



**Homes for
Islington**

improving housing through partnership

Issue 21

Autumn 2009

news

including
Home Owner
for leaseholder news

Building active communities

সকলৰ যি, কমউনিটি তৈৰী কৰা
Χτίζοντας ενεργές κοινότητες
Construindo comunidades ativas
Dhisidda bulshooyin firfircoon
Construir comunidades activas
Aktif toplumların inşası



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Council bridges digital divide with FREE Broadband

After a five month trial, 15 more homes at Vaudeville Court, N4 were given free in-home broadband on recycled council computers. At the click of a button residents can get help with learning, job hunting and stay in touch with friends and family.

Children have been the key drivers in boosting uptake of the service with older family members. Louise Durrant, Vaudeville Court resident and mother of 9 year old Lorelle said, "This will help my daughter study her ICT. It is really handy having internet access at home as it means that we don't have to go out and use an internet café."



The project uses recycled council PCs fully installed with Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint and has a fast link to the council's website enabling users to brush up their IT skills and find out about jobs and training opportunities in the borough. Users can even take up IT courses hosted from the Finsbury Park Mosque via a network link.

Cllr John Gilbert, Executive Member for Corporate Resources at Islington Council said, "A third of estate families do not have access to internet broadband. But this project has got residents better connected at no cost to themselves and at very little cost to the council. I have been very impressed that something so simple is creating real community spirit and getting residents talking and e-mailing each another."

New repair contract

The repairs and maintenance contract with Kier Islington ends in October 2010. Adverts have been placed asking companies to bid for the new contract. HFI are consulting with residents to use customer feedback to shape the contract that we are putting out to tender.

You can find more information on the HFI website in the 'consultation and involvement' section under 'customer feedback' or at <http://tinyurl.com/repairs-contract>. If you have any questions please contact the Repairs Project Team, Highbury House, 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN.

Car free day

For the fifth year Islington will be celebrating car free day on Saturday 19 September. Come along to enjoy the streetscape around Liverpool Road and the N1 centre without cars, buses and lorries from 12 noon to 5pm.

The lower end of Liverpool Road near Chapel Market will be turned into to a green oasis, by covering the street in grass and plants. Relax on the grass, pull up a deckchair or bring your picnic rug and enjoy a range of live music and performers in a lovely car-free environment.

Find out about the benefits of using a car less often and how it can help save money and the environment as well as improving air quality and your own health! Friendly experts will be on hand to provide advice on cycling, walking, using public transport and living in Islington car free.

For more information and advice on living car free contact the Green Living Centre on 020 7527 4462 or email greenliving@islington.gov.uk.

Supporting victims of ASB

HFI is aware of the pressure and fears that residents face when reporting antisocial behaviour (ASB) and the associated worries that may follow when their reports progress, to include possible court action.

We offer a free and confidential service provided by the Witness Service to all reporters of antisocial behaviour who are called to attend court and give evidence. The Witness Service provides residents with the opportunity to talk in confidence and assist in their preparation for their appearance in court.

The following positive feedback has been received from recent residents who used the service when attending court:

"The Witness Service were brilliant with 100% support through phone calls and help attending court on the day."

"Excellent service, very helpful."

"Wonderful support provided all the way through support of the ASB team made it so much easier. [I] recommend the Witness Service for [the] support they give before and after the case."

If you are involved in reporting antisocial behaviour and would like to discuss your case and seek support from the Witness Service, please approach and discuss with the ASB Officer managing your case.

Improved service tackling noise

In what is thought to be a first in England, the council's night-time noise patrol has joined forces with staff from HFI to provide all Islington residents with an enhanced noise patrol service. The team currently deals with around 5,000 calls a year, around one third of which relate to HFI properties, so it makes sense for staff with a knowledge of the homes and tenants to become more actively involved.

A pilot scheme has been running over the summer months and early indications are that it's working very well. Not only has the joint service reduced costs for the council, the new working partnership also means that more staff are on duty



Tackling ASB

We take dealing with antisocial behaviour very seriously as we want our residents to live free from aggravation. Based on the evidence you provide us, we have managed to have a number of people banned from certain estates and engaging in various activities.

We work closely with the Police to fight crime and will not tolerate antisocial behaviour. Anyone caught engaging in antisocial behaviour or crime activities is risking their tenancy as we will always seek to evict those who disrupt the lives of others.

To see our latest efforts, please see the news and events section of our website, www.homesforislington.org.uk.

If you want to report any instances of antisocial behaviour on your estate, call our ASB hotline on 020 7527 7272 which is also available outside of normal working hours.

during the busy weekend period, when around six times as many calls are received than between Sunday to Thursday.

Year-on-year figures show that around 50% more visits were made in May 2009 compared to May 2008. This meant that more significant noise problems were witnessed by enforcement officers, resulting in more effective action being taken.

If you are being bothered by noise, contact the noise team on 020 7527 3229 (8pm - 2am Sunday to Thursday and 10pm - 4am Friday and Saturday) or 020 7527 3258 during office hours.

Edible Islington



Sow it, grow it, eat it.

Islington Council has just launched its borough-wide community food growing programme, Edible Islington. Growing your own food is a fun and cheap way of producing healthy food and anyone can get involved, it doesn't have to be complicated. It could be as simple as planting a few rows of lettuce to creating your own urban farm providing a source of fresh locally grown food right in the heart of the city.

Edible Islington aims to support community food growing projects on estates, in schools, on adventure playgrounds and in community gardens, in fact anywhere where food can be grown. Edible Islington could help your community group transform a forgotten corner of Islington e.g. growing food in raised beds on a disused car park or even creating an edible roof garden.

A number of exciting projects are already getting started. These include the extension of the community allotment at the St Luke's Centre in the south of the borough and new food growing areas on the Sickert and Holly Park estates. Pupils are also getting their hands dirty with Edible Islington projects in six of the borough's schools.

EDIBLE ISLINGTON
SOW IT GROW IT EAT IT

Later in the year Edible Islington will see the transformation of an old car park at Quemerford Road, near to the Holloway Road tube station, creating up to 15 new permanent allotment plots for Islington's residents.

As part of the Edible Islington programme, grants will be available to community groups for food growing projects. Grants can be used for anything from buying compost and seeds to creating raised beds or establishing a community allotment. Three Community Food Growing Officers will be on hand to help groups

apply for grants and deliver their projects.

To help community groups in their food growing, a number of courses, workshops and events will be run throughout the year as part of the Edible Islington campaign many of which have already started. So even if your fingers aren't quite green yet there has never been a better time to get growing!

For more information on the Edible Islington programme and the Edible Islington food growing grants please contact Sandra Hoisz on 020 7278 1514 or email: edible.islington@groundwork.org.uk

Islington's got talent

Last year, Hollins, McCall and Daren Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) organised a family fun day, football tournament and talent show which proved a resounding success. Due to popular demand and with support from HFI, House on the Rock and St Georges Theatre, the TRA are now able to host a borough-wide talent contest for Islington residents, with two categories: 'youth' for ages 5 – 17 and 'adults' for 18 year olds and above. Participants that complete the heats will receive a £10 voucher; the winners from each category will be crowned the best youth act 2009, the best adult act 2009 and win a fabulous prize.

There are four heats in the North, South, East and West of the borough in the Autumn with the final being held in November.

The West heat will be in the Westbourne community centre on 19 September and the North heat at the Williamson Street community centre on 3 October. (The other two heats took place in early September.)

The finals will be at St Georges Theatre on the 28 November.

For further information please contact Liza Durrant on 020 7527 7471.

Get your name on the electoral register

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

It's simple to fill in: just give the names of all eligible voters living in the household, or let us know if there's no one eligible living there. Pop it in the freepost envelope and send it back to the council...it's as easy as that.

If your household's details have not changed since you last completed a form, you still need to confirm that with us by simply sending a text message, phoning or going online – you'll find the details on your electoral registration form.

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

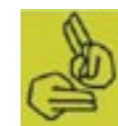
More subtitled films for Deaf people

Local Deaf people together with Disability Action in Islington (DAII) are encouraging Islington cinemas to provide more subtitled films. Odeon Holloway Road and Islington Vue have now agreed to increase regular subtitled screenings from two days a week to four days a week. Screen on the Green also shows many foreign films which are subtitled into English.

Odeon Holloway Road has subtitled films every Wednesday and Saturday and Vue shows subtitled films every Tuesday and Sunday. In addition Odeon Holloway Road with help from DAII has set up a local email list of Deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired people for weekly subtitled (ST) and audio described (AD) film updates. If you want to be added to this list please email accessislington@daii.org.

Mark Mannix, General Manager of Odeon Holloway Road says, "we are happy to be working with DAII and other cinemas in order to provide a complimentary choice of screenings for the community."

It is also widely acknowledged that subtitled screenings are popular with other community groups for whom English isn't their first language.



Easy as...



Get cosier for less!

HFI has helped the council to successfully bid for funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to insulate thousands of council homes with cavity walls.

The council was awarded £4.35m to spend on insulating the homes of over 6,000 HFI residents during the next two years. Islington received the third largest sum for an individual borough from the HCA's national insulation programme.

Insulating cavity walls will save about £130 each year in fuel costs for every household. With hotter summers the new insulation will also help properties to keep cool.

HFI and the council are always looking for ways to save residents money, especially in these difficult financial times. By securing this funding from the HCA, the council and HFI are helping to save our residents over £780,000 a year in total.

The new insulation will also help to reduce carbon emissions. Following the cavity wall insulation, the carbon emissions from each property will reduce by approximately 700kg. This will reduce each home's carbon emissions by approximately 15%. Over the next five years the new insulation will reduce the borough's carbon emissions by 23,000 tonnes. This is equivalent to the emissions produced by over 5,000 homes.

Caretaker of the year

Manuel Gaspar is your winner

Manuel Gaspar, the caretaker for Kerridge Court, N1, has won the caretaker of the year award that is presented every year to the caretaker who is judged to have provided the best service.

Nominations for the award come from both staff and residents and Manuel was nominated by a number of residents on his estate who found his work of high quality. They had seen improvements since he took over on the estate and were keen to see him recognised for the effort he puts in ensuring that the estate remains clean and tidy.

A resident who nominated Manuel said, "It is about two years since he took over and I can notice the changes he has made, the blocks are very clean and smell good. The rubbish chute and bin is never open or overflowing. Manuel is always on the estate when we need him, our estate is the best".

Next year's nominations are now open!

Now is your chance to nominate for the Caretaker of the Year 2010. If you think your caretaker has excelled in the past year and should be nominated for an award fill in the form below and drop it into your nearest area housing office or send it back to us at:

Caretaker Awards, Communications, Highbury House, 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN. Alternatively, email: hfi.communications@homesforislington.org.uk.

Remember to include the caretaker's name, the estate or area where they work and, on a separate sheet, why you think they should get the award. The closing date for nominations is 29 January 2010. There will be one winner and two runners-up who will be announced in a future issue of HFI News and on the 'What's New' page of the HFI website at: www.homesforislington.org.uk

Prize draw

If you make a nomination, leave your name and contact details and you will also be entered into our £50 voucher prize draw.

name of caretaker

name of estate

your name

your address

.....

your contact number



Manuel Gaspar, caretaker of the year 2009

Board update

Elections

Homes for Islington is seeking enthusiastic and committed residents to join our Board of Directors.

The HFI Board will be recruiting two resident directors to join the Board with effect from 25 November 2009. Whilst the ballot will extend to only the north of the borough, candidates are welcome from anywhere in Islington.

If you are interested in applying, or just require some further information, please contact the HFI Governance team on **020 7527 5148** or by email at governance.team@homesforislington.org.uk and ask for an information pack.

Board meetings

Homes for Islington's ordinary Board meetings and Board committee meetings are open to the public. All meetings take place at 6.30pm at Highbury House, 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN on the dates below.

Board meetings

Monday 19 October 2009

Monday 14 December 2009

Monday 22 February 2010

Performance management committee

Monday 23 November 2009

Monday 1 February 2010

If you have any questions or need help, such as a sign language interpreter or an induction loop, please contact the Governance team on **020 7527 6148** or by email at governance.team@homesforislington.org.uk.

Fire prevention in your home



Prevent a fire starting in your home

- Don't smoke in bed
- Keep matches safe
- Don't sit too close to a fire
- Don't overload electrical sockets

Avoiding damage and injury from fire at home

- Fit smoke alarms
- Check it is an approved standard
- Get help with fitting smoke alarms from the London Fire Brigade on 08000 28 44 28

Preventing fires in your home can be simple if you follow some easy steps to cut out the chance of a fire accidentally starting. Here are some simple steps suggested by the London Fire Brigade. You can find more tips on fire safety on our website www.homesforislington.org.uk

Preventing a fire in the bedroom

- Check everything is safe before you go to bed
- Switch off electric blankets when in bed
- Have electric blankets checked regularly

Prevent a fire starting in the kitchen

- Don't overfill pans and deep fat fryers
- If the oil catches light – turn off the heat

Escaping from fire

- Make an escape plan
- Keep keys to window locks by the windows
- Get everyone out as soon as possible. Dial 999
- Crawl under smoke and fumes
- Block gaps around doors if trapped by fire

Escaping from fires in flats and maisonettes

- Flats and maisonettes are built to give you some protection from fire. Walls, floors and doors will hold back flames and smoke for a time. If there is a fire elsewhere in the building you're usually safer staying in your flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you
- If there is a fire in your flat, leave the building closing the door to your flat behind you
- If there is a lot of smoke, crawl along the floor where the air will be clearer
- If you live in a building with a lift, do not use it if there is a fire, go down the stairs instead
- Call 999 from any phone. Give them the address including the number of your flat, and tell them which floor the fire is on

Remember! Communal staircases, corridors and balconies should be kept clear of all combustible material, i.e. prams and bicycles.

If you would like a FREE home fire safety check please call Brenda Quashie from HFI's health and safety team on **020 7527 4016**.



In 2004, HFI and Arsenal football club started our Positive Futures partnership offering football coaching and other activities to young people aged 10-19 from estates in Islington, and since then the scheme has been a resounding success.

A key and fundamental reason for the degree of success throughout this programme has been the quality of both the one-to-one and group mentoring undertaken by Arsenal Positive Futures coaches. Participants in the scheme can qualify as football coaches and, once qualified, the offer of paid, part-time work through Positive Futures is possible.

Young people repeatedly ask "to be given a chance" and this is exactly what this partnership offers them. The vast majority of youngsters choosing to take up what is offered go from strength-to-strength – a positive future!

We are currently live on nine HFI estates providing weekly supervised Positive Futures football coaching sessions on estate playgrounds and pitches with over 700 HFI young people benefiting from the partnership.

Due to demand, a number of estate football teams have been set up through the Positive Futures initiative, many of whom regularly take part in inter-estate and off-estate football matches.

And we have regular activities that take place each week with over 120 females registered on the programme.

One particular group of girls wanted to raise money for

Arsenal's Charity of the Season, Teenage Cancer Trust and came up with the idea of organising a girls football tournament with a difference - players had to wear their pyjamas!

Survey

We undertook a survey earlier this year for both participants and their parents/ guardians asking what they thought about the programme. Written questionnaires were handed out to both groups on estates by Arsenal coaches.

As you can see, the response to each question was a resoundingly positive yes!

Questions	Young people	Parents - Guardians
Enjoy the sessions? / Did your child enjoy them?	93%	99%
Improve/learn sports skills? / Was your child pleased?	85%	96%
Feel safe at sessions? / Was your child safe?	95%	98%
Sessions well arranged? / Were you happy to?	90%	86%
Will you continue to come? / Will your child continue?	84%	94%
Do you want more sessions? / Would you like more?	91%	82%
Coaching communication good? / Do you agree?	93%	88%

Double club

We also dovetail the Positive Futures work by delivering weekly supervised Double Clubs (football + fun-based activities) on seven HFI estates.

Additional curriculum activities provided through these two partnership initiatives include supervised sports, educational and cultural activities. Primary aims are to allow youngsters to have fun, build positive social lifelong learning skills, develop self-confidence, and assist individuals in realising their personal potential.

For further information contact John Lane, Youth Development and Engagement Officer, on 07904 268 452 or email: John-michael.lane@homesforislington.org.uk

There is more information on the positive futures scheme on the Arsenal website: www.arsenal.com/the-club/community/positive-futures

Waste Not Want Not

Watch Your Waste Week (17 – 25 October) aims to get people thinking about the amount of waste they produce and promote practical ways in which it can be reduced. Although recycling it is great, preventing it is even better, and you'll save money too.

The week will be jam-packed with fun events and activities including a Give or Take Day and a fashion swapping party. For more information on events during the week, please visit www.islington.gov.uk/recycling, email: recycling@islington.gov.uk or telephone 020 7527 2627.

Top tips for reducing waste

Whether it's saying no to plastic bags, buying goods with less packaging or simply recycling more, there are ways in which we can all make a difference. Check out these easy ways you can cut down on the waste you produce...

Freecycle

Freecycle is a website that allows you to get or give away goods for free in your local area. With over 12,000 members in Islington alone, there's always a bargain to be found! Visit www.freecycle.org to find out more.

Stop addressed unwanted mail

The Mailing Preference Service is a free service which takes your name off unsolicited mailing lists. You can sign up by telephoning 0845 703 4599 or online at www.mpsonline.org.uk

Love Food Hate Waste

The average household in the UK throws away a staggering £420 worth of food per year – most of which could have been eaten. For useful tips on food storage, tantalising recipes and advice on portions, visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com.

Fair gas and electricity bills

Some gas and electricity companies offer their best prices to customers who pay by direct debit.

However, with Equitable Billing Company (Ebico) - a not-for-profit company and an ethical fuel supplier - it doesn't matter whether you pay for your gas and electricity by pre-payment meter, every quarter or by direct debit. However you pay, you pay exactly the same amount.

When a household spends more than 10% of its income on fuel it is said to be in 'fuel poverty'. Ebico aims to combat

Islington Energy Doctor in the Home

Would you like to reduce the energy usage in your home, help the environment and save money on your household bills? Yes?

Then read on to find out more about the exciting new programme launching this summer...Energy Doctor in the Home.



Groundwork's Energy Doctors will make free visits to your home providing practical advice to help you address energy and environmental issues such as heating, lighting, and water use, reducing energy usage - and therefore household bills - helping you to make significant financial savings.



The Energy Doctor will help to install simple energy saving measures, for example draught excluders, energy saving light bulbs and radiator panels for free!

Cllr Greg Foxsmith, Islington Council's Executive Member for the Environment, welcomed the service, "Energy Doctor in the Home will provide a much-needed service and help our residents beat ever-rising fuel bills".

The programme is funded by the Islington Strategic Partnership, Ebico, Newlon Housing Association and HFI.

Watch this space for further information about this exciting new programme in future editions of HFI News.

Building active communities

Local children make a splash

It was a night of success and competition for local kids at the annual swimming gala at Ironmonger Row Swimming Baths in Finsbury Park.

The competition, which was sponsored by HFI and Apollo, was open to boys and girls and saw over 200 people turn up.



Back row, HFI board director Joe Trotter, Chris Doyle from Apollo, Cllr Jyoti Vaja and HFI deputy chief executive, Doug Goldring. Front row, swimmers Morgan Mockler, Devon Robins, Sarah Taylor-Reid and Harry Needs

Well done to the players on HFI's sponsored football club!

Islington Borough FC sponsored by HFI held its end of season award ceremony this summer. A number of the team have completed their level 1 qualification in coaching football and a further four have gone on to take the level 2 certificate in coaching football. Overall the team have achieved great results including players earning trails in the USA.

For more information on the scheme, please contact John MacKinnon at Access to Sports on 020 7686 8812.



Valan McKay, scorer of 31 goals last season



Check out your local community centre

HFI is committed to working with you to make community centres hubs of the community. We have worked with contractors during decent homes work on estates to make improvements to your community centres.

One of the improvements made recently is the brand new floor at the Westbourne community centre. Bill Millet MBE, community centre manager said that he was "absolutely thrilled" with the work and "over the moon" with the standard of work from the contractors.

Betty Brunker Hall, another community centre has a new heating system installed, designed to be much more energy efficient and make the hall cosier in winter.

Mayor of Islington, Cllr Anna Berent, re-opened the Walter Sickert community centre in Canonbury Crescent. The centre has been at the heart of the community for many years and has undergone a makeover funded by HFI with support from local councillors. Work was carried out by Kier Islington who did work at cost to help ensure the project was a success. The centre now includes an office for Connect, a service that brings local people together to help them find work.

The centre is open to local groups and clubs and can be contacted by email waltersickertcc@btconnect.com or telephone 020 7704 6669.

communities

New play area for the Mersey estate

The Mayor of Islington, Cllr Anna Berent, opened an improved playground on the Mersey estate. Residents came out to join in the celebrations.



Hira Miah wins Work4Islington apprentice of the year 2009

Hira is working as a multi-skills apprentice for Apollo. Jessie White, vice-chair of the HFI board who presented him with his award said, "Work4Islington is a valuable scheme offering opportunities for work. Hira should be very proud of all his hard work and I wish him every success with his career."

The Islington Working team work with a number of employers across the borough to help secure employment for local residents. If you are interested in finding out more about the opportunities on offer please contact Islington Working by email islingtonworking@islington.gov.uk or by telephone 020 7527 4486.



Congratulations to Hira Miah, this year's winner.



Enjoying fun in the sun

Community groups, tenant associations, contractors, residents and HFI staff worked in harmony during the summer of 2009 for all to have fun and enjoy their community fun days. The Energy Doctor was on hand giving advice on how to reduce your carbon footprint and energy bills, as well as complimentary massages, food and drink, sumo wrestling, a boxing demonstration, face painting, cake decorating, basketball and football among plenty of other informative stalls and activities.



New family accommodation reduces overcrowding

HFI is changing houses that had been converted into flats back into family-sized homes. Once a property is restored, it is advertised and let to families in need of larger properties. This is also freeing up smaller flats helping other people on the housing waiting list.

Tenant Esther and her family are delighted with the move. She said, "I'm ecstatic with my new home. The children love it too. It's great having more space and we are looking forward to many happy years here as a family."



Contact us

Central Street Area Housing Office
Central Street Area Housing Office
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
Fax: 020 7527 7407
e-mail: holland.walk@homesforislington.org.uk
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
50 Isledon Road, London N7 7LP
Tel: 020 7527 7715 or 020 7527 7720
e-mail: homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk

If you suffer a loss of water to your property

Help is at hand if you lose your mains drinking water

HFI have recently reviewed the mains drinking water procedure. Under Right to Repair legislation if you have a total loss of water to your property, HFI have a legal requirement to reinstate your water within one working day.

If we are unable to reinstate your water within 24 hours we will supply you with drinking water, this is in line with Thames Water Utilities' procedures. We will provide six litres of drinking water per property.

If your whole block is without water we will usually deliver the water to a concierge or other communal area.

If you are eligible for discretionary repairs HFI will make an earlier delivery of drinking water after six hours.

Early delivery eligibility criteria:

- Over 75 years of age and/or
- In receipt of one or more of the following:
 - Disability Living Allowance (higher rate of the mobility component or the medium or higher rate of the care component)
 - Attendance Allowance (higher or lower rate)
 - War Disablement Pension
 - Registered care package from LBI

In all instances to qualify you must live alone or live with other people who also meet one or more of the eligibility criteria.

If HFI are already aware that you are eligible for discretionary repairs we will contact you and offer early delivery of drinking water.

If you are eligible and HFI are not aware you can contact HFI Direct on 0800 694 3344 requesting early delivery of drinking water. HFI will deliver the water on your request. We will then check your eligibility with various agencies. If we find you are not eligible you will be recharged.

If you have any questions about the criteria needed to qualify for discretionary repairs please contact the Contract Performance & Scrutiny team on 020 7527 4010.

Snapshot

Islington youngsters showing us what they can do

Between November and March over 100 young people from across Islington took part in Snapshot, an estate-based arts programme run by local arts organisation All Change in partnership with Homes for Islington, Arsenal Positive Futures and Islington Young People's Service. Young people aged 11-19 years old who participated in the project had the chance to work with professional artists and to take part in a range of different creative activities including photography, dance, digital arts, music, drama, filmmaking, animation and creative writing.

Young HFI residents were invited to take part in workshops in youth clubs and community centres, and out and about on the estates where they live. The project provided fun and positive activities for young people to get involved in, as well as giving them the opportunity to develop their creativity, learn new skills, create their own artwork and explore the issues that matter to them.



A performance with film backdrop at the Snapshot event at the Emirates Stadium, March 2009.



Learning how to use professional cameras on the New River Green estate.



Using torches to create photographic images on the streets around the Finsbury estate.



Bianca Edwards, a young HFI resident from the Andover estate performing an original drama piece at the Snapshot event.

The project culminated in a special celebratory event in the Royal Oak Suite at the Emirates stadium featuring a film presentation, photography exhibition and original dance and drama performances. The event showcased the work to an invited audience of over 350 people of all ages and was a great way to celebrate the young people's creativity and achievements.

New projects coming soon

Snapshot will be back this autumn and winter with arts projects running in the areas of the following estates: Girdlestone, Andover and Harvist, Mayville and Kerridge Court, Highbury Quadrant and, Finsbury and King Square. Look out for more publicity locally soon.

If you are interested in taking part or would like more information you can contact All Change on 020 7689 4646 or email: all.change@virgin.net.



Service Promise feedback

“We will deal with your enquiries in a helpful, polite and professional way.” In this edition we are focussing on whether we are doing what we said we’d do about customer care in reception areas.

Getting it right first time in our reception areas

From resident mystery shopping reports carried out in 2008, we recognised that there was an inconsistent level of knowledge held by our frontline staff on our services.

To improve frontline staff knowledge, we looked at questions that were often asked by our customers when they visited our reception areas or contacted us on the telephone.

During May 2009 staff attended briefing sessions to ensure that they held the correct knowledge to be able answer these frequently asked questions avoiding, where possible, referrals to other services. In July 2009 staff were tested on this knowledge; and all passed the required levels.

During summer 2009 we returned to our resident mystery shoppers to verify that the level of knowledge has increased and to ensure, where possible, there are fewer referrals to other service areas.

We will feedback on our mystery shopping programme in the next edition of HFI news.

Reception area surveys

During August we carried out face-to-face surveys with customers in our area housing offices asking some key questions on our reception services.

About our staff

- 96% of respondents were satisfied that staff in the area housing offices were polite
- 91% were satisfied that staff were helpful and
- 95% were satisfied that staff were knowledgeable

Waiting times, staffing levels and opening times

- 89% of respondents told us that they were seen within 10 minutes of their arrival
- 95% stated that the level of staffing was adequate and
- 95% were satisfied with our office opening times

The reception area

- 98% found the receptions welcoming and clean and tidy
- 96% found the reception layout to be very good
- 91% said that there were good facilities to talk in private
- 96% stated they could access information in their own language
- 93% of respondents said that they were satisfied with the response they received to their enquiry

Thank you to those who took part in the survey. HFI will continue to treat customer care as a priority and monitor staff in these areas to maintain high standards.

You said, we did

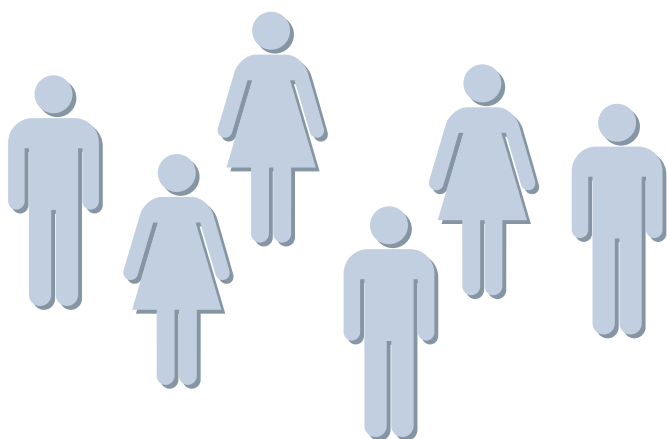
Below are some examples of changes we have made as a result of recent feedback you have given us.

You said...	We did...
There have been problems getting adaptation work and repairs carried out to my property.	HFI and the Occupational Therapy Service have met to agree a protocol which gives staff clear guidance on how to deal with requests or repairs for adaptations. We will make the process as simple as possible for tenants and consult with our disability panel.
I'm still waiting for repair work promised in the response to my complaint to be carried out.	We record where follow up work has been promised and review this list regularly. The complaint will not be completely signed off until the follow up work has been completed.
The first person chose which bits of the complaint they wanted to answer, ignoring the rest.	We continue to review and improve our complaints policy and procedure and offer training. We emphasise that staff need to answer all aspects of a complaint.
When you accepted the tenancy you were told that you would be getting a decent homes kitchen. When the programme started, your property was surveyed and you were not included on the programme for a new kitchen after all.	We are improving the information available to staff who carry out accompanied viewings so that they do not give out incorrect information.

We have also received compliments about our staff

You told us that the Housing Support Officer had done an outstanding and remarkable job which shows how well Housing and Social Services can work together.

We thanked the member of staff concerned. We recognise this is an area for improvement and are continuing in our efforts to forge good links with other departments and improve communication for the benefit of residents.



NATIONAL PANDEMIC FLU SERVICE

www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu
INFORMATION 0800 1 513 513
TREATMENT 0800 1 513 100

WHAT ARE FLU FRIENDS?

Flu friends are family members, friends or neighbours who can help you if you get ill. They can contact the National Pandemic Flu Service on your behalf to assist with the assessment, and if required they can collect antivirals from a local collection point as well as help with food and over-the-counter medicines. This will avoid you having to leave your home and prevent you spreading the virus within your community, so it's advised that you nominate at least one friend now and think about others who could do this for you.

To use the National Pandemic Flu Service and to collect antivirals from a local collection point, your flu friend will need their own **and** the patient's ID, such as driver's licence or credit/debit card, as well as the authorisation number. A full list of IDs will be available from the online service or the call centre.

If you think you have swine flu, stay at home and get advice by contacting the National Pandemic Flu Service at www.direct.gov.uk/pandemicflu or call 0800 1 513 100. A textphone service is available on 0800 1 513 200 for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

However, if you're pregnant, or have a serious underlying condition, or have a sick child under one year old, or you or your child's condition **suddenly** gets much worse, or your condition is still getting worse after 7 days (5 days for a child), you should contact your doctor. If your doctor decides that you need antivirals, you will still need your flu friend to collect them for you from a local collection point. Your flu friend will still need their own and the patient's ID plus the authorisation from your doctor.

Flu. Protect yourself and others.

Calls to these numbers are free from landlines. Calls from mobiles may vary, please check with your provider.

