

Chapter 9

How you can get involved

We want you to get involved in making decisions which will affect the way we manage your flat and the services which you receive. You see things through the eyes of a leaseholder, and you can help us to identify and solve problems with our services or in your area. This will help us set priorities so we can use limited resources in the most effective way.

The Resident Involvement

Team offers advice, training and help with the cost of getting involved in shaping our housing services.

Contact details

Phone: 020 8489 4463

E-mail:

resident.involvement@homesforharingey.org

There are different ways you can be involved, which we have explained below. For information on any of these choices, please contact the Resident Involvement Team.

Getting involved at a local level

Estate inspections and estate meetings

We encourage residents to get involved in estate inspections and meetings. Inspections take place at

least twice a year on each estate involving tenancy management officers, estate services managers, local councillors and contractors as appropriate.

We welcome residents who want to be present at either the inspections or meetings to raise issues of concern about the shared parts of the estate. You can get details about these activities on your estate from your tenancy management officer, from estate notice boards, or from your estate bulletin or newsletter.

Monitoring estate services

You can receive training and help us monitor the services provided to your flat.

Residents' associations

Residents' associations are groups of tenants and leaseholders who have come together because they want to have a say in issues that affect the area where they live. As a member of a group, it is sometimes easier to put forward your views because together you have a stronger voice and can really make a difference.

Residents' associations address issues that can have a real effect on their local community, such as repairs and estate improvements,

play facilities, car parking, antisocial behaviour and many other issues.

They can also influence housing policy, campaign for a better environment, help to build community spirit and organise social activities.

Your area may have a residents' association which you can join. The Resident Involvement Team will have details of the local residents' association. If there is not one in your area and you are interested in setting one up, we can provide information, advice, training and support to residents' groups. We can help groups in the following ways:

- **Getting you started** – advice on how to go about setting up a new group or association, including producing a set of rules, booking venues, helping with the first meetings, help with producing publicity such as posters and leaflets, photocopying, and arranging for translations and interpreters.
- **Annual recognition** – to become recognised and receive a grant, tenants' and residents' associations must meet a number of conditions, including:

- having a constitution (set of rules);
- meeting equal opportunities requirements; and
- representing the community they serve.

We will monitor groups and help you to work through any problems.

- **Offering training** – there is a choice of free training courses for individuals and groups.
- **Grant funding** – providing development grants to recognised associations.

Advocates

We are keen to build contacts with residents on estates and in areas where there are no recognised residents' associations. We want to do this through advocates – residents who are prepared to act as a local contact.

The role of an advocate is to:

- go to estate inspections if you are representing an estate (if possible);
- work with your tenancy management officer regarding shared areas of estates on behalf of your community;

- be consulted on any planned improvements in your area; and
- advise other residents in your area or on your estate of the correct ways to report problems.

We offer free training and opportunities for advocates to meet each other and housing staff. We will also organise informal resident involvement parties for advocates and residents' associations to meet and discuss their issues.

Tenant management organisations

We support tenant management organisations if a group of residents wants to manage an estate or area. A number of options are available, and we will work closely with residents to discuss the most suitable options for each estate. You may be able to get a government grant to help access these alternatives.

Getting involved at a borough-wide level

The Homes for Haringey Board

This is our decision making body which the chief executive (and all staff) report to. It has places for five tenants and one leaseholder alongside councillors and independent experts. Meetings are

open to the public and residents can out questions to the Board in advance. Contact the Governance Team on 020 8489 1737 or email on governance.team@homesforharingey.org

Resident involvement agreement

This is a formal agreement between us, the council, tenants and leaseholders that sets out how residents can be involved, consulted and informed. It contains standards which should be met and makes it clear what can and can't be done. If you would like a copy, or have any questions or comments, please contact the Resident Involvement Team.

Residents' Consultative Forum

If you have never been involved before, this is a good place to start because most of what is happening in Homes for Haringey will be discussed in this forum. There is no fixed membership – you can just turn up. However, to make sure you are sent invitations, you should register with the Resident Involvement Team.

Leasehold Panel

The Leasehold Panel has a key role in representing leaseholders' interests. It is one of a number of panels which make recommendations to the Homes for Haringey board. It meets at least four times a year and ensures that leaseholders' representatives have an input into day-to-day issues affecting leaseholders.

Leasehold Forum

The forum meets every year to discuss major issues of relevance to leaseholders and receive reports from the Leasehold Panel.

Other groups for residents include:

- Youth Panel – for young people aged 11 to 21.
- Residents' Repairs Panel – day-to-day repairs and maintenance.
- Asset Management Panel – major works, including decent homes.
- Tenancy and Estate Management Panel – housing management (including antisocial behaviour) and estate services.
- Finance Panel – finance.
- Communications Panel – communications, such as Homes Zone magazine and press.
- Supported Housing Panel – for those living in supported housing

- Disabled Peoples' Group – issues affecting disabled people.
- Tenant Participation Panel – oversees how we involve and consult residents.
- Tenant Training Subgroup – oversees training for residents.

Contact the Resident Involvement Team if you want to find out more.

Other ways to hear your views

Tenants' and leaseholders' conferences/open days

These one-day events are designed as an opportunity for resident to get involved without making any other commitment. All council tenants and leaseholders are welcome, and details are published in our magazine, Homes Zone.

Neighbourhood assemblies

Neighbourhood assemblies give residents an opportunity to discuss wide-ranging issues affecting the quality of life for all residents in their area. The aim of the assemblies is to bring together everyone with an interest in a neighbourhood to improve the overall standard of living.

Topics may include policing, planning, leisure, environmental and health issues. You can get details of the next neighbourhood assembly from the Resident Involvement Team.

Leasehold workshops

Workshops on specific topics are held to discuss issues that are raised at the leasehold forum in greater detail. All leaseholders are invited to attend. Previous workshops have been held on topics such as payment options, service standards and administration charges.

Haringey Leaseholders' Association

Haringey Leaseholders' Association is an independent organisation, we recognise. It represents the interests of all leaseholders in the borough. The association is run by leaseholders for leaseholders. It holds two general meetings a year. It also produces a newsletter. As a leaseholder, you will automatically be entitled to become a member, which won't cost you anything, although voluntary subscriptions are requested to cover the administration costs.

Their contact details are:.
PO Box 55222
London N22 9BQ

E-mail:

help@haringeyleaseholders.org.uk

Website:

www.haringeyleaseholders.org.uk

Surveys

We carry out a major satisfaction survey from time to time to find out more about the views of a representative sample of tenants and leaseholders. We have a number of small surveys asking about satisfaction with particular services, and we sometimes run other surveys by post, phone or face-to-face. Residents who participate in groups are asked their views about that group every year through the annual participants' questionnaire.

Focus groups

Sometimes we will consult residents on local and borough-wide issues, including the use of 'focus groups'. These are meetings involving a small group of people who are usually chosen at random. If you are asked to take part in any of these, please do because they help us to get services right for you and other residents.

Topic groups

We provide a range of ways for residents to be involved in improving borough-wide services. We arrange

working groups or review groups to look into specific aspects of the housing service, such as planning the tenants' and leaseholders' conferences and open day events. You can register with the Resident Involvement Team to receive full details as and when these groups are formed.

Supported Housing (housing for older people)

Sheltered Housing or Community Good Neighbour Schemes are entitled to have a representative at both the supported housing panel and the independent association of tenant representatives.

Comments and complaints

Please see chapter 19, 'Telling us what you think' for information about our Feedback Team.