

Hounslow Homes news

www.hounslowhomes.org.uk

Issue thirty nine | January - February 2006

Tenant satisfaction rises for fourth year running!

80% of you are happy with your homes



Every year an independent company surveys a random sample of tenants and leaseholders from across the borough to see how satisfied you are with the services we provide.

This year, you told us that:

- **Excellent Service:** 80% of tenants are very/fairly satisfied with the overall service we provide.
- **Very Good Neighbourhoods:** 77% of tenants are satisfied with their neighbourhoods
- **Very Good Homes:** 82% of residents rate the general

condition of their home as "good".

- **Repairs:** 75% of tenants are satisfied with the repairs service. 81% are happy with the quality of repair work and 78% are happy with the speed with which work was completed.

We are proud to be providing a service that you are happy with overall. We have also listened to what you have told us about how we could improve and will be striving to further increase your levels of satisfaction with our services.

What you would like us to improve:

- **Residents Participation:** 57% of tenants are satisfied with the opportunities available for participation in our decision making process and 36% of you are aware of our Tenants' Compact.
- **Anti-social behaviour:** Residents feel that vandalism, graffiti, noise and abandoned vehicles are all increasing problems on our estates.

"It's what you, our residents think that matters and I'm very pleased that our overall satisfaction is at 80%, our highest rating ever. This year we added a new element to our survey and have compared our results to those from the London Boroughs of Merton and Enfield, both of which gave the same survey to their residents. I'm very pleased to say that for the overwhelming majority of services Hounslow Homes outperformed the other two participants. Thank you for responding to the survey, we will continue to work hard to provide the highest level of service and will continue to tackle the areas where we need to make improvements."

Chris Langstaff, Managing Director Hounslow Homes

New pitches at Ivybridge bringing sport to the heart of the community



The new sports facilities will provide a safe, clean, fun environment for young people on the estate.

Two new dual-purpose football and basketball courts have been completed on the Ivybridge estate in Isleworth.

The £70,000 project was the joint idea of the local residents' association and Hounslow Homes' Ivybridge Neighbourhood Team. Residents were consulted before work began in November and chose the colour and the layout of the new pitches and also selected key design features to improve security.

It is hoped the new football and basketball

courts will help combat anti-social behaviour and encourage respect in communities by providing activities and facilities for younger people.

Tina Howe, Chair of the New Ivybridge Tenants association said:

"It's great that the kids now have somewhere decent to play. The old football pitches were very run down and were a real eyesore. No one ever used them because they were in such a bad state.

"Now the local kids have decent facilities hopefully there won't be

as many problems with boredom and kids getting into trouble because they haven't got anything to do. This is a great first step in improving sports facilities at Ivybridge and we are already involved in plans to improve other play areas around the estate."

The new facilities will also be used for the year round street soccer programme organised by Hounslow Homes, providing young residents access to professional football coaching from instructors at Brentford Football club.

Included with this issue...

...free info and advice on employment and training see page 4 for details

Save yourself money

- Think before you pour down the sink! See info included with this issue.

Everybody needs good neighbours



We all make noise in our homes at some time or another and occasionally we will all have something to celebrate.

Part of being a good neighbour involves a degree of give and take when it comes to noise, but there are some common sense steps everyone can take to prevent noise becoming a problem.

Shared walls, floors and ceilings

- Keep speakers away from shared walls/floors and limit the bass volume.
- Take your shoes off inside your home.
- Respect your neighbours right to sleep.

Parties

- Tell your neighbours in advance and give a finish time.
- Do not let the party spread out on to the street, balcony or landing.
- Make sure you know your guests and ensure they leave quietly at the end of the party.

DIY

- Perform noisy DIY work only between 8am and 6pm Monday – Friday and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays.
- Respect your neighbours right to rest and try to avoid any DIY on Sundays and bank holidays.

In some cases noise may become a nuisance and affect your happiness in your home.

What to do:

- If the noise is occasional it may be best dealt with person to person. Try talking to your neighbour and making them aware of the problem.
- For regular noise nuisance that can't be resolved person-to-person, contact your local housing office who will put you in contact with your anti-social behaviour team. Numbers can be found on the back page.
- For noise complaints out of office hours please contact the Noise Team on 020 8583 2222.

Message from the Leader of the Council



**Cllr. Colin Ellar,
Leader, London
Borough of Hounslow**

Cllr Colin Ellar, Leader of London Borough of Hounslow, said:

Some of you will have received a survey from Hounslow Homes in October asking you what you think about your property and what you think about our services.

Thank you to everyone who responded. It's pleasing that 82 per cent of people who responded were happy with the general condition of their homes. In addition, 80 percent of people questioned said they were satisfied with services provided by Hounslow Homes.

When Hounslow Council founded Hounslow Homes to

manage its housing stock, we were determined this arrangement would mean better housing and housing services for local people. In the last year alone, we have invested £57.9 million in better kitchens, bathrooms and facilities through the Decent Homes Programme.

But we want to make things even better and would value your help. You can become involved in making decisions that affect directly your community. Call your local area housing office or the Hounslow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations to find out more. Contact details can be found on the back page of this edition.

Residents reported some serious concerns and said they felt unsafe because of anti-social behaviour on their estates. Hounslow Council and its partners work very hard to stop

this problem and have a series of measures and initiatives at our disposal.

For example Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) are proving effective as a means of encouraging people to take responsibility for unacceptable behaviour. The Detached and Outreach Teams are working with young people in hotspots - where youth crime is a problem - and getting them involved in diversionary activities. This means they are kept off the streets and away from potential trouble.

We would encourage residents to report this type of anti-social behaviour to us, so that we can stop it. If you are experiencing problems with anti-social behaviour yourself, let us know and help us make Hounslow a more harmonious place to live.

Having difficulty paying your rent?

Sometimes you may have difficulty paying your rent, especially after the expense of the Christmas period.

If you fail to pay your rent you could end up going to court and eventually be evicted from your home. This is not what we want; we are here to help if you are having problems.

We can help by:

- Offering advice on how to clear rent arrears by instalments.
- Checking to see if you are eligible for housing benefit.
- Putting you in contact with the independent, confidential support agencies.

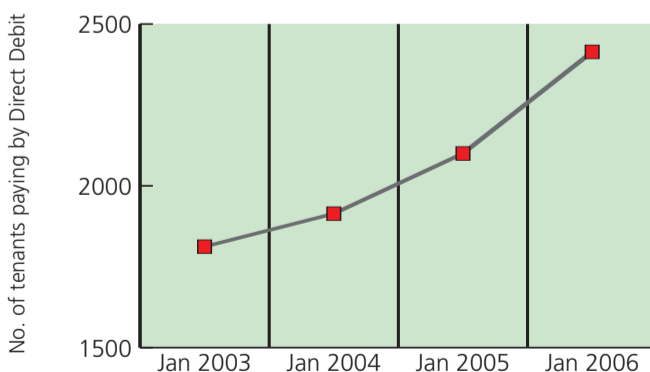
But it is important that you contact us as soon as possible.



Make the switch!

Did you know...

More and more people are choosing to pay their rent via direct debit.



Avoid long queues at the bank or post office, or the inconvenience of having to remember to post cheques or make cash payments. Paying by direct debit is simpler, more convenient and will save you and your community money.

16,700 of you pay your rent at the post office

each month and each transaction costs us just over 50p. We are charged a lot less when you pay by direct debit (less than 2p per transaction). So if most of you moved to monthly direct debit we could save £100,000 per year which can be invested straight back in to your community. To put this in perspective, £10,000 pounds could pay for new sports facilities for an entire estate.

Another great reason to switch

If you pay by direct debit for at least a year a £35 bonus will be credited to your rent account. If you pay by standing order for at least one year you will receive a £25 bonus.

Call your local area housing office to find out how to pay by direct debit or standing order: **Contact details can be found on the back page.**

More of you have also switched on to internet and telephone payments: You can pay online at www.hounslowhomes.org.uk or call: **020 8583 5959.**

The more rent money we collect, the more we will have to spend on improving your homes and neighbourhoods.

Leaseholder news

Property prices to rise as new buildings go up



Good news for homeowners, house prices in Hounslow are set to rise in line with the completion of major building projects across the borough.

Over the next 6 months the new shopping complex in Hounslow town

centre will be complete and Terminal 5 at Heathrow will be taking shape. The regeneration of Feltham Town Centre is also due to be complete. Local estate agents are expecting all these factors to play a key role in increased house prices in Hounslow.

Eric Keogh, Director of Sherwoods Estate Agents in Feltham said:

"I'm predicting a rise of five to ten per cent this year depending on interest rates dropping slightly. Feltham's already in great demand because of the jobs that will be generated when Terminal 5 opens at Heathrow."

Hometrack, the independent organisation which monitors house prices across the country are predicting a 1% rise nationally this year.

Leaseholder Information Evening

This event, held at West Thames College in Isleworth, in November was attended by over 150 leaseholders – more than we have ever had for an open meeting!

Leaseholders who came heard three informative presentations from external speakers, who kindly gave up their evening and travelled some distance to the event.

The speakers were from:

- LEASE - the Leasehold Advisory Service who provides free independent advice on the law affecting residential long leaseholders.
- CHAS Central London – who introduced their independent debt advice service.
- London Borough of Sutton Leasehold Services Manager and Secretary of their Leaseholders' Association.

Feedback forms were completed by the leaseholders who attended and it is pleasing to note that on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) scores of 3.6 were

achieved for the evening.

As the event was a success we will be working with your Leaseholder Forum to hold further events in 2006 – if you have a topic you would like more information about let us know!

We also asked leaseholders who came on the evening if they would like to become more involved with monitoring our services and influencing decision making. We had 11 leaseholders that kindly offered to be members of our resident panel, 12 who offered help with our mystery shopping programme and 12 who were interested in joining the Leasehold Forum.

If you would like to get involved please call:

For Brentford and Chiswick
020 8583 4295

For Feltham, Bedont and Hanworth
020 8583 3418

For Heston, Cranford, Hounslow and Isleworth

Tel: 020 8583 3417.

Minicom: 020 8583 5013 Thursday
1pm-2pm
Email: wbmau@hounslow.gov.uk

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) History Month

Hounslow Homes LGBT working group with Outwest will be promoting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender awareness training to our frontline staff as a part of LGBT history month in February 2006.

Our first Pilot training will commence on February 21, 2006. Anyone who would like to be involved or would like to offer advice on the issues that matter to the LGBT community can contact Razia Parmar, Equalities Policy Officer on: 020 8583 4011 or email razia.parmar@hounslowhomes.org.uk

HFTRA news

HFTRA - How far have we come?



Over the past two months we have been talking with Hounslow Homes about the things we agreed to do in the *Tenant Participation Compact*.

This is an agreement about how we all can all be involved in taking the decisions that affect our homes and where we live. Compact is a word that confuses some people, so just think "agreement" because the agreement itself is the most important part.

Our first agreement paved the way for setting up all the committees and meetings we now have with Hounslow Homes and Hounslow Council so that we residents can keep an eye on everything from repairs right through to gardening and estate improvements. We later set out some new things we wanted to do, like involving more people from different communities, recognising the effort that tenant reps put in and training staff about how we want to work together in partnership in the future.

In some of these areas we have done quite well, like setting up new groups to meet community needs and helping some younger

people to make their views known. In other areas we need to work harder, like making sure all the staff understand what it really means to work in partnership and helping them achieve this important goal.

We are still looking at new ways to get closer to our target of more people taking more decisions about how their homes are managed. For a copy of the *Tenant Participation Compact* or to find out more, contact your housing office on the numbers given on the back page.



Chair, Hounslow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations

Translations

If you need language assistance with this publication please ring 020 8583 2299 or Minicom 020 8583 3122. If you would like a copy of this publication in large print or Braille please ring 020 8583 2299.

English

Wargeyska Hounslow ee Guryuhu waa soo saarid qoraal ah oo loogu talo galay qofkasta oo ku nool Hantida ay leeyihin Qaybta Guryuhu. Haddii aad qoraalkan wax kaalmo ah aad uga baahatid fadlan soo garaac 020 8583 2520.

Somali

'હાઉન્સલો હોમ્સ ન્યૂઝ' સમાચાર પત્રક, કાઉન્સિલના મકાનોમાં રહેતાં પ્રત્યેક લોકો માટે માહિતી પ્રબંધ કરવાનો હેતુ રાખે છે. જો તેમાંની કોઈપણ વિગતો તમને ગુજરાતીમાં જાણવા માટે મદદ જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપયા આ નંબર પર ટેલિફોન કરો: 020 8583 2294

Gujarati

ਹੰਸਲੋ ਹੋਮਜ਼ ਨਿਊਜ਼ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਾਊਂਸਿਲ ਦੇ ਘਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਮਦਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 020 8583 2297 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Panjabi

Hounslow Homes News eshte per njerezit te cilet jetojne ne shtepija te Keshillit (Council Houses). Nese keni nevojte per ndihme per te kuptuar kete botim ne gjuhen tuaj, ju lutemi thirrni Sherbimin per Perkthime ne 020 8583 2298.

Albanian

हंसलो होमज़ न्यूज़ उन लोगों के लिए है जो काउंसिल के घरों में रहते हैं। यदि आपको इसके बारे में हिन्दी में जानकारी चाहिए तो कृपया ट्रांसलेशन सर्विस को 020 8583 2520 पर फोन करें।

Hindi

"ہاؤنسلو ہومز نیوز" کی اشاعت کونسل کے گھروں میں رہنے والے افراد کیلئے ہے۔ اگر آپ اس اشاعت سے متعلق مدد حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براؤزر میں اس نمبر پر ٹیلیفون کیجئے 020 8583 2293

Urdu

أخبار المنازل في هاؤنسلو - هي للناس الذين يسكنون في منازل مجلس البلدية. إذا كنت تحتاج مساعدة في فهم هذا المنشور بلغتك الأم، فنرجو الإتصال بخدمة الترجمة على رقم الهاتف: 020 8583 2298.

Arabic

"اخبار مسكن هانسلو" برای افرادی است که در خانه های شهرداری زندگی می کنند. اگر در فهمیدن این نشریه به زبان خودتان به کمک نیازمندید، لطفا با خدمات ترجمه با شماره 020 8583 2298 تماس حاصل نمایید.

Farsi

Would you like help getting a job?



Feltham Area Regeneration (FAR) the Green Corridor regeneration project for west Hounslow, has organised a programme of events in February and early March alongside partners such as Asda, Jobcentre Plus, Hounslow Council and the Westmacott Action Partnership. You can find out about:

- Retail opportunities in the new Feltham town centre development or at Heathrow Airport and other local vacancies
- Courses in confidence building
- How to present yourself in an interview
- Benefit advice (e.g. working family tax credits)
- Free support available through Adult Education – help with reading, writing and number skills

Free drop-in sessions

Wednesday 8 February 1.30pm – 3.30pm, Richmond Housing Partnership Office, Butts Farm, Hanworth

Friday 17 February 10am – 12pm, The Hanworth Centre, Hounslow Road, Hanworth

Thursday 23 February 2 – 4pm, Belvedere House Community Resource Centre, Lemon Grove, Feltham

Wednesday 1 March 2 – 4pm, Southville Centre, Southville Road, Bedfont

Tuesday 7 March 2 – 4pm, Page Road Community Room, 115 Page Road, Bedfont

For further information contact: the Careers Development Group on telephone no: 020 8570 6280.

Blooming great garden catches the eye of the BBC



Residents who have worked hard to transform the gardens on their estate had their work acknowledged by the BBC recently.

Over the last year residents of the Heston Farm estate have worked hard to turn tired flowerbeds in to a vibrant multicultural garden. Free

training was provided by Hounslow Homes and Hounslow Adult Education and recently the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew also opened their doors to the scheme.

The BBC invited residents along to a reception just before Christmas as a part of their Neighbourhood

Gardener project. This project aims to encourage people to learn more about horticulture, help their local communities, make friends and share their skills.

Sheila Davidson, one of the Gardening Students from Heston Farm who attended the event said:

"It was great to meet other neighbourhood gardening groups from across the country. We had the opportunity to talk and swap ideas with the other groups and we came away with some fresh ideas for our project."

The scheme has blossomed and the prestigious Capel Manor Horticultural College are



now involved. Staff from the college visited the estate and with the help of residents have drawn up professional designs for a new look garden. The residents will then build the final design as part of their coursework. Residents will also have the opportunity to achieve a professional gardening qualification.

The next round of gardening training courses starts on the 21st February. If you would like to know more about this course or other free training opportunities contact Asha on 020 8583 3715.

NOTICEBOARD

Housing contacts

EAST AREA

FOR TENANCIES IN BRENTFORD AND CHISWICK

General Enquiries: 020 8583 4220
Minicom: 020 8583 4390
Caretaking Service: 020 8560 5447
Both offices are open to you in person wherever you live. For emails, telephone and post, please contact the Brentford office only.

OPENING HOURS

8.45am - 5pm Monday to Friday
(5.30pm on Thursday by appointment)

ADDRESS

Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, Chiswick W4 4JE or
58-59 Brentford High Street, Brentford TW8 OAH

EMAIL

info.housingeast@hounslowhomes.org.uk

CENTRAL AREA

FOR TENANCIES IN HESTON, CRANFORD, HOUNSLOW AND ISLEWORTH

General Enquiries: 020 8583 4382
Minicom: 020 8583 3959
Caretaking Service: 020 8569 6873

OPENING HOURS

8.45am - 5pm Monday to Friday
(5.30pm on Thursday by appointment)

ADDRESS

The Civic Centre, Lampton Road, Hounslow TW3 4DN

EMAIL

info.housingcentral@hounslowhomes.org.uk

WEST AREA

FOR TENANCIES IN FELTHAM, BEDFONT AND HANWORTH

General Enquiries: 020 8583 4383
Minicom: 020 8583 4387
Caretaking Service: 020 8814 1771

OPENING HOURS

8.45am - 5pm Monday to Friday
(5.30pm on Thursday by appointment)

ADDRESS

St Catherine's House, 2 Hanworth Road, Feltham TW13 5AB

EMAIL

info.housingwest@hounslowhomes.org.uk

CALL CENTRE

All housing repairs can now be reported on one freephone number

0800 085 6575

Minicom: 0800 389 9821

Language line: 0800 389 9830

Email: housing.repairs@hounslowhomes.org.uk

Open: 8am-8pm Monday-Friday

9am-12 noon Saturdays

(at all other times call 020 8583 2222)

REPORT ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

contact your area office or:

Police: 020 8577 1212

Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111

HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE
020 8583 3844 Minicom:
020 8583 3111

LEASEHOLDER SERVICES & HOME OWNERSHIP
020 8583 3418 (Brentford & Chiswick)
020 8583 4006 (Feltham)
020 8583 3417 (Hounslow)
Fax: 020 8583 4133

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS
020 8583 3737 Fax: 020
8583 4336
Minicom: 0800 389 9821
complaints.team@hounslowhomes.org.uk

HOUSING BENEFIT HELPLINE
020 8583 4242

HOUNSLOW FEDERATION OF TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS
020 8569 5823
www.hftra.co.uk

RIGHT TO BUY
020 8583 3918

HOUNSLOW MEDIATION SERVICE
020 8568 5522
Fax: 020 8568 5566

RE-HOUSING UNIT
020 8583 4422

HOMELESS PERSONS UNIT
020 8583 3842

Help us unearth our GEMs

We need your help to find our members of staff who deserve a GEM (going the extra mile) award.

If you know of an individual or team that you feel deserve recognition for their commitment to providing an excellent service, let us know.

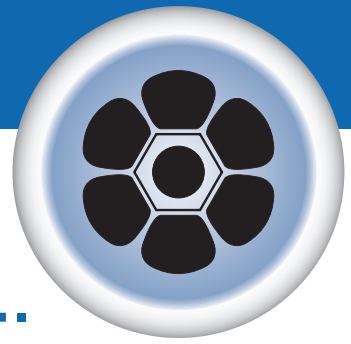
You can pick up a form in any of our housing receptions, download it from our website or call the personnel department on: 020 8583 3712.

Please return your entries by Thursday 2nd March.

If you would like a copy of this publication in another language, or format please call 020 8583 2299 or minicom on 020 8583 3122.

If you have a local story you would like to tell Hounslow Homes News about, please contact Anthony Kluth on: anthony.kluth@hounslowhomes.org.uk or call 020 8583 4431





Think before you pour down the sink....

Every year, Hounslow Homes spends approximately £20,000 on clearing blockages from kitchen sinks and sewage pipes across estates. One of the most common causes is kitchen fats and oils that have been poured down the sink. The oils build up over time and eventually block pipes.

The main waste pipes in your building can also become blocked, as can the main sewers and manholes outside. When this happens, the problem no longer effects only one resident and can affect a whole building or street.

The money we spend unblocking drains could be put to use improving your homes and estates.

If you are a tenant, you are responsible for clearing a blocked sink. This is detailed in your tenancy conditions. If you call us to deal with this problem then you could be charged. We are now considering strictly enforcing charges due to the increasing amount of money we have to spend every year dealing with these problems.

If you are a leaseholder you own the waste pipe from your sink up to the point that it connects with the main waste pipe in the building. Hounslow Homes will not clear blockages in this section of the waste pipe and you will need to make your own arrangements to deal with such problems.

Whenever we are obliged to jet the main waste pipe in your block or the main pipes on the estate, this is an additional cost that will be included in the overall maintenance charges for the block and estate. This will be reflected in your annual service charge and also applies to freeholders on estates who pay service charges.

Domestic contractors can charge around £100 – £200 for jetting the main waste pipe for a single property, therefore it makes sense to think about what you pour down your sink.

Save yourself money by following these simple steps when disposing of fats and oils

1. Never, never pour them down the sink. Keep an old cup or tin can by your cooker and use this to pour hot fats into after cooking.
2. Some fats, such as lard, will solidify when cool. In this case simply scrape them in to your bin.
3. Other waste, such as vegetable oil, will remain liquid when cool. In this case dispose of by absorbing into kitchen towel or pouring into secure bottles/containers, then place them in your bin.

Are there any other more environmentally friendly options?

You may be surprised to hear that saturated solid fats such as lard make a great treat for birds. You can create an environmentally friendly bird feeder by mixing nuts and raisins with your waste fat and then pour this into an old yoghurt pot and freeze it. You can then hang this up outside and it will provide an invaluable source of food for the birds.