

Dec  
2015

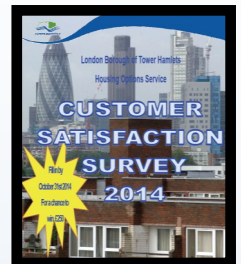
## Tower Hamlets Housing Options Services In Touch Customer Newsletter

# CONGRATULATIONS

CONGRATULATIONS to



Rujina Aktar



who won our prize draw and received £250.00 shopping vouchers for completing the 2014 Tower Hamlets Housing Options Customer Survey.

For your chance to win this year then please complete the 2015 survey that will be posted to you in the near future.



INTOUCH

# FAREWELL COLIN CORMACK



In June we said goodbye to the Service Head of the Housing Options Service Colin Cormack. Colin had over 40 years experience working for Tower Hamlets and will be truly missed.

# WELCOME JACKIE ODUNOYE

Jackie Odunoye has been appointed as Colin Cormack's replacement and is now the new Service Head of the Housing Options Service.

Let us help you.

## Just ask Mo



Ask Mo (My Options) is a new online tool that provides quick, easy, 24-hour access to help and information about housing in Tower Hamlets. It can also help to point you towards other support and services available to you, including:

- debt management
- job opportunities and training
- child care options
- money management
- legal advice
- help with utility bills



To visit our Ask Mo website, please go to:  
<https://towerhamlets.ehodirect.org.uk>

or [click here](#)



# Housing Options Service



## Awarded the Gold Standard Challenge

**The National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS)** is a new service set up specifically to develop and administer this framework for providing continuous improvement in front line housing services through the development and delivery of the **Gold Standard Challenge**.

The challenge is a local authority, sector led peer review scheme designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. The challenge follows a 10 step continuous improvement approach that starts with a pledge for local authorities aspiring to '*strive for continuous improvement in front line housing services*' and culminates in an application for the Gold Standard Challenge.

For further details go to; <http://home.practitionersupport.org/>

**The Housing Options Service are very pleased to announce that we were awarded the Gold Challenge award in July 2015. The Service passed with flying colours and got 78% - apparently one of the highest scores of all the reviews conducted to date.**

Reviewers commented on many things but they were particularly impressed on the willingness and enthusiasm of officers to participate, explain and engage.

Part of the remit was for the reviewers to identify three top areas of excellence.

These were

- HOST
- The walk in service, reception and seeing experienced officers at the first point of contact
- No Wrong Door

Janet Slater 'Service Manager of Options and Assessments' said

'Can I extend my thanks to all who participated in this and who contributed at the eleventh hour in getting some of our identified shortcomings up to speed before the review commenced. The score reflects how we impressed the assessors with every element of this Service (there were 12 in all) and all aspects of the customer journey. Our partnership working was also praised as was our range of partners.

As you know, we never stand still in this Service and always look to improve and build on what we have achieved. Over the next few weeks we will feed back the finer details of each element and the recommendations for improvements/ amendments/areas for consideration and discuss with the appropriate teams.

Thanks again and WELL DONE!'



# NO WRONG DOOR UPDATE



You may be aware that the Council's Housing Options service is being transformed to offer more help to those threatened with homelessness or needing housing advice. Instead of being able to simply offer advice on housing options, staff are working closely with other agencies so as to be able to offer information on a comprehensive range of services that help with problems that often cause homelessness or housing difficulties. This includes money advice, debt counselling, landlord and tenant mediation, specialist legal advice, help in accessing education and training, help in seeking work, access to child care and our Children's Centres.

Our Housing Options staff can make referrals to other agencies to ensure clients get the help they need, and some support services are now operating from Albert Jacob House.

The idea of this programme – called No Wrong Door – is to ensure that our customers can access all the services they need to help resolve their housing problems from one point of contact rather than having to navigate their way through lots of different agencies themselves. No Wrong Door provides a coordinated service so that for example, helping with debt management may mean there is more money to pay for housing costs, or getting into training and employment can mean that the benefit cap does not apply.

If you'd like to know more about the help that is available please talk to your housing officer and ask to talk to somebody about No Wrong Door or call 0207 364 7272 or email [homeless@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:homeless@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## FAMILIES IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION UPDATE

Many families who are in Temporary Accommodation will be placed on auto bid from January 2016.

Auto bid works by the Council's lettings system automatically registering bids for customers for all suitable properties that are advertised, and is intended to increase the number of permanent offers to homeless households, help the Council reduce the number of families it has in temporary accommodation and free up more properties for families currently living in bed & breakfast.

Automatic placement onto the auto bid system is dependent on the amount of time you have been on the housing register and the size of property you need. All households who are due to go onto auto bid in January have been written to. In future all homeless households will be placed onto auto bid when they have been on the housing register for the following periods:

- Families needing 2 bedrooms - 3 years
- Families needing 3 bedrooms - 6 years
- Families needing 4 or 5 bedrooms - 7 years

If you have not received a letter and would like to be considered for autobid, or you would like more information please contact your Housing Officer.

# **London Borough of Tower Hamlets Housing Options Service Customer Satisfaction Survey**

A full document containing the summary of the results from our annual Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS), conducted in September 2014 is available on our Tower Hamlets Housing Options Service website.

This link will take you to the report

["Customer Satisfaction Survey Summary Report"](#)

Your 2015 Customer Satisfaction Survey should have been posted to you can you please find the time to complete as we value our customer satisfaction.

Below are some of the findings from this years survey.



- We received 177 responses, equalling a response rate of 9% - our best yet - and another welcome improvement in service user engagement levels.
- 75% of respondents preferred to be contacted via letter. We received an increase from previous Surveys that customers wanted to be contacted via texts and emails.
- 72% of our customers were satisfied or very satisfied with their way their call was dealt
- 82% of our customers stated they knew who their housing officer was.
- 68% of our customers in temporary accommodation knew who their Managing agent was
- 62% of customers said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the location of the temporary accommodation
- 49% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the repairs carried out in their property
- 53% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall service they received

for full results and summary please click onto this link,  
["Customer Satisfaction Survey Summary Report"](#)

# The allpay Payment App is available for clients

The allpay app is a mobile application (App) available to download from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Windows Phone store](#) and [Google Play](#) enabling our customers to pay their bills from their Apple, Windows or Android smartphone.

Since its launch, the App has been used by residents to pay their rent and council tax, while others are using it to pay fines and manage debt repayments. Find out [more](#) about who uses the App.

## Using allpay's Payment App

- Allows your customers to pay anytime, anywhere
- Receive payment data the next working day

Promotes digital inclusion and helps your organisation meet e-government targets for payment service accessibility



## Benefits to users

- Securely stores Payment Reference Numbers, bank details and payment amounts
- Allows users to pay anytime, anywhere and offers allpay [Cashless customers](#) a quick and easy way to top up their accounts.

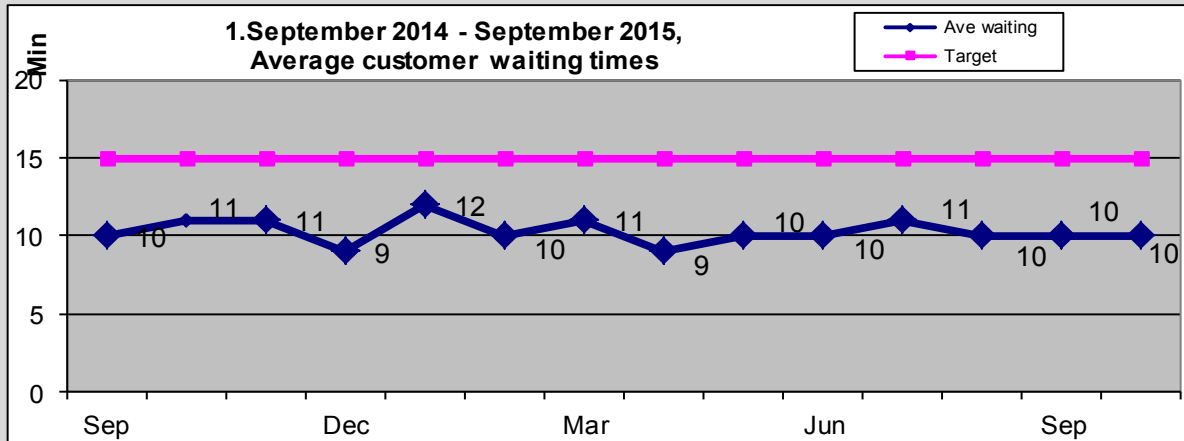
# The Housing Options Services Statistics

See below the Housing Options Service statistics .

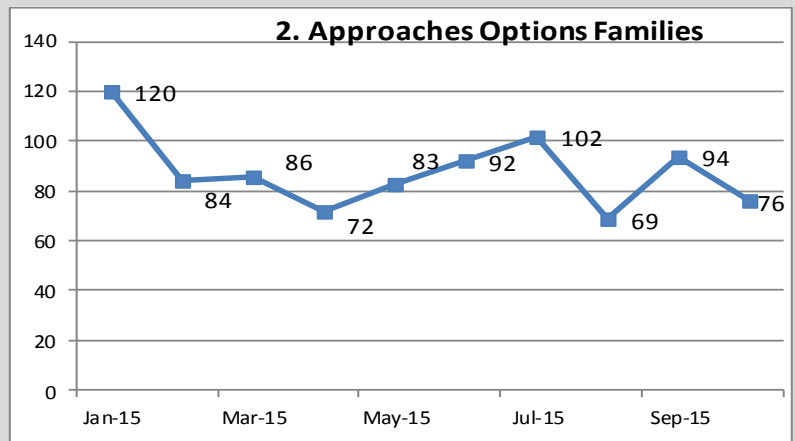
These stats include;

## 1. Average monthly customer waiting times

- Waiting times – the target is for 95% of our customers to be seen within 15 minutes.

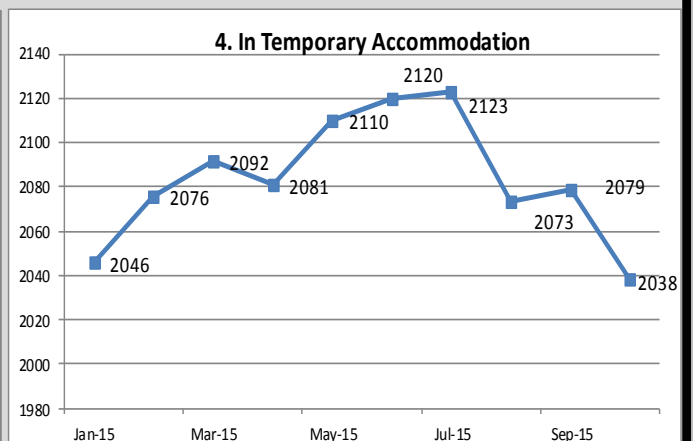
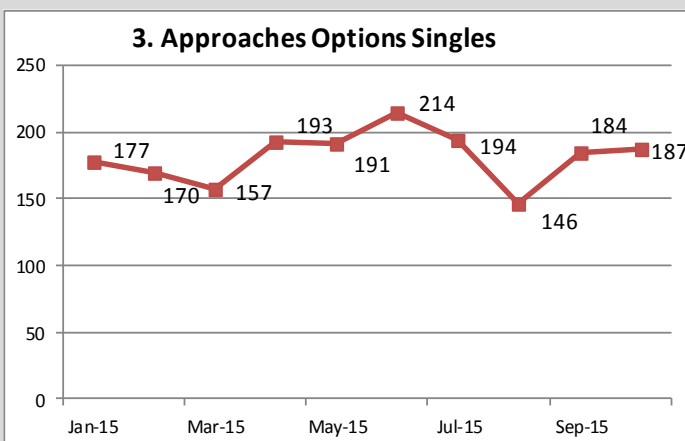


## 2. Approaches made to our Housing Options Service Family team.



## 3. Approaches made to our Housing Options Service singles team.

## 4. Current Tenants in Temporary Accommodation property.



<http://www.ideastoreonlinedirectory.org>

**CLICK HERE FOR ACCESS**  
**TO THE WEBSITE**

**idea**

Library Learning Information



Search for information about health services, local groups, clubs and organisations with the  
**Idea Store Online Directory**



**SIGN VIDEO IS  
AVAILABLE AT OUR  
ALBERT JACOB HOUSE,  
62 ROMAN ROAD,  
LONDON E2 0PG OFFICE.**

**FOR FURTHER DETAILS  
PLEASE CONTACT THE  
BUSINESS SUPPORT  
TEAM ON 0207 364 7262.**



# TRAINING INFORMATION SPECIAL

## Training With Aspiration

(TWA) are a training agency that helps people on benefits become trained and ready for work.

They offer courses in ICT, business, media, health and social care, travel and tourism, plumbing, electrical maintenance and accountancy.

The courses are based at various venues and are well organised with a high standard of training provided. There is also help to get work at the end of the course.

If you are interested in TWA call 07704 018 511 or email Alec Brown at [alecb@twa-careers.co.uk](mailto:alecb@twa-careers.co.uk) for more information, alternatively ask officers in the Families Options Team about the scheme.



BRIDGING THE GAPS BETWEEN TRAINING, RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

## 24+ ADVANCED LEARNING & CAREERS

Nationally recognised qualifications for learners aged over 24 years



TWA-CAREERS | DURU HOUSE | 101 COMMERCIAL ROAD | LONDON | E1 1RD

	BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	
	ICT PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE	
	CREATIVE MEDIA	
	HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE	
	TRAVEL & TOURISM	
	PLUMBING & GAS	
	ELECTRICAL MAINTENANCE	
	ACCOUNTANCY LEVEL 3 & 4	

CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TODAY

FIND OUT HOW TO RECEIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT THROUGH THE NEW ADVANCED LEARNING PROGRAMME

ALEC BROWN 07704 018 511  
[alecb@twa-careers.co.uk](mailto:alecb@twa-careers.co.uk)

REFERENCE CODE  
RWK001

## FREE Training Courses

Available now at Free2Learn, Hackney

### FREE TRAINING COURSES

→ CCTV Operator SIA Training  
→ Door Supervision SIA Training  
Both courses include fully paid SIA License

→ Forklift Counterbalance  
Includes fully paid Forklift License

#### ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible you must be:

- Over 19 years old
- Currently receiving JSA, ESA or Income support
- A UK or EU resident for 3+ years

#### GAIN QUALIFICATIONS

As part of your training programme you will also achieve accredited qualifications.

### ENROL NOW!

Find out more [www.free2learn.org.uk/training](http://www.free2learn.org.uk/training)  
Or call to register for free training 020 8525 9430 (Ext 1000)



020 8525 9430



[info@free2learn.org.uk](mailto:info@free2learn.org.uk)



[www.free2learn.org.uk](http://www.free2learn.org.uk)



Free2LearnUK



Free2Learn  
263 Mare Street  
Hackney  
London E8 3NS

# bite size Training

RETAIL . HOSPITALITY . SECURITY  
16 - 18 year olds

young  
free2  
learn

FREE  
tablet available  
for those that enrol  
before 31st Jan!



## SECURITY

3 easy steps ...

### SECURITY

free2  
learn

1. Enrol → 2. Train → 3. Work

#### What's great about the security sector?

- It is an exciting industry
- There are a variety of diverse possibilities
- Great potential for career development
- Good pay and flexible conditions

#### What do employers look for?

- People who enjoy interacting with people
- Dedication and responsibility
- Team players
- People who enjoy working in a fast paced environment
- A hands-on attitude

#### What's involved?

- Gain industry work experience
- Develop your employability
- Improve your CV
- Training that will open up real opportunities
- Gain industry relevant qualifications and skills

#### Are you eligible?

- Suitable for 19-24 year olds
- There is no experience necessary
- Resident in the UK or EU for the past 3 years with the right to work in the UK
- Have no criminal record
- It is mandatory to be in the receipt of benefits

Skills Funding Agency



Enrol now to start your training and work experience in the security industry. Call us on 0208 525 9430 (Ext 1018) or email [eliz@free2learn.org.uk](mailto:eliz@free2learn.org.uk)



## HOUSEKEEPING

3 easy steps ...

### HOUSEKEEPING

free2  
learn

1. Enrol → 2. Train → 3. Work

#### What's great about the housekeeping sector?

- It is an exciting industry
- Great opportunity to work as part of a team
- Fantastic potential for career development
- Good pay and flexible conditions

#### What do employers look for?

- People who enjoy interacting with people
- Dedication and responsibility
- Team players
- People who enjoy working in a fast paced environment
- A hands-on attitude

#### What's involved?

- Industry work experience
- Gain industry relevant qualifications and skills
- Develop your employability
- Improve your CV
- Training that will open up real opportunities

#### Are you eligible?

- Suitable for 19-24 year olds
- Residing in the UK/EU for the last 3 years with the right to work in the UK
- No experience necessary

Skills Funding Agency



Enrol now to start your training and work experience in the housekeeping industry. Call us on 0208 525 9430 (Ext 1018) or email [eliz@free2learn.org.uk](mailto:eliz@free2learn.org.uk)



## BUSINESS ADMIN

3 easy steps ...

### BUSINESS ADMIN

free2  
learn

1. Enrol → 2. Train → 3. Work

#### What's great about the business sector?

- It is an exciting industry
- A variety of diverse possibilities
- There is potential for career development
- It is an enjoyable and professional working environment
- Opportunity to earn a good salary

#### What do employers look for?

- People who are dedicated and self motivated
- Commitment and responsibility
- People who enjoy working as part of a team
- People who enjoy working in a fast paced environment

#### What's involved?

- Industry work experience
- Gain industry relevant qualifications and skills
- Develop your employability
- Improve your CV
- Training that will open up real opportunities

#### Are you eligible?

- Suitable for 19-24 year olds
- Residing in the UK/EU for the last 3 years with the right to work in the UK
- No experience necessary

Skills Funding Agency



Enrol now to start your training and work experience in the business industry. Call us on 0208 525 9430 (Ext 1018) or email [eliz@free2learn.org.uk](mailto:eliz@free2learn.org.uk)



# RETAIL

3 easy steps ...

## RETAIL



1. Enrol → 2. Train → 3. Work

### What's great about the retail sector?

- It is an exciting industry
- There are endless new opportunities
- Great potential for career development
- Good pay and flexible conditions

### What do employers look for?

- People who enjoy interacting with people
- People who enjoy listening and helping
- Team players
- A passionate and friendly mentality
- A hands-on attitude

### What's involved?

- Industry work experience
- Gain industry relevant qualifications and skills
- Develop your employability
- Improve your CV
- Training that will open up real opportunities

### Are you eligible?

- Suitable for 19-24 year olds
- Residing in the UK/EU for the last 3 years with the right to work in the UK
- No experience necessary



Enrol now to start your training and work experience in the retail industry. Call us on 0208 525 9430 (Ext 1018) or email [eliz@free2learn.org.uk](mailto:eliz@free2learn.org.uk)



# HOSPITALITY

3 easy steps ...

## HOSPITALITY



1. Enrol → 2. Train → 3. Work

### What's great about the hospitality sector?

- It is an exciting industry
- Ability to meet new people and work as part of a team
- Potential for career development
- Good pay and flexible conditions
- Endless new opportunities

### What do employers look for?

- People who enjoy interacting with people
- Passionate and friendly people
- Team players
- People who enjoy working in a fast paced environment
- A hands-on attitude

### What's involved?

- Industry work experience
- Gain industry relevant qualifications and skills
- Develop your employability
- Improve your CV
- Training that will open up real opportunities

### Are you eligible?

- Suitable for 19-24 year olds
- Residing in the UK/EU for the last 3 years with the right to work in the UK
- No experience necessary



Enrol now to start your training and work experience in the hospitality industry. Call us on 0208 525 9430 (Ext 1018) or email [eliz@free2learn.org.uk](mailto:eliz@free2learn.org.uk)



# CONSTRUCTION

Get a CSCS card in 3 easy steps...

## CONSTRUCTION



1. Enrol → 2. Train → 3. Work

### What's great about the construction sector?

- It is an exciting industry
- There are endless new opportunities
- Ever growing demand
- Potential for career development
- Good pay and flexible conditions

### What do employers look for?

- Dedication and responsibility
- People who enjoy working as part of a team
- People who enjoy working in a fast paced environment
- A hands-on attitude

### What's involved?

- Gain industry work experience
- Develop your employability
- Improve your CV
- Training that will open up real opportunities
- Gain industry relevant qualifications and skills

### Are you eligible?

- Suitable for 19-24 year olds
- Residing in the UK/EU for the last 3 years with the right to work in the UK
- No experience necessary



Enrol now to start your training and work experience in the construction industry. Call us on 0208 525 9430 (Ext 1018) or email [eliz@free2learn.org.uk](mailto:eliz@free2learn.org.uk)

## **Social Welfare Information and Advice Agencies**

Free confidential Community Legal Advice Services is provided by the following local voluntary organisations at their offices and outreach centres across the borough. A range of drop in and appointment sessions are offered by the different agencies, so please phone or check online for details. All of the agencies provide advice on welfare benefits, housing and debt problems and can refer you to specialist support services

### **Account3**

Drop in and appointment sessions provided at their main office in Bethnal Green  
Outreach sessions at Bow Idea Store, [Roman Rd](#) and Old Ford Housing Association office

9 Birkbeck Street, Bethnal Green, E2 6JY,

Tel: 020 7739 7720,

[www.account3.org.uk](http://www.account3.org.uk)

### **Bromley by Bow Centre**

Drop in and appointment sessions provided at main office in Bromley by Bow  
Outreach sessions at the Linc Centre Fern St E3 and Burdett Centre, [Wallwood St E1.4](#) and local GP surgeries

St Leonard's Street, E3 3BT,

Tel: 020 8709 9737

[www.bbbsc.org.uk](http://www.bbbsc.org.uk)

### **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

Drop in and appointment sessions provided at main office in Whitechapel. Outreach sessions provided at: Cheviot House One Stop Shop, [Commercial Rd](#), E1 and Chrisp St Market Idea Store, [E14](#) and Gladstone Place One Stop Shop, [Roman Road](#), E3

32 Greatorex Street,

Whitechapel E1 5NP

Tel: 020 7247 1050

[www.eastendcab.org.uk](http://www.eastendcab.org.uk)

### **Island Advice Centre**

Drop in and appointment sessions provided at main offices in Isle of Dogs and at outreach offices in other areas in the borough. Specialist debt advice, welfare benefits and housing staff

Island House, Roserton Street Isle of Dogs, E14 3PG

Tel: 020 7987 9379 (Isle of Dogs office)

[www.island-advice.org.uk](http://www.island-advice.org.uk)

### **Legal Advice Centre**

Drop in and appointment sessions provided at main office and outreach venues during the day. Free evening legal advice sessions also provided  
University House,

104 Roman Road, E2 0RN

Tel: 020 8980 4205

[www.legaladvicecentre.org.uk](http://www.legaladvicecentre.org.uk)

### **Limehouse Project**

Advice on welfare benefits, housing and debt problems Drop in and appointment sessions provided at main office in Copenhagen Place .Outreach sessions provided in Poplar, Lansbury and Wapping and in local GP surgeries

789-791 Commercial Road | London E14 7HG

Tel: 020 7538 0075

[www.limehouseproject.org.uk](http://www.limehouseproject.org.uk)

### **Tower Hamlets Law Centre**

Specialist advice and representation by appointment on housing, welfare benefits, employment, 214 Whitechapel Road, E1 1BJ

Tel: 020 7247 8998,

[www.thlc.co.uk](http://www.thlc.co.uk)

### **Toynbee Hall Debt Advice Service**

Specialist advice on debt and money management issues including fuel debt problems .Free evening legal advice surgeries also provided

28 Commercial Street, E1 6LS

Tel: 020 7392 2953

Email [advice@toynbeehall.org.uk](mailto:advice@toynbeehall.org.uk)

[www.toynbeehall.org.uk](http://www.toynbeehall.org.uk)

There are also a number of other voluntary organisations who provide advice services to particular communities as listed below

#### **Bangladesh Youth Movement**

21/23 Henriques Street E11NB

Tel: 020 7488 1831

#### **Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets**

Sailor Place, 680 Commercial Rd E14 7HA

Tel: 020 7515 5598

#### **Wapping Bangladesh Association**

Tench Street E1W2QD

Tel: 020 7702 1708

#### **OSCA Somali Advice Project**

Concordia Community Centre, Railway Arches

420 - 421 Burdett Rd E3 4AA

Tel: 020 7987 5833

#### **South Bromley Forum**

27 Aberfeldy Street E14 ONU

Tel: 020 7987 9584

#### **Praxis (New Residents Service)**

Pott Street E2 OEF

Tel: 020 7729 7985

[www.praxis.org.uk](http://www.praxis.org.uk)

#### **Stifford Community Centre**

2-6 Cressy Place E1 3JG

Tel 020 7790 3632

[www.stifford.org.uk](http://www.stifford.org.uk)

#### **St Peters Bengali Association**

Minerva Centre, 10 Minerva Street E2 9EH

Tel 020 7729 1036

### **National telephone helplines and websites - information and advice on benefits, housing, money and debt problems**

**Debt Advice Foundation** 0800 644 60 89

[www.debtadvicefoundation.org](http://www.debtadvicefoundation.org)

**National Debt line** 0808 808 4000

[www.nationaldebtlines.co.uk](http://www.nationaldebtlines.co.uk)

**Step Change Debt Charity** 0800 138 111

[www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org)

**Citizens Advice Bureau**

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

**Turn2us** [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk) (includes an online benefits calculator)

**Shelter** the housing and homelessness charity - 0808 800 4444 [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk)

**Payplan** 0800 280 2816

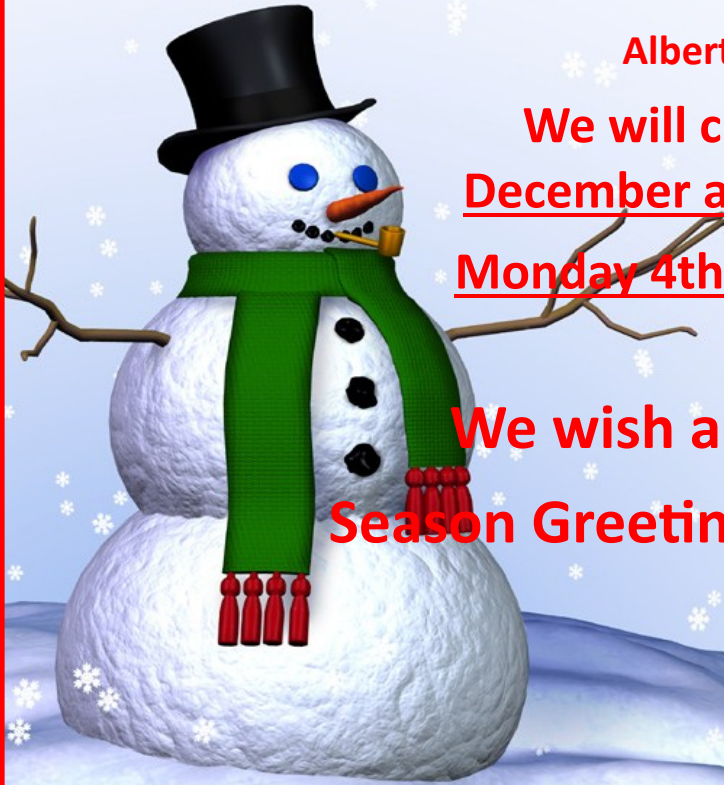
[www.payplan.com](http://www.payplan.com)

# NOTICE BOARD

**Housing Options Service Christmas and  
New Year opening times at  
Albert Jacob House:**

**We will close on Thursday 24th  
December at 4pm and reopen on  
Monday 4th January 2016 at 9:30am.**

**We wish all our customers  
Season Greetings and a Happy New  
Year.**



All previous editions of the  
In Touch Newsletter can be found  
on our website

click on the link below to view.

[http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/  
lgnl/housing.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/housing.aspx)

The best way to contact the  
Housing Options Service  
is via our generic email box at  
[homeless@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:homeless@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

## **CONTACT ME**

If you have any stories or  
information you wish to have published in the  
In Touch Newsletter please contact me

**Jamie Jackson**

**Business Support Team**

**Housing Options Service**

**Albert Jacob House**

**62 Roman Road**

**London E2 0PG**

**Tel: 0207 3647262**

**[Jamie.jackson@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:Jamie.jackson@towerhamlets.gov.uk)**