

Grrrrr!!!

This young man is having his face painted at the Holland estate Open Day. We are delighted to announce that we have been successful in receiving funding of £90,000 from central government for play spaces at Brune and Wheler Houses on the Holland Estate



In this issue...

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 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



Benefit changes

They've happened in November



Going the extra mile

Alison and Rose show dedication and commitment to their job



Fire Safety in the Home

Take the advice and keep safe

- Mystery Shopping
- Regeneration Award
- Christmas card recycling
- Young volunteers rewarded
- Estate Advice Surgeries
- Noticeboard

Talking about our regeneration

EastendHomes and Telford Homes are delighted that the Kira Building, part of the British Estate £25 million regeneration scheme, has won the Best City Development Award in the New Home Awards 2008.

The awards panel said "On a very narrow difficult site in Bow Road, Telford Homes in partnership with EastendHomes, have succeeded in pulling off a development that is both stylish and integral to the social and economic regeneration of a relatively deprived neighbourhood. The northern facade, against the busy Bow Road, has a strikingly tough odeonesque imagery that will become a landmark. All the apartments have sunny southerly aspects with big balconies overlooking quiet side streets. With a local supermarket in the entire ground storey, it's a scheme that works at every level."



Are you getting the most from your concierge?

Our residents living in blocks with concierges have opted for this service and pay a small additional charge with the rent to cover the costs.



Adetunji receiving thanks from John Hinds, Technical Services Manager

We recently asked some residents, as part of our mystery shopping exercise, to attempt to gain entry to blocks with concierges. They found that some residents of blocks were giving them access without asking for their identity or asking the concierge to allow them in.

The concierge service is only effective if all residents in a block remain security conscious and only allow access to people that they know. Make sure that no-one follows you into the building when you enter, and that the door is fully closed when you leave. Equally, don't allow entry to anyone unless you are expecting them, or ask the concierge to confirm the visitor's identity. If in doubt ask them to leave or alert the concierge.

Adetunji Baderin, a concierge on the St Georges Estate recently put out a rubbish skip fire. Vandals had put burning materials into a full rubbish skip and by Adetunji's quick action a nasty fire was prevented. He was able to notify the Fire Brigade and was able to provide the police with the CCTV images of the incident.

All part of the service

Alison Clarke and Rose Belle (pictured) from our Mile End local housing centre, recently showed their dedication and commitment to providing a quality service to our residents.



An elderly gentleman was due to be decanted from his home but did not have anyone to help him. So for several months prior to a new home being allocated, Alison and Rose visited him regularly to make certain that he was okay and to reassure him with their support and help with the forthcoming move.

When he accepted another property, they booked a removal van for him, and also arranged for suitable furniture to be pre-delivered to his new home. When the gentleman's moving day arrived, Alison and Rose went to his flat in the morning, packed his personal belongings and travelled with him to his new home. When they arrived at their destination they unpacked his things, arranged his furniture under his directorship, and made sure that he was settled. Finally they liaised with the relevant Support Services to ensure his wellbeing.

Free holidays for the over 60s

Are you over 60 and on a low income? You could have a free holiday!
The National Benevolent Fund for the Aged (NBFA) runs holidays to British seaside destinations.

The next available holidays for people in Tower Hamlets are:

Eastbourne 21-26 February 2010

Departing from Victoria, Islington and Stratford

Apply by: 5 January 2010

Folkestone 28 March - 2 April 2010

Departing from Romford and Ilford

Apply by: 29 January 2010

Contact NBFA for more details and an application form on
 020 7828 0200 or info@nbfa.org.uk



Important changes to housing and council tax benefit

Child Benefit

From 2nd November 2009, the amount of child benefit a person receives will no longer be taken into account as income when calculating entitlement to housing and council tax benefit.

This means that some people with children who currently get housing or council tax benefit may be better off.

What you need to do

If you are already getting housing or council tax benefit, you don't need to do anything. The council will automatically reassess your entitlement and notify you of any change.

If you have to pay rent or council tax and do not get housing and council tax benefit but want to apply, please phone 020 7364 5001. The council will send you an application form and answer any questions you may have about the November changes.

Ages 60 or over?

Capital/savings under £10,000 will be ignored in the assessment of housing and council tax benefit for people aged 60+. (Before November the amount was £6000).

The council will continue to apply income of £1 for every £500 of capital between £10,000 and £15,999.99, when assessing entitlement to housing and council tax benefit.

The capital limit will remain at £16,000, which means that if you have capital/savings of £16,000 or more you will not qualify for housing or council tax benefit.

The change means that if you are 60 or older and have capital/savings between £10,000 and £15,999.99 you may be entitled to more housing/council tax benefit.

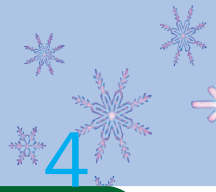
What you need to do

If you are already receiving housing or council tax benefit, you do not have

to do anything. The council will automatically check your entitlement and notify you of any change.



If you pay rent or council tax but do not currently receive housing or council tax benefit but think you may qualify, please phone 020 7364 5001. The council will send you an application form and answer any questions you may have concerning the new changes.



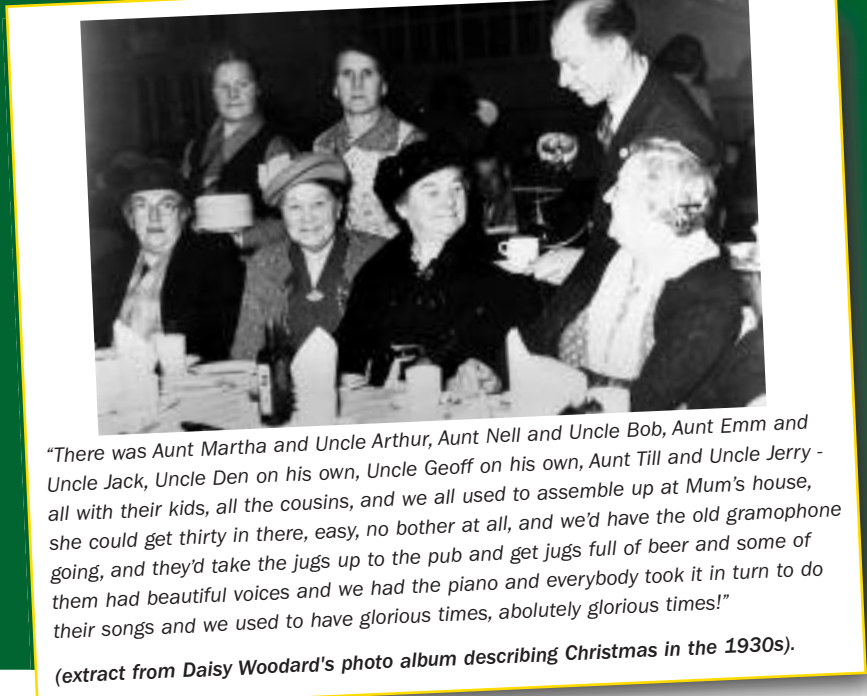
Be up-to-date with the Island Calendar 2010



Be up to date with the 2010 Calendar, published by the Island History Trust. It is an ideal present with its twelve black and white images selected from the best of the Island's own photograph collection. Personal stories tell about family life and leisure.

More recent changes are illustrated too in a dramatic photograph of Canary Wharf DLR station under construction. The glossy sepia-toned cover features twenty portraits of Islanders, capturing their rich diversity of character and style.

Get your 2010 calendar now from Island newsagents or your public library in Strattondale Street or the Dockland Settlement in East Ferry Road. Price £5.



"There was Aunt Martha and Uncle Arthur, Aunt Nell and Uncle Bob, Aunt Emm and Uncle Jack, Uncle Den on his own, Uncle Geoff on his own, Aunt Till and Uncle Jerry - all with their kids, all the cousins, and we all used to assemble up at Mum's house, she could get thirty in there, easy, no bother at all, and we'd have the old gramophone going, and they'd take the jugs up to the pub and get jugs full of beer and some of them had beautiful voices and we had the piano and everybody took it in turn to do their songs and we used to have glorious times, absolutely glorious times!"

(extract from Daisy Woodard's photo album describing Christmas in the 1930s).

My Home Contents Insurance

What would you do if you arrived home to find water flooding through your ceiling from your neighbour's flat? It's a shock for some when they find out their landlord is not responsible for damage caused to their home. If you have no home contents insurance you may have few options:

- Take your neighbour to the small claims court
- Put up with your ruined furniture
- Replace the items by taking out a loan or dipping into your savings.

Until something bad happens home contents insurance may be the last thing on your mind, especially when there are so many other things to pay for. Now you no longer need to worry as cheap home contents insurance is available to all our tenants. EastendHomes is pleased to

recommend My Home Contents Insurance which is approved by the National Housing Federation.

Ten reasons to choose My Home Contents Insurance:

1. Flexible, regular, pay-as-you-go payment options
2. You can make payments with your rent
3. No fuss, it is quick and easy to apply
4. No excess to pay – you do not have to pay for the first part of your insurance claim
5. You do not need special locks
6. Covers theft, water damage, fire and other household risks
7. Covers damage to internal decorations
8. Covers lost or stolen keys and freezer contents



Just for Tenants

9. Covers accidental damage to toilets and washbasins
10. Insurance for realistic sums available

How much will it cost?

The amount of your premium depends on the amount of cover you want and your age. For cover of £9,000 your weekly premium would be £1.38. If you are aged 60 or above you can apply for cover of £6,000 for a weekly premium of 92 pence. For further information pick up an information pack at your local housing centre or phone 020 7517 4725. Please give yourself peace of mind.

Estate Advice Surgeries

Advice surgeries are held at local Housing Centres. If you are unable to make one of our daytime appointments, we are able to offer you early morning or early evening home visits.

Please phone to make an appointment.

Rents

020 8880 7811

Leasehold Services

020 7517 4711

Lettings

020 8880 7817

The frequency of the Rents Service advice surgeries will be subject to change during December. Please contact Rents on 020 8880 7811 for further details.

Mile End 020 8880 7055

Mile End Housing Centre, 38 Wager Street, London E3 4JE

- **Rents Service** – fortnightly on a Wednesday 10am to 12 noon and 2pm to 4pm
- **Right to Buy and Leasehold Service Charges** – 1st Tuesday of each month 2pm to 4.30pm
- **Lettings Service** – 3rd Friday of each month 10am to 4pm
(some surgeries are also held at The Centre on the British Estate – phone for details)

St George's 020 7680 8640

St George's and Glamis residents can also contact us on freephone 0800 0281587

St George's Housing Centre 61A Swedenborg Gardens London E1 8HT

- **Rents Service**
– fortnightly on a Tuesday 10am to 12 noon at Glamis and 2pm to 4pm at St George's
- **Right to Buy and Leasehold Service Charges**
– 3rd Friday of each month 10am to 12 noon at Glamis and 2pm to 4pm at St. George's
- **Lettings Service**
– 2nd Tuesday of each month 10am to 12 noon at Glamis and 2pm to 4pm at St George's
- **Housing management (Glamis)**
– every Tuesday 10am to 12 noon a drop-in is held and every Friday 10am to 12 noon by appointment at Glamis

Glamis 020 7791 7947

Glamis Housing Centre Roslin House, Brodlove Lane London E1 3EL

Holland 020 7456 6700

Holland Housing Centre, 35 Commercial Street, London E1 6BD

- **Rents Service** – fortnightly on a Thursday 10am to 4pm
- **Right to Buy and Leasehold Service Charges** – 4th Tuesday of each month 2pm to 4.30pm
- **Lettings Service** – 4th Thursday of each month 10am to 12 noon and 2pm to 4pm

Island Gardens 020 7538 2340

Island Gardens Housing Centre, 137 Manchester Road, London E14 3DN

- **Rents Service** – fortnightly on a Wednesday 10am to 12 noon and 2pm to 4pm
- **Right to Buy and Leasehold Service Charges**
– 2nd Monday of each month 2pm to 4.30pm
- **Lettings Service** – 1st Wednesday of each month 10am to 4pm

Orange RockCorps hits Island Gardens - young volunteers rewarded

The Orange RockCorps concept is simple: you give four hours of your time towards helping a community project and then you get given a free ticket to one of the hottest gigs around. This year's gig featured artists such as Razorlight and Kelly Rowlands among many others at London's Albert Hall.

On 20th August over 160 volunteers gathered at the EastendHomes Island Gardens Neighbourhood Centre, eager to give up their free time to help the ongoing environmental improvements underway on the Manchester and Schooner Estates.

Railings surrounding the bio-diversity grass meadow were repainted green and wildlife's favourite flowering perennials were planted in improved green spaces designed to please residents and our planet.

Music-loving EastendHomes staff also signed up as Orange RockCorps members and joined the massed young volunteers in their work. Shamina Uddin swapped her usual reception work for painting railings and also brought five friends along as volunteers, adding to the around 8000 volunteers signed up to help in 2009. *"It was a fantastic opportunity to meet different people, work together to achieve*



Shamina Uddin and friends

a successful project and get rewarded for your help. Projects like this will motivate many young people and help to build their confidence and skills". Dominic Asamboa from our head office signed up ten of his mates, all keen to get their gig ticket. *"You can't even buy tickets for the Orange RockCorps gig. You can only get a ticket by volunteering. We enjoyed helping the community, and we got free tickets in return",* said Dominic.

A generous OrangeRockCorps not only provided the energetic volunteer labour but also supplied all the plants and materials at no cost to EastendHomes residents. A huge thank you goes to everyone who came down to Island Gardens and donated four hours of their time.

If you'd like to find out more about how you can improve the environment through volunteering, please email greenergardens@eastendhomes.net or ring Paul on 020 7538 2340. You can also see how you can volunteer with Orange RockCorps by checking out their website www.orangerockcorps.co.uk

The World's Biggest Coffee Morning



The World's Biggest Coffee Morning, in support of Macmillan Cancer Support, is now one of the biggest events in the UK. This year's event took place on 25th September and staff at the Island Gardens Housing Centre hosted what has now become an annual event. They raised the superb sum of £131. Thanks go to all residents and staff involved in making the event a huge success once again.

Macmillan Cancer Support improves the lives of people affected by cancer, providing practical, medical, emotional and financial support. For more information about Macmillan, visit www.macmillan.org.uk or freephone 0800 500 800 and ask for an information pack.

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

Public consultation launched on new Lettings Policy

Tower Hamlets Council and the Common Housing Register Partners are seeking the views of residents on a proposed new lettings policy, which will change the way housing is allocated for people on the housing list.

A recent review showed that many of the 22,000 applicants on the housing list felt they were unable to understand the current policy which has led the Council and Housing Associations partners (including EastendHomes) to look at a new approach.

Lead Member for Housing and Development, Councillor Marc Francis has said, *"The Council and the partner Housing Associations are proposing several changes to the Lettings Policy because we want to find a better and more transparent way to decide how applicants are prioritised and who will be offered housing."*

At the heart of this new approach, is the proposal to give higher priority to the length of time people have been on the housing list. We think a date order queue within each band is a fairer system for everyone and people will be able to better understand where they are on the list and what their chances of re-housing are.

The proposed new Lettings Policy won't create any additional housing - but we want to create a fairer and simpler system for everyone involved in applying for a home".

We would like to know your views

We need your help to get the new policy right. The new policy should be in place in early 2010. You can take part in the consultation in a number of ways.

You can complete a survey online at www.onetowerhamlets.net and follow the links to the Lettings Policy Consultation pages. You can also obtain copies of the survey by phoning the Council on **020 7364 2826** or email lettings@towerhamlets.gov.uk For LARGE PRINT, audio, Braille or translations phone **020 7364 2826**. Copies of the survey form are also available at all our local housing centres. The deadline for returned forms is 31st December 2009.



Mystery shopping

A number of EastendHomes residents have recently tested and reported back on customer service within the organisation by mystery shopping our local offices. Below are the key points we have learned, and what we have done in response:

- Some of our e-mail addresses were set up incorrectly and e-mails weren't reaching the correct people quickly enough to be dealt with efficiently. This has now been sorted out and double-checked.
- Some improvement can be made to how staff deal with enquiries from residents who don't speak English. Training is in the pipeline to improve staff awareness in this area.
- Improvements need to be made in the service response by the out-of-hours repairs service. The Technical Services Manager is meeting with the Contact Centre and contractors.

- Housing Centre Reception staff should have awareness about parking availability in their local area. This is now being reviewed regularly at team meetings.
- Residents in blocks with concierge staff often weaken the effectiveness of the security system by authorising entry for people they don't know.

Another round of mystery shopping, to check on improvements and identify any other areas of concern, will take place in the next six months. If you would be interested in joining our team of mystery shoppers, please contact Peter Griffiths on **020 7456 6730**.



FIRE SAFETY

EastendHomes and the London Fire Brigade recently issued a joint letter to all residents enclosing a 'Home fire safety guide'. This booklet contains advice for residents of flats and maisonettes on what to do in the event of a fire. If you did not receive a copy of the guide please contact your local housing centre or download it from our website www.eastendhomes.net.

We are working together with the London Fire Brigade to promote home safety visits by a Fire Safety Officer to all new tenants and other residents who feel that they would benefit from the service. If you would like a visit contact your local housing centre for a visit referral form.

The Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005

The order requires EastendHomes to take general precautions to make sure residents are safe in the event of a fire. We are responsible for making sure that residents have an adequate means of escape from their home. When we carry out block inspections we are checking to make sure that there is no dumped rubbish blocking escape routes.

Some residents have installed gates across communal landings which slow down residents leaving a building. They can also delay the Fire Brigade gaining access to rescue residents and tackle the fire. The Fire Safety Order requires EastendHomes to remove these gates. In the event of a fire we

would be heavily criticised for allowing them to remain in place.

A few residents have installed security gates over their new 'secure by design' front doors fitted under the Decent Homes programme. The Fire Brigade has specifically advised EastendHomes against this for the time taken to get into a flat is extended considerably where security gates and secure doors are fitted at a property. When EastendHomes fitted the new secure doors tenants were asked to provide written confirmation that security gates would not be reinstalled. Where tenants have ignored this commitment and put back security gates we will be removing them as soon as possible to ensure the safety of all our residents.

LIFT BREAKDOWNS

London Fire Brigade has contacted us recently to tell us that their policy on lift releases has changed. When taking 999 calls from the public about a person shut in a lift, fire brigade control will ask callers to check whether a fire engine is needed. If the lift occupant is, or is likely to be, seriously ill, they will still make an emergency attendance.

EastendHomes has installed notices in its lifts telling residents to contact **Precision Lifts on 0800 376 1637** in case of a lift breakdown.

Don't dump bulk refuse. The Council will take it away for free if you phone 020 7364 5004.



**If you discover a fire
always dial 999**

EastendHomes is setting the standard

We have been chosen to appear on the HouseMark website as an example of best practice in the delivery of value for money, local and accountable services to our residents.

HouseMark is jointly owned by the Chartered Institute of Housing and the National Housing Federation, two organisations dedicated to improving housing standards. They help social landlords to make the best use of their resources to provide high quality services.

The case study highlighted the work which EastendHomes has been doing with its residents in improving the local environment and its work in supporting vulnerable residents.

In May 2009, with the assistance and support of Housemark, EastendHomes organised its first Residents Conference which brought together residents from our estates to seek their views on providing value for money services.

The case study concluded that EastendHomes is at the forefront of delivering local services in a way that its residents really want.

STROKE

A stroke is a brain attack. It happens when the blood supply to the brain is disrupted. Most strokes occur when a blood clot blocks the flow of blood to the brain. Some strokes are caused by bleeding in or around the brain from a burst blood vessel.

With over 150,000 people in the UK having a stroke every year, it is imperative that people can recognise the symptoms of stroke when it's happening and act immediately.

Stroke is a medical emergency and by calling 999 you can help someone reach hospital quickly and receive the early treatment they need. Fast action can prevent further damage to the brain and help someone make a full recovery.



Noticeboard

It pays to be direct

Over thirty tenants have recently received a twenty pound gift voucher for switching over their rent payments to direct debit.

A study of who is using this payment method at EastendHomes shows that it has proved particularly popular with people with disabilities and the elderly. Could this be for you? Set up a direct debit for your rent, maintain it for six months and you could receive a voucher too. Interested? Contact Mary Collier on 020 8880 7811.



Value For Money **£50**

EastendHomes is offering £50 to residents who are due to move out, to allow prospective new tenants to view their property before they go. They could get a further £50 for allowing a technical inspection to identify any repairs which are needed. This has helped us to let our properties quickly and last year brought in an additional £7000 of income to spend on our services to you.

Rents Quarterly Prize Draw

Congratulations go to **Mrs Ironside** of Brune House who was selected as the winner of our quarterly prize draw for tenants who have maintained a clear or credit balance on their rent account.

The Woodland Trust Christmas Card Recycling Scheme

Remember to recycle your Christmas cards from Saturday 2nd to Sunday 31st January by dropping them off at W H Smith, Tesco or any M&S store. The Woodland Trust is UK's leading woodland conservation charity. By acquiring sites and campaigning for woodland, it aims to conserve, restore and re-establish native woodland to its former glory. In return for recycling cards the Woodland Trust will plant thousands of trees around the country. Don't throw away your Christmas cards – remember to recycle them!



You said - we did!

Are you thinking of laying laminate or hardwood flooring in your home?

Residents have asked us to raise this very important issue.

The laying of laminate and hardwood flooring in place of carpets results in more noise for your neighbours. These noises can quickly become an annoyance. You need our permission before installing this type of flooring and we need to make sure that you will take steps to install the right kind of insulation. This will help to reduce the amount of noise passing through to other flats.

For further information please contact your local housing centre.



Top ten target time

How are we doing?

THE TOP TEN KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



No	Performance Indicator	Target 2009/10	Performance First Quarter 2009/10	Performance Second Quarter 2009/10
1	Short term Void Turnaround Times	25 days	20 days	17.6 days
Lettings				
2	New tenant satisfaction with condition of home	85%	Not available	87%
Repairs				
3	Repairs completion in target overall	96%	95%	94%
4	Appointments kept	96%	98%	97%
5	Repairs satisfaction	96%	Not available	88%
Rents				
6	Satisfaction with help given if in arrears (monitored annually)	Target for 2009 - 80%		
Anti-social behaviour				
7	Satisfaction with outcome of complaint	80%	Not available	80%
Gas servicing				
8	% Properties with valid gas certificate	100%	99.0%	99.3%
Estate cleaning				
9	External areas grade B or above	98%	99%	99.5%
Complaints				
10	Satisfaction with case outcome	80%	Not available	64%

Christmas Opening Hours

Most of our offices will be closed from 5pm on Thursday 24 December 2009 and will reopen on Monday 4 January 2010.

The reception at Mile End Community Housing Centre will be open to all visitors on the following dates:

Tuesday 29 December

Wednesday 30 December

Thursday 31 December

The office opening hours will be 09:00 to 12:00 and 14:00 to 16:30. The office will cover emergency repairs from all our estates.

To report an emergency repair during office hours phone 020 8880 7055.

To report an emergency repair outside office hours phone the Emergency Call Centre on 0800 376 1637.

Emergency Call Centre operating hours:
 Thursday 24th December from 5pm
 Friday 25th December
 Saturday 26th December
 Sunday 27th December
 Monday 28th December
 Tuesday 29th December from 5pm
 Wednesday 30th December from 5pm
 Thursday 31st December from 5pm
 Friday 1st January
 Saturday 2nd January
 Sunday 3rd January

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 Regeneration Project Office and Area Housing Centre

61A Swedenborg Gardens
London E1 8HT
Phone: 020 7680 8640

St George's and Glamis
residents can also contact us
on freephone 0800 0281587

EastendHomes Housing Centre (Commercial St)

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

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

0800 376 1637

Rents

020 8880 7811

Right to Buy and Leasehold Services

**020 7517 4727
or 020 7517 4713**

www.eastendhomes.net 

Other languages and formats that this newsletter is available in

If you ask, we can provide copies of this newsletter in a range of languages and formats, including:

- in languages such as Bengali and Somali;
- in Braille;
- in large print;
- on audio tape.

To ask for a different format, please contact your local housing centre.

