



**Homes for
Islington**

improving housing through partnership

Issue 18

Autumn 2008

news



HFI gets 3 stars!

Audit Commission awards Homes for Islington highest possible rating

English classes for speakers of other languages

ইসলিংটন (Islington) এর অন্য ভাষায়, কথা বলা ব্যক্তিদের জন্য ইংরাজি ক্লাস

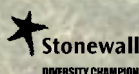
Μαθήματα εκμάθησης της αγγλικής γλώσσας για ομιλητές άλλων γλωσσών στο Islington

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HFI gets 3 stars!

Audit Commission awards Homes for Islington highest possible rating

The Audit Commission is an independent watchdog that checks public services to ensure they are providing value for money. Last year it inspected Homes for Islington (HFI).

It awarded HFI the maximum three stars (Excellent Service) and also decided that HFI has excellent prospects to improve more.

They described the service provided to residents in the report they wrote about the inspection. They said:

- "Offices are easy to access, telephones are answered well and customers have access to a lot of good quality information."
- "Vulnerable tenants are well supported."
- "Repairs are easy to report and are usually delivered in one visit to a high level of customer satisfaction."
- "Empty properties are turned round quickly."
- "Performance on collecting rents is high while eviction rates are low."
- "HFI provides a well co-ordinated and effective response to anti-social behaviour with an out of hours service increasing residents' sense of safety."
- "Leaseholder service charges are relatively low with good collection rates."



- "Major works are well planned and delivered, resulting in high satisfaction."
- "Performance indicators and indications of resident satisfaction are showing almost universal improvement. This is achieved while costs are reducing resulting in an overall improvement in value for money."

Eamon McGoldrick, HFI's Chief Executive, said: "The report shows the big improvements made to services, value for money and residents' satisfaction. We will not be easing up though; in particular, we will be focusing on improving leaseholder satisfaction and ensuring that the improvements we have recently made to tenants' homes are sustained. We will continue to invest in Islington's housing stock to deliver the Government's Decent Homes Programme by 2010 and continue to meet residents' priorities by dealing with issues such as anti-social behaviour."

Combating anti-social behaviour

How we're working with you to tackle ASB

Taking action against individuals where it's needed

Recent actions taken against residents committing anti-social behaviour (ASB) include:

- injunctions against residents in Highbury East, Astey's Row, De Beauvoir Square, Wynn Court and the Loraine Estate;
- a drug closure at 259 Camden Road; and
- court committal proceedings against a resident who breached an injunction on the Finsbury Estate.

If you are worried about ASB then contact your area office (contact details on page 11) during working hours. Outside working hours you can call the ASB hotline on 020 7527 7272.

Follow the firework code

Fireworks night is coming up. Stay safe and follow the firework code.

- Only buy fireworks marked BS7114.
- Don't drink alcohol if setting off fireworks.
- Follow lighting instructions and light at arm's length, using a taper.
- Keep fireworks in a closed box, never in your pocket.
- Stand well back and never go back to a lit firework - it could explode.
- Never throw fireworks.
- Always supervise children around fireworks and don't give sparklers to the under fives.
- Keep pets indoors.

Mobility vehicles

Contact us for help with storage

If you want a mobility vehicle but do not have room to store it then Homes for Islington may be able to help. For information about having outside storage equipment installed contact the tenancy management team at your local area housing office (contact details on page 11), or visit our website at www.homesforislington.org.uk.

If you think a shop is selling fireworks illegally to children, contact the trading standards team on 020 7527 3198 or email trading.standards@islington.gov.uk.

Anti gun and knife event

You have a CHOICE (YHAC) is a not for profit organisation which aims to engage, enlighten and motivate young people.

YHAC recently ran an anti gun and knife event at Arsenal football club. Over 200 young people attended and talked about how the community, young people and the police can work together to get guns and knives off our streets.

For more information visit the YHAC website at www.yhac.co.uk or contact John Lane on 020 7527 8630.

Photo credit gilesgphotography.co.uk



Dog control orders

Responsible dog ownership

Dog control orders came into effect on 14 July 2008. They mean that dog owners need to pick up after their dog, keep their dog on a lead when asked to do so by an authorised officer in a public space and ensure that the dog does not enter a clearly marked dog free area. An on the spot fine of £80 can be issued if these orders are broken. The fines can be issued by:

- Homes for Islington's out of hours anti-social behaviour team;
- Greenspace's park guard patrol; and
- Islington council's street environment officers.

To report problems with dog fouling or irresponsible dog owners please call 020 7527 2000.

Happy birthday!



Mrs Watling with her son and daughter

Celebrations as Elsie hits her century

Homes for Islington (HFI) helped one of its oldest tenants celebrate last week as she reached her 100th birthday.

Mrs Elsie Watling celebrated with her son and her daughter at her flat in Mildmay. HFI's Vice-chair Jessie White joined the celebration when she dropped in with a bouquet of flowers and a box of chocolates. "It was great to be able to wish Mrs Watling a happy birthday" she said. "I hope she had an enjoyable day and may I wish her many more to come!"

Gas safety

Keep your home safe

All Home for Islington tenants' gas appliances have to be checked at least once a year. This is required by law in order to keep people's homes safe. You must co-operate by giving access to your home for these important safety checks.

Don't end up in court – failure to let us do a gas safety check puts you at risk and can lead to a court case. In recent cases tenants were ordered to pay over £650 in court costs for failing to give access.

What is a tenancy audit?

A way of checking nobody is cheating the system

Tenancy audits are where we check that the person whose name is on the tenancy is living in the property. We do this by visiting random properties and asking tenants to identify themselves and show some proof that they live there. It's important that we do this as when someone lets out their property without permission it means they are making money from a council home whilst other families are overcrowded or are forced to live in temporary housing.

Homes for Islington recovered 22 properties last year as a result of tenancy audits and another 15 cases are ongoing.

If you know any properties which are sublet or where the tenant lives elsewhere then you can report it to the housing investigations team by calling 020 7527 7432, emailing housing.investigationsreportingline@homesforislington.org.uk, or visiting www.homesforislington.org.uk and completing the online form.

Building new homes

Cutting housing waiting lists

The waiting list for council homes in Islington is long and a lot of homes are also overcrowded.

Now, for the first time in a generation, new council homes are being built. Work has already started at two sites in the borough – Boleyn Road N16 and Armour Close N7. Five other new sites have also been found.

Possible locations include disused garages at Neptune House, the mezzanine floor of Clifton Court, the site of the Lewis Carroll temporary library and at 143 Seven Sisters Road. Flats could even be slotted into the gap between the building and the ground at Docura House on the Andover estate.

So next time you walk past a disused garage or notice a gap in a block of flats just imagine what it could become!

New training courses for tenants

Develop new skills and get qualifications and work

New training courses are being offered to help tackle unemployment. The courses are run by Islington Council and funded by HFI specifically for HFI tenants to help them get new skills and back into work.

The courses cover a range of topics including: security training, customer service, computerised accounts and basic skills courses in literacy, IT and childcare.

There are vocational courses such as a Food Hygiene Certificate, a national award in travel and tourism and bus driving training leading to a PCV licence. For those interested in sports, courses are available in football coaching, community sports leadership and being a gym instructor. These all come with recognised qualifications.

For the full range of courses and more information on them you can check the training page on the HFI website at: www.homesforislington.org.uk

For vocational training call Sarah Bullman on 020 7527 4220 or email sarah.bullman@islington.gov.uk

For security training call 'Learn Assist' on 020 7515 7111 or email harry@learnassist.co.uk

Change a child's life forever...

Find out more about fostering

Islington fostering service is recruiting carers to really make a difference to a child's life. We are particularly looking for carers able to look after teenagers and to help them through that very difficult stage of life.

You don't need qualifications, to own a big house or be married but you do need to be good with children, to be able to keep them healthy and safe and to help them progress at school. As well as the satisfaction of helping a child you will also receive generous financial allowances to help with their care, and of course Islington foster carers get full training and 24-hour support. To get the facts about fostering visit www.islington.gov.uk/fostering. For an information pack or an informal chat please ring 0800 073 0428 or email us at fostering@islington.gov.uk.

Free home fire safety visits

Did you know you are eligible for a free home fire safety visit?

Each visit takes around 30 minutes and involves a trained member of staff visiting your home to advise on how fires can start and practical things you can do to reduce the risk of a fire breaking out.

A free smoke alarm will also be installed (if necessary) during the visit. Specialist alarms can also be provided for residents who are deaf or hard of hearing.

If you would like to arrange a visit, please call 020 7527 4016 or email healthandsafety@homesforislington.org.uk.



Look up at Kestrel House's wind turbine

Renewable energy generates 10% of block's electricity

Kestrel House has been chosen as a pioneer for making housing in Islington green. A wind turbine on the roof generates 10% of the block's electricity. The energy is used to help light the communal hallway, pump water and power the electrical security system.

The turbine is part of a wider plan to reduce the carbon emissions of the council by 15% by 2010. Funding for the project has come a grant from the Low Carbon Buildings Programme Phase Two, Islington council, Apollo and Homes for Islington.

■ Improve your financial management skills

Free financial services for black and ethnic minorities in Islington

Black and Ethnic Minorities Financial Services (BEMFS) provides free surgeries on Saturdays from 10am to 3pm, where you can get confidential advice about your personal finances from an independent financial adviser (who will be a member of the Financial Services Authority).

For a confidential, no-obligation and FREE appointment, please call us on 020 7251 0000, email: info@bemfinancialservices.org.uk or simply walk into our Saturday surgery at:

Toffee Park Youth Centre, 50 Ironmonger Row during September and October.

St Lukes Centre, 90 Central Street during November and December.

Is your property ■ too big and too much to handle?

If you are a council tenant living in a home that is too big for you the council can help you move to a property that better suits your needs

If you move to a smaller, more manageable home you will get £500 for each spare room you give up (subject to a clear rent account) and up to £300 to help you with removal costs. Other incentives are also available.

If you want to move to another home you will need to register for a transfer. Forms are available at your local area housing office (contact details are on page 11), by calling the rehousing call centre on 020 7527 4140 or 020 7527 4143 or by visiting our website at www.homesforislington.org.uk.



■ New home ownership scheme available

Families flocked to Islington's Affordable Home Ownership Show at Arsenal's Emirates in June

It's not easy to get on the property ladder, but a new scheme called Social HomeBuy could help. You can buy as little as 25% of your home on a part-rent, part-buy basis, with the option to increase this to 100%. You could also receive up to £4000 to help you cover the fees and costs of buying a home. Islington recently held the first Home Ownership Show to give residents an opportunity to find out about this and other schemes. To find out more contact Homes for Islington's home ownership (contact details on page 11).

Don't let the ■ bed bugs bite!

Prevent an infestation

Contrary to what you might think, bed bugs aren't attracted by dirt but by body heat and the carbon dioxide we exhale, however what they are really interested in is our blood!

To minimise the risk of bedbugs avoid using second hand furniture, especially beds. If you stay somewhere where there have been bedbugs, make sure you wash all your clothes thoroughly and inspect your luggage carefully before taking it into your bedroom.

If you find small blood smears on your bedding, clusters of little insects or small dark spots or stains on the bed, bed frame, headboard or skirting board, you may have an infestation. You should contact the council's pest control team as soon as possible on 020 7527 3190 for advice and to arrange treatment.

■ Board meetings

When and where

Homes for Islington's ordinary Board meetings and Sub-board meetings are open to the public. All meetings take place at 6.30pm at Highbury House, 4 – 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN.

Upcoming Board meetings

Monday 20 October 2008
Monday 15 December 2008

Upcoming Contracted services sub-board meetings

Tuesday 14 October 2008
Tuesday 9 December 2008

Upcoming Managed property sub-board meetings

Wednesday 15 October 2008
Wednesday 10 December 2008

Translation, signing and an induction loop are available. If you have any special requirements contact: Governance Team, Highbury House, 4 – 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN, call 020 7527 6148 or email governance.team@homesforislington.org.uk.

■ Reduce, reuse, recycle

Save money and help the environment!

You might not know but every household in Islington produces over a tonne of rubbish every year that is sent to landfill. That's the same weight as an average car.

When this rubbish rots it creates methane gas, which contributes to climate change. And here's another important fact – the cost of burying our rubbish is going up which will cost Islington an extra £1 million a year.

Although Islington's recycling rate is 28% and we're one of the fastest improving boroughs in London we want to be the best. So we're asking everyone to watch their waste by reducing, reusing and recycling.

Over 23,000 households on estates have recycling collected from their doorstep. So recycling your paper, glass, cans, cardboard and plastic bottles is really easy.

And of course instead of throwing things away, you might find that someone else could put them to good use. Why not try the 'Swapxchange'. It's a website where you can exchange goods or items locally. And it's completely free! www.islington.gov.uk/swapxchange

■ If you are deaf or hard of hearing

How you can access our services

We can arrange an interpreter

If you are deaf and use British Sign Language (BSL), we can arrange for a professional BSL interpreter to attend appointments with you. Please let us know if you need a BSL interpreter so that we can arrange it in advance.

By phone or online

If you use textphone, you can contact us using Typetalk or on the minicom telephone numbers you will see on Homes for Islington's documents and leaflets. You can contact us via the website or email. Our website address is www.homesforislington.org.uk and local email contact details are included on our letters, leaflets and website.

Reporting a repair

You can contact us by sending an SMS text message. The SMS number for general repairs is 07781 472556.

If you need to report an emergency repair from Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm or Saturday 8am to 12 noon please use minicom 0800 073 0536 or email repairs@homesforislington.org.uk. If you need to report an emergency repair outside these hours use minicom 020 7527 1900 or email linkline.islington@islington.gov.uk.

For more information on recycling visit www.islington.gov.uk/recycling or call 020 7527 2000.



■ Sports stars

Young people on the Highbury Estate are getting active

The Olympics will be coming to London in 2012 and who knows, Britain's hopefuls may come from the Highbury Estate.

Lorna Reid, the local tenants and residents association chair, noticed that there were five young people on her estate excelling at sports.

Bertie Wilson, at 16 plays rugby for Finchley and Middlesex County, playing anywhere in the backs he was awarded players' player of the year for Finchley.

Billy Rixon is 11 and already the Captain of the Islington District Schoolboy Football Team. He was awarded second place in manager's player of the year and plays centre midfield for Senrab FC and FDS FC as well as for Canonbury School FC where he scored the winning goal in the Islington Schools competition.

Euan Taylor-Reid is also 11 and is Vice-captain of the Islington District Schoolboy Football Team and was awarded manager's player of the year. He also played for the Inner London County Schools Team and for Lyndhurst FC where he won the players' player award.

Keeping it in the family his sister is Sarah Taylor-Reid. At just 13 years old she swims with Camden Swiss Cottage Swimming Club at county and regional level where she holds three top rankings. She was the winner of Islington Schools' Sportswoman of the Year (Key Stage 3) in both 2007 and 2008.



Finally, there's Ria James. At 12 years old she plays for the District Girls Football Team, Highbury Fields School Girls Team and league winners Tufnell Park Ladies Football Club. Her team Highbury Fields Girls Football Team won the Islington School Sports Award.

If you'd like to get involved in sports taking place near you then take a look at the leaflet enclosed with this newsletter (if you've got a young person living with you), or contact your community and service development officer at your local area office (contact details on page 11).

■ Want to improve your estate?

Then why not set up a tenants and residents association?

Residents on the Girdlestone Estate have re-started their tenants and residents association (TRA). They decided they wanted to work together to make their estate a better and safer place to live.

For example, they have recently held a Community Action Day. The event was an opportunity for people to get to know each other and develop a stronger community feeling. There were fun activities for children and practical jobs for adults

aimed at making the estate look more cared for. The action day was just one small part of building a better estate and community. That's what a TRA is there to help you do.

If you'd like to find out more about setting up a TRA or joining one that's already there contact your community and service development officer at your local area office (contact details on page 11).

■ Your local safer neighbourhood team

Working with you to improve your neighbourhood

Did you know there are 16 safer neighbourhood teams in Islington? That's 16 teams, in addition to your local police force, who are working to improve your neighbourhood.

This could involve anything from dealing with graffiti and noisy neighbours to setting up a local youth club. That's just what the safer neighbourhood team in the St Peter's Ward have done.

It began two years ago when a local resident from the Popham and Cummings Estate worked with the team to set up a youth club. Since then the club's been open every Wednesday evening. It's been such a success that more recently it's been open every third Sunday in the month as well.

Police and community support officer Rachael Cox thinks the club has been a great way to get to know young people in the area. It gives them the chance to try doing new things which is good for their confidence.

The youth club recently organised a trip to Wales for 15 young people. They took part in caving, rafting, building, high/low ropes, paintballing and an assault course competition. They also got to know the spiders and bats in the local caves as well as taking a 'leap of faith' during a task where they jumped from a platform 20 metres from the group onto a trapeze a few feet away.

The aim of the weekend was to encourage team building and help the young people develop a sense of personal responsibility. At the end of the weekend their confidence



was boosted and their eyes opened to working together. The trip was a successful one with the possibility of others being arranged in the future.

To find out more about your local safer neighbourhood team visit their website at www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods or call your local community and service development officer at Homes for Islington (contact details on page 11).

Science innovation and imagination: ■ celebrate black history month!

October is Black History Month, which celebrates the contributions of the black community to society in the UK

The month gives us all the opportunity to learn more about the history, culture and heritage of Britain's black community. In Islington, this year the theme is celebrating science.

Islington Council and Cambridge Education @ Islington have come together to offer a range of exciting science-influenced events for the whole family. The opening event is at the New North Community School, Popham Road on Saturday 27

September. This free family fun day event starts at 1pm, and offers celebrity speakers, Caribbean cuisine, sports science activities, parenting workshops, a 'zoofari' and competitions.

There will also be events across the borough throughout October. Go to www.islington.gov.uk/bhm or phone 020 7527 8293 for more information.



English classes for speakers of other languages in Islington

Settling into life in a country where you don't speak the language isn't easy. Everyday tasks, such as buying groceries or making a doctor's appointment, become complicated. English classes for speakers of other languages can help you with daily situations and to improve your life in the UK. The classes take place at a number of different institutions across Islington. Some of the classes are for speakers of all languages but some are only for speakers of a particular language.

Information on available classes within Islington is available by contacting Islington's Adult and Community Learning Team on 020 7527 5782.

ইসলিংটন (Islington) এর অন্য ভাষায় কথা বলা ব্যক্তিদের জন্য ইংরাজি ক্লাস

জীবনে এমন কোন একটি দেশে স্থায়ী বসবাস করা যখনই আপনি ঐ দেশের ভাষায় কথা বলতে পারেন না, সঠিক খুব একটা সহজ নয়। প্রতিটি কাজ, যখনই মুদখিনার জনিসি কনো বা কোন ডাক্তারের সঙ্গে সাক্ষাত-সূচি ঠিক করা খুবই জটিল হয়। অন্যভাবে ভাষাই কথা বলা ব্যক্তিদের জন্য ইংরাজি ক্লাস আপনাকে দৈনন্দিন বিভিন্ন পরিস্থিতিতে এবং যুক্তরাজ্যে আপনার জীবনে উন্নতি করতে সহায়তা করতে পারে। ইসলিংটন (Islington) এর মধ্যে বিভিন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠানে ক্লাসগুলি নেওয়া হয়। তার মধ্যে কিছু ক্লাস সমস্ত ভাষায় কথা বলা ব্যক্তিদের জন্য কিন্তু কতকগুলি কেবলমাত্র কোন নির্দিষ্ট ভাষায় কথা বলা ব্যক্তিদের জন্য নেওয়া হয়।

ইসলিংটন (Islington) এর মধ্যে উপলব্ধ ক্লাস সম্বন্ধে তথ্য ইসলিংটনস্ অ্যাডালট এন্ড কমিউনিটি লার্নিং টিমি 020 7527 5782 তে যোগাযোগ করে পাওয়া যাবে।

(Bengali)

Μαθήματα εκμάθησης της αγγλικής γλώσσας για ομιλητές άλλων γλωσσών στο Islington

Η εγκατάσταση για διαβίωση σε μία χώρα όπου δεν μιλάτε τη γλώσσα δεν είναι εύκολη. Οι καθημερινές δραστηριότητες, όπως η αγορά τροφίμων ή το κλείσιμο ραντεβού στο ιατρείο, γίνονται πολύπλοκες. Τα μαθήματα εκμάθησης της αγγλικής γλώσσας για ομιλητές άλλων γλωσσών μπορούν να σας βοηθήσουν με τις καθημερινές καταστάσεις και να βελτιώσουν τη ζωή σας στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο. Τα μαθήματα διεξάγονται σε μια σειρά διαφορετικών ιδρυμάτων στο Islington. Μερικά από τα μαθήματα αφορούν σε ομιλητές όλων των γλωσσών και μερικά αφορούν μόνο σε ομιλητές μιας συγκεκριμένης γλώσσας.

Για πληροφορίες σχετικά με τα μαθήματα που διατίθενται στην περιοχή του Islington, επικοινωνήστε με την Ομάδα Υπηρεσιών Εκμάθησης προς την Κοινότητα και τους Ενήλικες στο Islington στον αριθμό 020 7527 5782.

(Greek)

Aulas de Inglês em Islington para pessoas que falam outras línguas

Não é fácil adaptar-mo-nos à vida num país onde não falamos a língua local. Tarefas do dia-a-dia, tais como ir comprar mercearias ou marcar uma consulta com o médico tornam-se mais complicadas. As aulas de Inglês para pessoas que falam outras línguas podem ajudar com estas situações diárias e melhorar a sua vida no Reino Unido. As aulas são dadas em várias instituições em Islington. Algumas aulas são para pessoas que falam qualquer outra língua, e outras são para pessoas que falam uma outra língua específica.

Informações sobre as aulas disponíveis em Islington encontram-se disponíveis através do contacto com a Equipe de Ensino para Adultos e para a Comunidade de Islington no número 020 7527 5782.

(Portuguese)

Casharo Ingiriisi ah oo loogu talo galay dadka ku hadla luqadaha kale ee Islington

La qabsiga noloshada aadan ku hadal luqadiisu maaha wax fudud. Hawlaha nolol maalmeedka sida iibsashada khudaarta ama in aad balan ka samaysato dhakhtarka, ayaa kugu adkaan kara. Casharada luqada Ingiriisiga ah ee loogu talo galay dadka ku hadla luqadaha kale waxa ay kaa caawin karaan xaaladaha nolol maalmeedka, waxana ay kobcin kartaa tayada noloshada ee UK. Fasalada waxaa lagu dhigtaa meelo/ururo dhawra oo kala duwan oo ku yaala Islington. Fasalada qaar waxaa loogu talo galay dhamaan dadka ku hadla luqadaha kale, lakiin waxaa kale oo jira qaar loogu talo galay dadka ku hadla luqado gaara.

Wararka fasalada aad heli karto ee ku yaala Islington waxa aad kala soo xiriirtaa Kooxda Islington ee Waxbarashada Bulshada iyo Dadka Waaweyn ee loo yaqaano 'Islington's Adult and Community Learning Team on 020 7527 5782'. (Somali)

Clases de inglés para personas de habla extranjera en Islington

No es fácil instalarse en la vida de un país donde no habla el idioma. Las tareas cotidianas tales como ir de compras o hacer una cita con el médico se vuelven complicadas. Las clases de inglés para personas de habla extranjera pueden ayudarle con las situaciones diarias, mejorando así su vida en el Reino Unido. Las clases se imparten en varias instituciones distintas a lo largo de Islington. Algunas de las clases son para personas hablantes de cualquier idioma, pero algunas son únicamente para personas que hablan un idioma en particular.

Puede obtener información sobre las clases disponibles comunicándose con el Equipo de Aprendizaje para Adultos y la Comunidad de Islington en el 020 7527 5782.

(Spanish)

Islington'da başka dilleri konuşan kişiler için düzenlenen İngilizce dersleri

Dilini konuşmadığınız bir ülkede hayat kurmak üzere yerleşmek pek de kolay olmayan bir şeydir. Marketlerden alışveriş yapmak veya doktor randevusu almak gibi olağan günlük işler karışık bir hal alabilir. Başka dilleri konuşanlar için yürütülmekte olan İngilizce sınıfları, günlük işlerinizi ve Birleşik Krallık'taki hayatınızı geliştirip iyileştirebilmeniz hususlarında size yardımcı olabilir. Dil sınıfları Islington sınırları içerisindeki birkaç değişik kurum bünyesinde düzenlenmektedir. Bazı sınıflar her dili konuşanlara açıktır, ancak bazıları sadece belirli bir dili konuşanlar için düzenlenmektedir.

Islington bölgesi dahilinde mevcut olan sınıflar ile ilgili olarak bilgi edinmek için 020 7527 5782 numaralı telefonu arayarak Islington'un Yetişkinler ve Toplum Öğretim Ekibi ile temasa geçiniz.

(Turkish)



If you would like this newsletter in another language, LARGE PRINT, audio tape, Compact Disc or in Braille please contact HFI news on 020 7527 5158 or at HFInews@homesforislington.org.uk.

Contact us

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85 Central Street, London EC1V 8DT
Tel: 020 7527 6250
Fax: 020 7527 6207
e-mail: csha@homesforislington.org.uk
Minicom: 020 7527 6202

Holland Walk Area Housing Office
85 – 88 Holland Walk, London N19 3XS
Tel: 020 7527 7480
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Minicom: 020 7527 7405

Lyon Street Area Housing Office
1 Lyon Street, London N1 1DQ
Tel: 020 7527 6880
Fax: 020 7527 6814
e-mail: lyon.street@homesforislington.org.uk
Minicom: 020 7527 6830

Upper Street Area Housing Office
Northway House, 257 Upper Street
London N1 1RU
Tel: 020 7527 5300
Fax: 020 7527 5301
e-mail: upperstreet.aho@homesforislington.org.uk
Minicom: 020 7527 5301

Home Ownership Services
50 Isledon Road, London N7 7LP
Tel: 020 7527 7715/7720
e-mail: homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk

■ Changes to the way we make repairs

From September 2008 an improved repairs system should mean a better service for everyone

In 2007 Homes for Islington (HFI) reviewed the way we do repairs and how we charge residents for them. In the review we spoke to residents and staff to find out what improvements they thought we should make.

Here are details of the changes and how they may affect you.

Change to planned work

We are increasing the amount of planned maintenance work we do in order to decrease the amount of urgent repairs that we do.

What's the effect?

This means that in the medium term all tenants will have better homes and will have less repairs to report.

Change to repair timescales

Under law called the Right to Repair (RTR) legislation, HFI must complete certain repairs within a set timescale. We are setting up a complete list of the repairs that come under this law. Our call centre HFI Direct will provide information on the timescales when you contact them to report a repair.

What's the effect?

This means that when a tenant reports a repair they will be clearer about how long it will take to be completed.

Change to the help we offer to residents who need it

Tenants who meet certain criteria will be able to have some repairs done for free.

The criteria are that the tenant is:

- age 75 or over; and / or
- receiving a care package from Islington council social services; and / or
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA), or Attendance Allowance; and
- in all instances is living alone or with other people who also meet the eligibility criteria. Children under 18 and carers who live with the tenant do not need to meet these criteria.

The free repairs are:

- to internal doors;
- to internal glazing;
- to doors and drawers of kitchen units;
- replacing tap washers; and
- two lock changes per year.

What's the effect?

This means that tenants in real need will not be put off having important repairs done because of worries about cost.

Change to recharging for repairs

We currently do some repairs that would normally be the resident's responsibility if, for example, there were health and safety reasons, and then recharge the resident.

It costs us more to do an urgent or emergency repair than to do a routine repair. If a resident tells us that a repair is urgent or an emergency when it isn't HFI will be able to recover the difference in cost.

If a resident agrees to an appointment and fails to keep it, then HFI will be able to charge a standard missed appointment fee of £15.

If a resident doesn't let HFI or its contractors into their home to carry out repairs or servicing, HFI will be able to recover the associated costs.

Payments can be made in advance, with various payment options and updated information will be available on our website at: www.homesforislington.org.uk from your local area housing office or HFI Direct.

What's the effect?

This will mean that all residents get a fair service and are aware of their obligations.

Changes to the assisted decorations scheme and the effect

Under the assisted decorations scheme tenants can apply for funds to decorate their property. We have retained this scheme but the number of tenants we can help may be reduced.

■ Home contents insurance – prize draw!

For peace of mind make sure you're insured

Did you know that you are responsible for insuring the contents of your home? If your belongings are damaged in a theft, fire, flood or accident and you do not have home contents insurance you are very unlikely to receive any financial help from the council or HFI.

We advise you to take out home insurance to cover:

- furniture and fittings;
- personal belongings;
- clothes;
- food and drink;
- jewellery and other valuables; and
- rented equipment, such as televisions.

Comprehensive house insurance will also include third party cover if someone claims against you. For example, if you left

a tap running and flooded your neighbour's flat, you could be liable for any damage.

The council provides a special insurance service available only to council tenants (and right to buy leaseholders) providing peace of mind for a reasonable cost.

Anyone who takes out home contents insurance through the council's scheme between September and December 2008 can be entered in a prize draw. **The first prize is £100, and there are two second prizes of £50 each. The draw will take place in December and the winners will be announced on 15 December.**

If you would like more information contact the Tenants Insurance Scheme on free phone number 0800 917 3243 or write to them at 222 Upper Street, London N1 1XR.

■ Get involved!

Each issue you can find out how you can have your say in the way your homes are managed

New way to give us your feedback

We have started to place surveys and consultations on our website. For current consultations go to www.homesforislington.org.uk and look under the 'do it online' column.

September sees the launch of new customer comment cards

When you visit one of our offices please remember to fill out one of our customer comment cards. We have reviewed the cards so that they now tell us how we are performing against our service promises.

We hope you will find them easy to use and will fill one out each time you visit one of our offices.

Feeding back via focus groups

In June, Homes for Islington (HFI) visited the older people's luncheon clubs at the Islington Bangladesh Association. We wanted to get some views on the services that HFI provides and how we could improve. The main areas of concern were



Enjoying lunch with the Islington Bangladeshi Association

repairs, antisocial behaviour and estate cleaning.

The information gathered from the Bangladesh Association will be used with other sources of resident feedback to inform our business plan for the coming year.

■ Performance news

How well are we doing at listening to what you tell us?

Between April 2007 and June 2008 we have asked customers to feedback on several issues. The following table reports what we have done with your comments and suggestions.

We asked you about ...	You told us...	So we did...
The tenant handbook	You liked a folder style where it would be easy to find information	We used a folder format
DVD for new tenants	New tenants might not have a DVD player	We play the DVD to new tenants at our offices
Our translation and interpreting services	That you didn't know about translation and interpreting services available or English for speakers of other languages classes	We are promoting the services available
Right to buy communication	You wanted to know more about the legal stages of the right to buy process	We added more information about eligibility, valuation, improvements and repairs
Good neighbour agreements (GNAs)	That estates are generally good places to live with occasional antisocial or nuisance behaviour	We have recommended that GNAs are retained as a tool that HFI could use, if appropriate
Tenants' incentive schemes	That incentives should benefit families, young people and communities and look at solving antisocial behaviour	We are working with Islington council on possible youth schemes
Repair and recharge policies	That it's ok for some types of work to have longer completion timescales, that customers who miss appointments should be charged and that we should promote the home contents insurance scheme	These comments have been incorporated into our new policy (see pages 12 and 13 for more information)

Thank you to all those customers who attended focus groups or gave up their time to feedback on our services.

If you would like to be involved in focus groups or any other area of consultation, please contact Jacqueline Robinson on 020 7527 2903 or email Jacqueline.robinson@homesforislington.org.uk

■ You said, we did

We value your feedback on our services, whether you wish to make a complaint or a compliment. We try to learn from our mistakes and some of the things we have done as a result of your feedback are listed below.

What you said...	What we did...
Instead of arranging for a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter we expected a hearing impaired resident to communicate using pen and paper.	We have talked to staff about using the BSL interpreting service. For pre-arranged appointments where you have told us you need this service we will arrange for a signer.
You were left without hot water because our contractor could not access the boiler room to carry out the repair.	Our contractor has issued keys to all their engineers and given details of the "on call" HFI Engineer in case of problems. HFI expects its contractor to resolve such problems and carry out the repair.
Sometimes it is difficult to contact the resident liaison officer (RLO) for decent homes work on your home, especially if you are not at home during the day.	We are now advertising the RLO email addresses in decent homes information pack and contractors' newsletters so you can contact them electronically if you wish.
We have also received compliments about our staff	
Our new website is user friendly.	We have been working with staff and residents to make improvements. If you have a suggestion please contact us by emailing web.feedback@homesforislington.org.uk , calling 020 7527 4056 or visiting the website at www.homesforislington.org.uk .
You were entirely satisfied with the receptionist at Holland Walk area housing office who dealt with your query. You valued her patience and advice.	We have provided customer focus training for all staff. We expect all staff to provide a polite and efficient service and we are always happy to hear that you have received an excellent service and will pass on our thanks to our staff.



■ Mystery shopping

Earlier this year Homes for Islington (HFI) launched its mystery shopping programme

Mystery shopping is a powerful way to test services wholly from the point of view of the customer.

Customers are trained to observe, experience and evaluate the customer service process of an organisation. They do this by posing as a customer and undertaking a series of agreed tasks. Each shop is followed by an evaluation, usually in the form of a questionnaire. Through the questionnaire, they report on their experiences in a detailed and objective way.

In February 2008 twelve resident involvement register members who had expressed an interest in working with us as mystery shoppers attended a training session.

The training was shared between HFI and residents and staff from Lewisham Homes. This meant the cost was shared and also that residents and staff could swap ideas with each other.

The first mystery shop

After the training, the HFI mystery shoppers carried out mystery shops on HFI's telephone services and reception services.

The results

- The mystery shoppers' reports told us that they were satisfied with 78% of the shops that they carried out in reception areas.
- They also told us that calls to telephones rated as 70% satisfaction with staff helpfulness, 78% satisfaction with staff politeness and 66% with staff professionalism.
- They told us that there was sometimes inconsistency between reception points and telephone response received.

- There was sometimes a lack of resolution to enquiries and sometimes a lack of knowledge to respond to enquiries.
- They told us that Lyon Street office was not clearly signposted from the Caledonian Road and at the meeting they told us that names on ID badges were difficult to see.

So what have we done?

- We have discussed the reports at all relevant management meetings and with frontline staff.
- We have sent all frontline staff on customer service training.
- We have asked Islington council to provide street signage for the Lyon Street office.
- We are looking at pin badges for frontline staff that state their name and title for easy identification.
- We will be improving our internal communications to ensure frontline staff hold greater knowledge about our services.

More mystery shopping on the way

We have now trained a further twelve resident involvement register members to become mystery shoppers. They are currently carrying out mystery shops on our services. We will feedback on their findings in later editions of HFI News.

Thank you to all our mystery shoppers for their input in this area of work.

If you would like to be involved in any aspect of feeding back to us on any of our services, please contact Jacqueline Robinson on 020 7527 2903 or email Jacqueline.robinson@homesforislington.org.uk.

