sections of the community to get involved, HFI has developed an Equalities Information Pack which contains advice on how to involve people from black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people and women and also gives lists of useful contacts.

Making your views known

All recognised TRAs have a right to put forward a representative to their local Area Housing Panel and to invite HFI and council officers from the local area office and other council departments to attend their meetings. In addition, the local area office is required to invite officers of the TRA to carry out regular joint inspections of their estate, so that problem areas and repairs can be identified and dealt with.

Further Information

For more information about TRAs in Islington and how they operate, please contact one of the following:

Local Area Housing Office,

ask for the Performance and Partnership Officer (PPO).

Resident Involvement Team Tel: 020 7527 8630/8632/8633

Federation of Islington Tenants' Associations (FITA) 58 Drayton Park, London N5 Tel: 020 7226 8934. Information on TRAs is on the HFI

website at: www.homesforislington.org.uk