

Winter 2024

ishahome

Your ISHA Resident Magazine



Islington & Shoreditch
Housing Association

Get Involved

*How to get more out of being
an Isha resident*

Winter helpers

Hints and tips for a cosy home

Coming in 2025

Our new customer service portal

Home

What that means to you is something our Involvement Team has been exploring with residents recently.

Our seasonal front cover was created in an art workshop. The theme was explored through mixed media over food and drink, allowing conversation and ideas to flow on how to offer these sessions and others like it in the future. We want them to be a way of meeting you in person, getting to know you better, understanding your needs, and improving our services.

We've been out and about again recently, on a Neighbourhood Knock in Waltham Forest. After our recent pilot, we've confirmed we'll be visiting as many residents as possible over the coming year to ask about your experience with us and learn how we can support you better. Our staff really enjoyed meeting with residents, and came away with some valuable insights about changes we can make to improve our services. We'll be working to implement these changes and hope you'll see the difference.

As the weather gets colder this edition of ishahome includes some hints and tips on how to stay safe and warm, and to keep your home in good order through this winter.

Excitingly, we are able to announce details of the new customer service portal we are introducing in 2025 that will make it easier for you to manage aspects of your ISHA home.



Best wishes, Thea
Director of Culture,
Communication and Involvement

Introducing our new customer service portal

Meet Charlotte, Mark and Tracy. This small team are beaver away behind the scenes to bring an innovation that will revolutionise our service to you.

We're getting excited here at ISHA HQ about the way you will soon be able to access your tenancy details, check your rent payments, follow progress on repairs and get the information that you need about your home.

It is our new Housing and Finance computer system that we are introducing next spring.

Like all good things, it's been a while in the making. Research into systems that could deliver an improved service for you began back in 2022. We then

had to follow a strict procurement process, to ensure our budget was spent wisely and that we appointed the best provider to the contract.

The project team were then assembled, who have been focused on this for the last year. For Tracy that has been on the finance side of the system, Mark on the input of data about our homes and you, our residents, and Charlotte on the management of the project, including training staff how to use it.

Project team

Left to right: Mark, Charlotte and Tracy.



Charlotte said:

"Our new system significantly enhances the security of the information we hold and improves our case management capabilities. This allows our staff to track your requests — whether for repairs or complaints — from start to finish. The team here at ISHA is working hard each week to ensure the project is set up for success, benefiting both our team members and residents by giving us the ability to provide a better service."

The information we hold about you, or 'data', not only makes the system efficient but enables us to provide better services for you. For example, knowing if you have a disability, or there are small children in the home, helps us manage your repair appropriately.

Therefore, it has been vitally important that the information we input is accurate. Mark has been tackling this monumental task.

He's been sifting records held in our soon to be decommissioned systems, checking and testing and applying common sense to them, working with our housing, tenancy and home ownership teams to fact check, before moving it to the new one. That is tens of thousands of individual pieces of information extracted, 'cleansed' and input.

Mark said:

"Already from having worked on the system ahead of 'going live', I can see the massive improvement it will mean to the service we provide. Staff are going to be much better placed to support you, through improved shared information with each other and the streamlined approach and access the new system provides."

Tracy said:

"The financial information that is input is equally vital to ensure the system offers the best experience for you, and our staff who will be using the system to manage your services."

You will see better statements, clearer account balances for your rent and service charges accounts. It will help us be able to resolve queries for you much more efficiently."

Currently the system is being rolled-out internally, training staff and testing and then we will be launching it to you, with access through a portal on our website.



While we are excited, we know that conducting business online is not right for everyone.

We will be continuing our phone and in-person services. Residents who wish to continue to contact us this way will also benefit from a better service as staff will be using the new system to handle their enquiry and waiting times on the phone should be reduced.

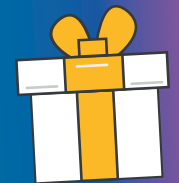
Get Involved – become a tester

We are so thrilled to be introducing the new system next year, we want as many of you as possible to sign up to it.

So, we're looking for residents who will be willing testers at this stage to make sure we're getting it right and ready for everyone. We are offering a £20 gift voucher to the first 10 residents who sign up with our team and complete the testing. They will need to test the sign-up process, and use some of the functions within the portal, and then provide feedback on the clarity of the sign-up instructions and on how they find using the system.

If you would like to be part of this important project to benefit all ISHA residents, please email ISHAportal@isha.co.uk by Friday 14 February. The team would love to hear from you.

**REWARD
OFFERED!**



**£20
Gift Voucher**

Subscribe to ISHA's monthly resident newsletter for updates and news:
www.isha.co.uk/newsletter-signup

Community, connection and creativity

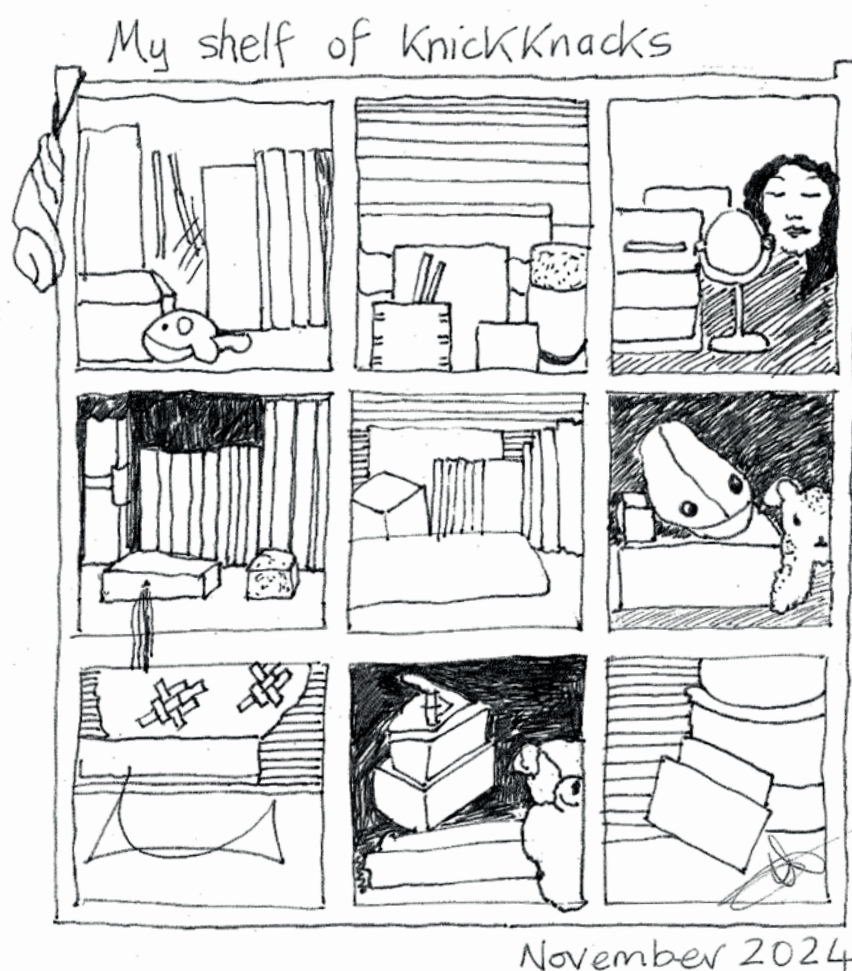
Joy had recently been hard at work moving all her belongings around her flat, as ISHA was coming to install a new extractor fan. In our recent art workshop she felt inspired to draw her shelf of Knickknacks from a photo she had.

The event was organised by Sophie, our Resident and Community Involvement Lead: "We chatted about how interesting it is, that our shelf treasures can reveal so much about our story - our past, our present, and our dreams for the future."

We know that doing creative activities is good for the soul, it gives us space and time to become mindful and reflect on life. Sophie said: "It can really be a way to explore how we feel, what makes us happy, what makes us sad. Sometimes it really helps to put down our thoughts on paper, or draw them out in colour, as I did with Joy. We wanted to think about what home means to us. What comforts us, what makes us feel safe, why we value where we live. What makes the property we reside into a home. What ISHA can do to support this."

At ISHA we are exploring new ways for residents to get more involved and co-create our neighbourhoods and services for the better.

We value your views, time and input whatever way you wish to contribute. We also want to involve residents in enjoyable ways, which



bring people together and create connections and community such as the recent workshop where Joy, one of our involved residents, was inspired, and helped us to think about what events we could hold in the future.

We know that there are many ways of being creative, whether it be painting, knitting, singing, dancing, writing stories and poetry - the list is endless, and these can often be enjoyed alone and equally in the company of others doing similar over tea and natter.

You might have a talent or passion for a creative hobby already. You might have an idea for a community

social group or gathering which isn't creativity related at all. If so, we would love to hear from you.

Please get in touch with Sophie at involvement@isha.co.uk with your thoughts and ideas.



Get involved!

There are different way to get involved and shape ISHA for the better, such as taking part in a Neighbourhood Knock conversation, or coming to an ISHA Neighbourhood Night to talk with our directors and staff teams.

You can give us your views in the annual customer satisfaction survey or take part in consultations or project development to improve a variety of different service areas. If you wish to influence senior and strategic decision making, you can apply to become a member of the Resident Scrutiny Panel who raise the voice of

residents and ensure that residents needs are heard and acted on.

As well as taking part in activities to shape our service for the better, we also want to support and develop community, social, and wellbeing related initiatives across neighbourhoods. After all, it's not just our physical environment

which makes a home, but our surroundings, sense of safety and belonging within the community.

If you are already part of an active group of neighbours wishing to improve your estate, you could set up a resident's association - we can support you with both funds and training for this.

You choose the level of involvement you want, and how you want to do it.

Informed

To be an **informed** resident, it's as simple as signing-up to receive our monthly email newsletter. We've made it easy for you by including a sign-up card and reply-paid envelope with this newsletter.

You can also follow us on our social media channels or check for latest news on our website.



What's in it for you?

This will keep you up-to-date with useful information about your home, consultations that might affect you, events and offers so you can make the most of your home and neighbourhood.

Involved

To take your interest a step further, become an **involved** resident, taking part in our consultations, events and shape projects with your views and feedback to shape ISHA service for the better. You can dip in and out as and when it suits you and your commitments.



What's in it for you?

You will be invited to a wide range of involvement opportunities. You will be able to develop connections with other residents and receive rewards and recognition incentives for taking part.

Active

To take your interest to the top level, become an **active** resident. You can participate more formally to influence strategic decision making at ISHA by influencing at senior and Board level. You can join the ISHA Resident Scrutiny Panel, which holds ISHA to account and ensures the top priorities of residents are listened to and acted on. You can also advise on such things as the contractors and staff we employ, by participating on contract appointment panels.



What's in it for you?

You'll receive access to training and personal development opportunities, with rewards and recognition incentives for taking part.

We are currently recruiting residents for our Scrutiny Panel and to become Neighbourhood Champions and Communications Champions. If these opportunities, or any other involvement activities, interest you please contact involvement@isha.co.uk

Safe and warm

The cost of living is affecting us all. To support you we've created advice resources with the help of experts.

Tips to reduce your energy usage to save on bills can be found in our 'Keep your home safe and warm' resource. You can pick up a copy from our office, it is also available on our website.

It contains tips and hints, and busts some of the common myths around energy saving.

It's not only about energy, it also contains practical information about actions you can take around your home this winter to help keep it snug and safe, and further sources of help and support in your community and beyond.

On the repairs page on our website, you'll find links to helpful videos for small maintenance jobs you can do yourself.



Damp, Mould and Condensation

At ISHA, we take all reports of damp and mould very seriously and we ask that if you spot any sign of damp and mould to please report it to us immediately, even if the problem is only small.

There are lots of reasons why damp and mould can occur in your home.

There are three common types of damp.

- 1. Condensation:** The most common form of damp. It is caused when warm air meets a cold surface, the warm air cools quickly and creates water droplets on surfaces such as windows and walls.
- 2. Penetrating damp:** This is caused by water that enters the home from outside, including the walls, roof, or ceiling. Signs of penetrating damp include stains on interior walls and bubbles cracking the plaster.
- 3. Rising damp:** This form of damp enters the home from the ground. Signs of rising damp include rotting skirting boards, peeling wallpaper, and stained plaster. It typically occurs in older buildings.

What will happen when I report damp and mould?

To make sure every case is properly investigated, we will visit and assess your home and identify the causes.

We will discuss next steps with you and liaise with our contractors to complete the required damp and mould treatments. The length of time for the repair will depend on the seriousness of the issue. We will also offer you advice about the things you can do to help prevent damp, mould and condensation in the future.

To report damp or mould contact our team on 0300 131 7300, email isha@isha.co.uk or visit our office between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

DAMP MOULD & CONDENSATION

The top 10 tips to reduce the risk of getting damp and mould in your home.

- 1** Wipe away condensation regularly, especially from windows, window frames and walls.
- 2** Clean damp spots regularly with a dampened cloth and diluted bleach to reduce the risk of it developing into black mould or mildew.
- 3** Reduce the amount of moisture being created by keeping lids on pans when cooking, drying clothes outside when possible, and if you use a tumble dryer, making sure it is vented to the outside.
- 4** Use an extractor fan in the bathroom and kitchen, or if one is not fitted, open a window when taking a shower or cooking.
- 5** Keep your doors closed when using the bathroom.
- 6** Try and keep your home at a steady temperature, even turning central heating to a low setting can help prevent condensation.
- 7** Dry clothes in a well-ventilated room, not on a radiator.
- 8** Air your home regularly by opening windows, even for a short time.
- 9** Keep trickle vents on windows open and don't cover up air bricks.
- 10** Ensure there is a gap between walls and furniture e.g. wardrobes, so air can circulate.

Visit our YouTube channel, Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association, for useful video guidance to simple DIY tasks around your home.

We're holding a Neighbourhood Night near you!

It's a one-stop shop to speak to ISHA staff and contractors about whatever you need.



Over October and November this year we've welcomed more than 40 residents who came for assistance or to offer feedback on how we can improve our services to you.

Free hot food is provided for all. Mini-residents are made welcome with fun activities to join in.

You can attend any night that's convenient for you, not just the ones in your borough.

Here are dates for the first half of next year:

Waltham Forest **1 April 5:30 – 7:30pm**

The Mill, 7-11 Coppermill Lane
Walthamstow London E17 7HA.

Islington **29 April 5:30pm – 7:30pm**

The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton Street, London N7 6QT

Hackney **Tuesday 20 May** **5:30pm – 7:30pm**

Our Lady & St Joseph, Dalston
Kingsland, Presbytery, 100a Balls
Pond Road, London, N1 4AG

Here are some of the things residents have said about the events:

"It was fun, and I got to socialise"

"It's good to speak to someone in-person"

"Events like these make it all so much easier"

Christmas and New Year services

Everyone at ISHA joins in wishing all our residents a happy and restful holiday season and peaceful new year ahead. We look forward to providing our services to you in 2025.

ISHA offices, at 102 Blackstock Road, N4 2DR, close over the holiday period. They will be closed from 4pm on Tuesday 24 December, reopening at 9am on Thursday 2 January.

Paying your rent

If you usually pay your rent over the phone, you won't be able to do that on 1 January as the office will be closed. There are more ways to pay your rent, which you can see on our website.

If you think you might need support over the Christmas period, please get in touch with our Outreach team now on **0300 131 7300**.

Our out-of-hours service will still be available and some staff will be on call for emergencies.

Please call **0300 131 7300**. Your call will be forwarded to the service, who will arrange repairs to make your property safe and notify us of the situation.

In the event of a gas leak call the 24-hour Gas Emergency Services on **0800 111 999**.



www.isha.co.uk