



Residents' News Update

Winter 2014



A new community....

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Our Vision:

NLMHA will maintain its place in the top quartile performers of our peer group in London and continue to build a strong reputation as a leading provider of culturally appropriate services.



Our Mission:

To provide quality homes and services, strengthen our communities and improve the lives of local people by adding value, dignity and quality of life.

Feedback thank you

We would like to thank you for the feedback we receive throughout the year. Without your input, we wouldn't be able to improve on the services we provide.

We have taken on board all the comments and feedback we receive over the phone and in our office. We urge all tenants to continue giving us feedback, so we can enhance our services.

Online card payments – coming soon

Next year, we hope to introduce a new way to pay your rent and other charges.

The change will mean that, in future, you will be able to pay using your debit or credit card online. Keep an eye on our website for this new service.

Christmas office opening times

Our offices will close from 1:00pm on Wednesday 24 December 2014.

We reopen normally from 9:30am on Monday 5 January 2015.

For emergencies when we are closed, call the office number on 020 8815 4200.

Seasons greetings from all at NLMHA



Text messaging

We will be introducing our text messaging service from the new year.

Text messages will enable us to get important messages to you fast and ensure that you receive them.

We may send you details of your repairs and rent balances, updates about where you live and other tenancy related information.



Have we your phone number?

We will text you on the number you have provided to us, so it is important that we have your correct mobile telephone number. If you change your number, please contact us so we can update our records.

Beware of bogus callers (always ask for ID)

Not all burglars break into homes – some try to trick their way in.

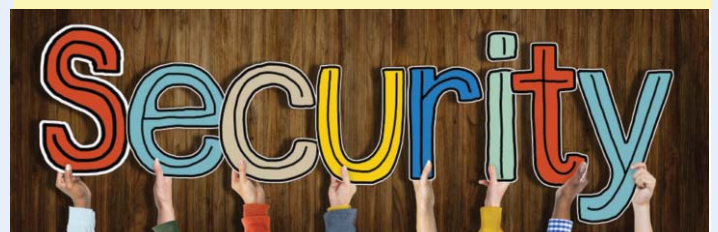
These 'bogus callers' pretend to be on official business. They might say they are from your gas, electricity or water company. Or they might pretend to be one of our contractors.

Be careful about letting anyone into your home, if you have one, use your chain or spy hole first.

Ask for proof of identity. Our staff and contractors carry ID cards, so always ask to see them.

Don't be distracted. Some bogus callers work in pairs. While one tells you a story – perhaps they have 'seen' something wrong with your home – the other may be breaking in.

If you suspect someone, call the police on 999. You may call us to check whether our staff or contractors are due to visit you.



Are you a gas hero?

Faulty gas fires, boilers and cookers are deadly. They could cause deadly gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Be a gas hero for your family and neighbours by making sure you get your appliances checked out every year.

If you're a tenant, we will do this for you without charge – but you must give us access. In fact, if you don't, we may have to take you to court, so that we don't break the law as your landlord.

If you're a shared owner or leaseholder, arrange a visit from

a gas engineer on the Gas Safe Register. To find an engineer near you, phone 0800 408 5500 or visit www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Signs to watch for

In between gas checks, your appliance may be faulty if:

- the flames change colour from blue to yellow or orange
- there are black marks around the appliance



- there's too much condensation in your room.

If you start getting headaches, dizziness, breathlessness or nausea get help straight away.

Be a great tenant and neighbour

Great tenants:

- are proud of where they live
- dispose of rubbish properly
- never leave bulky items by the bins (they call the council instead)
- report problems to us
- make sure their kids aren't being a nuisance
- are polite, friendly and helpful to their neighbours.

Watch out for your estate

Help us care for your estate by telling us if someone is:

- sub-letting
- causing anti-social behaviour
- keeping a pet they shouldn't
- breaking another of their tenancy conditions.

Together we can really make a difference!

One month's travel for **£10**



Hackney Cycle Loan Scheme

Borrow a bike for one month for £10 including lock, lights and helmet

Full details and registration online at: www.hackney.gov.uk/cycle-loan
movegreener@hackney.gov.uk
020 8356 4891

- 1 Register online
- 2 Collect your bike
- 3 Cycle away

Option to buy your bike at a discount over 3 payments

Hackney

Keys and fobs – you are personally responsible

Please remember that you are responsible for the keys and fobs to your home.

We don't hold a spare set of keys for your property. If you lose them, you must get a new set cut at your own expense.

We issue you with fobs to the building (where required) when you move in. If you lose any of them, you need to call the office on 020 8815 4200 to arrange for a new one. We will pass on the cost to you.

We ask you not to use fellow residents' fobs.



Staying on top of

Move somewhere smaller

Is your home larger than you need?

Moving somewhere smaller could leave you better off.

- Your rent may be lower.
- You may get more Housing Benefit (no 'bedroom tax').
- You may get a one-off payment.
- Your home may be easier to manage.

Many landlords encourage tenants to move when they no longer need so many bedrooms. This is because there are lots of growing families who need the space.

If you are moving from a family-sized property, you may be offered a one-off payment for every bedroom you give up.

To find out more, phone us on 020 8815 4200 to ask about our 'Incentive to Move' downsizing scheme.



Non-dependant deductions

The Government assumes that 'non-dependants' over the age of 18 who share your home are helping to pay your rent. This means your Housing Benefit is reduced.

Non-dependants

- Your adult son or daughter.
- Other relatives or friends.

Not non-dependants

- Your partner.
- Anyone who pays to stay in your home (your lodger).
- Your joint tenants.
- A son or daughter you still get child benefit for (for

example, an 18-year-old at sixth form college).

- A carer paid to help your household by a charity or voluntary organisation.

How much benefit you lose

The amount you lose will depend on your non-dependant's income and your council's policy on council tax reduction.

If you or your partner are over 65:

- There are no deductions for the first 26 weeks after the dependant moves in.
- If your non-dependant's income rises, your deduction does not rise for the first 26 weeks.

For more information, call the Housing Management team.

your rent

MONDAY

Your rent is due in advance

If you don't pay your rent every Monday in advance, you are breaking your tenancy conditions and you risk losing your home.

If you are struggling to pay, please contact us straight away. We can help you sort out a plan to pay what you owe. Your problem will only get more serious if you don't talk to us.

To discuss your rent account, phone Amanda Hunt on 020 8815 4208, or Imtiaz Ahmed on 020 8815 4207.

Discretionary Housing Payments

You can apply to your council for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to help pay your rent.

DHPs can:

- top up your rent, if you're affected by the bedroom tax or the benefit cap, **or**
- help you pay a tenancy deposit, rent in advance and removal expenses so you can move.

Your council has limited funds. Payments are for a short time only and not everyone will get a payment.

To be successful, you will need to give plenty of detail about your situation.

You are more likely to get a payment if:

- you have health problems or a disability
- you can't move somewhere smaller
- you have extra travel costs for a good reason
- you risk losing your home
- you are working to improve your situation.

Make sure you explain your own strong reasons to the council.

For help to make a claim, or information on welfare reform, call the Housing Management team (see back page).



Weekly deductions if you and your partner are of working age:	Housing Benefit deduction	Council Tax Deduction (estimate)
Non-dependant under 25, on Income Support, income-based Jobseekers' Allowance, or assessment phase Employment and Support Allowance	None	None
Non-dependant gets youth training allowance or pension credits	None	None
Non-dependant is a student (Deductions apply if they work in holidays)	None	None
Non-dependant in prison or usually lives elsewhere	None	None
Non-dependant works less than 16 hours or has no income	£14.15	£3.70
Non-dependant works 16+ hours and earns £128+	From £14.15 to £91.15	From £3.70 to £11.25

Check out your stopcock

Every NLMHA home has a stopcock for turning the cold water system off and on. Do you know where yours is?

Stopcocks are important because you can use them to turn off the water in an emergency and if there's a pipe burst or leak.

Stopcocks are usually found in your kitchen, below the sink. However, in some houses you will find it in a front or back hall, or in a larder unit beside the sink.

Make sure everyone in your household knows where your stopcock is, in case of emergency, and check it still works.

Turn your stopcock clockwise to turn the water supply off and anti-clockwise to turn it back on.

(Remember: turn right for tight, turn left for loose.)

If you have problems with your stopcock call the maintenance team.

Check it today!



Where to use computers and the internet for free in Hackney

Lots of centres in Hackney offer free computer use and some can offer help while you're there.

Children's centres:

Brook Community, Clapton Park, Comberton, Daubeney, Fernbank, Gainsborough (parents with under-fives only), Hackney Ark, Hillside, Linden (parents with under-fives only), Millfields Community School (parents with under-fives only), Woodberry Down.

Older residents:

Silver Surfers, 52 The Lawns, Matthias Road, N16. People aged 50+ only.

Jobcentres (claimants only):

Dalston Jobcentre Plus (not Thurs), Hackney Jobcentre Plus, Hoxton Jobcentre Plus (not Thurs).



Libraries:

Clapton, Dalston CLR James, Hackney Central, Homerton, Shoreditch, Stamford Hill, Stoke Newington, Woodberry Down, Redmond Community Centre.

Resource centre:

Howard Road, N16.

The council also offers a Basic IT Workshop to help you get online. Write to: The Hackney Service Centre, 1 Hillman St, E8 1DY, giving your name, address, phone number, email address and any special requirements.

Top fire safety tips at home

To prevent fires

- Don't smoke in bed.
- Keep matches and lighters away from children.
- Don't put clothes to dry or sit too near heaters.
- Don't overload sockets.
- Install a smoke alarm and check it regularly.

Before bed

- Make sure cookers and heaters are turned off.
- Remove plugs from sockets.

Kitchen safety

- Don't overfill pans and fryers.
- Never leave pans while they are being used.
- If oil catches fire, turn off the heat – don't move the pan or throw water on it.

Make plans

- Have an escape plan for emergencies, make sure everyone in your household knows and practices it.
- Keep escape routes clear inside your home and never leave items in shared areas.
- Keep door and window keys close by.

If you have a fire in your home

- Get everyone out and dial 999.
- Crawl under smoke and fumes.
- If a closed door is hot, the fire is on the other side. Block gaps with towels and call for help from a window.

For a fire in your block

- Ring 999 for advice.
- Never use the lift.



Tackling anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour can be annoying, encourage crime – or even wreck someone's life. That's why we take it so seriously.

Anti-social behaviour can include:

- regularly playing loud music
- dumping cars or rubbish
- damaging property and buildings, including graffiti
- failing to control your dog
- shouting, swearing, fighting or drunken behaviour
- being racist, abusive, threatening or violent
- selling drugs, or
- throwing things.

As a tenant, you are also responsible for the behaviour of your children, other household members and visitors.

What action we can take

We will always take anti-social behaviour seriously.

If it's a case of neighbours falling out, we will encourage you to resolve things together if you can. In more serious cases, we can go to court to:



- get a possession order, so we can evict you
- demote your tenancy, making it less secure, or
- get an injunction or ASBO (anti-social behaviour order) – ordering you to stop causing a nuisance.

We work with the local authority, police and other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour together.

Over the years, we have evicted a number of households for anti-social behaviour, after they ignored our warnings and we took them to court. Don't risk losing your home. With a record of anti-social behaviour, you will find it difficult to get another one.



Getting rid of bulky items

To get rid of large items like furniture, call your local council on the number below. Remember that leaving large items in the bin stores adds to your service charge, because we have to pay for a separate collection.

Hackney 020 8356 6688 (free)

Waltham Forest 020 8496 3000 (free)

Newham 020 8430 2000 (free)

Tower Hamlets 020 7364 5004 (free for Housing Benefit claimants, or £15 charge, up to five items)

Enfield 020 8379 1000 (£25 charge, up to six items)

Community Skips 020 8356 3344

Free ESOL classes in Hackney

For free ESOL classes, you must first go to an advice session. An advisor will check your English and try to find a class for you.

Advice sessions: Homerton Library (Tues 10-11am), Hackney Learning Trust (Tues 1-2pm), Woodberry Down Children's Centre, (Weds 10-11am), Linden Children's Centre (Thurs 1-2pm), Petchey Academy (first Weds of month, 6-7pm), Comet Children's Centre, (last Weds of month, 1-2pm), Haggerston School (second Thurs of month, 10-11am).

Sessions run from October to June (not school holidays). They close from the second week in December to the second week in January.

More details at www.learningtrust.co.uk/esol



Our October playschemes



In October, youngsters from Finsbury Grange, Marconi Road, Ambleside Close, Ansar Garden and Oriana House took part in our latest playscheme – run for us by our partners Sky Tutors.

The young people took part in sports and educational activities, as well as learning about healthy eating, protein and minerals, looking after the environment and recycling. They also discussed how to be a good neighbour, keep their estate tidy and how they could offer help to elderly people in their neighbourhood.



Fun and consultation at Finsbury Grange



On 26 October, we held a really successful community day at Finsbury Grange.

The event was designed to give residents the chance to get to know their neighbours better.

NLMHA staff were also on hand to provide information and discuss any problems or concerns.

Residents and their children told us they really enjoyed the day and found it very useful.

These events help us to promote healthy neighbourhoods by bringing people from different backgrounds together.



Save on energy bills and save the planet too



Make your home more energy efficient with these 10 simple tips.

You won't just save on your bills, you will reduce your carbon footprint too!

Turn your thermostat and radiators down. Reducing your heating by 1°, can cut your heating bills by 10%, saving an average of £85 a year.



Is your water too hot? Check that it's set to heat your water to between 55-60°C.



Close your curtains at dusk, to keep the heat in.



Turn off the lights whenever you leave a room.



Don't leave appliances on standby and don't waste energy by charging things up for longer than they need.



Only boil as much water as you need – but always cover the element of an electric kettle.



A dripping hot tap wastes energy as well as water. Get leaking taps fixed.



Try to fill your washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher: a full load uses less energy than two half loads.



Use energy-saving lightbulbs. They last up to 12 times longer and save up to £100 in energy over their lifetime.



Complete a free home energy check online to find ways to cut back your bills. Go to <http://hec.est.org.uk/>



Pest control made simple

Keeping pests out of your home is your responsibility. Here are some helpful hints.

Step 1: Keep your home clean and dry Many pests thrive near food and water. Make your home less attractive by vacuuming, washing dishes straight away, and keeping food tightly sealed. Comb pets regularly for fleas and wash bedding. Keep your kitchen and bathroom as dry as you can.

Step 2: Seal entryways Use a silicone filler to plug gaps.

Step 3: Try chemical-free remedies first Vacuum to get rid of bugs or nests. Use traps and sticky fly paper.

Step 4: If you have to, choose lower-risk pesticides Use closed bait boxes for rodents. Look out for 'greener' pesticides and always follow the instructions.

Step 5: If your problem is persistent or more serious, contact your local council

Your environmental health department may be able to offer advice – either on their website, or if you phone them.

If you need hands-on help, book an appointment with the council. They can sort out most common problems, but they usually make a charge. For example, Hackney Council currently charges from £73.21 for a treatment.

Register to vote

The way you register to vote has changed. You can now register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

If you don't have access to the internet, call the helpline on 020 7271 0500. They will ask the electoral registration team in your area to contact you.

Who should register

You should register if you are:

- a British citizen, or
- an Irish, Cypriot, Maltese or qualifying Commonwealth citizen (anyone with 'leave to enter' or 'remain' in the UK, or someone who does not need permission), or
- an EU citizen from another country (you can vote in local and European elections).

To register, you need to be:

- aged 18 or over – and able to vote immediately, or
- aged 16 or 17 – you can vote as soon as you turn 18.

Even if you were registered in the past, you might need to sign up again – especially if you moved in the last 18 months.



Why you should register

The main reason for registering is so that you can vote. But if don't register, you could be fined up to £1,000.

If you aren't on the register, you may have a problem getting credit. Credit reference agencies use it to check your address.

Your vote matters

Voting levels are low in inner city areas – especially among ethnic minority citizens. By registering now, you will be able to vote in the general election on 7 May 2015.

To find out more about voting go to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk



Avoid blocking your drains

Don't forget – blocked drains are your responsibility not ours.

Here are some tips to avoid blocking your drains.

- Use a strainer on the sink.
- Never pour fat or oil down the sink or loo. When they hit cold pipes they can harden and cause blockages.
- Wash drains often – with hot water, or a cup of baking soda followed by a cup of vinegar.
- Your loo is for human waste and loo paper only. Never throw wet wipes, cotton buds, or anything else down the loo.

Like playing football or cricket?

If there's enough interest, we're thinking about setting up a football tournament and cricket league next year.

To find out more call us on 020 8815 4200.



Keeping tenant satisfaction high

After your repair has been completed out, you may get a phone call from us to ask how it went.

Your feedback is important to us and if you tell us you aren't happy, we will look into what went wrong.

Our aim is always to improve your satisfaction with repairs.

Take care of your garden

If you have a garden, it's up to you to keep it tidy.

An untidy garden can be an eyesore to your neighbours – or worse.

If your garden gets overgrown, it can attract mice and rats that can end up getting into people's homes.

Don't let your garden get to that stage! If you do, we will treat it as anti-social behaviour and a breach of your tenancy.





We're here to help you!



You can call our Customer Service Team on:

020 8815 4200

Press 1 for repairs

Press 2 for all other enquiries



Abeer and **Hulya** take calls on weekdays from 9:30am to 5:30pm, but we are closed for lunch from 1-2pm

Fax the Team on 020 8806 6854. Email customer.services@nlmha.com

Gas boiler, heating and hot water enquiries

Phone Robert Heath Heating on 0203 667 4584

All other repairs enquiries

Phone Sohail Hussain on 020 8815 4213, or Salim Patel on 020 8815 4211

Email maintenance@nlmha.com

Report your repairs online at www.nlmha.com

Rents enquiries

Phone Amanda Hunt on 020 8815 4208, or

Imtiaz Ahmed on 020 8815 4207

Enquiries about tenant participation, estate issues or anti-social behaviour

Phone Tausif Bham on 020 8815 4205



North London Muslim Housing Association

15b-15c Urban Hive, Theydon Road
Upper Clapton, London E5 9BQ

Website www.nlmha.com

NLMHA is not responsible for any of the external websites, or their contents, featured in this newsletter.

Out-of-hours emergencies

Gas leaks

National Grid 0800 111 999

Water leaks/burst pipes

Thames Water 0848 920 0800

Gas boiler, heating and hot water

Robert Heath Heating
0203 667 4584

St Andrews Heating (E.ON)

0345 302 4312

All other out-of-hours repairs

North London Muslim HA
020 8815 4200

Useful information

National Debtline

0800 800 4000
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Childline 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Samaritans 08457 90 90 90

www.samaritans.org

HomeSwapper

www.homeswapper.co.uk

National Domestic Violence

Helpline 24 hrs, confidential
0808 2000 247
www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk



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