

Taking Part

Issue 1 January 2007

The newsletter of Housing's Getting Involved Register

TOWER HAMLETS

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter to tenants and leaseholders who are interested in getting involved in improving our services. The newsletter is for people who have joined our Residents Involvement Register, which includes members of our Compact and Tenant and Resident Association (TRA) chairs. It is also available in our local housing offices and one stop shops.



The newsletter will report back on our involvement events and activities, as well as keeping people informed of what's coming up.

Thanks to everyone who has taken the time to help us over the past year. Over the coming year we hope even more of our residents will get involved in improving our services.

Vicki Potticary

Consultation and Participation manager

HELP US IMPROVE THE WAY WE INVOLVE RESIDENTS

It is important for the council to get residents input into the service we deliver. It helps make sure that we are delivering a service that meets your needs.

We would like your help in improving the way we consult with and involve tenants and leaseholders.

You can help by:

- ◆ reading the attached document: *Your Voice: Creating a new Housing Involvement Strategy*
- ◆ completing the attached survey. Tell us which of the statements is most important to you and how strongly you agree with them.

Please return the survey by Friday 16th February in the freepost envelope – it won't cost you a penny to return!

What's next?

Once we've had your surveys back we'll draw up the findings and report back to everyone on the Register.

residents and shape the strategy.

If you would like help filling in the survey or you're interested in coming along to the workshop in February please give Rod Booth a call on ☎020 7364 7173; or email rod.booth@towerhamlets.gov.uk and we'll let you know what's happening.

Reporting Back....



....It's a POS-ABILITY!

Housing staff were on hand at Brady Arts Centre for the Pos-Ability event last month, which celebrated the International Day of Disabled. More details on the back page.

Coming Up....

Readers' Panel to relaunch

Would you like to help the Housing Service improve the information we give our residents?

We want residents to comment on leaflets and posters that explain our front-line services to make sure they're easily understood and tell residents what they want to know.

If you can spare up to an hour a month you can help us get it right.

To help achieve value for money we want to pilot the Readers'

Panel by email to save money and time in organising meetings. It also means more people can get involved and that people who can't come to a meeting can have their say.



Coming Up....

The Boroughwide Compact Group and Resident Panels

Do you want a greater say in how your estate is run?

Do you need more information about repairs, rents, service charges and improvements?

Troubled by anti-social behaviour? Want the local environment cleaned & improved?

If the answer is "Yes" to any of these questions you may be interested in our Resident Panels. The Panels are looking for volunteers from estates that aren't yet represented. If you live in one of these areas and can spare one evening every six weeks why not give it a try?'

The Panels look at everything to do with the delivery of the housing services in your area from anti-social behaviour to repairs and we know that the

people in the best position to comment on our housing services are the people who receive them.

There are two Panels, one for the south and one for the north of the borough. Each panel nominates members to sit on the Boroughwide Compact Group, which looks at housing issues affecting the whole of the borough.

The Panels give residents

Don't worry if you don't have access to a computer - we're happy to send you the information by post!

Over the next few months the Panel's programme will include:

- ◆ a series of fact sheets about our rents service explaining what the rent service does and what help is available for people who run into money problems
- ◆ new posters and flyers to encourage residents to get involved in improving our services
- ◆ reviewing the information for our lettings service to help residents understand how choice-based lettings works
- ◆ reviewing our tenant advice leaflets to make sure residents know their rights and what we can do to help

If this sounds like something you might be interested in, or to find out more, please contact Jebin Syeda on ☎020 7364 7503 or Ian Dalgleish on ☎020 7364 0702 or email jebin.syeda@towerhamlets.gov.uk or ian.dalgleish@towerhamlets.gov.uk

the opportunity to meet with senior council officers and get involved with shaping key housing services. Recent discussions have included major works, caretaking and anti-social behaviour policy. The Metropolitan Police have also come to meetings to discuss the Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Training is available to help you gain in knowledge and confidence, but what counts most is your willingness to get involved.

If you're interested in joining the Resident Panels and the Boroughwide Compact Group, or you'd like to find out more please call Ian Dalgleish on ☎020 7364 0702 or email ian.dalgleish@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Coming Up....

Training Opportunities

We have a range of training and information sessions aimed at people just like you! People who want to improve their understanding of housing issues and work with the council to develop better services for tenants and leaseholders.

We want to help you gain skills so that you can participate more fully. Our Tenant Resource Centre in Stepney was opened in 2002. It is a place for Tower Hamlets residents to learn, develop skills and grow in confidence in a relaxed and informal setting.

Recent training sessions we have delivered include: chairing skills, committee skills, being an effective group secretary, writing skills, anti-social behaviour, how Tower Hamlets Council works, Tower Hamlets Council housing policy and equality and diversity.

We have the following training coming up soon:

- Understanding Housing Finance 27th February

February & March:

- Setting up and Running a Tenants' & Residents' Association (TRA),
- Fundraising for TRAs and Community Groups.
- TRAs and Community Regeneration

The centre has a Resource Library and an IT suite. We can offer IT training whether you are a complete novice or a seasoned computer user. You can learn how to produce newsletters, design websites, present letters, do mail merges, design posters and publicity material and lay out agendas and minutes.

To discuss any aspect of our Resident Training programme, please call Ian Dalglish on ☎020 7364 0702 or Carol Farnum on ☎020 7364 0702/0710 or email ian.dalglish@towerhamlets.gov.uk or carol.farnum@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Coming Up....

Next Issue...

...reporting back on how you're helping shape our resident involvement strategy

...focus on our repairs service

...what our survey of new tenants' survey says

Apart from keeping everyone informed of opportunities to get involved and reporting back on what we've done we want you to tell us what you would like to see in your newsletter.

If there are any topics you would like to suggest for future issues please please call Ian Dalglish on ☎020 7364 0702 or Noj Hussain on ☎020 7364 0704 or email ian.dalglish@towerhamlets.gov.uk or noj.hussain@towerhamlets.gov.uk



Reporting Back.... Resident Workshop Introducing Direct Debits

Residents from the Getting Involved Register attended a Resident Workshop in the



autumn before direct debits were introduced and decided:

- that a prize draw should be offered to encourage residents to pay the easier way
- that everyone who signs up to pay their rent by direct debit should get nine chances of winning £100
- the conditions for the prize draw included that the tenant must have signed-up to direct debit for six months and have no missed payments; tenants in arrears can be included as long as they have agreement in place for clearing arrears etc
- publicity material for introducing direct debits.

Housing went live with direct debits for paying rent

আপনি এই চিঠির বিষয়বস্তু বুঝতে পারা খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। যদি আপনার আরো ব্যাখ্যার প্রয়োজন হয়, এবং/অথবা অনুবাদ সুবিধার প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে অপর পৃষ্ঠায় উল্লেখিত অফিসে যতো তাড়াতাড়ি সম্ভব যোগাযোগ করুন।

WAA MUHIIM IN AAD FAHAMTO WAXYAABAHA WARQADAN KU QORAN. HADDII AAD SHARAXAAD DHEERAAD AH IYO/AMA HAWL AFKALIN AH U BAAHAN TAHAY. PADLAN SIDA UGU DEGDEGSIMAHA LEH EE SUURTOGALKA AH U LA XIRIR (XIDHIIDH) XAFIISKA WARQADAN DHABARKEEDA KU QORAN.

這信的內容對你是非常重要的，如果你需要進一步解釋，或翻譯的要求，請儘早與下頁提供的辦事處聯絡。

ĐIỀU QUAN TRỌNG LÀ QUÍ VỊ HIỂU NỘI DUNG CỦA LÁ THƯ NÀY. NẾU QUÍ VỊ CẦN ĐƯỢC GIẢI THÍCH THÊM, VÀ/HOẶC MỘT PHƯƠNG TIỆN THÔNG DỊCH, XIN LIÊN LẠC NGAY VỚI VĂN PHÒNG GHI Ở PHÍA SAU.

in January. So far over 200 tenants have switched to the easier way to pay their rent. Direct debits can save the Council money which can be used in other service areas.

The results of the first prize draw will be announced in July, as the workshop agreed that residents must have signed up for six months and have no missed payments.

If you would like a copy of the full report on the workshop please contact Jebin Syeda on ☎020 7364 7503 or email jebin.syeda@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Want to sign-up to direct debit?

If you would like to sign-up to direct debit, please contact your Rents Team on ☎020 7364 2200.

Reporting Back.... Tenants Tell Us What They Think

The results from the latest best value tenants' survey are back. The survey was carried out independently by MORI and has to be carried out every 3 years. It asks a random sample of our tenants how satisfied they are with our housing services.

The results help tell us how satisfied tenants are with our housing services and what areas we need to look at in more detail.

Although the results in the survey show an improvement in tenants' satisfaction since the survey was last carried out in 2003 we think there's more room for improvement and over the coming year we want you to help us make our services better.

If you would like a copy of the report on the best value tenant survey please call Lesley Owen on ☎020 7364 7051 or email lesley.owen@towerhamlets.gov.uk

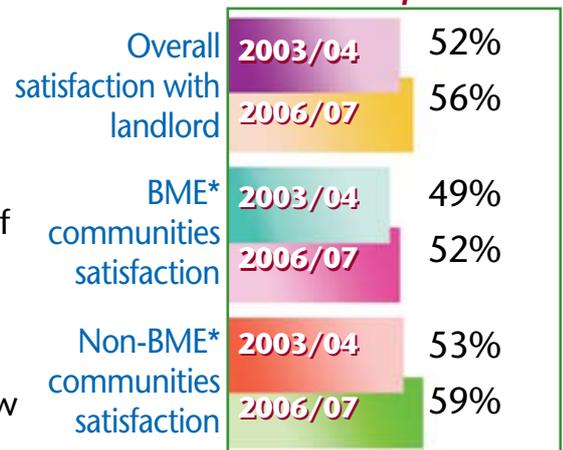
Reporting Back.... Pos-Ability

See photo on the front page

Housing staff were on hand to answer questions from disabled residents at the Pos-Ability event in December to celebrate International Day of Disabled. Staff from Rents, Lettings, Independent Living Team and Private Sector Improvement Team answered questions from residents and explained how their services can help disabled residents live independently.

At the event the council launched its Disability Rights Scheme. If you would like a copy please call Jebin Syeda on ☎020 7364 7503 or email jebin.syeda@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Best value question



*BME – black and minority ethnic