

Hounslow Homes news

www.hounslowhomes.org.uk

Issue forty-four | January - February 2007

One magic number!

New freephone telephone number for all your housing enquiries

Contacting Hounslow Homes has just become a whole lot easier with the launch of one freephone telephone number for all your housing enquiries.

By calling our number - 0800 085 6575, Hounslow Homes residents can now:

- Report repairs and book appointments
- Call about any tenancy matters
- Get information on leasing a garage or report a repair to your garage
- Report an abandoned vehicle
- Report anti-social behaviour or nuisance neighbour issues
- Check your rent account
- Call if you have problems paying/want to know more about rent payment facilities
- Get information about your leasehold service

Our new system means better efficiency, and that means a better service for you.

As well as introducing the one freephone number for all enquiries, Hounslow Homes has also introduced a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which allows access to information held on our specialist housing systems.



The magic number: Hounslow Homes staff and contractors from Anite, Lagan and NCC hold up the customer service centre number for all housing queries.

This provides our Customer Services Advisors with a customer's full contact history and customers will not have to repeat full details of previous enquiries.

Lynne Bann, customer service centre manager says "residents will reap the benefits as they will receive a much more efficient and quality service."

The linking of the various systems further enables our Customer Services Advisors to answer questions as fully as possible. Where we cannot

answer a customer's question at first point of contact, we will pass the query as a "case" to a relevant specialist officer and the Advisors will give the customer the case reference number and inform them how and when their query will be resolved.

This system also automatically records every time a customer contacts Hounslow Homes, why they contacted us and the outcome of their enquiry.

Smell gas? Report it!

It is very important that you take action immediately if you smell gas in your home and you should make sure you know where your stopcock is for turning off the supply in an emergency.

If you smell gas you should:

- Turn off the supply immediately
- Contact Transco immediately on freephone 0800 111 999
- Put out any cigarettes
- Don't use matches or a naked flame
- Don't use electrical switches
- Open doors and windows to get rid of gas
- Check if the pilot light has been blown out or if a gas tap as been left on
- Telephone Hounslow Homes Customer Service Centre.

For any queries contact the Customer Service Centre on 0800 085 6575.

Start the New Year with some free training

Hounslow Homes' tenant training programme is currently in full swing with residents now studying various courses.



Many courses are proving very popular this year including City & Guilds Business Administration Level 2, Introduction to Childcare and IT.

For more information on our free training courses for tenants call the Hounslow Homes Training team on 020 8583 3715/6.

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

Safety in numbers

Police Safer Neighbourhood



Teams work with Hounslow Homes to increase safety in our communities. They are not an emergency service or response team - they deal with day-to-day issues on their wards. Each ward has one sergeant, two Police Constables and three Police Community Support Officers.

Residents can call their Police Safer Neighbourhood Team for non urgent issues including:

- Gangs of youths causing nuisance on an estate
- Concerns an address is being used as a crack house/drug dealing

- Illegal riding of motorbikes and mini motos
- Rowdiness/ drunkenness which is intimidating to residents or where the perpetrators are damaging property

If you need to call your Police Safer Neighbourhood Team for any reason it helps to give them as much information as possible. Information like times, dates, names, addresses and descriptions are all important and helpful pieces of information.

If you witness a crime being committed such as burglary or assault call 999 to report an emergency.

To contact your safer neighbourhood team for non-urgent matters phone 020 8577 1212 or direct phone numbers and more information can be found at <http://www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods/>

How does your tree grow?

If a nearby tree within communal space presents a health and safety risk, you should organise for our specialist contractor to assess it.

Simply call our customer service centre on 0800 085 6575. If the area is not on the planned programme, trees will be pruned back and if they present a risk to health and safety, or if they are dead, trees will be removed.

Complete Tree Care, our specialist contractor, carry out our tree maintenance on communal grounds and have a 4 year planned maintenance programme in place.



During 2007 they will be carrying out work in Heston and Cranford.

They avoid heavy pruning of trees in favour of more modern practices, which are less likely to result in vigorous regrowth or the onset of disease.

Trees which represent a minor nuisance, for example because they interfere with satellite reception, restrict views, or cause seasonal nuisance such as honey dew, leaf fall or bird droppings are not pruned.

Achieving great results

We've made great progress in consultation with our residents in different ways over the last year. This means that we've been able to make improvements from the information you've given us.

See below for a summary of some of the consultation we have carried out along with what it means to you, our residents.

| Subject of consultation | Improvements made in 2006 |
|---|---|
| Residents involvement | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74% of respondents stated that consultation/feedback from Hounslow Homes was satisfactory. • 59% of respondents were satisfied with opportunities for involvement. • 75% of respondents state the standard of information they receive is good. | Leaflets have been produced from real life cases promoting the benefits of involvement. |
| ASB | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73% of residents were fairly or very satisfied with the service. • 77% of residents felt that they were dealt with fairly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ASB focus group has been set up to identify ways in which the service can be improved. • Residents are informed of any successful ASB actions through Hounslow Homes News. |
| Leasehold | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48% leaseholders are very/fairly satisfied with the service they receive. • 25% stated that service charge bills needed more detail as to calculation of charges. • There was a 4% reduction in those finding bills difficult to understand to 25% from previous survey figures. • 32% are satisfied that their service charge provides value for money | A Leaseholder Business Improvement Plan has been drawn up to make improvements to the service, with involvement from all service areas. |
| Decent homes | |
| <p>Major Works satisfaction survey Overall satisfaction levels remain above target. Performance of external contractors continues to improve.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way in which residents are consulted and given information before and during works is currently under review. |
| <p>Major and Minor Adaptation survey A very satisfactory service in regards to quality of work and helpfulness of staff.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are continued efforts to reduce waiting times. • Portable toilet and washing facilities are now offered when works are underway and existing facilities cannot be maintained. |
| Sheltered housing and Linkline | |
| <p>Linkline satisfaction survey Overall survey findings were very positive. Users believe the system greatly improves their quality of life, with evidence of quick and efficient response times from helpful and friendly staff.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All users have been provided with our complaints leaflet. • Information sheets are given to all new users at installation. • 3-way speech now available with new Control Centre. Enables connection to Language Line for BME users. • Promotional events organised with Age Concern, Multi Cultural event and Carers Event during Summer 2006. |
| Young people | |
| Young people (aged 7 –15) fed back information and views on ethnicity, disability, play and recreation provision, after school activity and their interest in inputting to the development of local schemes. | Young people were involved in the organisation of summer activities and helped prioritise estates for organised activities (see back page). |
| Moving to a new property | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84% of tenants were given an appointment for a resettlement visit. • 80% of repairs due to be carried out after the tenant moved in had been completed, a substantial improvement on the previous report. • 88% of tenants fairly/very satisfied with the lettings process. • 99% of tenants had received the 'tenants information pack'. • There was a significant improvement in assistance with Housing Benefit claims/applications. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All tenants are given a resettlement visit appointment during sign-up. • Tenants are given advice on Housing Benefit and assistance is given on completing forms. |

By clicking onto www.hounslowhomes.org.uk you can also view the entire programme of consultation for the current year. Click on 'About' then 'Information and leaflets,' and scroll down to 'Consultation Programme 2006 – 2007'.

When its cold outside

Residents are reminded that serious damage can be done to pipes, sinks and basins by the expansion of water if it freezes in the winter.

To avoid this you should:

- Keep your home as warm as you can
- Ensure that all pipes and tanks in your home are lagged. You should check this, but if you are unable to check the next time any plumber comes to your home ask him or her to check for you.

No compensation is available for damaged caused if a flood occurs as a result of freezing.



An easier way to pay leasehold charges

Last year for the first time, leaseholders have been able to use direct debit to pay leasehold charges. As this is a new service we adopted a staged introduction, using ground rent as the pilot account type. We were heartened when the take-up was higher than expected and the whole process went very smoothly.

From April you will be able to pay annual service charges and for major works by direct debit, and your insurance from October. Leaseholders who choose this payment method will always be informed of the schedule of payments in advance, will not have to contact the bank to adjust payments on standing orders or remember to send cheques. They can relax knowing that their accounts are always in good order and payment reminders are a thing of the past.

Contacting Leasehold Services

Leaseholders are reminded that they can e-mail us on:
home.ownership@hounslowhomes.org.uk
with any leasehold queries.

Please be aware the usual timelines (10 working days) remain in place for answering your enquiries online.

Stop the press!

An Introduction to Youth Work course is being held for those with little or no experience. Why not sign up? The course runs for eight weeks on Wednesday evenings from 25 April. For more information call Pauline or Asha on 020 8583 3715/6.

A load of rubbish!



Hounslow Homes spends a large amount of money paying for dumped bulky rubbish to be removed by our caretaking service or other contractors - money that could be spent instead on improving our services to you.

Hounslow Council provides a 'tidy town' collection service to all residents who need heavy or large household items collected from their home. It costs £25 for 5 large items to be taken away. Fridges and freezers are free. The service is free for elderly and disabled residents. To find out more please call 020 8583 5000 and ask for Tidy Town or e-mail:

cleansingservices@hounslow.gov.uk
You can also take all household bulky waste to your nearest Reuse and Recycling Centre free of charge.

The Council's site is called Space Way and is located at North Feltham Trading Estate Pier Road, off Faggs Road, Feltham TW14 0TH.

You may use neighbouring authorities sites if they are closer to your home and more convenient for you.

Keep your estate free from bulk rubbish

If you see a vehicle dumping rubbish please take down the make and registration number and let our customer services centre know on 0800 085 6575. We will then take action against them.

Please do not dump rubbish or large household items, such as beds or mattresses on your estate.

HFTRA news

Taste and see: free training courses for residents



On the front page of Hounslow Homes News there is an article about the free training courses that are being run for residents.

There are plenty of opportunities on offer for people with all sorts of interests and abilities. If you are like me, then it will be a long time since you have been at school and the prospect of being in a classroom again may be a bit daunting. Not to worry though, as the sort of training being provided is designed to make

everyone, whatever their ability, feel comfortable and at home.

In the past training courses have included such things as music technology, British Sign Language, how to become a play-scheme worker, together with courses for those thinking of returning to work.

HFTRA have for some time been working with Hounslow Homes and Adult Education to provide a mix of fun and skills training so that residents can first have a "taste" of something they know they will enjoy before perhaps being a bit more adventurous. There are opportunities for people to gain National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) as part of their training or

to undertake courses that contribute to these or other accredited training qualifications. There will be elements of the training on offer that will help those residents running clubs or associations, and there will be more training to help residents become involved in the decisions that affect where they live.

Training can be a lot of fun and allows you to meet other people with similar interests. So call the Hounslow Homes Training team on 020 8583 3715/6 for more details.



George Fry
Chair, Hounslow Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations

Message from the leader of the council



Cllr. Peter Thompson

As you know the Council's new Executive was created in May following the local Government elections.

Since that time, we have been looking into every aspect of Council work to develop a strategy of improvements.

That work has now been completed, and I'm delighted to tell you about the Hounslow Plan 2006 - 2010.

Hounslow Council is responsible for a wide range of services that directly affect people's

everyday quality of life.

To put it simply, we are responsible for the things that so often make the difference between having a good or bad day. Local Government is in the front line of the fight for a better quality of life.

The Hounslow Plan sets out our direction for the London Borough of Hounslow over the next four years. It is based on our vision of Hounslow as a borough characterised by strong, united communities and excellent services.

In the Hounslow Plan, the new administration has demonstrated its commitment to Hounslow Homes.

Hounslow Homes does an excellent job managing the Council's housing stock and

services. In this edition of Hounslow Homes News, you will see it continues to improve with the introduction of new initiatives designed to make your life easier. But we felt Hounslow Homes' customers - you - were not always having your voices heard.

We want tenants and leaseholders to have more opportunities to be involved in how Hounslow Homes manages the services it provides to you, and give you the ability to challenge them where you have concerns.

We would like to see more active tenants and residents associations in Hounslow, and the Council's new administration will be working to make sure more people have a say.

Rewarding young people

YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

We had fantastic success with the Young Persons Reward Scheme in 2006. The scheme, run in partnership with The Youth Service Detached and Outreach Team (DOT) is continuing into Spring 2007 and offers a chance for young people to take part in community activities and improve

their local environment. Young people work with other local residents, community

service providers schools and private sector groups, providing them with an excellent opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to their community.

All the projects were immensely enjoyed by the participants and it is hoped that they and their communities will benefit from the outcomes far into the future.



Young residents from the Heston and Cranford area have got together to form a successful football team and provide coaching and mentoring to other young people.

Chiswick House Kitchen Garden Project



As a result of their involvement in the reward scheme, the Chiswick House Kitchen Garden Association was able to extend the work it had started to children and young people from, Staveley Gardens and Edensor Gardens.

Young people from the Alexandra Estate took part in several extended work sessions as part of a specific programme, helping to clear new ground and plant out seedlings for the new season.

Local young residents, and pupils of Cavendish Primary School, came regularly throughout the year and worked on a wide variety of tasks. By September they were such experienced gardeners that they were chosen to be filmed working in the Kitchen Garden by BBC Gardener's World, for a programme to be transmitted in spring 2007.

The young participants and the Chiswick House Kitchen Garden Association, who host the project were delighted to receive vital equipment and gardening products as rewards for all their hard work.

If you have a local story you would like to tell Hounslow Homes News about, please email: communications.team@hounslowhomes.org.uk or call 020 8583 4431.



Community Garden project developed by young people from the Bedford Lane area.



Syon Estate young people and local residents got together for an environmental clean-up day.



Young residents at Convent Way Estate produce a video documentary on community issues on the estate.



Young people were rewarded at Dukes Meadow for their clean-up day.

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.

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.

'હાઉસલો 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

ਹੰਸਲੋ ਹੋਮਜ਼ ਨਿਊਜ਼ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਾਊਂਸਿਲ ਡਿਪਾਰਟਮੈਂਟ ਦੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ 'ਚ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਮਦਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 020 8583 2297 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

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.

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।

”ہاؤسلو 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 براہ کرم اس نمبر پر ٹیلیفون کیجئے 020 8583 2293

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.

“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.

English Somali Gujarati Panjabi Albanian Hindi Urdu Arabic Farsi

NOTICEBOARD Housing contacts

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

Please ring our freephone number for all housing queries

0800 085 6575

Minicom: 0800 389 9821

Language line: 0800 389 9830

Open: 8am-8pm Monday-Friday
9am-12 noon Saturdays

(at all other times call 020 8583 2222)

Report your repairs

Call the freephone number above

Email housing.repairs@hounslowhomes.org.uk

New service!

Go to www.hounslowhomes.org.uk and report a repair as well as book an appointment online

EAST AREA

FOR TENANCIES IN BRENTFORD AND CHISWICK

Minicom: 020 8583 4390

Caretaking Service: 020 8560 5447

There are two offices open to you in person wherever you live. For emails and post, please only contact the Brentford office.

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

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

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

REPORT ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

contact our customer service centre on 0800 085 6575 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

home.ownership@hounslowhomes.org.uk

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

RE-HOUSING UNIT

020 8583 4422

HOMELESS PERSONS UNIT

020 8583 3842



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE