

Spring 2024

# ishahome

Your ISHA Resident Magazine



**isha**  
Islington & Shoreditch  
Housing Association

**90**  
Year Anniversary

**ISHA welcomes the  
Year of the Dragon**  
*Celebrating the Lunar New Year*

**ISHA in Bloom Competition**  
*The deadline for entries is 28 June*

**Local footballers**  
*ISHA supports Islington Girls Football*

# Welcome to the spring edition of ISHA Home



**Ruth Davison**  
*ISHA Chief Executive*

## Welcome to the spring 2024 relaunch of our resident magazine, ISHA Home.

I'm delighted to bring you updates on your home and community as well as a bit about what we've been up to.

We've been getting out and about in our community, including a Lunar New Year celebration with our Vietnamese residents and Neighbourhood Night resident events in Islington and Waltham Forest. I've really valued the opportunity to speak with residents face-to-face and hear directly about your experiences. So, I am planning to head out more often with my colleagues to meet with residents and see more of our services in action.

You may be aware of several new pieces of legislation recently introduced to strengthen tenant rights and regulatory oversight. Along with new building safety requirements, the Consumer Standards for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code set out very specific requirements that we must meet, including an annual Tenant Satisfaction survey. We are working hard to implement these requirements and will have lots more to share about what you can expect from us.

Resident involvement is a key requirement for much of the new regulation and so working with our revitalised Scrutiny Panel is crucial. We want to expand our involvement opportunities to make sure every

resident has a voice and can be involved meaningfully in shaping our services.

I'm also thrilled that we're sponsoring Islington Girls District Football Under 11 and Under 12 squads. We collaborated with Islington Council to provide a small amount of funding towards their kit and expenses, which allows them to continue to play at the highest level. I believe that supporting young people to thrive is aligned with our values and an important contribution to our community.

And for a bit of fun this spring, and further contributing to our vibrant and inclusive community, I hope you'll enter our ISHA in Bloom competition and share photos of your best blooms for a chance to win.

## ISHA in Bloom



ISHA residents have enjoyed gardening throughout our 90 year history and it's lovely to see photos of everyone's efforts. This year, we're embracing spring with 'ISHA in Bloom', our gardening photo competition celebrating the green thumbs of our residents. We're on the hunt for the most stunning displays of flowers and plants that brighten up our lives and spaces.

Whether you have a sprawling garden, a cozy balcony adorned with hanging baskets, or a collection of potted plants, there's a category for you.

**Best Front or Back Garden:** Show us the beauty of your personal outdoor oasis.

**Best Hanging Basket:** Let those blooms hang high and proud.

**Best Container Garden:** Perfect for those who love their plants in pots, big and small.

**Best Community Garden:**

Collaborate with neighbours to create a shared space of floral wonder.

The winner of each category will win a £50 gift voucher, adding a little extra sunshine to your gardening efforts. **The deadline for entries is 28 June at 6pm**, so don't let the grass grow under your feet! Get those photos of your floral masterpieces to us ASAP. Send your photos to [news@isha.co.uk](mailto:news@isha.co.uk) with your name, address, phone number and a brief description of your photo and the category you wish to enter.

More information is at [www.isha.co.uk/isha-in-bloom](http://www.isha.co.uk/isha-in-bloom)





## Rent and service charge review: How we can help

You should have recently received your rent and service charge review letter for the upcoming year.

Rents for tenants have increased by 7.7%, in line with government guidelines, which are based on inflation. If you're a shared owner, rents are increased in line with your lease.

We review our service charges each year and base them on the estimated cost of delivering shared services (such as communal cleaning and gardening) to your building or estate.

Where we are not the freeholder of the estate where you live, the annual service charge may be set by the managing agent, and we are obliged to pass this charge onto our residents. We know some of these charges have gone up a lot this year and where this is the case we are speaking with the managing agents to review costs.

We try to keep costs down while still providing good housing and repair services. If you have any concerns about your rent payments, please contact our Income Team.

If you're struggling with the cost of bills, we can help direct you to support in your area, and if needed, our staff can help you with applications to support funds or offer help to manage debts and rent arrears.

You can find more information on our website, [www.isha.co.uk](http://www.isha.co.uk). You might also want to look at resources available from Citizens Advice, Which? and your local council.

### For those on Tax Credits or Housing Benefits

If you're on Universal Credit, please update your journal with any rent changes. If you get Housing Benefit, let your local Housing Benefit team know about the rent change.



You may have recently received a letter saying that Housing Benefit will switch to Universal Credit soon. We understand this is a big change and we're here to help you through this transition. For support, call us at **0300 131 7300** or email [incometeam@isha.co.uk](mailto:incometeam@isha.co.uk), and we can discuss your options.

If you receive certain benefits you may also be automatically receiving financial support as part of The Government's Household Support Fund. Your council should have contacted you about this if you qualify, but if you think you've missed out on the support you're entitled to, we can help you investigate. For more information about the Household Support Fund check your local council's website.

Currently, many people in our community find themselves turning to food banks. If you're facing a situation where you need access to a food bank, please know that you are not alone. Our team is ready to support you by providing the necessary referral. Just email our Outreach Team at [outreachandsupport@isha.co.uk](mailto:outreachandsupport@isha.co.uk) or call **0300 131 7300**. We're here to help.



# Your Scrutiny Panel

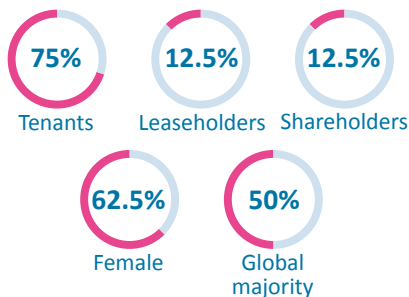
The Resident Scrutiny Panel is an integral part of ISHA and serves as the independent voice for all our residents, ensuring your opinions and concerns shape the way we work.

Our Scrutiny Panel meets regularly to discuss issues important to residents

is very valuable, and the Scrutiny Panel ensures these sessions lead to change.

The panel includes eight dedicated residents from varied backgrounds; including different ages, ethnicities, locations and skills. This helps us to get views and opinions from across our community and a wide range of perspectives across all tenancy types.

## Who makes up our Scrutiny Panel?



## What the panel does

The panel identifies specific areas of ISHA's service, such as repairs,

communications and complaints to review and identify improvements we can implement.

By working closely with ISHA teams, the panel digs into these areas to uncover issues and gather wide-ranging insights from residents to recommend actions for meaningful improvements. The panel has identified a number of priorities for this year and will soon be calling for input on them.

## Why your voice matters

Residents should have a say in shaping the services they receive. That's why the panel may reach out to gather your insights. Your participation in these discussions

## How to get involved

Are you eager to make a difference? Here's how you can be part of this transformative process:

- **Stay informed:** Watch for announcements or calls to participate on specific service reviews. Your experience and feedback could be exactly what we need to identify and implement improvements.
- **Reach out:** If you have suggestions or concerns or want to join in the activities of the Resident Scrutiny Panel, we want to know. You can contact the panel directly via email at [involvement@isha.co.uk](mailto:involvement@isha.co.uk).

Your involvement can drive positive change.



## Meet the people on the Resident Scrutiny Panel

### Sarah

Sarah is the interim Chair of the ISHA Resident Scrutiny Panel. She's been an ISHA resident in Hackney for 14 years. She joined the panel as she believes

people should be part of decisions that affect their lives and futures. She wants to ensure that ISHA can deliver the best services for all residents and leaseholders tenants.

Sarah and Brendan at ISHA's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations



## Joy

Since retiring, Joy has spent more time on her music and is in a band called Prestwood Fridays. Joy joined the panel after becoming frustrated with the repairs process and sees it as an opportunity to ensure that ISHA lives up to what it says in its mission statement. She says the panel is a group of highly motivated residents passionate about using the power invested in them to address things that aren't working properly.

## Brendan

Brendan is a designer/maker originally from the Yorkshire Dales. He moved to East London in 2002 and after struggling for years, eventually bought an affordable home with ISHA. Coming into his 10th year as an ISHA resident Brendan's flat was showing signs of wear and tear. Frustrated by the lack of agency he had in how his home is cared for, he joined the Scrutiny Panel to hold ISHA accountable for

the service we provide. Brendan feels that for ISHA to thrive, it needs all its residents, staff and contractors to work together to improve the lived experience of families in ISHA homes. For him, the Scrutiny Panel is here to represent residents' concerns, aspirations and needs and to help improve the service all residents receive.



## Neighbourhood Nights: Meet our team face-to-face

**Sometimes, a face-to-face conversation makes a huge difference.**

Last year, for the first time since COVID, we reintroduced our resident events in Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest so we could reconnect with residents face-to-face and understand what's most important to you.

Since speaking with residents at recent events, we've resolved several outstanding repairs and complaints and have appreciated the opportunity to hear firsthand about your experiences.

We have more Neighbourhood Nights planned this year and we hope you'll come along to a local venue with hot food and children's activities to:

- Discuss repairs or tenancy matters.
- Receive support from our Outreach, Housing and Income teams.
- Get to know ISHA staff and contractors.
- Tell us how we can improve our service.

These events are a good opportunity to raise a repair job then and there.

We are there to discuss and agree with you what we do in response. We can learn from your feedback and strive to improve our services in response. We've also heard a range of creative ideas to help improve your experience and the area you live in, including attracting more wildlife in gardens, revamping playgrounds and a whole host of other ideas that you've said will make a difference.

We're always keen to connect with you and hear any ideas you have for improving ISHA services and the area you live in, so please come along to your next Neighbourhood Night.

**Check our website and subscribe to our newsletter for the latest information on upcoming Neighbourhood Nights.**



## ISHA welcomes the Year of the Dragon

We were delighted to hold a Lunar New Year celebration with our Vietnamese residents, marking the Year of the Dragon, which symbolises growth, improvement and abundance.

The celebration at our Blackstock Road offices included lion dances, a Tai Chi master, and traditional Vietnamese dances. We hadn't held this event since before COVID, so it was a wonderful opportunity to meet up with old friends.

ISHA houses many people from the Vietnamese community, some of

whom arrived as refugees in the 1970s. They were initially helped by the Lien Viet Housing Association, which was founded in 1988 to provide affordable and culturally sensitive housing. Now, Lien Viet is part of ISHA and we're proud to support our local communities to thrive and keep their traditions alive.



Residents, staff and performers at Lunar New Year celebrations

## Meet our new directors

**Thea McNaught-Reynolds**, *Director of Culture, Communications and Involvement*



Thea joined ISHA in 2021 as the Head of Communications and Involvement and became a director in September 2023. With 20 years of communications experience, working for a mix of not-for-profit, housing and commercial sectors, she has

a strong interest in diversity and inclusion. She says: *"I'm passionate about creating spaces where people can thrive and I'm delighted to have taken on responsibility for HR, as well as communication, complaints and resident involvement. I'm enjoying working with our residents and staff to focus on and strengthen our commitment to compassion and respect in all we do."*

**Jerome Geoghegan**, *Director of Development*



Jerome recently joined ISHA as our new Director of Development, bringing over 35 years of experience in development and real estate. He has focused on mixed-use urban projects, partnerships, regeneration, and affordable housing, making him a

key figure in advancing ISHA's initiatives. He said: *"Joining ISHA is both an honour and an exciting new chapter for me. ISHA's dedication to building homes and communities aligns with my professional ethos. I'm eager to contribute to creating quality, affordable housing and continuing ISHA's tradition of punching above its weight as a small-to-medium sized association with a significant output in social housing."*



# Shaping a better ISHA together



At ISHA, we aim to be an outstanding landlord.



We know that there's always room for improvement and we don't always get everything right, but we want to listen and improve our services.

In April 2023, as part of the updated Consumer Standards for Social Housing, the Regulator of Social Housing in England introduced new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). These measures are designed to raise quality of living by ensuring landlords are accountable for the homes and services they offer.

These satisfaction measures evaluate landlords based on five key areas:

- Keeping properties well-maintained.
- Ensuring building safety.
- Engaging with residents in a respectful and helpful manner.
- Efficiently addressing complaints.
- Managing neighbourhoods responsibly.

There are 22 critical aspects we report on: 12 satisfaction measures based on tenant survey results and 10 from our operational performance records.

As a housing association that manages more than 1,000 homes,

we're required to report on our Tenant Satisfaction Measures each year, submitting our data by 30 June 2024.

We'll openly share our performance on these measures with you as well, so you can track our progress and hold us to account. The Tenant Satisfaction Measures are part of a push for greater transparency and accountability in the housing sector. We look forward to using the learnings from our TSMs to improve the quality of service we provide to you as your landlord.

## Our updated complaints policy

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024, meaning that we are obliged by law to follow its requirements.



We welcome complaints because they are an important way to understand your experience of our services.

We now have specific requirements that we must meet when handling complaints from our residents and we've updated our Complaints Policy to reflect these.

The code defines a complaint very clearly as: 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'

We'll always give you the option of making an official complaint if you're dissatisfied with the service you receive from us and you can raise a complaint up to 12 months after a problem occurs or you become aware of an issue.

We have two clear stages to our complaints policy, with timelines and processes to ensure it is fair for everyone. We will take action to put things right and learn from our mistakes.

We want to take the opportunity to fix an immediate problem, rebuild our relationship with you, learn from your feedback and improve our services.

We will always try to resolve your complaint.

To provide assurance that we are taking complaints seriously, a senior member of staff has designated responsibility for all complaints, and a member of the Board has also been appointed as the Member Responsible for Complaints.

They will scrutinise ISHA's complaint handling performance and ensure we are transparent and accountable about how we respond to resident complaints.

### HOW CAN I COMPLAIN?

You can call, email, write to us or come to the office during opening hours. If we can't resolve your complaint straightaway, we will:

- give your complaint to the **correct case handler**
- acknowledge your complaint **within five working days of receiving it**
- reply to you about your complaint **within 10 working days of receiving it.**

For more information, and a copy of our complaints policy, head to our website:

[www.isha.co.uk/complaints](http://www.isha.co.uk/complaints)

# New changes for Fire Risk Assessments to keep you safe



We've updated our fire safety rules in line with the Fire Safety Act 2021.



Our dedicated Building Safety and Compliance Team is focused on keeping you safe and making sure your home meets all fire safety regulations. We'll

be reviewing our Fire Risk Assessments every year to make sure actions have been completed. This might include visiting sites to check for ourselves. We also make sure that smoke and heat detectors are working in all rented homes during our annual gas safety checks (residents are responsible for changing the batteries and regular testing).

In buildings taller than 11 metres (usually about five storeys or more), we check the doors that lead to

common areas quarterly. In line with the Fire Safety England Regulations set in 2022, we will also check flat entrance doors every year to ensure they're working properly and haven't been tampered with.

Please always keep communal areas clear. To comply with safety requirements, we don't allow anything to be stored in communal areas; for example, no mats outside doors and no bikes or shoes.

Also, please do tell us right away if you have any building safety concerns or safety issues or if something needs fixing. You can email [neighbourhoods@isha.co.uk](mailto:neighbourhoods@isha.co.uk)

If you have questions or need more information about fire safety, please call us on **0300 131 7300**, email [buildingsafety@isha.co.uk](mailto:buildingsafety@isha.co.uk) or visit [www.isha.co.uk/FRA-changes](http://www.isha.co.uk/FRA-changes)

## Summer respect: Keeping our community happy and safe



As we head into the warmer months, and windows are open more often, please be considerate of your neighbours...

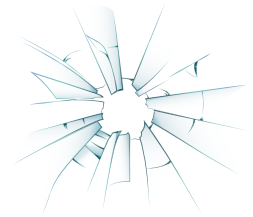
**Keep It Clean:** Don't leave waste on the floor. Ensure all rubbish reaches the bin to avoid smelly messes and pests.

**No Drugs Allowed:** All drug use, including marijuana, is prohibited on ISHA property.

**Quiet Nights:** Reduce noise during evening hours. Avoid loud music, running, and noisy pets to respect your neighbours' sleep.

**Clear Communal Spaces:** Remove any obstructions like mats or shoes from shared areas to prevent fire hazards and keep our community tidy.

**Secure Our Building:** Always ensure main doors are fully closed to restrict access to non-residents. Report any issues with door closures to [neighbourhoods@isha.co.uk](mailto:neighbourhoods@isha.co.uk) or call **0300 131 7300**.



Anti-social behaviour (ASB) ranks high among our residents' concerns.

### Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

We want to be able to respond appropriately to reports of anti-social behaviour, so we have invested in a new management system. This system will be used to record and track ASB cases, tenancy fraud investigations, care and support case work and domestic abuse. Only our Housing Team can access this secure system, so your sensitive data is protected.

We've done this because we understand that ASB can significantly impact your right to live in peace, quiet, and safety; a right we deeply value and strive to protect for everyone in our community.





## 105 new affordable homes for North and Northeast London

For 20 years, ISHA has been a proud member of the North River Alliance (NRA), working with other local housing associations to access government funds and build new affordable homes.

View from one of our newest properties at Parkhurst Road, Islington

We work with other small housing associations and local partners to build homes.

This recently led to a winning bid for £15.7 million to build 105 new homes in North London, with options for social rent, London affordable rent and shared ownership.

We're gearing up to start construction on the first site within the next 12 months and aim to start work on all the sites by March 2026.



## Celebrating 90 years of ISHA

In 2023, we marked a significant milestone – our 90th anniversary!

We celebrated this special moment with a reception in Islington that brought our community together. This included many long-term residents along with former staff, board members, and others who have been integral to ISHA's journey since 1933. It was lovely to share memories and recognise our achievements. Thank you for being a vital part of our ongoing story.



Residents at ISHA's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in November 2023



# Meet Muriel, a long-term ISHA resident and former staff member

Have you got a story to tell  
about your life with ISHA?  
Email us at [news@isha.co.uk](mailto:news@isha.co.uk)

ISHA is all about community and we're always grateful when a resident wants to share their story with us.

*"I lived in Islington and my husband worked on buses and was based in Hackney. When ISHA advertised for a caretaker at Shakespeare House, I took the opportunity. It allowed us to relocate and enabled my husband to keep his job.*

*"When I moved to this area it was mostly large families living in the same block and lots of us still live here; my neighbour and I have been friends for 39 years. I always liked the family atmosphere and the nice tenants who lived in the area.*

*"At Shakespeare House we had a big garden and I volunteered to take care of it all, with my husband too. When I first moved in, I held all the keys and people used to come to me if they were locked out. I was friendly with lots of people in the neighbourhood and I enjoyed the caretaker role and other odd jobs too.*

*"We'd have bonfire nights, and you'd see all the local children and grandchildren and we set up a table with food to share. I remember when ISHA arranged trips for tenants; we went to Hampton Court, London Zoo, and a few others.*

*"My sons don't live in London anymore and they tell me I should move out towards them but no, I like Hackney. I love going on the high street and seeing how busy it is. Some people think Hackney isn't a nice area, but I've always liked it."*

Muriel, long-term ISHA resident  
and former staff member





## Encouraging the next generation of local footballers

As part of our commitment to gender equality and helping young people grow through sports, ISHA is excited to support Islington Girls Football.

The Under 11s and Under 12s squads had lost their funding and were at risk of being disqualified from competing, despite winning their first season. We provided £2,500

towards their costs, so they could continue to play.

Ellen Maggs, speaking for the team, thanked ISHA, saying this money supports 32 local girls and helps

Islington District Girls football team players and coaches with Cllr. Nurullah Turan and Ruth Davison. Courtesy of Charlotte Chambers, Islington Tribune.

grow girls' football in Islington. "Our teams won big last season after not playing for 20 years. We needed money for new kits and coaching. Thanks to ISHA, we can keep growing," she said.

Ruth Davison, ISHA's chief executive, said, "We're proud to help the Islington District Girls Football Club. It's great for young talent, fitness, and confidence."

## Privacy Statements update

ISHA has recently updated its privacy statements which inform you about how we collect, store and process your personal data.

The main change to the statements clarifies that since the UK's departure from the European Union, we may transfer your personal data to countries outside of the United Kingdom, for example when a processor holds

their data in the EU. When doing this, we ensure we comply with the UK GDPR's rules around international transfers. We've also updated the descriptions of the data we may collect and the third parties with whom we may share data.

A copy of our privacy statements can be found on our website at [www.isha.co.uk/privacy](http://www.isha.co.uk/privacy)





# Always ask for ISHA IDs

We've heard about some people pretending to be ISHA surveyors to get into homes without permission. We want to make sure everyone is safe, so we are asking for your help.



First, if someone comes to your door saying they're from ISHA, please ask them to show you some identification (ID).

We always send a message before we visit, so if you weren't expecting someone, don't let them in.

If you're not sure if the person at your door really works for ISHA, please call our Repairs Team on **0300 131 7300** before letting them in.

We're here to help and will tell you if the visit is real or not.

We care about your safety. Please take care and always check IDs.



## SHINE London



The Seasonal Health Intervention Network (SHINE) is a free fuel poverty energy advice service and referral network for Londoners.

It offers a free helpline to provide guidance on reducing energy bills and debts and getting discounts. SHINE can also do home visits to install free small energy saving measures such as LED lighting, draught proofing and radiator reflectors.

## Islington Debt Relief Fund

The Islington Debt Relief Fund is a SHINE grant which can pay up to £300 for people who are in energy debt. There's also another grant scheme for EDF customers who are in fuel poverty, through which SHINE can pay £150 onto their electricity bill.

To apply, call SHINE on **0800 953 1221** or **0207 527 2121** or text **07800 006 143**. Lines are open 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

## How to contact us

**EMERGENCY  
GAS LEAKS:**  
0800 111 999

**DAMP & MOULD:**  
0300 131 7300\*  
isha@isha.co.uk

**ISHA**  
**102 Blackstock Road**  
**London N4 2DR**

<b>Repairs and Maintenance Team</b>	0300 131 7300* repairsandmaintenance@isha.co.uk
<b>Home Ownership Team</b> (for shared owners/leaseholders)	0300 131 7300* homeownership@isha.co.uk
<b>Income Team</b> (for rent issues)	0300 131 7300* incometeam@isha.co.uk
<b>Neighbourhoods Team</b> (for communal/building issues)	0300 131 7300* neighbourhoods@isha.co.uk
<b>Tenancy Team</b> (for general housing issues)	0300 131 7300* tenancyteam@isha.co.uk
<b>Complaints Team</b>	0300 131 7300* complaints@isha.co.uk

### OPENING HOURS

We're open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

*\*We know it can get very busy on the phone, especially if you're calling us out of hours. Do stay on the line and we'll answer your call as soon as possible.*



[www.isha.co.uk](http://www.isha.co.uk)