

Service charges must come first, even at Christmas. If you don't pay, you risk losing your home.

Audit Commission report

It's official! Following their inspection of all our services in June this year, the Audit Commission has now confirmed that we provide a good service and awarded us with a two-star rating with promising prospects for improvement (see page 2 in Homes Zone).

The inspectors had many positive things to say about our services to leaseholders. They liked:

- The range of information we provide for leaseholders such as the Welcome Pack, Leaseholder News, the Plain English Guide to the lease and the Leaseholders' Charter.
- Our email subscription services and that we offer a £5 annual service charge discount each year.
- The ways we involve leaseholders to help us shape our services, such as our monthly Leasehold Panel meetings, the annual Leaseholder's Forum, estate inspections and many more.
- Our consultation with leaseholders on making it possible for them to install their own windows as well as extending our payment options to include an interest-free payment option for up to 6 years.

- Our service charge estimates and bills being accurate, clearly explained and sent out on time.
- Our efforts in going that extra mile to help and advise leaseholders who have large major works invoices to pay.

The Audit Commission inspectors also made a few recommendations that we are following up on. This includes looking at the possibility of offering a wider range of gas maintenance packages for leaseholders. We are also looking into further developing the Key Leaseholder Scheme, focusing on communal repairs and major works – we know that these issues are important to you.

We are going to consult with the Leasehold Panel on other initiatives to improve our services.



Shortlisted for national award

The Home Ownership Team has recently been involved in an important initiative to find ways to improve the flow of information to our leaseholders about major works. This work was part of an organisation-wide project to improve customer experiences, and earned us a nomination for the 2010 UK Housing Awards.





Meet our new Resident Board Member

At the Resident Board Member elections in August, Alena Breckova was elected as the new leaseholder Board member.

Born in Slovakia, Alena has been a Haringey leaseholder for seven years. She is a trainee solicitor but has taken a special interest in leasehold matters, and been actively involved in the Leasehold Panel, the Key Leaseholder Scheme and other leasehold related activities. She kindly agreed to tell us a bit more about herself:

Why did you decide to stand as a Board member candidate?

I have always been very interested in taking up leasehold issues, attending panels and so on. Partly because of this, a number of leaseholders I know quite well suggested I put my name forward.

What can you bring to the Board?

I have been a leaseholder for a number of years and I like living in Haringey. In addition to this, I have a good background in law and property management so I feel I will be able to make a significant contribution.

How have you found it so far?

Board meetings are very stimulating and the members are all very open to considering other people's opinions.

What are the main issues for leaseholders?

Apart from day to day services and service charges, leaseholders continue to feel concerned about possible major works bills as a result of the Decent Homes programme, although it does help that there are now better payment options available to them.

What is your main message to fellow leaseholders?

The most important thing is to get involved as much as possible through the available involvement panels and residents' associations.

How do you hope to address leaseholder issues?

Mainly by going to panel meetings and taking people's views forward where appropriate. Leaseholders can contact me at:
alenaib@yahoo.co.uk



Leasehold Panel elects Chair and Vice-Chair

In October, leaseholders Roger Kemp and Anne Goodhew were re-elected Leasehold Panel Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

Roger was pleased to be able to keep contributing as Panel Chair: "The Leasehold Panel provides a place where all leaseholders can raise their issues directly with

senior managers at Homes for Haringey. Experience has already shown that leasehold problems can be more effectively identified and resolved in this way.

The more leaseholders attend, the greater the influence the Leasehold Panel has – this is a benefit for us all."



New Chair for Key Leaseholder Scheme



The Key Leaseholder Scheme now has over 500 key leaseholders who receive reports on communal repairs for their estates. Nearly every block in the borough is represented. 30 members of the

scheme now meet regularly to discuss communal repairs and major works issues.

The group recently elected leaseholder Ian Lush as their chair. Ian, who is Chief Executive of the Architectural Heritage Fund, is looking forward

to his new role: "The Key Leaseholder Scheme is a good example of Homes for Haringey working closely with leaseholders, to ensure that charges for communal repairs are fair and accurate, and I look forward to working with fellow leaseholders and Homes for Haringey."

To find out who the key leaseholder in your block is or to become a key leaseholder yourself, call

Paul Cox on **020 8489 3060** or **Nick Claxton** on **020 8489 3021** or email key.leaseholders@homesforharingey.org

Letting your property?

You must register the details with us and get your tenant(s) to sign an agreement to keep the conditions of the lease. If you do not tell us that you are renting out your property, your building insurance may be invalid. When you register, we will provide you with helpful information about letting your property, and arrange for your Tenancy Management Officer to visit your new tenant(s) and give them an information pack about our services. We will include more information about tenants' responsibilities in this pack in the future. If you do encounter any anti-social behaviour (including overcrowding) by tenants who are subletting, tell us immediately:

- contact your Tenancy Management Officer or
- call freephone **0800 195 3404** or **020 8489 5611** (cheaper from mobiles) or
- visit your local Customer Services Centre

You can register a sublet with the **Home Sales Team** on **020 8489 3357** or email Home.OwnershipRTB@homesforharingey.org

Sign up and Save

Sign up to receive information by email and get a £5 discount on your service charge each year.

Be gas safe

Have your gas appliances checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer every 12 months. Faulty gas appliances can produce carbon Monoxide - a deadly poison which has no smell and which can kill in a matter of hours. **If you sublet your property, you are required by law to get a Landlord Gas Safety certificate every 12 months.**

You can contact our gas contractors for a cheap and reliable gas maintenance service. To make an appointment call Kinetics on **0845 521 1423** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) and ask for the Haringey Leaseholders Section. Kinetics can take no responsibility for any mechanical failures before or after their inspections.

What should I do if there's a leak?

If water is coming from the flat above, talk to your neighbour and ask them to fix it. If they can't, report it to your Tenancy Management Officer. Report roof leaks to us on freephone **0800 195 3404** or **020 8489 5611** (cheaper from mobiles). If damage is caused to the ceiling, walls, fixtures or fittings you can claim on the buildings insurance policy. Call the Insurance Section for a claim form on **020 8489 3610**.

Leasehold Panel

The monthly Leasehold Panel meetings at the Civic Centre are open to all leaseholders. The next dates in 2011 are: **18 January, 15 February, 16 March, 14 April**. Meetings start at 7pm and minutes are published on **www.homesforharingey.org** or you can email: **leasehold.panel@homesforharingey.org**

Arabic

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Turkish

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Home Sales – for resale, re-mortgage and subletting enquiries
Phone: 020 8489 3357 or
020 8489 3231

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