

## The results of this year's survey show improvements have been made

This is a summary of the leaseholder satisfaction survey that was carried out in April 2006. The last time such a survey was carried out was July 2004. The figures for both surveys are given to allow for comparison.

### Overall satisfaction with Homes for Islington

In the 2006 survey 35% of leaseholders were very or fairly satisfied with HFI. This is an increase from 32% in 2004.

### Keeping leaseholders informed

In the 2006 survey 66% of leaseholders agreed that they are informed of the services that HFI provides. This is an increase from 45% in 2004.

### Service of staff

In the 2006 survey 53% of leaseholders agreed that staff were able to resolve their query successfully. This is an increase from 51% in 2004.

### Annual service charge bills

In the 2006 survey 72% of leaseholders agreed that the bill indicated who to contact with queries. This is an increase from 67% in 2004.

In the 2006 survey 75% of leaseholders agreed that the bill indicated how the figures were made up. This is an increase from 61% in 2004.

In the 2006 survey 75% of leaseholders agreed that the layout of the bill was clear. This is an increase from 58% in 2004.

In the 2006 survey 71% of leaseholders agreed that the bill was easy to understand. This is an increase from 63% in 2004.

### Major works

In the 2006 survey 46% of leaseholders said that their views were taken into account a lot or a little. This is an increase from 36% in 2004.



In the 2006 survey 31% of leaseholders said that they were very or fairly satisfied with the standard of major works to their home. This was an increase from 23% in 2004.

### The Islington Leaseholder Forum

In the 2006 survey 70% of leaseholders said that they were aware of the Islington Leaseholder Forum's existence. This was an increase from 62% in 2004.

### Actions

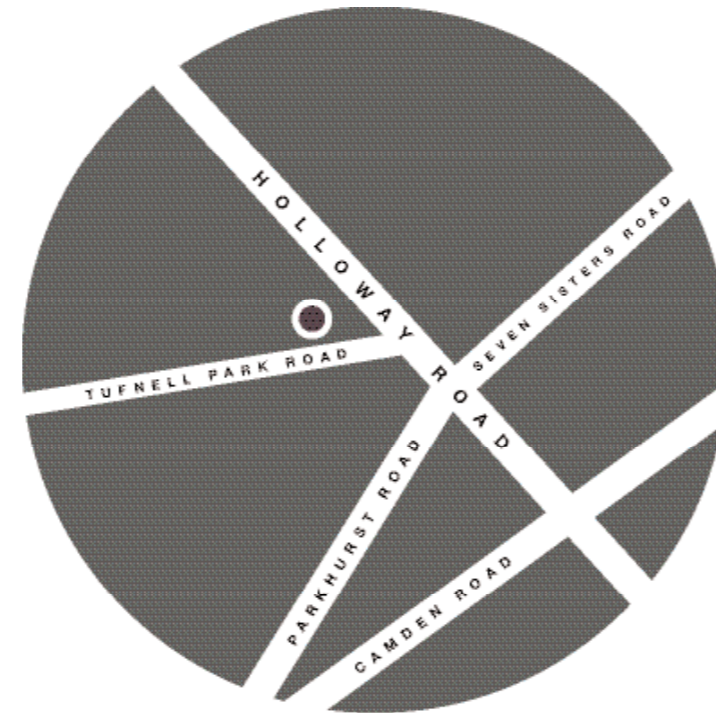
Thanks for responding to the survey. HFI will look at the results of the survey and continue to work with and consult ILF to improve the services we offer.

### By post

Home Ownership Services  
2-4 Tufnell Park Road  
London N7 0DL

### Visit our office

Our office hours are Monday to Friday from 9am to 4.45pm. We are at the Holloway Road end of Tufnell Park Road, close to the Odeon cinema; about ten minutes walk from Holloway Road underground station. Buses 4, 17, 43 and 271 stop near the office.



### By telephone

020 7527 7715

### By email

homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk

If you know the name of the person you want to contact, his or her email address will be in the form `firstname.secondname@homesforislington.org.uk`

### On the web

Homes for Islington's website is [www.homesforislington.org.uk](http://www.homesforislington.org.uk)

## Contact the Islington Leaseholders' Forum

For general advice and information, meeting times and to raise queries you can contact your forum representatives as follows:

### By post

Islington Leaseholder Forum  
FREEPOST NAT20609  
London N5 1BR

### By email

You can email the representatives for the area where you live

[forum.boleyn@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:forum.boleyn@homesforislington.org.uk)  
[forum.central@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:forum.central@homesforislington.org.uk)  
[forum.holland@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:forum.holland@homesforislington.org.uk)  
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## What's Inside...

- 2006 leaseholder satisfaction survey results
- Information on making alterations to your property
- The easiest way to get a refund on your overpayments



## An overview of the forum's activities, achievements and upcoming elections



The Islington Leaseholder Forum (ILF) is a consultative body, made up of leaseholders elected for a two year term. Two representatives are elected from each of the local housing management areas. All leaseholders whose landlord is Homes for Islington (HFI) or Partners For Improvement are eligible to stand for election and to vote for their representatives. The current chair of the ILF is Brian Potter, and the vice-chair is Andrew Jex, both of whom were elected to these posts by ILF members.

### The meetings

The ILF meets on the second Wednesday of every month, at 7pm, at Islington Town Hall, on Upper Street. These meetings are open to the public. In alternate months, meetings are attended by representatives from HFI and Partners, and approximately one hour of those meetings is set aside for questions from leaseholders to these representatives, on any issue directly related to leasehold issues, including the scheduling, billing and standard of major works. A strict code of conduct is expected to be adhered to at all times.

Additionally, meetings have been attended by representatives from three political parties active in Islington, including Islington Councillors and MPs. They have been invited in order to answer questions from leaseholders on leasehold issues and how they represent the interests of Islington leaseholders. Other guests at the meetings have included legal and insurance experts, who have answered questions on leaseholders' rights.

### Achievements

These meetings, and other sub-committee meetings held at HFI's offices, plus the efforts of individual ILF members, have had a huge impact in resolving disputes between leaseholders and both HFI and Islington Council. One recent example involved a review of insurance practices at Highbury Quadrant, resulting in leaseholders who had been expected to cover a huge excess being told that this cost will now be covered by the Council.

Other issues have involved reducing the cost and waiting time for permission for a deed of variation (where a leaseholder

applies for permission to make alterations to their property) and the implementation of an independent surveyor to review disputes over major works. There is also a long-running negotiation over payment schemes for leaseholders following major works arising from the Government's Decent Homes Standard (under which all Islington housing stock managed by the Council or its representatives will be subject to major works by 2010, involving - in some cases - very large bills for individual properties). As yet, the ILF does not receive independent funding from HFI or the Council, but this is under negotiation.

### Elections

Elections for representatives on the ILF for the next two year period will take place soon, with nomination forms being sent out to all leaseholders in about September. It is important that we have as many nominations as possible from actively interested leaseholders across the borough, in order that leaseholders can be represented on the ILF by those committed to continuing the good work achieved in the past two years, and progressing further with discussing issues with HFI and Partners, making real breakthroughs in improving the service that leaseholders receive. For further information on elections, please contact HFI or your ILF representative.

Additional information can be found on HFI's Website, [www.homesforislington.org.uk](http://www.homesforislington.org.uk), including details of how to contact your local ILF representative.

## Reduced charges for carrying out structural works to your property

If you live in a leasehold property and want to carry out alterations to your home such as installing new windows or converting a loft space, you must get permission first. This is very important, as otherwise you may be in breach of your lease. Consent will normally be given, however if there is a window replacement programme in place for your block you will not be given permission to install your own windows.



The nature of the works you want to do will determine who you need permission from. If the changes are not structural you will only need permission from Homes for Islington (HFI), and there is no charge for this. However, if the changes are structural, such as fitting new windows or fitting a new flue, you will need legal permission from the London Borough of Islington (LBI), and

you will have to pay for it. You must also obtain the relevant planning permission and building control.

Please contact your leasehold services officer at HFI's home ownership services and they will explain what you need to do. If you are making changes to the inside of your property it is likely that we will have to send a surveyor to your property to determine whether or not the changes are structural.

### Reduction in fees

Earlier this year, as a result of discussions between HFI and Andrew Jex and Chris Radway of the Islington Leaseholder Forum, HFI negotiated with LBI to reduce the amount they charge for the two main documents involved in carrying out works. The standard charge for the permission to carry out structural works (a licence for alterations) and the document that is

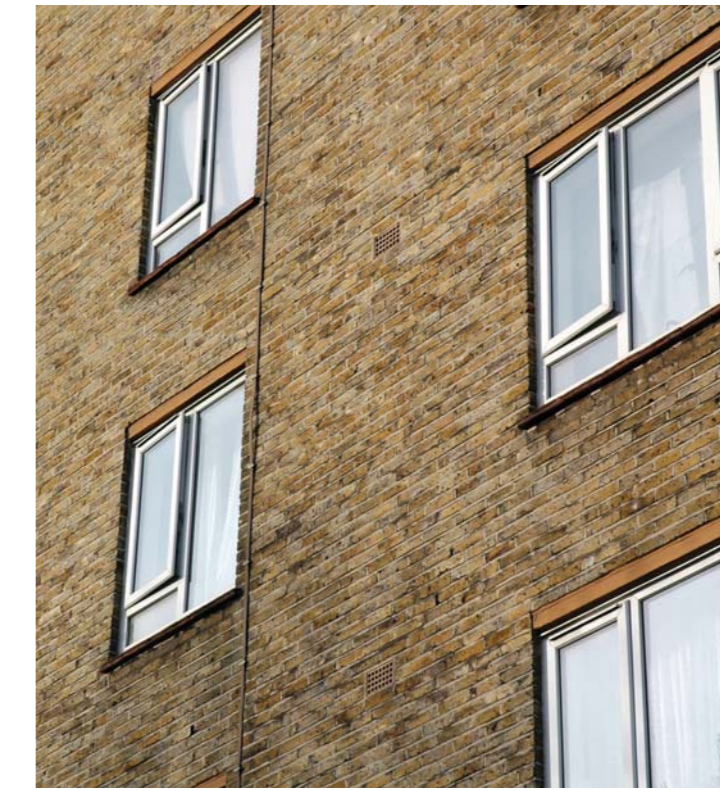
produced if repairing obligations have passed from the freeholder to the leaseholder (a deed of variation), has been reduced from £700 to £400. In addition, HFI has abolished the £150 fee that was charged for our surveyors to visit a leasehold property before and after the works are carried out.

### Purchasing additional space

If you intend to make changes to a loft space, basement or a roof terrace you should check to see if this space belongs to you. Normally it will not, and so you will have to purchase the space from LBI. You will have to pay for the space to be valued and for your lease plans to be redrawn and the additional space added to your existing lease. If you have a copy of your lease plans you can look at these. Alternatively contact your leasehold services officer at HFI's home ownership services.

### Retrospective consent

If you have previously carried out alterations to your property without the landlord's consent you are likely to be in breach of your lease. This can be problematic when it comes to trying to sell your property. If you have made alterations without consent contact your leasehold services officer at HFI's home ownership services for advice.



## Getting a refund is easier by BACS

If you require a refund from HFI's home ownership services, for example you have overpaid on your annual service charge and are in credit on your account, the most efficient method for you to receive the money is through a BACS payment. Not only will the refund be processed quicker by HFI than if a cheque is sent, but the money goes straight into your bank account, so you will not need to visit a bank to pay in the cheque, or wait for it to clear.

In order for the refund to be made by BACS, we require the following information; your name and address, your bank's name and address, your bank account number and sort code. If you include an email address or fax number a confirmation of the refund will be sent to you.

