

Dog Training is a Howling Success

A free dog training course, put on by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Animal Warden Service in partnership with EastEndHomes, has shown local people how to take the lead on good dog behaviour.

See page 4 for more details. Left to right are: Dawn & Silva, Jennie & Dottie and Doris & Pepe.



Our mission:

EastendHomes will provide a local housing service which is efficient, gives value for money and meets the needs, priorities and aspirations of all residents.

Our vision:

To achieve the comprehensive regeneration of our estates and to bring about a sustained improvement in the homes and quality of life for residents.

Our core values:

The core values which support, inform and guide our work at all levels in the organisation are:

We value and support resident involvement

We recognise and value the commitment and hard work by our staff

We will always strive to provide the best possible service

We welcome and support diversity and we are committed to equality

We want to improve and succeed in all aspects of our work

In this issue...



Mind Your Language
we join the Plain English Campaign



Good Neighbour
pilot scheme launched



You Said We Did -
We introduce safe & well scheme

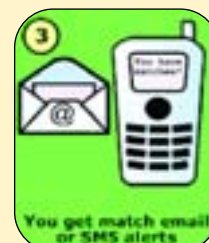
HomeSwapper • Green Living
Noticeboard

Change is as good as a rest

HomeSwapper 
The mutual exchange solution for tenants and landlords

EastendHomes is delighted to offer a new national mutual exchange scheme to our residents. We are dedicated to researching new housing options and mutual exchange is an effective way of enabling our tenants to move to a home anywhere in the UK.

HomeSwapping a DIY guide



HomeSwapper was launched just over a year ago and now has 100,000 registered applicants from around 300 social landlords partnering HomeSwapper. This represents 30% of social rented stock in the UK.

During the last year over 5,000 tenants have moved nationwide using the scheme. 3000 tenants join or renew their membership each week. 7 out of 10 tenants receive a match within the first 24 hours of registration.

EastendHomes has paid a yearly fee to HomeSwapper which means this service is FREE for you to use. Don't worry if you don't have access to a PC we can register your details for you. Interested? To find out more call the Lettings Team on 020 8880 7836 / 7817 / 7840 or call into your Local Housing Centre or visit the HomeSwapper website at: HomeSwapper.co.uk

HomeSwapper.co.uk - free to our residents!

Would you like to be beside the seaside?



Seaside and Country Homes is a housing mobility scheme run by Housingmoves who are funded by Communities and Local Government.

If you are interested in registering for the Seaside and Country Homes scheme you (or your partner) must be at least 60 years of age and live in social rented housing. The scheme offers opportunities to move to bungalows and flats throughout the south of England and Midlands.

Once you have been assessed and accepted on to the scheme, you will be placed on a waiting list for an offer of accommodation. Waiting times will depend on the demand for properties.

EastendHomes Lettings Team regularly receive updated lists of areas where accommodation may be available. This information is also available on the [movinghomes](http://movinghomes.com) website. To find out more call the Lettings Team on 020 8880 7836/7817/7840, or call into your Local Housing Centre or contact the Housingmoves Team direct on 08450 21 20 20 or visit their website at www.housingmoves.org

Green Lights...

for EastendHomes from Housing Corporation

EastendHomes has just received its second formal Housing Corporation Assessment (HCA) and we are delighted that we have retained the full set of green lights awarded in 2006.

The HCA is based on a number of documents and submissions which RSLs are required to make to the Corporation during the year, including the audited accounts. Overall these documents provide key information on EastendHomes performance as a social landlord in terms of the provision of services, the delivery of its regeneration programmes and the overall governance of the organisation, including the performance of the main board.

The Corporation assessment is based on what is known as a traffic light system, with an RSL being judged in terms of viability, governance, management and development (where Housing Corporation funding has been received). Each category is awarded either a red, amber or green light (green being the best assessment).

EastendHomes has achieved a full set of traffic lights for those areas on which it was assessed.

Martin Young, Chair of the Board of EastendHomes said:

"I am delighted that we have retained a full set of green lights from the Housing Corporation. We have only been able to attain this through the hard work and commitment of all our staff. On behalf of the Management Team and the Board I would like to express our thanks to everyone, including residents for helping us to achieve this."



You Said, We Did.....the launch of Safe and Well



As part of our consultation on the estate warden service, residents have given us a clear message that you want EastendHomes to take an interest in the welfare of older and vulnerable people on our estates.

We have introduced the "Safe and Well" scheme which is a way of checking on a regular basis if residents who are vulnerable need our help. Residents can decide how often they contact us and we will check to see if they are okay if they have not been in touch. We will also ask the resident to give us the name of their next of kin, or a neighbour, for us to contact if we cannot get hold of them.

In we are listening and acting on your concerns can you highlight anti social behaviour and control of dogs.

In the resident profiling questionnaire we sent out in December 2007, we asked all residents to indicate whether they would be interested in joining the scheme and over 170 households initially expressed an interest. So far, over 30

households have joined the scheme. The scheme will give households who may have had difficulty accessing EastendHomes' services, or those of others, a regular helping hand.

Michael Lerpiniere, Tower Hamlets Tenancy Support Manager says *"this will help us to make a real impact in our work to support individuals as often, we only get referrals when people have already got serious problems. This will allow us to get in early and make a real difference to people's lives"*.

Monica Makayi is leading the scheme for EastendHomes and you can phone her on 020 7517 4700 if you, or someone you know, wishes to register. Monica has started making regular contact with residents on the scheme. One customer, who is hearing and speech impaired keeps in contact with Monica by regular fax. If residents who have registered with the scheme need one of our services, Monica arranges for this on their behalf and if outside agencies are needed, she can make referrals for support and assistance.

Everybody Needs Good Neighbours

In February EastendHomes and the Attlee Centre in Thrawl Street E1, combined forces to promote the Good Neighbourhood scheme being piloted on the Holland Estate.

EastendHomes has started to work with the residents of the Holland Estate towards the formation of a Good Neighbour agreement. The content of the agreement will be decided by the residents themselves and will form the foundation for a better community. One of the major concerns of residents is that there is a shortage of play space and youth provision on the estate. EastendHomes arranged the open day at

the Attlee centre to promote the state of the art recreation area on the estate.

Following this successful day, the Attlee Centre has seen an increase in attendance by residents and the young people in the area are using the designated play areas.

The Attlee centre ran special events to highlight the facilities that it has to offer to all members of the local community in Spitalfields. Football competitions were held, Tae Kendo demonstrations, a free raffle and a free lunch.

If you live on the Holland estate and want to get involved in the scheme or would like more information phone Linda

Standing at the Local Housing Centre on 020 7456 6700.

If the Good Neighbourhood scheme proves to be a success we will set up similar schemes on our other estates.



Attlee residents enjoying the raffle.

Mind Your Language *?^!\$

EastendHomes have taken out membership of the **Plain English Campaign** with a commitment to clear communication in all its leaflets, forms, posters and newsletters. The Crystal Mark, launched in 1990, is a guarantee that a document has reached a good standard of English. All new leaflets we publish will be edited by Plain English and removed of gobbledegook and we will then be able to display the Crystal Mark.

Plain English Campaign

Fighting for crystal-clear communication since 1979



Plain English are an independent organisation fighting against jargon and other confusing language, while promoting crystal-clear language. They are based in New Mills, Derbyshire and are entirely self funded. Plain English is writing that you can read, understand and act upon the first time you read it.



Spring Blooms on Derwent Green

Dog Training is a Howling Success



A free dog training course put on by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Animal Warden Service in partnership with EastEndHomes has shown local people how to take the lead on good dog behaviour.

The six-week course held at the British Street Community Centre concentrated on basic obedience training designed to keep dog, owner and the public safe in the community and to prevent common dog behaviour problems in the home.

Dog trainer Jennie Plane stressed the importance of starting training when dogs are still very young. She said, *"Puppies may not seem to need training but that's because they are very dependent on their owners and eager to please at the beginning. But they soon get their confidence and can develop a dominant personality very quickly, and once your docile puppy becomes a headstrong young adult, it is much harder to correct bad behaviour. Early training makes it a fun and rewarding exercise for dog and owner."*

Participants in the course received a certificate of merit for their achievements and can now enjoy a closer and safer partnership with their pet. Anyone interested in joining a future course should register their interest with Jennie on 020 7987 3045.

Green Living

Saving Energy – Saving Money

For EastendHomes residents with individual gas fired central heating and hot water systems we have put together some guidelines to help you set the heating controls in your home.

- ▶ The normal setting for the thermostat is 18 to 21 degrees Centigrade. By turning down the control by just one degree you could save up to 10% on your heating bill and not notice much of a difference in the temperature.
- ▶ The time clock should be set so that your heating and hot water is switched on 30-45 minutes before you wake up each morning. Set the clock to turn off 30-45 minutes before you go to bed.
- ▶ If your radiators are fitted with thermostatic radio valves, you can control the temperature

in each room of your home. Some people like to have the temperature turned down in the kitchen and the bedroom. The radiator in the room with the room thermostat should always be set to maximum.

- ▶ If your gas central heating and hot water system is working correctly, you should check and make sure that the hot water cylinder electric immersion heater is switched off, if you have one at your property.

EastendHomes will be notifying you soon about having your heating system serviced and to carry out gas safety checks at your property. It is best to have these checks completed during the summer before the onset of the winter weather at the end of the year. It will save you money on fuel bills if your boiler is working efficiently.



Don't let money worries get on top of you – Money Matters is here to help.....

The **Money Matters Project** offers free and impartial advice to help you resolve your money worries and is available to EastEndHomes tenants and their families as well as residents of Tower Hamlets, Hackney or Newham. Money Matters can work with you to develop a realistic financial plan and negotiate on your behalf with creditors.

We'll help you get back in control of your money so that you can plan with confidence.

Expert staff can help on a range of issues including:

- Rent arrears
- Existing loans and debts
- Debt counselling
- Sensible repayment arrangements to suit your budget
- Outstanding bills

The service is free, independent and there to help those that need it.

Here are some examples of cases that Money Matters has recently worked on:

- Ms AB contacted us to seek help with council tax debt that was being collected by Bailiffs. The project negotiated on her behalf with the Bailiffs and set up an affordable repayment plan. She has stuck to the repayments and is paying off her arrears with no further action taken against her.
- Ms RB came to the Money Matters Project with huge consumer debts that she was unable to manage. The project helped her identify all her debts, and negotiated affordable repayment plans with all her creditors. She has stuck to her agreed plans and no longer receives chasing calls and threatening letters

she also feels more confident in her financial situation.

- Mr AS had amassed several years of Council Tax debts and was being threatened with bankruptcy. Working with him and the council the project established an affordable repayment plan which he has since maintained. No further action has been taken against our client.

If your debts are getting uncontrollable or you're amassing rent arrears and want to do something about it call the Money Matters project on 020 7780 1777 or alternatively ask your Rents Officer for a direct referral.



Noticeboard

The Drugs Don't Work

EastendHomes are committed to promoting a safe and secure environment for our residents to live in. We are now working hard to achieve reductions in anti-social behaviour across all our estates by working with the police and local people to achieve this.

Using CCTV surveillance, staff from the Island Gardens Neighbourhood Centre have been liaising with police which recently led to the arrest of a nuisance drug user in Glengarnock Avenue, E14. Paul Wilson, manager at the Island Gardens centre: "We are working hard on reducing anti social behaviour in the neighbourhood area. Often this work because of its nature occurs behind closed doors and is not widely known by residents. But as this arrest shows, our support of the police effort does lead to results. Residents should feel that their nuisance reports are acted upon".

You can report ASB by telephoning the Council's 24 hour freephone reporting line on 0800 917 5198. If you witness a criminal act or are in danger you should ring the emergency services on 999.

Help for the disabled

EastendHomes are to set up a Disability Focus Group for staff with a disability and staff who have a keen interest in championing disability issues. We want to raise awareness among staff of issues that concern disabled people, raise their profile and widen the debate about equal opportunities and fair treatment for disabled people in work and the wider community.

We will focus on a number of key issues which will improve the quality of life for our staff and residents by ensuring equal access to services and employment for people with a disability.

The aim of the group is to continue to raise awareness and challenge unfairness and it is our intention to have a positive impact on disability issues within our workforce and the wider community.

We are listening and acting on your concerns

As residents will recall last year we carried out a detailed STATUS survey which asked you to comment on all aspects of EastendHomes service. We have highlighted 4 areas covering a range of issues but if residents would like a copy of the full report they can obtain a copy from their Housing Centre Manager.

- 1. Repairs:** Although 63% of residents felt satisfied with the repairs service we feel we can do better and a key area highlighted by residents related to the time tenants have to wait for work to start. In response we have introduced a flexible appointments system with EPS our general build contractor at Mile End, Holland and the Island which means that when a tenant reports a repair they can chose from 4 different daily time slots. Tenants will therefore know from the outset when the repair will be started. Obviously, we have to prioritise the most urgent repairs and emergencies over repairs that are not causing a serious problem and a complete list of these will be set out in our new repairs leaflet. We are working to introduce a similar appointments system on St George's and Glamis estates.
- 2. Elderly leaseholders** said they were less satisfied with our services. In response we have introduced local surgery arrangements so they can discuss their concerns with a leaseholder specialist. We have also been promoting the range of repayment options for major works and ensuring leaseholders are aware of Houseproud grants.
- 3. Residents** said they were concerned about local problems including anti-social behaviour. We are undertaking a review of how we deal with anti-social behaviour and have been involving residents in this process. We will keep all residents informed in this newsletter.
- 4. Residents** in three local housing centre areas expressed concern about the control of dogs on their estates. We have progressed a contract with the Animal Wardens Service which has included classes to promote responsible dog ownership.

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs
0800 376 1637

We need your help to improve our services

EastendHomes is aiming to deliver high quality services to all of our residents. A key part of making sure that we do this is by looking at how we currently do things and working together with residents to find out how we can do them better.

So, we will shortly be running two service reviews focusing on **estate services** (estate cleaning, bulk refuse, the blitz team and garden maintenance) and our **Right to Buy service**.

The aims of the review will be:

- To strengthen the influence of residents over the design and delivery of the services they receive;
- To deliver high quality and cost effective services;
- To get better at delivering good quality services to residents and the community.

Residents will be consulted in a number of ways:

- the residents annual satisfaction survey;
- the latest STATUS survey data;
- local focus groups;
- feedback from our newsletters and our website;

Look out for our limited edition questionnaire entitled *"20 questions that we need residents to answer....."*

Your responses are really important to us and will influence how we deliver services in the years to come.

If you make a suggestion and this results in us giving a better value for money service to residents we will make a donation to a charity of your choice.



Prize winners from the Status survey:

1st prize £50 **Cecil Maitland**, Pickard House, E3

2nd prize £30 **Nouridien & Margaret Bahmane**, Shearsmith House, E1

3rd prize £20 **Sultana Begum**, Shearsmith House, E1

Paying your rent and service charges

We at EastendHomes are delighted to announce that our bill payment provider, allpay.net, has joined forces with high street favourite, Woolworths, making it even easier for you to pay your rent and service charge bills. Simply hand over your swipe card or barcoded bill, together with your payment in cash or with a debit card, at any till in any of their UK stores.

You can use your payment card at any outlet displaying one of the following signs. Simply take your payment card to the counter with your payment.

You will be given a printed receipt as proof of payment. You should keep this in a safe place. Your rent & service charge payment card lets you pay at a wide range of other local shopping outlets or in a variety of other ways.

EastendHomes intends to reward tenants who keep their rent account clear by entering all eligible tenants into a prize draw for a £50 voucher every quarter. The winning tenants will be reported back in this newsletter.

WATCH THIS SPACE - IT COULD BE YOU!



Post Office

Pay at any post office with cash, cheques or debit cards.



PayPoint

Pay by cash at any local shop displaying the PayPoint logo.



Payzone

Pay by cash or debit cards at any local shop displaying the Payzone logo.



Direct Debit

Direct debit is the easiest and most convenient way of paying. Paying your service charge or rent by direct debit offers a hassle-free solution if you worry about paying your bills on time. You will need to have a bank or building society account before you can set up a direct debit. Phone 020 7517 4708 to pay your service charges by direct debit and phone 020 880 7055 to pay your rent by direct debit.



Internet payments

Pay over the internet. Make sure you have your payment card and your debit card. Log on to www.allpay.net and click where you see 'Make a payment'.



Telephone payments

Pay over the phone. Make sure you have your payment card and your debit card. Phone 0870 243 6040 and follow the simple instructions.

Leaseholder Survey - The Results

In the March edition of Eastend News, we gave you the results of the tenant's survey carried out by the National Housing Federation (NHF). In this edition, we are providing information from the leaseholder survey which shows that satisfaction levels for the services we provide are similar to those achieved by other RSLs in London, particularly in the early years where major regeneration works are ongoing following a transfer.

Overall, 42% of leaseholders are satisfied with the service provided by EastendHomes and 65% found the staff helpful the last time they made contact with us. A good majority, 70%, felt that they were kept well informed by EastendHomes and in addition, 47% felt that the management of their estate had improved since transfer to EastendHomes. There is some encouragement here given that on most

estates leaseholders were less supportive of transfer than tenants.

On the downside, however, only 30% of leaseholders believe their service charge represents good value whilst 27% of leaseholders were satisfied with the opportunities to be involved with the management of their homes. This latter figure is disappointing given the efforts EastendHomes have made to encourage all residents to become involved locally on their estate boards, which all now contain significant numbers of leaseholders. We are very keen to get more people involved and our recently published leaflet "Get Involved" sets out a range of ways leaseholders and tenants can do this.

Finally, although 55% of tenants said that they liked the neighbourhood in which they lived, there were clearly significant concerns by leaseholders

about problems in their areas, such as vandalism (81%), litter (82%) and graffiti (78%). EastendHomes will continue to work in partnership with other agencies, including the Police to address these and similar local issues.

65% found the staff helpful the last time they made contact with us

70% felt that they were kept well informed

At your service

You can now contact us by Text Phone 07961 941584

Contacts

EastendHomes Head Office

Tayside House, 1st Floor,
31 Pepper Street, London E14 9RP
Phone: 020 7517 4700

Island Gardens Housing Centre

137 Manchester Road,
Isle of Dogs, London E14 3DN
Phone: 020 7538 2340

Mile End Community Housing Centre

38 Wager Street,
London E3 4JE
Phone: 020 8880 7055

St George's Housing Centre

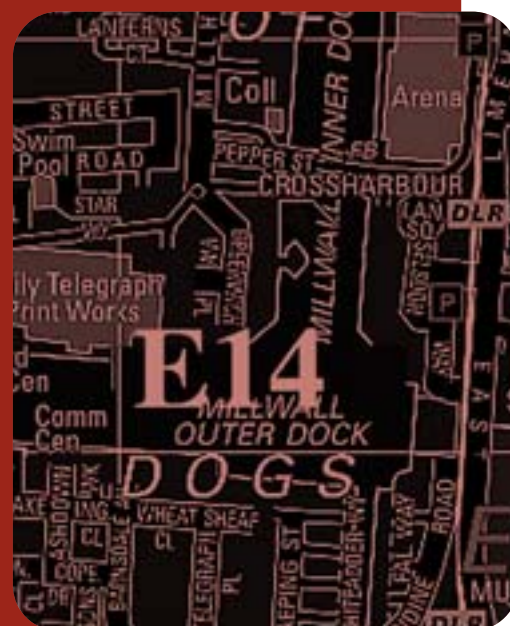
Shearsmith House, Hindmarsh
Close, London E1 8HT
Phone: 020 7481 4110
Phone: 020 7702 9186
(12-2pm)

EastendHomes Housing Centre (Commercial St)

35-39 Commercial Street,
London E1 6BD
Phone: 020 7456 6700

Glamis Housing Centre

Roslin House, Brodlove Lane,
London E1 9EL
Phone: 020 7791 7947



Format options - meeting your needs

This newsletter can be made available in a range of formats including: Translation (Bengali, Somali and a range of other languages); Braille; large print and audio tape.

To request a different format, contact your Local Housing Centre or email: editor@eastendhomes.net.

