



Residents' News Update

Winter 2022



Half-term play schemes

In this issue:

- Festive season opening times
- We can help you get support
- Help to pay your bills
- NLM goes digital
- Community news
- Estate issues
- Housing Moves has changed
- Caring for your home



Our Vision:

To make a positive difference to our residents' lives through the provision of quality and affordable homes to those who are in need.



Our Mission:

To provide quality homes and services, strengthen and build communities, and improve the lives of our residents.

Checking your details

We now confirm your security details when you call us, so that we are sure we are talking to the right person.

We are also checking that we have full contact details, including email addresses, for all our residents. We may contact you if your details are not up to date on our system.



New-look rent cards issued

In line with our new NLM branding, we now have sent out updated rent cards to all of our residents.

If you have not yet received your rent card, please phone the Customer Service line on 020 8815 4200, or email customer.services@nlmha.com

Stay well

Covid-19 is still passing round our communities and the flu season will begin soon, so you should still take care to stay well.

Masks in crowded indoor spaces and regular hand washing are still a good idea. You should stay at home if you are sick.

If you are over 50 or at higher risk, you can get your seasonal booster jab for Covid-19 from a local walk-in clinic – or book online at: www.nhs.uk/book-a-coronavirus-vaccination

If you are over 50, you should get your free flu jab too – either from your GP's surgery or a local pharmacy.

Festive season opening times

Friday 23 December
Open: 9.30am-5.30pm

Monday 26 December
Tuesday 27 December
Wednesday 28 December
Thursday 29 December
Friday 30 December
Monday 2 January
Office closed

Tuesday 3 January
Open: 9.30am-5.30pm



Moving to Universal Credit

The Department for Work and Pensions has confirmed that it is going to restart the process of moving around 2.6 million households from the old benefits and tax credits to Universal Credit. It aims to move everyone by the end of 2024.

In practice, you will automatically end up on Universal Credit if you need to make a new claim because your circumstances have changed – if you lose your job or find a new one, for example. You can also choose to swap if you think it will leave you better off.

Everyone else will receive a 'managed migration' letter at

some point, letting them know they have been moved to Universal Credit. Some will get 'transitional protection' – extra Universal Credit for a time, to cover any fall in benefit that results from the move.

If you are currently claiming other benefits, you can visit the benefits calculator at <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators>, to see your universal credit entitlement.

If you are thinking about a voluntary transfer to Universal Credit, contact our Customer Services team to get advice from a Housing Officer.

Buying your home

If you would like to find out more about your right to acquire your NLM home, please email us at customer.services@nlmha.com

We can help you get support

Food bank referrals

Our Tenancy Sustainment Officer can give you a foodbank referral, if you need help to feed your family. Call the Customer Service line on 020 8815 4200.

Food banks in our areas

North Enfield Foodbank

Jubilee Central, Unit 2 Lumina Way, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 1FS (11am-3pm: Tues, Thurs, Sat).

Hackney Foodbank

Mon (11am-1pm): Museum of the Home, Hoxton. Tues (11am-1pm): Our Lady and St Joseph's, Dalston. Weds (5-6.45pm): Leaside Trust, Upper Clapton. Thurs (12-2.30pm): St Mary's Church, Stoke Newington. Sat (10am to 12 noon): Queensbridge Sports Centre, Haggerston.

Newham Foodbank

Weds (11.30am-1.30pm): Bonny Downs Church Hall, East Ham. Thurs (11am-1pm): Ascension Church Centre, E16).

Tower Hamlets

Bow Foodbank, Mon (8.30am-12 noon), Bromley-by-Bow Centre, E3. Weds (2-7pm), Raines Foundation School, E2.

Waltham Forest

Eat or Heat: Collections in E17 (Mon, Weds, Fri), E4 (Tues am), E11 (Thurs am), by arrangement.



Help to pay your rent

If you are having difficulty paying your rent, please tell us as soon as you can, so that we can do our best to assist you.

Email our Housing Officer at housing.services@nlmha.com, or phone the Customer Service line on 020 8815 4200.

Help with benefits

If you need help to apply for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, our team of housing advisers can assist you.

They can also help you check if there are extra benefits you could claim.

Contact the team by emailing housing.services@nlmha.com, or phone the Customer Service line on 020 8815 4200.

You can check which benefits you could claim by using the calculator at: benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk

IMPORTANT: You should never switch benefits without getting independent advice first. Be aware that some of the old benefits pay more than Universal Credit.



benefits



Cost-of-living crisis

Help to pay your bills

Help with energy bills

The Government has been providing funding in various forms to help people pay higher heating bills.

As well as extra money for people on benefits and those who are over state pension age, most people are getting £67 taken off their monthly electricity bills until March 2023.

If you have a (non-smart) pre-payment meter, you should be getting vouchers by post or email instead. Use them when you top up your card at a PayPoint site. Contact us if you need help to use this scheme.

During the year from April 2023, people on means-tested benefits will get another £900. People on disability benefits will get £150 and pensioners will get another £300 top up to next year's Winter Fuel Allowance. There will be more details later.



Are you still struggling to pay?

If you are behind with payments, call your provider to agree a plan you can afford. They may also be able to help with advice or grant. Some charities offer help too. To find grants in your area, use the online search at: www.turn2us.org.uk

Winter fuel schemes

Winter Fuel Payments: If you were born before 26 September 1956 and get a state pension or benefits, you get a Winter Fuel Payment each year. Enquiries helpline: 0800 731 0160.

Warm Home Discount: People on low incomes may get a £150 Warm Home Discount taken off their electricity bill. Enquiries helpline: 0800 731 0214.

Cold Weather Payments: When the temperature stays below zero for seven days from November to March, people on Pension Credit, Universal Credit, and other benefits for jobseekers, get £25 each week towards their higher energy costs.



Help with water bills

Thames Water has two social tariffs for people on benefits.

WaterHelp: If you have a household income below £19,747, WaterHelp cuts water bills by half.

WaterSure: WaterSure can also cap bills for people on means-tested benefits. You will need to be on a water meter and use a lot of water, because you have a large family (three or more children), or someone in your household needs extra water for a medical condition (such as, eczema or psoriasis).

Apply for both schemes at: www.thameswater.co.uk/help/account-and-billing/financial-support/waterhelp

Help to find broadband social tariffs

Several UK broadband providers have social tariffs for people on Universal Credit and other benefits. Check out: BT Home Essentials; G Network Essential Fibre Optic; Community Fibre; Virgin Media Essential Broadband; Hyperoptic Fair Fibre.

Help from your Council

Hardship or crisis funds: Local authorities have hardship funds for people struggling to meet their day-to-day needs. Check their websites or contact us for further information.

Discretionary Housing Payments: You may be able to get a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) from your Council as a temporary rent top-up. Call us for advice on how to apply.

Help from NLM

If you need support to access the help listed on these pages, contact our Tenancy Sustainment Officer, by phoning the Customer Service line on 020 8815 4200.

Save energy and money

Keep track of your bills

Send regular meter readings to your provider (unless your smart meter does this automatically).

Be ready to question any direct debit increases that seem too high. Get your provider to explain the reasons.

Make the best use of your appliances

Fridge/freezers Close doors quickly and keep shelves three-quarters full. Defrost fridge/freezers regularly and vacuum the coils at the back.

Washing machines Wash full loads, at low temperatures, on eco settings. You can save 46% of the cost of running a load if you wash at 30 degrees not 40.

Dryers Avoid tumble drying, if you can dry clothes outside, or in a room with the window open. Never dry clothes on radiators (it causes condensation).

Kettles and pans Boil only the water you need and keep lids on pans. Filling a thermos can give you cups of tea later in the day.

Cooking Defrost frozen food before cooking. Batch cook when you use the oven.

Stay warm for less

Turn the thermostat down by one degree and lower radiator valves to save energy.

Reflectors (or tin foil) on the wall behind a radiator can boost the heat back into the room.

Draw curtains as it gets dark.

Cling film across draughty windows and draught excluders can help you feel warmer. (But keep your home well aired, if you suffer from condensation, to prevent black mould starting.)

Stay warm with an extra jumper, slippers or thick socks, a rug over your knees and a hot drink. But also stay active if you can.

Light your home for less

Invest in LED light bulbs to cut energy usage by 90%. Turn lights off when not in use.

Shower for less

Shorter showers at lower temperatures can save money – especially compared to a bath.

Save wastage on standby

Don't leave items on standby – this uses up to 85% of energy of running them switched on fully. Switch off sockets when not in use.

NLM goes digital

Introducing My Home

Later this year, we are launching new online services for residents. When we go live, you will be able to sign up for direct access to many of our services at a time that suits you. You will be able to go online to check your tenancy account and update your details, check your rent account, report a repair and pay your rent.

Paper-free services

We will soon begin sending all our routine letters and messages by email or text message, instead of sending you a letter. We will still send legal or other important documents by post.

We are making this change to make us more efficient and to make better use of our money.

Prize winner

Mohamed Patel won a £100 Amazon voucher in our prize draw for the first 100 residents to sign up to our paper-free service.



Do you need IT support?

We don't want to leave anyone behind as we move to digital services. So, we are offering residents free IT skills training.

To find out more, contact our Resident Engagement Officer. Email resident.engagement@nlmha.com or phone Customer Services on 020 8815 4200.



Half-term playschemes

We organised holiday play schemes for young people at two of our sites over the spring half-term break.

We wanted to give hard-pressed working parents an alternative to expensive play schemes during school holidays.

The play schemes were very well attended and we had great feedback from all of the young people who took part. They were able to try out lots of different activities, including laser tag and bowling, and they enjoyed a day trip to the beach.



Summer fundays

Throughout the summer we hosted popular fundays for our residents at various sites.

East Thames House

At East Thames House, children had great fun taking part in activities and getting henna designs. Meanwhile, adult residents talked through their repair issues with members of our Maintenance Team.



Pavilion House

Pavilion House residents gave us great feedback after the funday at their scheme. Children particularly enjoyed the bouncy castle we booked.

Oriana House

At Oriana House, residents took the opportunity to discuss some common concerns. In the meantime, their children were able to enjoy the games and food provided.

Hana Mews

Residents at Hana Mews got together with neighbours who are residents of Shian Housing Association. Everyone enjoyed the food and activities.

Fun day at Marconi Road

We hosted a welcome event for Marconi Road residents when we took over their homes from L&Q. We are now the sole landlord at this estate.

With fun and refreshments, we enjoyed getting to know our new residents and seeing the familiar faces of some of our longstanding residents. It was lovely to get so many residents meeting and socialising with each other.



Cazenove Road launch event



Extra tuition for young residents

Marconi Road residents between the ages of seven and 16 have been benefiting hugely from a special NLM project.

We brought in a team of Ofsted-registered tutors – all specialists in their fields – to provide a successful tutoring scheme for our youngsters.

The tutoring allows the students to break down and work on topics they have been covering in class – in a small, concentrated environment.

Our young people tell us that the tutoring has helped to improve their grades and confidence in class. It has also brought them together with people they didn't know before.

In the summer, we held a launch event for residents at Cazenove Road sheltered scheme, to celebrate their new-look garden and communal areas.

Yahya Hafesi, Chair of NLM's Board of Management cut the launch ribbon and residents enjoyed a lovely day in the sun, with fun, games and refreshments.

Scheme improvements

We renovated the garden some time ago and, together with the grounds maintenance team, residents have done a great job of keeping in neat and tidy.

Following resident consultation, we updated the shared communal lounge too – turning it into a light, modern and inviting space.

We stay in very regular contact with our sheltered housing residents, to check on their wellbeing.

Estate issues



Help us to keep you safe from fire

We keep finding fire safety problems when we inspect your estates.

In a fire, people have to be able to escape quickly and fire fighters have to be able to do their job. Personal items left in communal areas are a fire risk because they can cause an obstruction and they may catch fire.

Fire risk do's and don'ts

DO keep balconies, meter cupboards, shared corridors, stairwells and pathways clear.

DON'T leave personal belongings in shared areas. This includes bikes and scooters, buggies, shoes, plants or decorative items, doormats, large items you want to get rid of and rubbish or recycling.

DON'T wedge open communal doors – this is a fire risk and may affect our buildings insurance.

DO be aware that, as a responsible landlord, we may need to remove items that pose a fire risk.

Don't be a bad neighbour

Keep life on your estate pleasant and safe for everyone by being considerate to others.

We ask that you keep to some simple rules.

- **DON'T** cause unreasonable noise – especially late at night.
- **DON'T** throw litter on the estate or leave litter in communal areas.
- **DON'T** hang around – or let your children hang around – in communal areas.
- **DON'T** let others follow you into the block. You could be letting in someone planning to steal from your neighbours or worse.
- **DO** use our bin stores and recycling bins correctly. Piled up rubbish makes your estate look dirty and can attract rats and mice. And if you put the wrong items in the recycling bins, they may not be emptied (see page 9 for what you can recycle).

How to get rid of bulky items of rubbish

- **DON'T** leave large items of rubbish in communal areas or bin stores. They will not be cleared away by our refuse collectors. We have to pay extra to get them collected and that cost gets added to everyone's service charge.
- **DO** call your council to collect your items (see the back page for contact details).
- **DO** tell us if you know who is dumping large items – whether or not they live on the estate. We will act on what you tell us, but keep your name and report confidential.



Damp, mould and condensation

ADVICE LEAFLET



Tackling damp, mould and condensation

Damp and condensation can cause black mould to grow in your home. It's a common problem in British homes, but we can work together to manage it.

What causes damp?
We explain what causes mould and how to prevent it. We also explain how to report it to your landlord and what to do if you have a problem with your property. Please call us to book an inspection by our surveyor.

What causes mould?
Mould grows in damp homes. It is important to stop the source of the damp. We will advise you on how to prevent it. We will also advise you on how to report it to your landlord. We will also advise you on how to report it to your landlord.



We take mould, damp and condensation very seriously, because we know they can be bad for people's health.

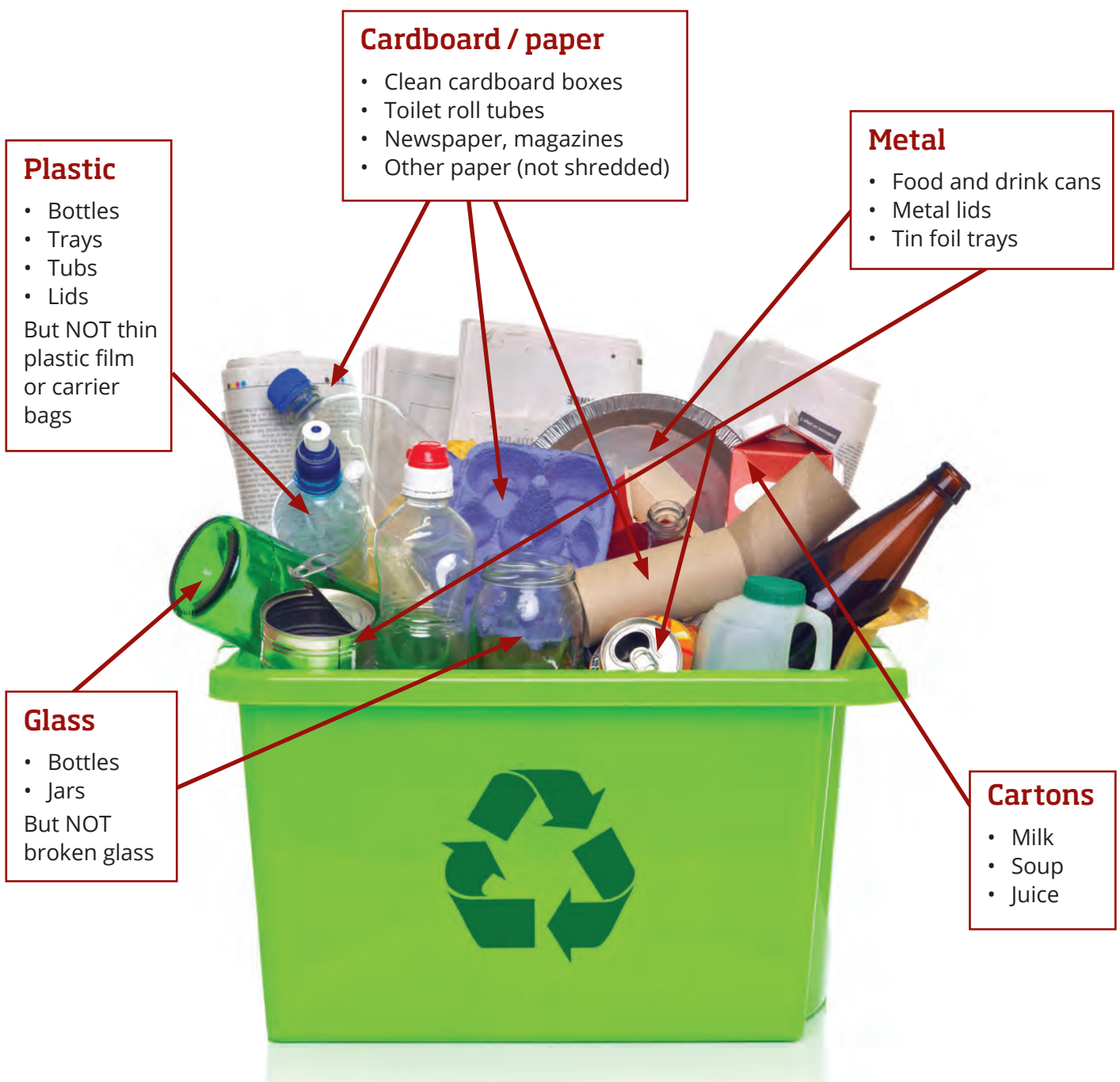
Our new advice leaflet explains the steps you and we, as your landlord, can take to manage these problems in your home.

What should you recycle?

There are separate bins on your estate for general rubbish and recycling. Please sort your rubbish carefully, to keep the estate tidy.

It is very important to use the recycling bins properly. Whether you live in Enfield, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets or Waltham Forest, your council collects the items shown below for recycling.

Your recycling items should be CLEAN, so give bottles, cans and tubs a quick wash first. DON'T include dirty pizza and other food boxes.



Housing Moves has changed

From 1 July 2022, the Mayor's Housing Moves scheme closed to most new applicants.

The scheme originally gave Londoners living in social housing a way to move to different areas. However, there are now far too many people wanting a move and far too few homes – so something had to change.

Housing Moves is still open to victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and people who have been rough sleeping. If that applies to you, contact NLM and we will help you get the support you need.

If you are already registered on Housing Moves and made bids before 1 July, you will have a short time to see how your last bids have progressed.

Below: The Housing Moves scheme is now prioritising people who are street homeless or suffering domestic abuse.



Other ways to get a move

If you want to move, you still have other options.

- You can sign up to the online HomeSwapper service at www.homeswapper.co.uk, to advertise your home and find a swap partner. This service is free to NLM residents. Because homes for social rent are in such short supply, this is your best option for getting a move.
- You should also register with the council, to bid for homes in your area.
- We may sometimes be able to offer an internal transfer.
- If you (and your partner) are 55 or older, you can still sign up to the Mayor's Seaside & Country Homes scheme. This provides homes outside London to around 150 older people each year. For more details, go to: www.london.gov.uk/seaside

For more information on any of these options, please contact our Customer Services team.



Caring for your home

Mice and rats



Mice or rats in your home can be dangerous to your health and your home. You should try to get rid of them as quickly as possible. This is your responsibility and not part of the repairs service offered by NLM.

Annual gas safety check

If you have gas heating or appliances in your home, you need to give access to our approved local gas contractor to give them a safety inspection every year.

If you haven't had a gas safety check in the last 12 months, please ring our Maintenance team to ask for an appointment.

What to do if you smell gas

If you smell gas, suspect a gas leak, or think there may be a carbon monoxide leak, phone the National Gas Emergency Helpline on 0800 111 999.

To keep everyone safe:

- if you can, turn off the meter at the control handle
- don't turn electrical switches on or off
- open doors and windows, and
- do not smoke.

Warning signs

If you have mice or rats, you may notice:

- black, shiny droppings under fridges, kitchen cupboards or other enclosed areas
- holes appearing in boxes, wallpaper and furniture – or even in food you left out
- grease smears left on surfaces, as mice or rats walk around, or
- a musty smell, like a pet shop – warning that you have significant problem.

You can check your suspicion by putting talcum powder on pieces of paper in the corners of your rooms. You'll see footprints or tail marks if there's a problem and which rooms are affected.

Are they dangerous?

Unfortunately, mice and rats can carry diseases that can make you ill – including salmonella.

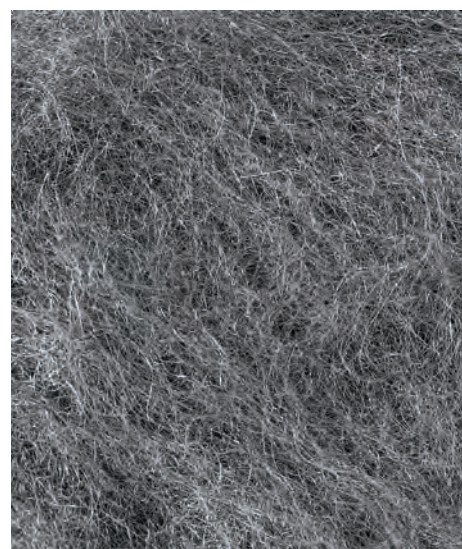
They can also carry fleas and ticks, and make existing conditions, such as allergies and asthma, worse.

Rodents can also chew on and damage electrical cables, causing fire hazards and the danger of electric shocks.

What you can do

There are some simple pest control measures you can take.

- Keep your home clean and cut off their food supply.
- Stop rodents getting in. Try to work out where they are getting in and fill any holes with wire wool.
- Get mouse traps – but we don't recommend traps with poison, which are dangerous to children, or traps that are sticky, as they are cruel. You can find traps that snap shut or electrocute the rodent. Or you can buy traps that trap the animals, so that you can release them somewhere more appropriate.





We're here to help you!

Email our Customer Service Team at:
customer.services@nlmha.com

Report your repair by email at:
maintenance@nlmha.com

If you don't have access to email, you can still phone
in your query on **020 8815 4200**

Choose '1' for repairs

- During office hours, select '1', whatever your repair. See opposite for our out-of-hours emergency details.

Choose '2' for all other services

- Select '2' for housing services (including rent enquiries, neighbourhood issues and resident involvement), as well as for accounts payable and any other type of enquiry.

Office hours: Our Customer Service Team take calls on weekdays from 9:30am to 5:30pm, but we are closed for lunch from 1-2pm. We are also closed during public holidays.

You can fax the Team on 020 8806 6854.



North London Muslim Housing Association

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

Website www.nlmha.com

Please recycle this newsletter when you've finished reading it.



NLM 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 heating/hot water (24 hours) Robert Heath Heating
020 3667 4584

St Andrews heating (E.ON)
0345 302 4312

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, 0808 2000 247
www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Bulk waste collection Call:

- Hackney on 020 8356 6688
- Newham on 020 8430 2000
- Tower Hamlets on 020 7364 5004
- Waltham Forest on 020 8496 3000
- Enfield on 020 8379 1000.