

Resident Consultation

We recently carried out a consultation with LSH residents to help us understand their priorities with regards to accommodation and services. The results are currently being analysed by LSH's Management Team and Board to see where we should be allocating resources in future.

LSH commissioned Solon Community Network (SCN), an independent resident involvement and community development consultancy, to carry out these consultations on our behalf. In November 2009, SCN posted or emailed survey forms to all residents who had moved into LSH properties in the previous six months. In January 2010 they followed up with a telephone survey.

Focus groups of up to a dozen residents were also organised and held in East London, West London, St Albans and in Willesden Green during December 2009. At each session, the SCN Consultants invited residents to discuss what they felt we are doing well, and what we could

improve on. Positive feedback and constructive criticism were equally welcome, as everything we learn from our residents helps us to improve our services. All of the focus groups were very well attended, and everyone agreed that such in-depth resident involvement was both beneficial and instructive.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the survey and focus groups. We value your opinions and appreciate the time you took to provide them. Once we have analysed the results they will be incorporated into a point-by-point action plan, showing where we will focus our attention and resources. The action plan will be communicated to all residents in due course.

Helena Trippe from SCN said "The residents really enjoyed taking part in the focus groups. It was an opportunity, the first for some, to be able to have a say about what they like about LSH and give their ideas about how services could be improved in future. A number of residents said they would like the opportunity to meet in future to set standards for services and be involved in reviewing them."

Save energy, save the environment

We are now using energy-efficient bulbs in communal areas and residents' rooms.

Please do what you can to save energy each day.

- Switch off lights when you go out
- When boiling a kettle, only use as much water as you need
- Turn thermostats down by one degree
- Don't leave TVs and computer monitors on stand by
- Choose energy efficient appliances





Director's corner

The consultation results are still being analysed, but we have already identified two clear priorities says London Strategic Director, Jon Dawson.

The recent consultation has been invaluable to LSH, helping us to focus on what is important to our residents and to direct resources to that area.

1. Communicate local service standards

Many residents were unclear on what they could expect from LSH in terms of cleaning, repairs, maintenance, customer services and more. We will be carrying out further work in consultation with residents to develop and communicate local service standards.

2. Improve the decoration in cluster accommodation

Residents said they were dissatisfied with the standard of decoration in communal areas such as kitchens and halls. Last year we began a systematic programme of

re-decoration for all LSH cluster units. We have already finished redecorating Hodgson Court and Hill House, and we plan to continue with the programme through 2010.

Future resident participation

Our resident key workers often leave to take up new jobs in different areas. The high turnover means we have had limited resident feedback to work with in the past. The recent consultation process has given us some very valuable qualitative feedback, so we will be conducting more surveys and focus groups of this kind in future. We will also explore ways that residents can work with us to monitor local services, such as the cleaning of communal areas.

Fire safety

The safety of our residents is of the utmost importance to LSH. If you ever hear a continuous fire alarm please evacuate the building immediately and do not return until the Fire Brigade confirms it is safe to do so.

All LSH properties are fitted with the appropriate smoke detectors, heat detectors and fire alarms which are required under prevailing safety legislation. The emergency call points in the properties (the red boxes with glass windows) are tested by LSH staff every month, and the heat detectors and smoke alarms on a quarterly basis by our specialist fire equipment contractor.

When an alarm is being tested it will ring for just a few seconds. So if you ever hear a continuous alarm please evacuate the building immediately. It's never safe to assume an alarm has been triggered by accident.



STAY SAFE. Never prop a fire door open with a fire extinguisher, or any other object, or remove or cover the smoke detector in your property, as this could jeopardise your safety in the case of a fire.



New Build HomeBuy

Affordable home ownership for first-time buyers

The New Build HomeBuy scheme is a government-led initiative to help first-time buyers onto the property ladder. Network Housing Group, our parent organisation, sells around 100 new apartments every year through the scheme.

How does it work?

If you are a first-time buyer, and you can't afford to pay the open market price for a suitable property, you can buy a share of a property that has been built by a housing association (between 25% and 75%). You take out a mortgage loan on your share, and pay a subsidised rent on the rest. The mortgage and rent payments are collected each month by direct debit. You would also be responsible for paying your council tax and utility bills.

Who is eligible?

Broadly speaking, any employed individual with access to at least £4,000 to cover the costs involved in the purchase. In London there is also a maximum salary cap of £60,000 total household income.

Can I increase my share?

If you want you can buy further shares in your home, with a maximum of three purchases to get to 100%. So if your initial stake was 25%, for example, you could make 3 further purchases of 25%.

How do I apply?

First you need to register with Housing Options, the organisation that manages the affordable homes register in Greater London. The Housing Options website has all the information you will need about the scheme, along with online application forms and the available properties listed by Borough.

See www.housingoptions.co.uk for further information.

Real help now

Spotlight on: Customer Services Team



**Maria Moriarty,
Business Performance
Manager**

The LSH Customer Services Team comprises four officers, one of whom is based at Northwick Park and the other three officers are based at our Head Office in Cambridge Heath Road, Bethnal Green. The Customer Services Team officers work from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and are the first point-of-contact for approximately 1,200 LSH residents.

The team is responsible for all accommodation enquiries, dealing with invoices, liaising with suppliers, helping residents with repairs requests and all other residents' queries, providing administrative support to the Housing Officers and the Business Performance Manager and many more tasks! If they are not on the phone, the busy officers will be dealing with residents face-to-face or responding to email enquiries.

If you have a query but no time to waste, email is the fastest way to make contact. All emails are picked up immediately, during office hours, by the Customer Services Team, so you can be confident that your query will be attended to as quickly as possible. Alternatively, fill out a general enquiry form on our website, or leave a voicemail and we will respond as soon as possible.

Email:
customerservices@londonstrategichousing.com

Online enquiries:
www.londonstrategichousing.com

Cambridge Heath Road Office: 020 8782 4880
Northwick Park Office: 020 8782 4860

Do more online!

Do you need to request a repair, find out if your rent has been collected or enquire about LSH accommodation? You can do all this and more on our website, 24 hours a day.



- Find information** Go to Residents Information for all kinds of useful information about our services and accommodation.
- Pay your rent** Go to Residents Information/ Paying Your Rent. You'll find options to pay by direct debit, with your AllPay card, online, by telephone and by text.
- Request a repair** Go to Residents Information/ Repairs and Maintenance and complete an online repair form.
- Enquire about accommodation** Go to Residents Information/ Accommodation Enquiry and complete an online accommodation enquiry form.
- Submit a satisfaction survey** Go to Residents Information/ Resident's Satisfaction and complete an online satisfaction survey form.
- Make a complaint** Go to Residents Information/ Complaints and complete an online complaints form.

If you sign up for My Home Online, you can access even more online services to manage all aspects of your tenancy, whenever you want.

- Report antisocial behaviour** Log on to My Home Online.
- View my rent account** Log on to My Home Online.
- Update my personal details** Log on to My Home Online.

Switching off heating in cluster accommodation

We will be turning off the heating systems in all LSH cluster accommodation on or around 1 May 2010.

As each unit of accommodation has its own boiler, LSH staff will be visiting the individual units to check that the heating is switched off. This will help us to save energy during the warmer months. We will switch the systems back on in early October.

Please be assured that you can switch the heating back on if we have an unseasonably cold period.

Condensation

Some of our residents have contacted us regarding problems with condensation. Here are some useful tips to reduce condensation in your home.

Condensation happens when cold air enters a warm room and turns any water vapour back into water. If it is not wiped up quickly, the water may soak into window frames, cupboards, walls, bedding and soft furnishings, leading to mould and mildew.

The best way to reduce the risk of condensation is to keep rooms well ventilated.

- When using kitchens and bathrooms, keep the doors shut and the windows slightly open
- If a room is cold and not being used, close the door
- If you have double glazing, leave the trickle vents open so the air continue to circulate
- Don't leave wet clothes to dry indoors.

LSH contact details

If you need to contact LSH you should do this through your local office:

- East London office: 020 8782 4880
- West London office: 020 8782 4860
- St. Albans: 01727 893017

www.londonstrategichousing.com

e-mail: customerservices@londonstrategichousing.com

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