

Leaseholder focus group advises on new improved consultation for Section 20

Before we carry out major repairs such as external decorations, roof repairs or installing replacement windows, we have to undertake a formal consultation process with leaseholders. This is known as Section 20 Consultation.

During a recent focus group, leaseholders were asked their views and opinions on current Section 20 documentation, and what could be done to make the information clearer.

Following this consultation the Section 20 Notice has been redrafted, and a "Major Works Frequently Asked Questions" fact sheet has been written. This fact sheet is now sent out with the Section 20 Notice, and is also available on the internet.



If you have any comments on the FAQs please let us know via email homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk.

Buildings insurance

OCASO has been successful in securing the new contract to provide building insurance to leaseholders. The new contract will commence on 1 April 2011, and will run for two years, with an option to extend for a further three years.

The proposed rate under the new contract is £1.249 per £1,000 insured value (excluding Insurance Premium Tax) and this is fixed for

the first two years of the contract, starting from 1 April 2011. This is the first increase in the insurance premium since 2008/09.

The new contract will include a freephone number to enable leaseholders to always speak to the right person. Further information can be found on the HFI website www.homesforislington.org.uk.



HFI Residential

This summer HFI will launch an exciting new property management service.

Working with an experienced and reputable local letting agent, HFI will offer a comprehensive letting and management service to leaseholders who wish to let their property on the open market.

The service will include:

- finding and vetting suitable tenants for your property
- a full management service including property inspection, rent collection, arrears management and tenancy management at a competitive rate
- a full repairs service along with optional services including gas safety and servicing, electrical testing and Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)
- managing both furnished and unfurnished properties

We are specialists in housing management and will provide a unique and personal service to you. Through HFI, leaseholders will have a one-stop service for all their property needs.

If you would like further information when we launch this new service, please email **Kay Morgan** at kay.morgan@homesforislington.org.uk or telephone her on 020 7527 7752.

Broadway provides free and independent advice to Homes for Islington home owners

HFI has recently entered into partnership with Broadway to provide free support to leaseholders and freeholders who are having difficulty paying their bills. Broadway will provide expert support, advice and advocacy to explore ways to maximise your income, reduce 'priority' debts, negotiate 'non priority' debts, arrange direct payments and promote financial literacy.



To be referred to Broadway's service, contact **HFI's Home Ownership Team** by email at homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk or by telephone **020 7527 7715** from **9am to 5pm Monday to Friday**.

A couple of HFI leaseholders were recently referred by us to Broadway having run into difficulties with their major work bill. Broadway helped by meeting them and aiding them in preparing a financial statement. A payment plan has been agreed at an affordable level and they will be able to increase this repayment when they are in a position to return to work. The leaseholders said that they "felt reassured that their situation was manageable and that Broadway had been helpful and approachable."

Your responsibilities as a leaseholder

If you suspect that your bathroom or kitchen pipe work is leaking or if there is a pool of water under your washing machine each time you use it, it is essential that you get the problem resolved quickly.

Whilst a burst pipe may cause extensive damage, a small constant drip over a period of time can also cause major damage.

Flooding into a neighbouring property causes distress to the resident, as well as damage to the property.

All leaseholders have a responsibility to abide by the terms of their lease, and to address any repairs issues inside their property within a reasonable timescale. Of course you may not be aware that water is leaking from your property into a neighbouring property until you are alerted to the fact. If this is the case you then have a responsibility to address the problem as a matter of urgency.

If you do not remedy the problem within 48 hours of receiving written notification from HFI, in accordance with the terms of your lease agreement, HFI will take the necessary



action to gain access to your property to stop the leak. You will be recharged for any associated costs.

It is essential that you inform us of any changes to your telephone numbers or correspondence address, and that you register any sublets providing the name and contact details of your tenants. Keeping your contact details up-to-date will help us to help you.

LEASE

LEASE has confirmed that they will continue to support mediation by referring leaseholders who need this type of help to the National Mediation Helpline.

Further information and advice can be found by visiting the LEASE website at www.lease-advice.org or contacting them on 020 7383 9800.

HFI will always try in the first instance to resolve any dispute that you may have.

Valuing diversity prize draw

Congratulations to Mr S Haddad of Fairdene Court, N7 who won £25 in vouchers in our last quarterly prize draw. The vouchers can be used at a number of high street shops.

To enter the draw all you need to do is to complete a Valuing Diversity form. These are available on our website, at your local area housing office, or from Home Ownership. The details that you provide help us to tailor the services we provide to you.

A draw takes place every three months, and the results will be announced in the next newsletter.