



Well-being is a giggle

Laughter is the best medicine
at South Acton fun day

Plus...

Diversity has its day, page 4

Wanted: mystery shoppers, page 9

Report anti-social behaviour, page 12

A few words from John

Welcome to the spring issue of Housing Matters.

Even though our country is in the midst of a recession, it's reassuring to know that we are able to continue to offer many additional services to residents. This is down to the manner in which they are paid for: through external funding, not rents.

Thanks to funding from organisations including Sport England, Sporting Chance, Groundwork London and UK Online, we can report back on a variety of exciting projects that are continuing to keep young people active, get adults online and support residents looking for work or a career-boost.

Read about the early successes of a fledgling football team for Windmill Park teenagers (p.3), a taster day of fun and healthy lifestyle activities in South Acton (p.5), a new internet cafe for older resident in Oxford (p.13), and free training courses for residents (p.16) - all funded through grants and other external partnerships.

In this issue of Housing Matters, you can also meet some more of the people who work behind the scenes at CCHA to deliver your services. Find out what a typical working day is like for one of our neighbourhood managers in Reading on page 18 and find out how the Customer Services Centre

helps hundreds of residents with queries every month on page 14.

As you read through the magazine, you will be able to find out about getting involved in all sorts of resident consultation projects and activities. Residents should be involved in shaping the services that affect them, which is why projects like CCHA's cleaning services focus group and mystery shopping exercise (p.9) are so important.

This theme of getting involved is no less important on a national level, being one of the Government's key agendas. The Tenant Services Authority's recent consultation exercise has involved finding out the views of social housing tenants across the UK so that these ideas can then set the overall standards for housing associations. You can read about CCHA's involvement with the consultation on page 10.

John Foxall
Managing Director
Catalyst Communities
Housing Association



John Foxall

Winter word-search winners

We had an overwhelming response to our word-search competition in the winter issue of Housing Matters.

The prize draw for an Argos voucher was won by Ms J Head (£40), Ms J R Kirwan (£30) and K Mahi (£20), who have all been contacted by post.



Catalyst
Communities

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As well as completing the puzzle for a chance to win an Argos voucher, residents were given the opportunity to put comments on their entry that will provide valuable feedback to us about Housing Matters magazine.

Readers told us they would like to see more about activities in their local areas, tips for saving money during the recession and information about members of staff at CCHA.

You also told us that more information on the various systems and processes at CCHA would make useful content for the magazine.

Thank you to everyone who submitted their views: your comments will be taken on board to plan future issues of Housing Matters.

Team Windmill takes a sporting chance

An under-13s team coached by Brentford FC made it to the semi-finals at a football tournament for local housing estates.

'Team Windmill' was formed through the Sporting Chance project at Windmill Park estate and played in the Ealing Kidz football tournament in March.

Funded by the Football Foundation and Sport England, Sporting Chance is being delivered by CCHA (along with sustainable communities organisation Groundwork London) for a year. Windmill Park is one of 12 West London estates involved in the project.

Brentford FC also delivers Sporting Chance's football scheme for 13–18 year-olds at the Windmill Park Community Centre in the multi-use games area on Wednesdays from 6.30-8.00pm

The organisation 'Street Science' delivers Sporting Chance's boxing training at 6.30pm on Fridays at the Windmill Park Community Centre main hall for all aged 8yrs and above.

Team Windmill was eventually defeated in a penalty shoot-out. Local resident Mohammed Askar manages the team, and said "It's amazing! This project has been going for just five weeks so with more time to train together, who knows what they can achieve?"



Residents' voices to be louder than ever

A new survey is set to be the most comprehensive collection of residents' views in the Amersham Road estate area of Caversham, Reading.

The opinions of all residents, including private owners, local authority and housing association tenants, will help to develop a Thriving Neighbourhoods Action Plan. This plan will be approved by residents and address a wide range of issues, from access to a household car to how the credit crunch is affecting local families.

Local agencies such as Reading Borough Council, local emergency services officers, NHS and Children's Centre staff will be involved in carrying out the survey through door-knocking and road shows.



The survey is part of the "Thriving Neighbourhoods" initiative, which addresses why certain areas in Reading retain statistically high levels of deprivation, despite increased affluence across the town as a whole.

All completed surveys will be added to a prize draw, with a first prize of £200 worth of Tesco vouchers to be won.

Age proves no obstacle to celebrating diversity



Many Windmill Park residents donned cultural dress for their celebration of diversity

Over 80 older residents joined together to celebrate age and diversity at a special, free event held on the Windmill Park estate in Southall.

Residents from a range of different ethnic backgrounds were encouraged to wear traditional cultural or national dress to the event, organised by Catalyst Communities Housing Association and sponsored by Catalyst Communities Trust.

The party included multi-cultural music, a live band and food from different cultures to recognise the vibrant and diverse local community.

Catalyst rent increase

A number of tenants have asked us about the rent increase that they have recently been notified about. In a situation where times are tough for people, particularly those on low incomes, we recognise that a larger than average increase is not what everyone would like. Whilst we are unable to reduce the amount by which your rent is increasing, we thought it might be helpful if we explained the basis upon which Catalyst's rents are set and increased.

All housing association rents are based on what are known as *target rents* that are set by a government formula: the idea being that over a period of several years, all rents will move towards the *target rent*. The formula for setting *target rents* takes into account the value of local housing as well as average earnings in each region. The government has also set the basis on which *target rents* increase each year which is the inflation rate (RPI) at the previous September plus 0.5%. As RPI last September was 5.0%, the increase to *target rents* we have agreed for this April is 5.5%.

CCHA (along with other housing associations) is required to increase all rents towards the *target rent*. Although this process has been ongoing since 2000, our actual rents have in the past been quite a lot lower than *target rent* levels. As a result a significant number

of tenants will have had an additional increase of up to £2 per week to move their rent closer to the *target rent*. For new tenants, we always set their rent at the *target rent* which means that they are usually paying more than existing tenants who have had the benefit of phased rent increases.

You may have heard the recent government announcement that local authorities are being encouraged to reduce their April rent increases. This is being made possible by the government promising local authorities money to make up the shortfall. This has not, however, been offered to housing associations, nor any relaxation of the requirement on them to move to *target rents*.

We recognise that the increase this year is above the current level of inflation and that a number of our tenants face difficult financial circumstances.

If you are already in receipt of housing benefit then it will be increased to meet the higher rent, protecting you from the effects of the rent increase. If you think you may have difficulty paying your new rent please contact your Neighbourhood Manager who will be able to give you advice and assistance.



The healthy lifestyle message really hit home at South Acton's fun day

Well-being is a giggle in South Acton

South Acton residents gave their creative juices a workout for a community fun-day in February, where 'laughing yoga' and film making were on the agenda.

Hosted by Catalyst Communities, Groundwork London and Acton Community Forum, the fun day offered residents the chance to try out a selection of exciting sports and activities for free.

The event formed part of 'Well London', a three year programme to boost the health and well-being of people living in London, funded by The Big Lottery and led by the London Health Commission.

Activities for all ages and tastes were available at the Oaktree community centre, ranging from indoor bowls, martial arts and dance workshops to t-shirt printing and laughing yoga (which involves simple, tension-releasing laughter exercises).

Residents were also able to find out how they can make a positive difference in their community by getting involved in various projects, including the healthy walks programme, community food growing, women's exercise classes and community arts programmes.

Diversity U



In the winter edition of Housing Matters, we announced the launch of the new Diversity Strategy across the Catalyst Housing Group. This strategy will ensure that we provide the best possible service to all of our customers.

In the coming issues of Housing Matters, we will focus on different areas of diversity. In this issue, we are focusing on disability and what CCHA can do to assist residents who have a disability.

Disability

Most of us will experience some kind of impairment at some time in our lives – such as poor eyesight or reduced movement as we get older, or perhaps depression. Not all impairments and health conditions can be seen; for example, epilepsy, depression, haemophilia or HIV.

Disabled people should have the same opportunities and choices as non-disabled people, be respected and included as equal members of society. If you have a disability that is substantial and permanent, you can register as a disabled person with your local council.

We continue to collect information on our customers' needs, including disability. This information is collected and used to ensure that we can make sure our services meet your needs. 21% of Catalyst Communities residents consider themselves to have a disability.

Catalyst Communities also has a Disability Equality Scheme, which outlines our commitment to ensuring that all our residents can use our services and participate fully.

update



Equal : Different
Building diverse communities



Aids and Adaptations

If you or someone in your household finds it difficult to get around your home, it may be possible to have adaptations carried out to help you move around more easily and better enjoy your home.

Aids and Adaptations are alterations to your home and can range from simple things like grab rails to help you get out of the bath, or through ramps and level-access showers.

An occupational therapist will need to do an assessment first to work out exactly what is needed. Occupational therapists are specially trained and work for your local council or health trust. Your council or GP can tell you who to contact, or we can put you in touch with the right team.

Tenancy Support Service

If you have a physical, mental or learning disability, and are a Catalyst Communities resident living independently in the London Boroughs of Ealing or Hillingdon, you may be able to receive support in maintaining your tenancy or lease, or help in using our services.

The funding for this is provided by the local council's 'Supporting People' programme. The support is provided by a tenancy support officer who offers a wide range of support services. These include: for example helping you to use community and social services; putting you in touch with other sources of support, and providing support in claiming welfare and housing benefits.

We are limited to working with 26 tenants in each borough, therefore you may have to be placed on a waiting list until a vacancy becomes available.

If you are not in the boroughs of Ealing or Hillingdon, your local borough may run a similar service. Please contact your neighbourhood manager who can find out for you.

For more information on Aids and Adaptations, Tenancy Support Services or our Disability Equality Scheme, call your local office and request a leaflet or log onto our website at www.chg.org.uk/catalystcommunities.

A new name for gas safety



A new nationwide system is giving gas safety issues a renewed focus.

This is good news for social housing residents, who are required by law to allow access to their home for gas safety checks to take place.

The new Gas Safety Register came into effect on 1st April and has replaced the CORGI registration scheme.

A new logo will now indicate a gas installer's status as a competent gas worker. The symbol replaces the familiar CORGI shield, but will not require a registration number to appear next to it as the shield did.

Installers' registration numbers will remain unchanged and ID cards will continue to carry details of the company's identity and the operative's qualifications.

Confusingly, the CORGI brand will continue to provide gas related services and products and continue to use its existing logo. So in future, when checking the competence of gas installers, look for the ID with the 'gas safe' logo.

Smell gas?

If you suspect a gas leak in your home, phone the National Grid (GAS) immediately on 0800 111 999. Be sure to use a phone outside your home as using a phone inside could spark an explosion.

Then, turn off the gas at the mains and open windows. It's vital that you do not smoke or switch anything electrical on or off until the problem is fixed.

This information can also be found on page 30 of the Tenants' Repairs Handbook.



Focus group to get services gleaming

Blackbird Leys residents got the opportunity to put forward their views to CCHA staff on the cleaning services they receive at a focus group in January.

Fifteen residents took part in total, either by attending the afternoon at the Clockhouse community centre or contributing later by phone or in writing.

The comments and views submitted will be used to inform the tendering process for a number of new cleaning contractors.

Most residents were pleased with the outcome of attending the focus group. "I enjoyed the informal and relaxed atmosphere," said one of the residents. "It was really useful to meet other residents and listen to other concerns around cleaning."

The next steps in the retendering process will be to serve notice on existing contractors where appropriate, prepare and consult with residents on the specification process and invite new contractors to tender.

CCHA expects the whole process to be completed by June.

"We intend to continue finding ways of involving residents in the running of the organisation and in particular getting information about the performance of contractors," said resident involvement coordinator Sasha East.

Demystifying CCHA

CCHA is looking for volunteers to become 'mystery shoppers', who would help test and improve the services delivered to residents.

We would like to hear from you if you would like to know more about getting involved in testing the services in person, over the phone or in writing.

Training and support will be given, so if you live in Reading, Oxford or London and would be interested in taking part in this exciting new venture, please contact Michael Simms, Resident Involvement Manager, on 020 8832 3111 or email michael.simms@chg.org.uk.



Regulation for housing associations gets spring cleaned

The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) is the new independent regulator for homes owned by housing associations.

It came into effect in December last year and from spring 2010, it is likely to regulate homes provided by councils and arms length management authorities (ALMOs) too.

At the same time, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) came into being as the funding agency for affordable housing in England, replacing the Housing Corporation as the agency responsible for both regulating and providing funding for affordable housing.

The TSA's job is to ensure that residents are receiving an excellent service from their landlords and where they are not, it will take action to improve this. The TSA is just one way in which tenants will have a greater say in the running of their communities.

Why have two different agencies, when there was just one before?

The TSA as the new regulator will be much more tenant-focused. It has been established to champion the needs and aspirations of tenants and leaseholders, including people who are as yet unable to access affordable housing. It will also promote choice for tenants and providers of affordable housing.

It will bring consistency across social housing by eventually covering local authorities and ALMOs as well. It will also be more in line with other regulators, none of which combine their regulatory responsibilities with investment and funding duties like the Housing Corporation did previously.

The HCA as the new investment agency will cover a much wider set of housing supply and investment responsibilities than just giving grants for housing. It will bring together responsibility for both the land and the money to deliver new housing, community facilities and infrastructure. It will also ensure that homes are built in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable way, as well as promoting good design.

TSA gets residents' tongues wagging

Over the last few months, Catalyst Communities residents have been having their say about what they think are the most important aspects of customer service in their housing experience, as part of the 'National Conversation'.

The National Conversation was launched in January by the new independent housing association regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). It aims to find out what tenants and leaseholders think about services provided by their landlord.

The TSA has asked tenants these questions to shape a new set of standards for social housing. These standards will be used to monitor how landlords are performing in delivering services to their residents.



Reading tuning in to residents again

Reading residents will have another chance to entertain the community with a four day radio broadcast this autumn.

CCHA previously teamed up with other five other housing associations to bring a residents' broadcast on Reading 4 U community radio station to the local airwaves last November.

The shows will once again be based at CCHA's Chatham Place development in Reading.

This year, even more residents can get involved in the four day broadcast. Whether you're interested in running your own programme or learning to edit one, there's something for everyone.

If you are involved in a local community group, club, school or sport and would like to get on the airwaves, give Holly Rosenegk a call on 0118 960 4519.



London calling at forum's biennial meeting

The London Residents' Forum (LRF) will be holding its Biennial (every other year) General Meeting in the Elizabeth Cantell Room, Ealing Town Hall on Saturday 25th April 2009, from 12-3pm.

The day will begin with formal recognition of the newly elected Executive Committee members and attendees will have the opportunity to learn about some of the things that the LRF has been doing.

It is also a chance to find out how the LRF plans to further support and assist residents in the coming months and years. The LRF usually meets every two months.

Residents will then be invited to browse the displays and meet their resident representatives,

as well as members of CCHA staff.

Information available on the day will include;

- Employment & training advice
- How to become a resident representative
- Grants available for community groups /initiatives

Refreshments will be served, along with entertainment from some of CCHA's particularly talented residents.

There will also be children's activities taking place, so please do come along to share your ideas and experiences with others.

Places are limited, so please book yours as soon as possible by contacting Michael Simms, Resident Involvement Manager on 020 8832 3111 or email michael.simms@chg.org.uk

REPORT IT!

Together we'll beat Anti-social behaviour

Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) and making our communities safer is a priority for Catalyst Communities and so we've made it easier for residents to tip us off.

We've provided an out-of-hours phone line where residents can 'tip off' CCHA about any ASB they had witnessed and were concerned about.

You can inform us anonymously of:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Illegal rubbish dumping ('fly-tipping')
- Illegal occupiers / sub-letting
- Any concerns about issues that may be affecting your neighbourhood
- Other activity you think KHT should know about

Rather than having a separate phone number, we have simply added a new option to our main customer services phone line, so there's still just one simple number to remember.



Our numbers are:

Reading - 0800 328 5709

Oxford - 0800 085 2947

London - 0800 085 8680

In an emergency, you should always contact the police and if you call us out-of-hours, you can still be directed to other services, such as environmental health.

Swap your home with 80,000 others!

As we reported in the last edition of Housing Matters, residents can now choose to swap their home with one of over 80,000 other tenants.

Now that CCHA has joined the Homeswapper mutual exchange scheme, residents can use the scheme to find someone with whom to swap their home – and it's free!

In CCHA's view, Homeswapper is the best mutual exchange scheme currently operating. Growing fast, it has members throughout the UK who are looking for someone with whom to swap their home.

Registration is easy. Simply go onto the website – www.homeswapper.co.uk - and put in all your details. The team at Homeswapper will send CCHA an e-mail to tell us that you have registered and asking us to activate your details. Once we have done this you can browse the details of all the tenants who are

registered and get in touch with any of them if you are interested in their property.

Remember that both tenants who want to swap need to obtain the permission of their landlords. Providing there is no good reason why the move should not go ahead, the paperwork can be completed quite quickly and your move can then take place!

At a time when housing association and local authority homes are in short supply, mutual exchange provides tenants with a really good way to move to a more suitable home. We hope that you will have a look at the Homeswapper website and register with the scheme.

HomeSwapper 

The mutual exchange solution for tenants and landlords



CCHA sets neighbourhood fitness challenge!

CCHA has set down a challenge.

We want to see residents working together to be crowned our fittest neighbourhood in 2009/2010 – and so now your neighbours need you!

Each neighbourhood will have a group of people representing them in the project. As part of the group, you will meet weekly during term time to carry out different types of exercise, pick up some healthy tips, make use of local resources, meet with your neighbours and have some fun.

The aim is to help you meet your fitness goals, promote a sense of pride in your neighbourhood and ultimately feel more satisfied with the area in which you live.

If you can form a group that is up for the challenge, why not contact Wendy Sweeney – Community Development Manager on 020 8832 3186 and register your interest.

Each successfully registered group will be provided with a coach, diaries to log their progress and basic equipment to get them started.

The neighbourhood that is deemed to be the healthiest by our special points system will win a prize.

Clocking on to the internet

A free internet cafe for older members of a CCHA community centre in Oxford has been created.

The computer room at the Clockhouse in Blackbird Leys will be solely for the over 50s and will provide friendly tuition, open days and support for those who need it.

Beginners' IT courses from UK Online will be offered, along with one-to-one help from volunteer tutors.

CCHA's community investment coordinator successfully raised £5,360 from the Government-funded UK Online project to provide new computers for the centre, which is jointly owned with Octavia Community Housing Association.

The centre forms part of the Blackbird Leys Community Development Initiative (CDI), which was founded more than ten years ago as a partnership between CCHA and local organisations, to engage and support both older and younger people in the community.

As a charity, much of the funding for its projects comes from grants, donations and fundraising activities and over £1million has been invested into its many community projects.



How may we help you?

When you telephone CCHA's London office you'll get through to our Customer Services Centre. Based at Ealing Gateway, the team of nine housing officers can handle the majority of enquiries straight away. They are experienced in dealing with a wide range of enquiries from repairs and maintenance to rent arrears and payments, transfers and general tenancy queries.

In the event that one of our housing officers is unable to help, your enquiry will be passed on to another member of staff who will respond within 24 hours.

About us

Our Customer Services Centre is open from 8am – 5pm Monday – Friday and can be contacted on 020 8832 3298. You can also contact our Customer Service Centre via our website at www.chg.org.uk.

We aim to answer 92% of calls within 20 seconds and in so doing, limit the number of abandoned calls to less than 2%. Our staff are trained to greet you courteously and will give you their name when they answer your call. We are also able to offer translations in Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi and Somali - please ask for this service if you need it. All calls are recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

Other enquiries

Enquiries about the 'choice based lettings scheme' (Locata) can be made through our Customer Services Centre too - please ensure you have your LIN number available when contacting us.

Pay your rent

Rent payments can also be made via the team using a credit or debit card - please ensure that you have your rent account reference number available. When you have made the payment you will be given a reference number, you are advised to write this down and keep it as your receipt. The payment will be immediately posted on to your rent account.

Report a repair

If you need a repair, please report the problem to the housing officer who answers your call - they will raise an order with our contractor using the information you provide. It will help us if you can refer to the Repairs Handbook when reporting a repair - we sent a copy of this to all residents. The housing officer will also arrange a convenient appointment for the contractor to attend. He or she has access to our contractor's database and which of their staff who are based in our office, and so can provide you with up-to-date information on the progress of your repair job.

We work closely with our colleagues in District Housing Teams and between us, we are able to deal with any maintenance issues or else refer a resident to one of our maintenance surveyors or a maintenance manager.

If you report a gas boiler problem, our team will contact our contractor's gas department by telephone as they are based at a separate location.

If our Customer Service Centre is unable to deal with your enquiry or you need to speak to your neighbourhood manager we will try and connect you with the person with whom you want to speak. If that member of staff is not available then we will log your call onto our database and aim to call you back within 24 hours.

Get Learning - Resident Training Programme

Get learning this summer with Catalyst and our NEW Resident training Programme!!

Catalyst offers recognised qualifications to residents, with new courses starting from April 2009.

If you are looking to learn new skills, why not take advantage of our new resident training programme? Delivered thanks to external funding, these short informative courses can help develop your confidence and skills, helping you into volunteering or employment. Interested?

Resident Involvement Short courses...

As an active member of your community you can make a huge difference to your neighbourhood. These courses will help you learn the best techniques to influence, encourage and lead others in your community. Board members and those participating in management committees in their neighbourhoods will find courses beneficial in introducing the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in related activities, whether paid or voluntary.

Committee skills - 11th May - 1 session

Board member skills - 23rd & 30th May – 2 sessions

Energy Wise, Money Wise - 25th June - 1 session

This workshop will give residents the opportunity to find out how to keep warm at home and save money and energy by exploring alternatives of current consumption patterns. We will be establishing the links between fuel poverty and ill health, reducing your domestic waste and reducing your shopping bills through healthier eating. The knowledge gained from this course will benefit not only your family but the environment around you.

OCNLR - Introduction to Youth Work Level 2 (NVQ Level 2 equivalent) - starting 29th April for 12 weeks

Prepare yourself for one of the most demanding yet most rewarding jobs around. From mentoring to managing volunteers, you will learn the skills to become a youth worker. This course is for residents currently working and/or interested in working with young people. Applicants must be aged 18 years and over.

CIH - Chartered Institute of Housing– Certificate in Housing Level 2 (NVQ Level 2 equivalent) - starting 5th May for 12 weeks

This course will provide residents with a basic understanding of housing to introduce some of the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in housing related activities, whether paid or voluntary. The course aims to prepare learners for future study within the housing sector.

OCN Budgeting Skills & Money Management – Level 1 - 9th July 2009 – 1 session

This course is suitable for residents who want to improve their personal budgeting and money management skills. It will allow them to identify areas of personal income and expenditure and consider how these may vary with changing circumstances.

ramme

Case study: Ingrid Francis

Ingrid Francis is a CCHA resident who has taken advantage of the new “Get Learning” programme by attending courses such as Youth Work Level 2 in the summer of 2008.

Ingrid also took the Chartered Institute of Housing Level 2 qualification, which she finished in February 2009. Within two weeks of completing the 12 week course, Ingrid applied for and was successfully offered a job with “Inquilab Housing Association” as a customer care adviser .

She said gaining the knowledge and understanding the background with the CIH course, she breezed through her interview and every question she was asked related to the units she had previously covered on the CIH course. She said this gave her confidence when applying for the position.

Ingrid has found a new direction with the CIH course and you can too. It’s so easy - just speak to one of our advisers about our “Get Learning” scheme, with courses running throughout the year, and you too could find a new career .

Are you interested in finding out more information about:

- our future training programme for 2009?
- course start dates and enrolment details?
- becoming a volunteer & working towards a career in housing or youth work?
- how our training delivery and material can be adapted to the visually impaired?

Then speak to one of our training advisers by contacting them via the details below:

Luciana Buzak - Community Learning Trainer
0208 832 3110 or 07814 233863
email luciana.buzak@chg.org.uk

Samina Hurry – Training Officer
020 8832 3377
Email: samina.hurry@chg.org.uk

HOW WAS YOUR DAY?



Wendy Forsyth, a Neighbourhood Manager in Reading, shares with us a typical day working for CCHA.

The first thing to tackle when I arrive around 8.30am is to ensure I have a cup of tea at the ready before I open my email inbox. Around ten messages from tenants or leaseholders have usually arrived overnight; perhaps about anti-social behaviour, rent and service charge arrears, or estate maintenance issues.

At this time of year, when the rent and service charge letters go out, the questions tend to centre around double-checking the accuracy of our finance team's statements.

If any anti-social behaviour complaints come in, I log the information and respond with the actions which are currently in progress. If appropriate, I would consult with my manager, since many cases have multi-faceted needs and require agency work.

My appointments usually start at 10am and can be anything from a mutual exchange office interview for paperwork completion, through to arrears interviews, where we may discuss what income/expenditure assessments have been done, and whether any referrals to debt advice agencies have been completed. If not, I go through these with the resident.

The calls come in constantly. I try to have a lunch break, but as most calls come in during lunchtime hours, these can sometimes go by the wayside!

I will often attend afternoon meetings to share information with other agencies who work in the area, including the police. That exchange of information allows us a wider perspective on what is taking place.

I do my home visits from 4pm onwards and I try to be as flexible as possible, meeting residents after hours, if necessary. This is particularly important in cases where you are dealing with anti-social behaviour as the alleged perpetrators may try to avoid those meetings as much as possible.

Today a lad is constantly playing loud bass music and it becomes apparent that as mum works full-time, he has friends round and they have not realised the impact on the tenancy for the mother. It is agreed to reconvene in a fortnight with more details of dates and times, which allows us to come to a negotiated agreement.

In many instances, it is really useful to ensure that the children are also home as you get a sense of what the household is like, which also leads you to how the case is managed.

My final visit today at 6pm was to a leaseholder who has lost their job and has never been in debt before and does not know the most appropriate way forward. We completed a benefits application and I referred the leaseholder for specialist debt advice. An agreement is made for nominal payments until there is a clearer picture of what their entitlement and income will be. I also made a note to contact the housing benefit department directly to push for a quick decision.

Any home visit also allows me to make a note of the standard of cleaning and estate maintenance issues generally. These get logged the following day when I get into the office.

I usually collapse on the sofa at home around 6.30 – 7.00pm, knowing there isn't another job out there as varied or as challenging in terms of quick thinking and researched responses, and the capacity for clear decision-making with as little bureaucracy as possible.

Spring word-search

Circle all the spring-related words from the list on the grid below, then cut-out and post this page back to us and you could win a £40, £30 or £20 Argos voucher!

Three lucky winners drawn at random will receive an Argos voucher.

Completed word-searches must be received by Friday 1 May 2009. No alternative or cash prizes are available and the editor's decision is final.

G	N	I	R	P	S	T	F	P	I	E	S
V	L	K	B	I	R	D	S	L	W	G	U
J	H	S	T	G	E	P	R	M	F	V	N
A	X	W	P	W	W	G	M	N	L	B	S
L	M	G	N	A	O	M	G	F	L	A	H
E	B	U	R	B	L	O	S	S	O	M	I
G	Q	M	N	P	F	E	C	H	Q	B	N
Y	W	E	B	O	S	U	F	O	E	A	E
I	A	P	L	Q	R	R	R	W	Y	I	O
E	F	U	U	G	L	O	K	E	U	C	C
C	S	E	B	U	T	T	E	R	F	L	Y

spring

flowers

birds

eggs

sunshine

blossom

butterfly

bulb

warm

shower

Name:

Age (if under 18):

Address:

What sort of events for the local community would you like to see CCHA organise more often? Do you have any ideas for new ones?

Please cut out this page and return to: Editor c/o Anu Sharma, Design Manager, Housing Matters. Catalyst Communities Housing Association, Ealing Gateway, 26-30 Uxbridge Road, Ealing, London W5 2AU

This magazine provides information about housing news, events and local information. If you need any part of this information in large print, Braille, on CD or explained in your own language please contact us on the number below.

How to contact us

London

Ealing Gateway
26-30 Uxbridge Road
London W5 2AU

Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm.
Translation services are available if you visit in person or call.

Telephone: 020 8832 3298

Gas heating & hot water: Call Mears Group Plc 01707 290562

Emergency repairs: Call Mears Group Plc 01707 290561



Oxford

The Farmhouse
Nightingale Avenue
Blackbird Leys
Oxford OX4 7BU

9am-5pm from Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays and the first Wednesday in every month when the office is closed for training. Translation services are available if you visit in person or call.

Telephone: 01865 712244

Gas heating & hot water: Call Robert Heath Heating Ltd 0800 783 0833

Emergency repairs: Call Mears Group Plc 01707 290563



Reading, Slough, Wycombe

Enterprise House
95 London Street
Reading RG1 4QA

9am-4pm, Monday, excluding bank holidays;
9am-5pm, Tuesday to Friday. Translation services are available if you visit in person or call.

Telephone: 0118 951 2900

For all repairs: 3C Asset Management 020 8326 1196

Gas heating & hot water: Call Robert Heath Heating Ltd 0800 783 0833

Emergency repairs: Call Mears Group Plc 01707 290563

Website

You can contact us on the web by visiting www.chg.org.uk/catalystcommunities

On the website you can:

- report a repair
- make a housing enquiry
- download guides and residents' magazines
- find out the latest news on Catalyst Housing Group and Catalyst Communities
- make a suggestion or complaint.

Services on the web are quick and easy to use and available 24 hours a day.



Ky dokument ju jep informacione në lidhje me të rejtat për strehim, ngjarjet dhe informacionet lokale, nëse ju duhet ndonjë pjesë e këtij informacioni në Braille, në CD, në kasetë ose të shpjegohet në gjuhën tuaj, ju lutemi kontaktoni në numrin poshtë.

এই দস্তাবেজটি বাসস্থান সংক্রান্ত খবর, ঘটনা ও স্থানীয় তথ্য সংক্রান্ত তথ্য সরবরাহ করবে। যদি আপনি এই তথ্যগুলোর যে কোন একটির সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত জানতে চান, অথবা আপনার নিজের ভাষাতে ব্রেল, সিডি, অডিও টেপ-এ পেতে চান তাহলে নিম্নলিখিত নম্বরে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

本文档提供关于住房新闻、事件和当地信息方面的信息。如果您需要将这些信息的任何部分以大字印刷形式、盲文形式，或通过CD、磁带，或以您的本国语言的形式提供给您，请通过以下号码与我们联系。

Niniejszy dokument zawiera nowości z rynku mieszkaniowego, informacje o wydarzeniach społecznych oraz doniesienia miejscowe. Jeżeli potrzebujesz aby całość lub część tego tekstu były przedstawione większą czcionką, w języku Braille'a, na nośniku CD, na kasecie audio lub zostały przetłumaczone na Twój język ojczysty, prosimy o kontakt pod numerem podanym niżej.

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹਾਊਸਿੰਗ ਖ਼ਬਰਾਂ, ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਸੂਚਨਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਸੀਡੀ, ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Dokumentigan wuxuu ku saabsan yahay warka cusub oo guriyo, dhacdooyin iyo gobol ah. Haddaad u baahan tahay warkan afkaaga-hooyo, afka loogu talagalay dadka aan arki karaan – afka faraha ama CD-ga ama ajeladda rekorka nala xirir. Namberkan isticmaal.

یہ دستاویز اقامت گاہوں کی خبریں، واقعات اور مقامی معلومات کے بارے میں جانکاری دیتا ہے۔ ان معلومات کے کسی حصہ کی اگر آپ کو بریل، سی ڈی، آڈیو ٹیپ یا اپنی زبان میں وضاحت کی ضرورت ہو تو، براہ کرم ہم سے نیچے دیے گئے نمبر پر رابطہ کریں۔

यह दस्तावेज़ आवासीय खबरों, आयोजनों और स्थानीय सूचना के बारे में जानकारी देता है। अगर आप इस जानकारी के किसी भी हिस्से को ब्रेल, सीडी, ऑडियो टेप में चाहते हैं या अपनी भाषा में समझना चाहते हैं, तो कृपया नीचे दिए गए नंबर पर हमसे सम्पर्क करें।

આ દસ્તાવેજ ઘરના સમાચારો, પ્રસંગો અને સ્થાનિક માહિતી વિશે માહિતી આપે છે. જો તમારે કોઈ પણ ભાગની આ માહિતી બ્રેઇલ, સીડી ઉપર, ઑડિયો ટેપ અથવા તમારી પોતાની ભાષામાં સમજી શકો તેની જરૂર હોય તો નીચે જણાવેલ નંબર ઉપર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.



**Catalyst
Communities**

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A charitable housing association

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