



# Tenants' Newsletter



More  
New  
Homes

Presentation of keys to new tenants of Windrush close at opening ceremony by Cllr Jamie Carswelle from London Borough of Hackney

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## Thinking about painting your flat?

Here are some tips to help you choose the correct type of paint to use.

first, make sure you have all the tools you need, and most importantly take your time.

### Emulsion

An emulsion is a water-based paint that is most suitable for internal walls and ceilings.

### Vinyl Matt

This paint provides a non-shiny matt finish, ideal for hiding small imperfections in the underlying wall surface. These should not be used in areas of high condensation, such as bathrooms and kitchens, or where the wall will need to be sponged clean regularly, such as hallways.

### Vinyl Satin

This produces a subtle soft-lustre finish to your walls, and is often more durable and stain resistant than matt finishes. This makes this paint suitable for children's rooms, hallways and stairways.

### Vinyl Silk

This paint delivers a high-sheen durable finish making it perfect for areas of high wear and tear, such as floors, stairs and handrails. These hard wearing properties also make it resistant to condensation which is useful for kitchens and bathrooms.

### Gloss

Gloss paints are usually oil-based paints. They are particularly hard wearing and provide excellent weather-protection for external woodwork.

Requires paint thinners, such as white spirit, to clean tools and spillages.

### Primer

Primers are used primarily to seal unpainted surfaces and prevent future coats soaking in. They can also be used to prepare previously

painted surfaces that have begun to flake and peel.

### Undercoat

This is usually oil-based and should be applied on top of the primer. You should select the same shade of undercoat as the top coat to deliver the best finish.



### Radiator Paint

This paint is specially designed to be applied to metal and to resist the high temperatures of a radiator whilst not discolouring.

### Anti-condensation paint

This is a formulated paint which makes the surface resistant to becoming cold thereby ensuring that condensation is less likely to form, also in many cases it will often include a fungicide as well. This paint is particularly useful for kitchens and bathrooms, although where these rooms have reasonable ventilation, a vinyl emulsion paint will often suffice.

## How to clear blocked Waste Pipes

### Is your water draining slowly from your sink or bath?

You may have a blocked pipe.

Internal waste pipes can easily become blocked over time with hair, grease, kitchen waste, etc. It is the tenants responsibility to clear the blockage.

The best place to start is to use a chemical drain cleaner, following the manufacturers instructions. Allow it plenty of time to tackle the blockage.

If a chemical cleaner fails to do the job then try a sink plunger. To plunge a sink:

- Using a traditional sink plunger, first smear some grease (vaseline works fine) onto the underside of the rubber cup
- Firmly hold the plunger over the plug hole, then fill the washbasin, sink or bath with enough to cover the rubber cup
- Place a wet cloth into the overflow outlet
- Pump the plunger up and down a few times until water runs smoothly and cleanly.



Plunger



U-Bend trap



Bottle trap

If this does not clear the blockage, you may have to dismantle the waste pipes.

There are usually two types of traps fitted in pipe works to prevent odours from entering the house.

### Clearing a u-bend trap

Place a bucket under the sink. To remove, unscrew the fittings and place in the bucket.

### Clearing a bottle trap

This type of trap is easier to clear as the base cap can be removed to gain access to the pipe.

If the fittings are stiff use a wrench to free them. Before reconnecting, clean the cap and trap pipe with a little detergent to ensure any bacteria is removed.

Insert a hooked wire into the pipe to free the blockage. Alternative you may use a drain Auger (drain 'snake') from your local DIY store.

# CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (CBL)

CBL allows applicants for social housing (and tenants who want to transfer) to apply for property vacancies which are advertised widely in the neighbourhood (e.g. in the local newspaper or on a website).

## How does it work?

1. All applicants have to be registered with the local authority, who provide them with a reference number. The reference number is required when an applicant bids for a property.
2. CBL requires local Authorities and registered social landlords to advertise their housing vacancies for all applicants
3. All available properties are listed in the local newspapers and on the councils CBL website. The lists include descriptions about the property
4. Applicants can apply for any home to which they are matched (e.g. a single person would not be eligible for a 3-bedroom house).  
The bidding can be done over the phone or online, if the local authority provides the facility.

5. The list of properties change **every week**, so it is important that applicants keep applying.

6. Priority is given to those with urgent needs, but where possible properties are allocated on the basis of who has been waiting the longest. Authorities may provide feedback that helps applicants to assess their chances of success in subsequent applications.

7. The successful bid will be awarded to the applicant with the highest priority under the scheme.

Hackney, Waltham Forest, Newham and Enfield Councils are all currently operating a choice based lettings system. If you wish to apply for housing you should initially register with your local Council who will ask you for some information to help them determine the urgency/priority of your case.

To bid online for housing in Hackney, Newham and Waltham Forest please go to:

[www.ellchoicehomes.org.uk](http://www.ellchoicehomes.org.uk)

To bid online for housing in Enfield please visit:

[newcbl.homeconnections.org.uk](http://newcbl.homeconnections.org.uk)

## Get cash for moving

Hackney council operates an under occupation cash incentive scheme which is open to housing association tenants.

If you live in Hackney, and want to move to a smaller property that has fewer bedrooms, Hackney can offer you a cash incentive to move. If you give up at least a two bedroom property, you could get £1,000 per room.

*Some benefits of moving:*

- Helping the people who are severely over crowded
- Reduced fuel bills
- Chance to move to another area
- Chance to move to a newer property
- Cheaper Rent

For further information contact the Special Projects Officer at Hackney Council on **020 8356 5769/5752**

## Staff Movement

### Who is going where...

**Amanda Hunt** (Housing Officer) is now on maternity leave for one year. We would like to welcome **Nah Lamptey** who will be covering her post of dealing with rents.



**Sarah Dean** (Assistant Technical Officer) will be leaving at the beginning of July to pursue her career with a larger housing association. NLMHA would like to thank Sarah for her hard work over the last five years.



**Ikbal Hussain** (Tenant Participation and Community Development Officer) will be starting a new role in October as a housing officer. He will be dealing mainly with estate issues including antisocial behaviour.

## Flats acquired at newly refurbished block



### New Flats in Gazelle House

The block of flats (in Newham) has been refurbished to a high standard, comprising of private owners, shared housing scheme as well housing association properties.

NLMHA has acquired 12 units of which 8 are one bedroom flats and 4 two bedroom flats. The modern open-plan flats with an open courtyard have been well received by the new tenants.

## Official Windrush Opening



Windrush Close is a new development funded by the Housing Corporation and developed by the North River Alliance (NRA) on behalf of North London Muslim Housing Association (NLMHA).

This site prior to the development, was a derelict garage site and bin store, used by surrounding estates in the area. There had previously been a great deal of anti-social behaviour problems on this site. Extensive public consultation took place in relation to the relocation of the bins.

Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association then purchased the site from the local authority and transformed it into this wonderful, innovative development, which comprises of 3 family sized maisonettes, one wheelchair adapted maisonette and six one bedroom flats.



The site was officially opened on Thursday 22 February 2007 by Cllr Jamie Carswell on the new estate. There were opening speeches by James Cannon - Chair of Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association (ISHA), Ashraf Hakim - Chair of NLMHA and Cllr Jamie Carswell - Deputy Mayor of Hackney. The opening was symbolised by handing a key to one of the tenants and guests viewing some of the tenants homes.

# Holly Street Awards



A consultation day was organised to make the residents aware of opportunities to get involved and empowered in the community. The event was widely publicised within the estate by working in partnership with the RSL's as well as the Hackney Play Association, Freeform, CityzenPeers, Youth committee members and the Sharp End.



All The previous JMB members were thanked for their contribution towards the estate and were presented with an award by Meg Hillier, MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch.

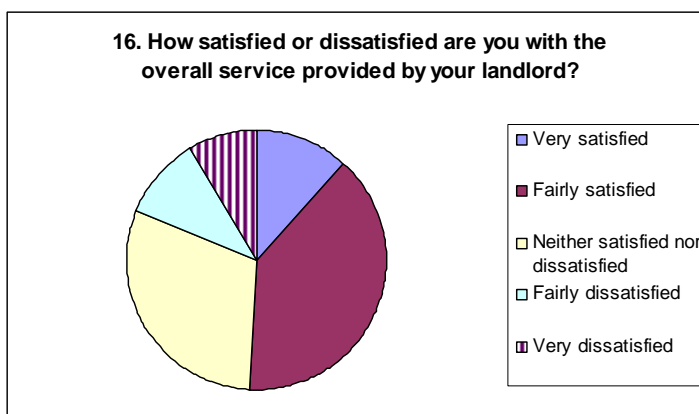
**If you are a resident of the Holly Street estate and would like to be part of the new tenants association, please contact the Tenant Participation Officer.**



## Tenants Satisfaction Survey Results

NLMHA has a rolling program to carry out tenants surveys on 20% of the stock. During the financial year 2006 – 2007 the survey was carried out by Faith In The Future (FITF). FITF was chosen as an independent organisation to carry out the survey, as it is an established organisation in the tenant participation and regeneration sector of social housing. One hundred properties were identified within the 4 boroughs across London where NLMHA operates.

NLMHA is grateful to its valued tenants for their cooperation. We have received 72% of the surveys completed to a satisfactory level. Unfortunately 28% of the surveys were not completed to a satisfactory level, despite efforts by FITF to contact the tenants on three different occasions.



A summary of the results the results have been collated and a report of key points produced. Here we have a extract of one of the main questions.

The pie chart (16) shows the overall satisfaction of the service provided by NLMHA, this shows that of all the tenants surveyed the majority were fairly satisfied with a small percentage very satisfied.

We will be putting together a focus group to identify ways to improve the service delivery. If you would like to be part of the focus group or would like a copy of the 'Tenants Satisfaction Survey Summary', please contact the Tenant Participation Officer.

# How quickly should it be done?

We have three priority levels for carrying out repairs. These are set out in the table opposite with some examples of the types of repair that would fall into each priority level.

It is essential for tenants to provide access to contractors to carry out the repairs. All our contractors carry ID, please ensure that you allow the correct contractors in to your property.

Priority level	Timescale	Typical example of repair
Emergency	Make safe within 24 hours	Major water leak Collapsed Ceiling Property is insecure
Urgent	Complete within working 5 days	Central Heating Breakdown Plumbing leak WC Flush system defective
Routine	Repair within 28 working days	Decorative repairs Carpentry repairs Blocked rain water gutter

## Before you call

If something goes wrong at home, before calling our maintenance team please do the following-

### SERIOUS WATER LEAK

1. Turn off the main stopcock, which is usually under the kitchen sink.
2. Put buckets under the leak(s), then turn on all the taps in your home and flush all the toilets. This drains the cold water storage tank until a plumber can attend.
3. Call the maintenance team.

### NO HEATING OR HOT WATER SUPPLY

1. Check the programmer is set for 'on'.
2. Check the thermostat is turned on.
3. Check the electricity supply is switched on.
4. If the pilot light won't light check the gas supply is turned on at the meter or, if you are on a key meter, check you have enough credit left on the meter.

If the gas is 'on' consult the instructions in your handbook or on the boiler casing.

### SMELL OF GAS

1. Extinguish all naked flames.
2. Call Transco on 0800 111 999.
3. Switch the gas supply off at the meter.
4. Do not switch on lights and disconnect all appliances.
5. Open all windows to ventilate the property.

### NO ELECTRICITY

1. If the power within your home fails and neighbouring houses are also without power, there is an area mains supply failure. Contact your electricity company to find out when the power will be restored.
2. If the neighbouring houses have power and you have none, there is a failure on the electrical circuit within your home. Check the consumer unit, which is usually located on the wall nearest your front door, in the cupboard under the stairs or in the cellar. If any of the switches on the unit are in the "off" position, push the switch back to "on". You should find electricity restored.
3. If this switch fails to stay on please follow these simple steps:
  - turn all switches to the off position and remove all plugs from the sockets.
  - Then try to switch on the switches in the consumer unit (CU).
  - If the CU switch stays on, plug and switch on all appliances that were connected before one at a time, checking the CU between each appliance.
  - If the CU switch goes off when switching an appliance on, that appliance is faulty.
  - If there is still a problem call the maintenance team.

**Tenants will get recharged for call outs due to faulty appliances.**

**IF IN ANY DOUBT, STOP AND CONTACT THE MAINTENANCE TEAM**

# Ways to get involved as a NLMHA Resident

## Tenant's Newsletter

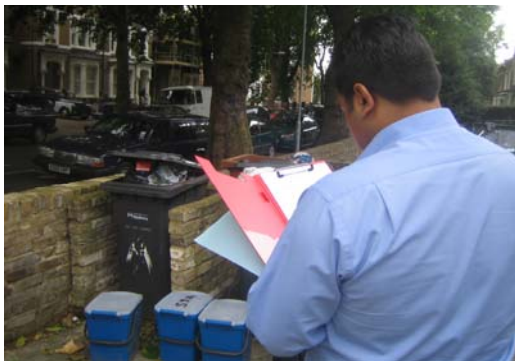
**1** We publish our Tenants' Newsletter twice a year to both inform and involve residents as much as possible. We are developing new ways to involve residents in the production and distribution of the newsletter and would like to hear from anyone interested.

We are interested to be contacted by residents who would like to work with NLMHA staff to help design and produce the Tenants Newsletter that is published twice a year. There are a number of ways to be involved including deciding the contents, designing, writing articles and looking at ways to get more people reading the Tenants Newsletter and getting involved with our services and activities.

The role will involve meeting twice a year to decide the contents for the newsletter and then ensuring that articles are edited and delivered on time for the final newsletter.

## Estate Inspections

**2** Residents can take part in the regular estate inspections that look at the main issues affecting estates like cleaning, gardening, lighting, refuse, communal repairs etc. These are undertaken on a monthly basis on our estates to monitor the standards of cleaning and ground maintenance (grass cutting, shrub pruning etc.).



## Residents Meeting

**3** We hold meetings on our estates to provide residents with opportunities to raise matters of concern.



## Residents' group and associations

**4** We encourage residents to use a self-governing approach to form a group to represent the views of an Estate or neighbourhood and seek to provide a range of different activities for residents including an annual Tenant Fun Day. These groups work closely with NLMHA Tenant Participation Officers to discuss and resolve issues arising from meetings. Currently we have Residents group operating in a number of our estates and some in our street properties that are classified as informal groups that meet once a quarter, however we are keen to empower our Resident Groups by forming them into formally constituted Residents' Association enabling them to apply for additional funds as well as managing their own Bank Account for the running of their group. With this approach, residents invite staff to attend meetings and together they discuss issues, problems and organize activities together.

## Individual Response

**5** You can always register your comments by writing.

## Surveys, questionnaires and block letters

**6** NLMHA are keen to receive resident feedback on key NLMHA services through surveys and questionnaires. For example, Maintenance sends out a feedback form when tenants report a repair with their work order to find out how the repair was carried out etc. Please respond to our letters, surveys, questionnaires so that we can continue to improve the service.

**To find out more information or how you would like to get involved please contact Ikbal Hussain or Shahina Haider.**

## Bulletins



# 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007

From the first of July 2007 it will become illegal to smoke in all enclosed public places and work places. This legislation covers the communal areas within a block of flats. Signs will be put up in the communal areas. NLMHA requests all tenants to adhere to these signs. Failure to do so can result in tenants being fined under the legislation.

## Useful Information

### Bulk Removals

Hackney:	020 8356 6688
Newham:	020 8430 2000
Waltham Forest:	0800 232 323
Community Skips:	020 8356 3344

Please use the above services, which are free of charge and do not dump furniture in bin-stores. This creates problems for the bin men who cannot move the bins. Therefore your bin area will not be cleaned.



### Emergency Contact - Out of Office Hours



**nationalGrid** 0800 111 999  
Gas Leaks



**Thames Water** 0848 920 0800  
Water Leak / burst pipes



**RG Francis** 08000 407 110  
Heating / Hot water / Boiler Breakdowns



**NLMHA** 020 8815 4200  
All other out hours repairs

Report your repairs online at [www.nlmha.com](http://www.nlmha.com) or email [maintenance@nlmha.com](mailto:maintenance@nlmha.com)

### Other useful information

<b>National Money / Debt Helpline</b>	0808 800 4000	
<b>Childline</b>	0800 1111	<a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a>
<b>Samaritans</b>	0800 776 600	
<b>NHS Direct</b>	0845 4647	
<b>HomeSwapper</b>		<a href="http://www.homeswapper.co.uk">www.homeswapper.co.uk</a>
<b>Domestic Violence Helpline</b>	0808 2000 247	24hr freephone confidential service



### North London Muslim Housing Association

62 Cazenove Road, Stoke Newington, London N16 6BJ



Tel: 020 8815 4200



Fax: 020 8806 6854



[info@nlmha.com](mailto:info@nlmha.com)



[www.nlmha.com](http://www.nlmha.com)

