

isha news

the quarterly newsletter for all Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association residents

issue 01 summer 2012

www.isha.co.uk



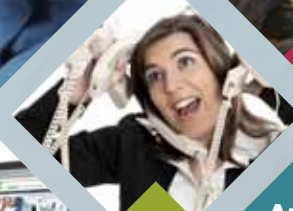
Welcome to our new look newsletter!

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Have You Considered Shared Ownership?



If you are an existing ISHA resident and are thinking of buying a property, have you considered shared ownership as an option?

Frances and Elayne have recently moved into their new home at Burbage House overlooking Shoreditch Park. Having previously rented from ISHA, they now own a share in the property and pay rent on the rest.

Under the shared ownership (or New Build Homebuy) scheme, existing ISHA tenants with strong local connections are prioritised for

any new shared ownership homes. Whilst minimum income threshold applies, it's a lot more affordable than buying outright. Because you are only buying a share you don't need to obtain the size of mortgage (and deposit) required to buy outright. Further details including a new video explaining shared ownership can be obtained from ISHA's website www.isha.co.uk.

Frances and Elayne are delighted with their new home. They say "We have so much more space now, as under shared ownership rules we were able to buy a two bedroom flat rather than the one bedroom flat we

were renting before."

They lived in the area previously and despite seeing shared ownership schemes built by other associations, they decided to wait for the Burbage House scheme to complete. They particularly like the stunning views over central London. Vince Tanner another resident at Burbage took the picture below from his balcony which explains Frances' comment "At night it's like Las Vegas".

Thank you to Vince for letting us use the picture and to Frances and Elayne for showing us round their new home.

HELP US SAVE SOME TREES

Register to receive ISHA News by email by sending an email to haveyoursay@isha.co.uk confirming your name and address and future newsletters and annual reports will be sent to you by email instead of the post.





Have you booked your seat on the bus? Don't get left behind!

If you haven't already seen the invites this year's Residents' Forum Annual General Meeting is going to be slightly different, a big red bus for a tour of central London and then off to have lunch on Saturday 14 July 2012.

The excursion is open to all so, if you want to get on board contact Tullia Morris, Resident Service Improvement Manager on 020 7704 7349, 07930 202 317 or tulliam@isha.co.uk.



You Don't Have to Suffer in Silence ISHA is Here to Help

Whether it's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Noise Nuisance, Litter, Unauthorised Car Parking, Domestic Violence, Race, Religious or Homophobic Abuse (anti-gay or lesbian abuse) – ISHA is here to HELP.

We are more than just a landlord carrying out repairs and chasing people for rent arrears. We are here to help any resident who is suffering because of the negative

If you live in Hackney contact **Teslim Fagbayi**

teslimf@isha.co.uk

020 7704 7341

or abusive actions of others. Whether it's your family, your neighbours or just people hanging around – in fact, anyone who makes your life a misery in or around your home – all you have to do is contact us.

We will always treat your call sympathetically and in the strictest confidence. But unless you contact us, we cannot help. We can't solve these difficult problems overnight, but we will do our best and if we can't do it alone, there are plenty of agencies

If you live in Islington or Camden contact **Geoff Henson**

geoffh@isha.co.uk

020 7704 7392

who are willing to work with us and you to bring an end to your suffering.

So please, if you are enduring any of the abuse or problems mentioned above, make sure you contact your Resident Services Manager to discuss how we can help straight away. You can do this by phone or e-mail, by letter, via the web on our internet site: www.isha.co.uk where we have set up a new ASB reporting form.

Your first port of call is your Resident Services Manager:

If you live in Waltham Forest contact **Dexter Edward**

dextere@isha.co.uk

020 7704 7353

But please remember, if you have an emergency situation; call either the Police or one of the other emergency services straight away. You can also ring the ISHA out of hours ASB/Abuse help line after 5.00pm, at weekends and bank holidays on: **0800 075 6699**.

Ready? Set, Go for the Olympics



The Olympic and Paralympic games will be taking place between 27 July 2012 and 9 September 2012.

No one can be sure of the level of disruption and impact that it will have on our ability to deliver our service to you. All our front line staff and operatives

will be working in a flexible manner during this period to provide the service with the required level of staffing at all times taking into account the impact that the games will have on journey times. Even so we may not be able to get to you as quickly as we would hope, or offer you the same choice of appointment times. You can help us to maintain an effective and efficient service in the following ways;

- ◆ Give us clear information when reporting a repair or problem on your estate. If you are not sure how to describe your repair you can log onto ISHA website, click on report a repair then click on to "Online Service" which will take you to a repair diagnosis page which has easy to follow pictures to help you identify your repair correctly.
- ◆ Tell us the best phone number or e-mail address to contact you on if we need to change the appointment time or update you in any way
- ◆ Tell us by phone, or e-mail if you can't get home in time for your appointment or won't be in for any reason.

If you want to know how the Olympics might affect your personal travel log on to www.getaheadofthegames.com

Free Training For Residents

Times are tough and you need to make sure that every penny counts but help is at hand.

ISHA is offering free training courses run by WALTHAM FOREST CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU on money management training and debt awareness to be held in your area.

Aim:

To support residents to take control of their money and to help develop their skills and confidence to avoid financial crisis

Duration:

Six workshops once a week for two hours

Location:

Date/time/place to be confirmed

To register your interest please contact Les Hoyte on 020 7704 7346 or email lesh@isha.co.uk or isha@isha.co.uk



To pay rent: For Islington, Camden and Waltham Forest areas, please call 020 7704 7350. For the Hackney area please call 020 7704 7346.

We accept all major credit and debit cards as payment, please have your card details ready before you call.

Thinking of Moving? Then Swapping Your Home Might be Your Best Option?

One of the best ways to move out of your ISHA home and into another more suitable one is by swapping. Also known as a mutual exchange.

You can even swap or exchange with a tenant from another housing association or a council tenant and it can be anywhere in the country. Last year about a dozen ISHA tenants chose to swap their homes, but we want to increase this number to at least 50 this year!

If you think swapping your home might be difficult or take too much time, the results of our 2011-12 Mutual Exchange Survey will tell you that it couldn't be easier. We asked all the tenants who swapped homes last year a few questions about how they found the process. Here are the headline results:

- ◆ 100% of residents were satisfied with the mutual exchange process
- ◆ 82% felt the mutual exchange process could not be improved – it worked great for them!
- ◆ 100% said they would recommend the scheme to a friend or neighbour
- ◆ 100% were satisfied with the customer service they received

◆ 91% were satisfied with their new home

There were a couple of things that residents said we could do to improve things such as making sure minor repairs were done before they moved in and speeding the process up. But remember, the speed of your move is mainly up to you and the person you swap/exchange with.

You start the process by finding someone to swap with – you can find thousands of people like you looking to swap on www.homeswapper.co.uk – a FREE website that ISHA subscribes to on your behalf – and then filling in a mutual exchange application form. This is available to download on our website www.isha.co.uk. We will always give you an answer within 6-weeks of you applying. So it really couldn't be simpler and if you want to swap get in touch with us NOW!

For further information about swapping your home contact Merleen Allen, Allocations & Voids Officer, on 020 7704 7348 or you can e-mail her on merleena@isha.co.uk or write to her at our office at 102 Blackstock Road, London N4 2DR.

you said...

You said when you move into a newly built property you want to know about any defects (repairs issues) in your new home and also when the contractor would be carrying out the repairs.

You said you wanted it to be easier to complete the Repairs Satisfaction Form

You said that ISHA's Car Parking contractor was not visible on ISHA's estates and asked if they were being effective.

...we did

We have started to issue defects lists to residents either when they sign up for the property or within two weeks of signing up

The Repairs Satisfaction Form can now be completed on the website www.isha.co.uk

We have included a report on the car parking service in this Newsletter (see page 7), and Liberty Services staff will now patrol in marked cars more frequently and they will wear clothing which will make them more easily recognisable. Please note however that they will sometimes still use unmarked vehicles.

Special Offer On Computers For People On Benefits



Do you want to get a computer to help you get a job, pay your bills, shop online or else to keep in touch with friends and family using the internet?

If you receive one of the qualifying benefits (such as housing benefit, income support, jobseeker's allowance, pension credit, disability living allowance etc), there is a Microsoft backed scheme where you

can buy a computer for as little as £99 and get cheap internet connections.

Even if you are not on benefits you can still get a good deal or use it to help somebody you know get connected.

To speak to someone about this scheme you can call **03719 100 100** between 9am and 5pm from Monday to Friday. You can also visit their website: www.getonlineathome.org

Did you know...

The average household can save up to £560 a year by shopping and paying bills online.

90% of jobs require basic internet skills and people with good computer skills can earn up to 10% more than people without such skills.

Over 25 million people now use Facebook to share photos and news with family and friends, and it's entirely free.



Do You Want To Be Involved In Isha's Decision Making?



We are looking for new resident members of the Sub Committees of ISHA.

There are three sub committees, Housing Services, Finance and Resources, and Development. If you would like to put your name forward for any of these committees, please contact Clare Thomson, Company Secretary, claret@isha.co.uk or write to ISHA, 102 Blackstock Road, London N4 2DR. We will be holding interviews in July 2012.

Introducing ISHA's New Car Parking Contractor



In April ISHA's Car Parking Policy and Procedure was reviewed and agreed by the Car Parking Working Group which is made up of residents and ISHA staff.

The new Policy and Procedure clarifies ISHA's approach to car parking on its estates, in its car parks and in any general parking area it owns for the benefit of residents, staff contractors and visitors.

ISHA has a number of parking sites in Islington, Hackney and Waltham Forest which are regulated by our contractor Liberty Services. Parking at these sites is only permitted where the vehicle is displaying a valid permit issued by ISHA.

Some residents have mentioned that Liberty Services staff are not as visible as the previous contractors however they have effectively managed parking on ISHA's sites by issuing Civil Parking Notices (penalty tickets) and towing vehicles away.

The following table shows how many notices have been issued at ISHA sites in the first four months this year:

	Notices Issued	Notices Cancelled on Appeal
January 2012	21	1
February 2012	25	1
March 2012	50	2
April 2012	26	0

Note: During this period one vehicle at a site in Walthamstow received 12 tickets, a vehicle at Well Street in Hackney has received 4 tickets as has a vehicle at the Brooksby House/Lofting House site in Islington.

In the same period Liberty Services has towed away 120 vehicles from ISHA owned sites.

In order to raise their profile on ISHA's estates Liberty Services staff will patrol in marked cars more frequently, although they will sometimes still use unmarked vehicles, and they will wear clothing which will make them more easily recognisable.

The Car Parking Policy and Procedure can be viewed on the ISHA website (just click on publications and then policies). Alternatively you can collect a copy from the ISHA office at 102 Blackstock Road or you

can telephone and ask for a copy to be sent to you.

Sites where parking is restricted are clearly sign posted. To avoid the annoyance and inconvenience of receiving a fine or finding that your vehicle or a visitor's vehicle has been towed away please do not park without displaying a valid parking permit.

For further information about car parking or if you have any concerns or wish to report an unauthorised vehicle, please contact the Operations Administrator on 0207 704 7396.

Welfare Reform – Will the Changes Affect You?



There are major changes to welfare benefits that will come into play from April 2013, they include two key changes:

- ◆ An overall benefit cap of £350 a week for a single person and £500 for a couple, or a single parent with children living at home.
- ◆ A “Bedroom Tax” of between 14% to 25%, if you receive Housing Benefit & have more rooms than you need.

As around two-thirds of ISHA residents receive Housing Benefit, it is quite likely that some of you will be affected by one or more of these changes and the amount of Housing Benefit you receive may go down.

First, if you currently receive more than £350 a week in benefits (all your benefits, not just housing benefit) as a single person or £500 in total as couple (or two or more people living at the same address) then the amount of Housing Benefit you will receive may go down. Not everyone receiving more than these amounts will be affected and the Government is writing to everyone who is likely to have their benefit cut advising them to contact the National helpline on **0845 605 7064** open between 8.00am and 6.00pm.

You can also find out more information online at www.direct.gov.uk/benefitcap

Second, if you live in a property that has more bedrooms than you need, and you are of working age i.e. under 60 and not receiving a pension, your Housing Benefit will be cut by 14% if you have 1 spare room or 25% if you have 2 or more spare rooms. The way in which the Government works out if you have a spare bedroom is as follows:

- ◆ Children under 16 of the same sex (boy & boy etc.) are expected to share a bedroom
- ◆ Children under 10 are expected to share even if they are different sexes (boy & girl)
- ◆ A disabled tenant or partner who needs an overnight carer can have 1 extra bedroom

If you have received a “Benefit Cap” letter from the Government or if you think you may be affected by the “Bedroom Tax” it is important that you contact us soon, so that we can start looking at ways in which we may be able to help you. Please contact Les Hoyte, Senior Revenue Manager on 0207 704 7346 or by e-mail lesh@isha.co.uk or by letter at our offices at 102 Blackstock Road, London N4 2DR.



Seeking a New Name for ISHA News

We have completely redesigned our newsletter and are grateful to the residents who helped us in refreshing it. We thought it would be a good opportunity to give a new name to the newsletter. Have you any suggestions for a new name? We would also love to know what you think about the newsletter's new look. Please give us your ideas, comments and suggestions on isha@isha.co.uk, by telephone on **020 7704 7300** or by mail to **Newsletter, ISHA, 102 Blackstock Road, London N4 2DR**

Letting ISHA's New Homes



Am I entitled to the increased subsidy on right to buy?

ISHA does not operate right to buy (this is generally for council tenants), but we do operate right to acquire. Right to acquire entitles you to a discount of up to £13,500 if you live in Waltham Forest and up to £16,000 discount on your property if you live in Camden, Hackney or Islington. There is a qualifying period you need to have been a housing association resident, and the www.direct.gov.uk site gives a good explanation of the scheme.

The other way ISHA assists residents into home ownership is through shared ownership. This is not an option on your current home, but ISHA along with other housing associations continue to build homes for shared ownership every year. www.firststepslondon.org has all the properties that are currently available under shared ownership and explains the scheme. You would be given priority as a housing association resident.

When residents see new developments being built by ISHA they often ask if it is possible to move into one of the new homes. Understandably enquiries are most likely to come from people who are already on the Transfer List for another home.

Unfortunately it is rarely possible to allocate a new property directly to an ISHA resident as all the new units have to be offered to people on the Local Authority's Waiting List. However there is nothing to stop an existing ISHA resident from bidding

for a new home directly with the Local Authority. In order to do this you would need to be registered on their Housing Waiting List.

ISHA's advice to any resident who wants to transfer to another home would be to register on the Local Authority's Housing Waiting List as well as joining ISHA's Transfer List. This will increase your chances of being able to move to a home that better meets your needs.

For further information please contact Merleen Allen on 0207 704 7348 or MerleenA@isha.co.uk

Our Performance in Quarter 4

January to March 2012

At a Glance Key



Above Target



Below Target



Just Below Target

*These comparisons are based on our performance in the previous year April 2010 to March 2011. This is the latest date for which information is available.

1. Responses to your Complaints, Letters & Phone Calls

Measure	Result	Target (2011/12)	How we Compared with Others in March 2011 (London & South East*)	What we are doing to improve our performance?
Replying to Complaints within the target time of 10 days	81%	100%	N/A	Below Target All staff to respond to complaints as a priority. Reminders in place for complaints still outstanding from day 7 onwards.
Replying to Letters within the target time of 10 days	90%	95%	N/A	Below Target All staff are reminded regularly to make sure they respond to letters and e-mails promptly.
Answering the Phone within 15 seconds	90%	95%	N/A	Below Target There were fewer staff available to answer the phones at this time. Cover for these posts has now been arranged.




2. Repairs

Measure	Result	Target 2011/12	How we Compare with Others? (London & South East*)	What we are doing to improve our performance?
The average number of days to carry out Repairs	16 days	14	N/A	There were a small number of repairs (7) that took longer to be completed (between 30 - 40 days). Although we are using the same contractor, Chigwell, we have agreed a new contract with them. We are following this up as part of the new contract.
The Number of overdue Gas Safety Checks carried out	0	0	Top Group	Above Target
Repair Appointments Made & Kept	91%	85%	Bottom Group	Above Target
Residents' satisfaction with repairs	93%	95%	Bottom Group	Just Below Target



3. Letting of Empty Properties

Measure	Result	Target 2011/12	How we Compare with Others? (London & South East*)	What we are doing to improve our performance?
How Quickly we relet your Home?		29 Days	Bottom Group	Above Target
How Many General Needs Homes we re-let?		No Target Set	N/A	For Information Only

4. Rent Collected & Arrears

Measure	Result	Target (2010/11)	How we Compare with Others? (London & South East*)	What we are doing to improve our performance?
What is the Level of Arrears ?		5.5%	Upper Middle Group	Just Below Target From April 2012 there is one additional member of staff in the Revenue Team to help residents who fall into difficulty in paying their rent or paying off arrears.
How much Rent did we collect?		99.08%	Upper Middle Group	Just Below Target We were just below our target of 99.08% of all rent to be collected. The addition to the Revenue Team has also been put in place to make sure ISHA collect more rent.
How Many Evictions for Rent Arrears were there?		No Target Set	N/A	For Information Only

5. Resident Involvement

Measure	Result	Target (2010/11)	How we Compare with Others? (London & South East*)	What we are doing to improve our performance?
How many residents have been involved this quarter		No Target Set	N/A	We are measuring how many residents have been involved. The total number involved this year – up to the end of March 2012 was 360 residents.
Changes to ISHA's services as a result of resident involvement		No Target Set	N/A	Also being measured is the number of services changed, implemented or withdrawn as a result of your involvement. So, the total number this year – up to the end of March 2012 is 17 changes to our services made as a result of residents' involvement.

If you would like an article in this newsletter translated or in a different format contact us or tick the box then fill in your details and return it with the article.

<p>Nëse doni të përkthyer ndonjë artikull të kësaj fletushke, n'a kontaktoni ose shënoni (✓) në kuti, pastaj plotësoni detajet tuaja dhe n'a dërgoni formën së bashku me artikullin.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Albanian</p>	<p>إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على مقال في هذه الرسالة الإخبارية مترجماً، اتصل بنا أو قم بالتأشير على الصندوق ثم املأ بياناتك وأعدھا مع المقال.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arabic</p>
<p>যদি আপনি এই নিউজলেটারের কোন একটি আর্টিক্যাল অনুবাদ আকারে পেতে চান, তাহলে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন বা বক্সে টিক দিন তারপর আপনার বিস্তারিত পূরণ করুন এক আর্টিক্যালসহ তা ফেরত দিন।</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bengali</p>	<p>Si vous souhaitez obtenir la traduction d'un article de cette lettre d'information, veuillez nous contacter ; alternativement, cochez la case, indiquez vos coordonnées et retournez-les avec l'article.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> French</p>
<p>જો તમને આ સમાચાર પત્રકમાં આપેલ કોઈ લેખનું ભાષાંતર જોઈતું હોય, તો અમારો સંપર્ક કરો અથવા ખાનામાં ટિક કરો અને તે પછી તમારી વિગતો ભરીને તે લેખ સાથે પાછી મોકલી આપો.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gujarati</p>	<p>इस सूचना का कोई लेख यदि आपको अनुवाद कराना हो तो कृपया हमसे संपर्क करे, या खाने में टिक लगा कर अपनी संपर्क सूचना लिखे और यह परची उस लेख के साथ वापिस हमें भेजे।</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hindi</p>
<p>Jeśli chciałiby Państwo otrzymać tłumaczenie artykułu w niniejszym biuletynie na inny język, proszę się z nami skontaktować lub zaznaczyć właściwe okienko a następnie wpisać swoje dane i zwrócić formularz wraz z artykułem.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Polish</p>	<p>Hadii aad jeceshay qoraalka warqada akhbaarta in lagu turjumo, nala soo xariir ama dhag sii sanduuqa yar markaa ka dib ku soo qor magacaagga iyo cinwaankaagga ee la' soo celi Qoraalka.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Somali</p>
<p>Si desea la traducción de algún artículo de este boletín, contáctenos o marque la casilla y luego incluya sus datos y remita la información con el artículo.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spanish</p>	<p>Bu haber bültenindeki bir yazının tercüme edilmesini isterseniz, bizimle irtibat kurun ya da kutuyu işaretleyerek, bilgilerinizi yazın ve yazıyla beraber geri gönderin.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Turkish</p>
<p>Nếu bạn muốn bài nào được dịch ra trong tờ báo này, thì hãy liên lạc với chúng tôi hoặc đánh dấu vào ô này, rồi điền chi tiết của bạn và gửi trả lại cùng với bài báo đó.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese</p>	<p>اس خبرنامہ کا کوئی مضمون اگر آپ کو ترجمہ کرانا ہوتو براہ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کریں یا خانے میں ٹک لگا کر رابطہ کی معلومات بہترین اور یہ پرچی اس مضمون کے ساتھ ہمیں بھیجیں۔</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Urdu</p>

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

ISHA, 102 Blackstock Road, London, N4 2DR

Tel: 020 7704 7300 Email: isha@isha.co.uk

Contact our team..

Resident Services Team

for all general enquiries and repairs

020 7704 7300 isha@isha.co.uk

Your Resident Services Manager

Dexter Edward 020 7704 7353 dextere@isha.co.uk

Teslim Fagbayi 020 7704 7341 teslimf@isha.co.uk

Geoff Henson 020 7704 7392 geoffh@isha.co.uk

Your Allocations & Supported Housing Manager

Peter Ward 020 7704 7347 peterw@isha.co.uk

Your Resident Service Improvement Manager

Tullia Morris 020 7704 7349 tulliam@isha.co.uk



EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS NUMBERS

LIFT BREAKDOWN

0800 652 0692

EMERGENCY REPAIRS

020 7704 7300

GAS LEAKS

0800 111 999

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

0800 075 6699

You can also report a repair, pay your rent or contact us through the website www.isha.co.uk

...OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

To pay your rent or for enquiries about your rent account:

If you live in Hackney contact Les Hoyte on 0207 704 7346

If you live in Islington, Camden or Waltham Forest contact Ola Ogunlana on 0207 704 7350

You can also pay your rent with a credit card. To do so have your credit card details handy and ring either Les or Ola on the above telephone numbers

Call the Service Delivery Team on **020 7704 7300** to book an appointment with Capitalise for free money advice.