



Housing Matters

The Catalyst Communities residents' magazine

Summer 2010

BIG win

Oxford youth projects
gets £372,000 funding

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Welcome

to the summer issue
of *Housing Matters*



It's been a great few months for us: the regeneration of the Dee Park estate got the go-ahead in May (see opposite), the Blackbird Leys Community Development Initiative was awarded £372,000 (page 3), and many of you turned out to the customer focus groups we held (page 5).

You, as our customers, know how we can improve our services. So, this edition also includes details on how you can get involved. You can help shape our draft Rechargeable Repairs Policy (page 6), become a green champion (page 7) or even nominate your street for a clean-up (see below).

Finally, I'd like to welcome those residents who joined us from Derwent Living, Riverside Housing Association and Harrow Council (see opposite).

Best wishes,

John Foxall

Managing director

Cleaning up Oxford



Residents from eight streets in Greater Leys, Oxford, took part in a clean-up day in June which involved them dumping their unwanted things in six skips provided by us. These items were previously making the area look untidy and were a real eye-sore.

Prizes were given to teams of residents who collected the most rubbish, and residents also got the chance to speak to our team about issues important to them.

We're planning to hold further clean-up days in the South East, so call us on 01865 712244 if you'd like to nominate your street for a clean-up.

Dee Park to start



What the Dee Park estate will look like after the regeneration

The long-awaited £150m regeneration of the Dee Park estate in Reading got the go-ahead in May when Reading Borough Council and Dee Park Partnership signed agreements for the first phase of the project.

Over an eight-year period, the 1960s-built estate will be transformed so it includes 763 new homes, a school, a community centre and shops. Every resident at Dee Park will benefit from the regeneration as it will result in improved transport links and traffic calming measures, as well as enhanced landscaping and local roads.

Welcoming new residents

Over the last few months, we completed the acquisition of homes in Isleworth from Derwent Living and the South East region from Riverside Housing Association. These associations decided to rationalise some of their housing stock by transferring properties outside their normal areas of operation. We saw this as a great chance to provide a more local service to the residents as well as increase our housing stock.

Residents of Mill Farm Close, Harrow, also voted for us to become their new landlord. We're now in the process of building new homes on Mill Farm and transforming the whole neighbourhood, with building works scheduled to start in September.

We've been working closely with the former landlords of these residents to ensure that the transfer of their homes goes smoothly. If you're one of our new residents and want to speak to us about anything, our customer services team is on hand to help (contact details on back page).



BIG win for youth project

Local young people celebrate lottery windfall

The Big Lottery Fund awarded the Blackbird Leys Community Development Initiative (Leys CDI) a mammoth £372,000, over a three-year period, in April. The grant is set to transform the lives of hundreds of young people living on Oxford's Blackbird Leys estate.

The funding will be used to pay for dozens of new weekly activities and after-school courses for children on the estate, as well as vocational courses designed to help people get into work.

It also means that the project will be able to employ more youth workers to help young people set up their own community groups and projects.

The project aims to encourage young people to think about their future and over the coming months will be providing free courses in film making, first aid, food hygiene, table tennis as well as a youth club night.

For more details, contact Sasha East on 0186 533 4802 or sasha.east@chg.org.uk



Mr and Mrs Anand celebrate Carers week with our day services support team

Caring for carers

'Southall Day Centre, where my mother comes every day, and Ealing Outreach Carers' Support Scheme have helped me to support my mother and keep my job. I don't know what I'd do without their support.'

That's what a local carer told us at national carers' week in June. Southall Day Centre (SDC), in partnership with Ealing Council's Outreach Carers' Support Scheme, celebrated the initiative with a host of fun events including yoga, singing, bingo and a trip to the seaside. Hundreds of older people attended the activities, which were all followed by practical advice and information on carers' rights and entitlements.

The centre provides health and social care, training, advice and support to disadvantaged people across West London. It is visited by hundreds of people a day and is open 365 days a year.

For more details, contact Sukh Sandher on 020 8843 1893 or sukh.sandher@chg.org.uk

Our performance

We're committed to delivering a high quality service to residents and to help us measure this, we have a set of service standards. Below are just some of the service standards residents told us are important to them, and the table shows how we've performed against them over the last two years.

We'll be publishing a full report on our performance against all of our service standards in the autumn, so watch this space.

Responding to you

The amount of time it took us to respond to our calls and letters within target has on average stayed the same over the last two years. Our performance in responding to your calls fell by 2.1 per cent, but we responding to your letters quicker – up 4.3 per cent from the previous year. However, in both case our performance is below our previous targets and targets for this year.

We'll now be looking at our internal procedures to see what we need to do so we can improve our performance.

Rent

The amount of rent we collected last year against the amount due decreased slightly – 0.9 per cent – and we were only 0.6 per cent off our target. We aim to make the difference this year, so we can reach our target of 100 per cent.

Repairs

Our overall performance when it comes to completing repairs within target has increased since 2008/09 and we performed better than our targets for next year.

When completing emergency repairs, our performance increased by 2.2 per cent and we performed better than our target for next year. For urgent repairs, our performance increased by a whopping 11.4 per cent and we exceeded our target by 6 per cent. Our performance increased dramatically, by a massive 14.3 per cent, when it comes to completing routine repairs within target. We also easliy surpassed our target and performed well above our target for the coming.

Sevice standard	2008/09 performance	Target for 2009/10	2009/10 performance	Target for 2010/11
Calls answered within 20 seconds	88.6%	92%	86.5%	90%
Letters replied to within target time of 10 working days	85.1%	90%	89.4%	95%
Rent collected against amount due	100.3%	100%	99.4%	100%
Emergency repairs completed within target of 1 day	96.8%	98%	99%	98%
Urgent repairs completed within target of 7 days	84.6%	90%	96%	90%
Routine repairs completed within target of 31 days	83.6%	92%	97.9%	92%

Setting our local offers to you

Housing associations have been tasked by our regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), to set standards with residents that are known as 'local offers'. This means asking you which services are most important to you, how you want to receive those services and how you'd like to be kept informed about them.

This is a great opportunity to work closely with you to determine how we deliver services, and we want to ensure that as many of you as possible get the chance to give us your views and help shape our services.

We'll be coming along to some of the community events we've arranged over the summer, and asking you questions on the services you receive and what else you'd like to receive. Your feedback will then form the local offers we commit to.

We've already started getting your views. We held nine customer focus groups in the areas we manage homes, in May, which were attended by over 250 residents. Thank you to everyone who attended these events as it gave us very useful information. This included the importance of getting repairs, our response to anti-social behaviour, estate services (including cleaning and caretaking) right and your improvement ideas.

We've used this feedback to identify where we need to focus on improving services and we'll keep you informed on how we're doing with those improvements.

The Group Residents' Federation, made of resident representatives, helped us to shape the way we consult residents by ensuring we focus on areas you're most interested in and making sure we do this in a clear and useful way.

If you want to get involved, contact Michael Simms on 020 8832 3111 or michael.simms@chg.org.uk



Residents attend customer focus group meetings to tell us what they think of our services

Downsize your home for cash



Is your current home too big for you? Would you like to move to a smaller home and get a bit of cash to help you with your move? Well our Downsizing Scheme, which we've recently reviewed and tweaked, may be the answer! Here's how it works...

We'll help you find another CCHA home by giving your application high priority for a move. When you have found somewhere you'd like to move to, we'll give you £1,000 for every bedroom you give up. We'll also pay you up to £500 to cover your removal costs.

Our Downsizing Scheme applies to households releasing a home with at least two/three bedrooms. We'll also allow you to under-occupy your new home by up to one bedroom,

which means you'll have a spare room for guests.

So for example, if you are a couple living in a three bedroom home we'll pay you £2,000 if you move to a one bedroom property owned by us. If you move to a two bedroom home, then we'll pay you £1,000. In both cases, we'll top this up with help for removal costs – up to £500.

If you're interested in moving to a smaller home, contact your local office to find out how you can take advantage of the scheme.

Draft Rechargeable Repairs Policy



Sometimes a tenant, their family or their guests may cause damage to a home either deliberately or by accident. As your landlord, we have to repair the damage to protect the health and safety of residents living in the home or nearby. But we also need to ensure that this cost is not met by other tenants through their rent.

We do this by having a Rechargeable Repairs Policy and Procedure, which set out what repairs we'll carry out if a tenant causes damage and how we'll recover this cost. The policy also explains how we'll deal with emergency repairs caused by tenants or where the tenant is vulnerable and needs support.

We've recently updated this policy, so it also includes how we'll recover the cost of deliberate or accidental damage that we have to repair when a tenant moves out. It's often expensive to collect this money, but you told us that it's important that people are held responsible for any damage they cause.

To ensure our policy matches the approach you want us to take, we want to know what you think of this draft policy. So to have your say or get a copy of the policy, contact Hannah Weight on 020 8832 3467 or hannah.weight@chg.org.uk

Become a green champion

We've adopted a new Sustainability Policy to help address the environmental implications of our activities and now we're looking for residents to join our green champions group. Your role will involve addressing the environmental impact of your community and helping us implement greener initiatives in your local area.



Over the past few months, we've implemented many 'green' initiatives including:

- Food growing projects and composting schemes at the Invicta Grove, Windmill Park, Friary Park, Michael Gaynor Close estates.
- Recycling facilities at the Page Road, Lamb Close, Hurst Crescent estates.
- Environmental clean-up days at the Friary Park and Michael Gaynor Close estates.

Interested? Contact Nuria Rodriguez 020 8832 3233 or nuria.rodriquez@chg.org.uk. You can also download a copy of the policy from our website at www.chg.org.uk

Fire risk assessments

Under current legislation, we're required to carry out a fire risk assessments (FRA) to common parts of our buildings to identify fire safety issues and minimise any potential risks to tenants. So shortly, Metro Safety – who we've contracted to undertake the FRA – will be visiting our properties in London to carry out the FRAs. Metro Safety staff will carry a letter from Catalyst Housing Group, our parent company, to identify themselves and will produce it on demand.

Keeping communal areas free of hazardous and potentially dangerous items is vital, as these can block exits and risk lives if people need to quickly get out of buildings in an emergency.

Ask Coach

for skills, training and employment advice



Find out more about:

- employment opportunities relating to the 2012 Olympic Games
- access to skills and training opportunities.

You'll also get the chance to sign-up to your own skills coach, who'll be able to help you achieve your training and employment goals.

The events will be held on

- Saturday 24 July, from 12 noon to 4pm. At the football field behind Meadows Community Centre, 90 Wise Lane, West Drayton.
- Saturday 21 August, from 12 noon to 4pm. At Trail Finders, Castle Bar, Vallis Way, West Ealing.

For more details, contact Kerry Starling on 020 8832 3366 or kerry.starling@chg.org.uk

Bringing Locata to you

In the last issue, we reported that the Locata Home printed magazine was being phased and you'd only be able to view the magazine on the Locata website at www.locata.org

So, to make it easier for you to search for new homes on the Locata website, we've installed a PC in our London office. The PC is free for all residents to use, but you can only use it for up to 45 minutes at a time.

The London office is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.



Illegal subletting: stop it now



Over the past few months, we've discovered more people who are illegally subletting our properties. For some time now we've been checking tenancies, asking for identification and inspecting properties.

Illegal subletting deprives other households of much needed accommodation and exploits people as the rent charged is often much more than we would charge.

If you know of someone who's illegally subletting, please report this anonymously to our customer services team on 0800 085 8680.

If you need any part of this information in large print, Braille, on CD or explained in your own language please contact us the numbers below.

Ky dokument ju jep informacione në lidhje me të rejtat për strehim, ngjarjet dhe informacionet locale, 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 সম্বন্ধীয় খবর, ঘটনা ও স্থানীয় তথ্য সম্বন্ধে তথ্য সরবরাহ করবে। যদি আপনি এই তথ্যগুলোর বে কোন একটির সম্বন্ধে 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 ਰਾਹਿਮਿੰਗ ਖਬਰਾਂ, ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਸੂਚਨਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਸੀਡੀ, ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਅਪਣੀ 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 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 नम्बर पर हमसे सम्पर्क करें।

ਆ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਘਰਨਾ ਸਮਾਥਾਰੋ, ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗੋ ਅਨੇ ਸਥਾਨਿਕ ਮਾਠਿਠੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਮਾਠਿਠੀ ਆਪੇ ਓ। ਜੋ ਤਮਾਰੇ ਡੋਠ ਪਛਾ ਆਗਨੀ ਆ ਮਾਠਿਠੀ ਖ਼ੋਠਲ, ਸੀਡੀ ਓਪਰ, ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ ਅਥਵਾ ਤਮਾਰੀ ਪੋਤਾਨੀ ਆਥਾਮਾਂ ਸਮਝਯੋ ਥਕੋ ਤੇਨੀ ਜੜ੍ਹਰ ਡੋਯ ਤੋ ਨੀਥੇ ਜਛਾਵੇਲ ਨੰਬਰ ਓਪਰ ਅਮਾਰੋ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

How to contact us

London

Ealing Gateway
26-30 Uxbridge Road
London W5 2AU

Telephone:

Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm.

Translation services are available if you visit in person or call.

020 8832 3298

Gas heating & hot water:

Call Mears Group Plc on 01707 290562

Emergency repairs:

Call Mears Group Plc on 01707 290561

South East (Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire)

The Farmhouse
Nightingale Avenue
Blackbird Leys
Oxford OX4 7BU

Telephone:

Monday to Friday 9am-5pm except the first

Wednesday every month for staff training days.

Residents can call the emergency repairs number for any queries.

Translation services are available if you visit in person or call.

01865 712244

Gas heating & hot water:

Call Robert Heath Heating Ltd on 0800 783 0833

Emergency repairs:

Call Frontline on 01489 884697

Website

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



Catalyst
Communities

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