

Landlord Forum

The Landlord Forum took place on Wednesday 15th June 2011 and once again continued its success in working relationships between the Housing options Services and local Landlords and Agents. Around 30 Landlords and Agents attended and they were treated to presentations from Lee Fearon and Clive Buckman who spoke about the Local Housing Allowance, John Byrne from Gas Safe and Emma Adams from London Warm Zone. The Landlord Forum has been running successfully for over 5 years now and is run by Noella Ling and the Housing Advice team, they are always looking to recruit new Landlords to attend the Forums so if you have any Landlords you can refer I am sure they will be happy to talk to you.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)/Welfare Reform

Update from Lee Fearon and Clive Buckman (pictured below). This is the third presentation done by Lee and Clive and without fail the temperature in the room rose a few degrees prompting a quick adjustment to the air conditioning. Understandably these are burning issues for landlords. Housing Benefit is the hottest subject of the Forum, but our dynamic duo are proving very popular with all. With years of experience and knowledge they reassured all that the Council is looking at every option available to minimise the impact of welfare benefit reforms on both tenants and landlords.

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CONGRATULATIONS Housing Options Services staff: Kieran Floyd, Linda Tuthill, Noella Ling & Theresa O'Brien on their long service awards to Tower Hamlets Council



We want to hear from you!

Please send us your letters and ideas – all welcome.

Housing Options Services

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Tower Hamlets
Housing Options
Services

The Partner's Newsletter
NETWORK

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Congratulations

Housing Options Services Lettings Team achieve award

Congratulations to the Housing Options Services Lettings Team for achieving the Customer Service Excellence Award (CSE).

I am proud to share with you the success of the Lettings Service in achieving the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation.

Rafiqul Hoque (Lettings Service Manager) initiated and led a programme, that over a period of eight months engaged every member of the Lettings staff and culminated in a very successful on-site inspection last week.

To achieve accreditation you cannot be judged non-compliant in any of the criteria and there can only be a maximum of eleven partial compliances. The Lettings Service was judged to be fully compliant in 54 of the criteria and partially compliant in only three – an outstanding achievement.

The CSE standard consists of 57 separate criteria grouped into five categories:

- Customer insight
- Culture of the organisation
- Access & communication
- Delivery
- Timeliness & quality

The independent inspector took the opportunity during the final feed back session of drawing to my attention to her being impressed at the commitment shown by the staff to customer service and the all embracing ethos they adopt.

I trust you will be as delighted as I am to see that yet again this Council, through its diverse teams, has demonstrated its commitment to the very highest standards of customer service.

Colin Cormack
Service Head
Housing Options

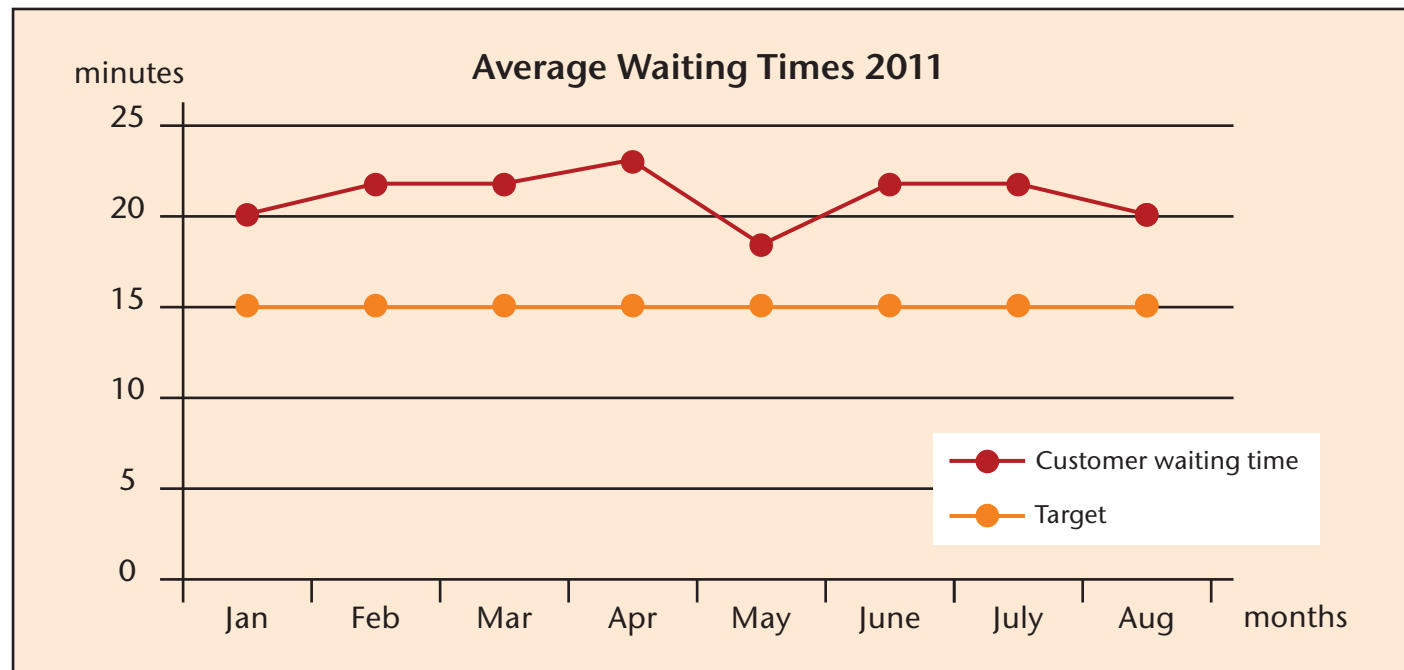




CUSTOMER WAITING TIMES

As a result of our recent Customer Service Excellence (CSE) review, it was agreed that we will start putting the Contact Manager monthly statistics in each Network edition.

These figures represent how long visitors wait, from being seen at reception to being called for an interview with a member of staff. They are recorded using our computer software, Contact Manager. Our target is to keep the customer waiting for no more than 15 minutes, and we are making progress towards keeping that promise to the customer.



HOUSING CHEAT FOUND OUT

A housing cheat was caught out by Tower Hamlets Council after a routine check found that he lied on his application form.

Suhel Miah, of Rosegate House, was found guilty at Thames Magistrates' Court on 16 August of making fraudulent claims. He was sentenced to 16 weeks imprisonment, which was suspended for two years. He is also required to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work, and has been ordered to pay prosecution costs of £1,586.50 within four months.

Miah failed to disclose that he was a homeowner when filling out housing benefit, lettings and homeless forms. David Gingell from Tower Hamlets Council said: "The council routinely carries out a variety of checks when people apply to it for help as homeless and its investigations revealed

Miah to own a property that he had not disclosed. Had he disclosed it then he would not have been provided with temporary accommodation. The judge commented that Miah had lied and cheated and prevented another family from having accommodation."

"This case shows that the council will use the full force of the law to prosecute those who attempt to defraud it by not fully declaring their details when requested."

To report homeless fraud telephone:

020 7364 7343

To report benefit fraud telephone :

020 7364 7443



Tower Hamlets Housing Options Services Partner Organisation Survey

We have identified your organisation as a 'partner organisation', working with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. As such, we want your opinion on the Housing Options Services, along with any comments you have regarding how we can improve our service to you and your clients.

Please see the link below to our Partner Survey. We would be very grateful if your organisation would take 5 minutes to complete the survey, as the results are very important in how we can improve relationships and the way we work with our partners.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TowerHamletsHousingOptionsServicesPartnerSurvey>

'Fire Kills' campaign appoints Fire Safety Champion for landlords

News from Communities and Local Government

Councillor Mark Healey, Chair of Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority and a landlord himself has joined the **Fire Kills campaign** as a champion for fire safety in rented homes, encouraging landlords to make their properties as safe as possible for their tenants.

Since its beginnings in 1988, the **Fire Kills campaign** has seen the number of yearly fire related deaths and casualties reduce dramatically, and ownership of smoke alarms has increased from just 9% in 1987 to 86% last year. Despite this rise in ownership, evidence suggests that those renting properties without an alarm are often among those most vulnerable to the risk of fire such as older people or single parent families. As an advocate for the **Fire Kills campaign**, Councillor Healey will remind private landlords that it is good practice to install and maintain smoke alarms in the properties they are renting out. He will also encourage them to help protect their tenants and their property from the devastating effects of fire by fitting long-life smoke alarms like 10 year battery devices or hard-wired systems in every home they rent out. Councillor Healey said:

"As a landlord myself, I know how important it is to install working smoke alarms in the

properties I am responsible for. I am therefore pleased to have been asked to help support the Government's Fire Kills campaign and urge all landlords to consider installing either 10 year battery alarms or hard-wired detectors in their properties."

Request a home fire safety visit from the London Fire Brigade

Tenants can request for a Home Fire Safety visit from the London Fire Brigade to offer advice on how to make their properties safe and where appropriate fit a smoke alarm for free.

What is a home fire safety visit?

We will visit you at home to offer advice on how to make your home safe and where appropriate fit a smoke alarm for free.

Who is eligible?

We target our visits in areas and situations where we know there is a higher risk of fire, including the homes of older or disabled people, but anyone living in London can request a home fire safety visit.

Why request a visit?

If you are concerned that your home may be at risk of fire, or know someone who you think needs our help then please arrange a visit.

Certain insurers may offer a discount for a hard-wired fire alarm, which is mandatory for some types of properties.

To find out more visit: <https://www.londonfire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit.asp>