

PARTNERS



Partners for Improvement in Islington
Tenants Handbook



Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
HOW TO CONTACT US	5
SECTION 1 – YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN INTRODUCTORY OR SECURE TENANT	7
ABOUT YOUR TENANCY	7
CHANGES OF TENANCY	7
SOLE AND JOINT TENANCIES	8
OTHER TENANCY RIGHTS	8
SECTION 2 – PAYING YOUR RENT AND CLAIMING UNIVERSAL CREDIT	11
UNIVERSAL CREDIT	11
MONEY AND DEBT ADVICE	11
FAILURE TO PAY YOUR RENT – RENT ARREARS	12
SECTION 3 – REPAIRS, GAS SERVICING AND CYCLICAL DECORATIONS	13
REPAIRS	13
GAS SERVICING	14
CYCLICAL DECORATIONS	14
SECTION 4 – ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, HARASSMENT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	17
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A TENANT:	17
WHAT IS HARASSMENT?	17
DOMESTIC ABUSE	18
SECTION 5 – GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR NEIGHBOURS	21
SECTION 6 – KEEPING A PET	25
SECTION 7 – IMPROVING YOUR HOME	26
LAMINATE OR WOODEN FLOORING	26
SATELLITE DISHES AND AERIALS	26
SECTION 8 – MOVING HOME	29
SECTION 9 – INSURING YOUR HOME CONTENTS	33
SECTION 10 – KEEPING YOUR HOME SAFE AND SECURE	34
SECTION 11 – TELLING US WHAT YOU THINK	37
SECTION 12 – MAKING A COMPLAINT OR A SUGGESTION	38
USEFUL COUNCIL SERVICES	39
OTHER CONTACTS	40

Welcome to your new home

Partners, the organisation that manages and maintains your home on behalf of Islington Council welcomes you to your new home.

We hope you find this handbook helpful in setting out what you can expect from us, and also what we expect from you.

In the handbook you will find useful details on a range of topics such as how to report a repair and how to pay your rent.

We aim to deliver the best possible service to you at all times and I hope that you find this is the case. However, if you have any concerns you need to raise with us at any time, you will also find details of how to contact us to discuss issues or make a complaint.

If you can't find the answer to your question in this book, please don't hesitate to contact us to ask further questions; you will find that any member of staff will be happy to help you.

Above all, we hope that you enjoy living in your new home.

How to contact us

By telephone

Between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, you can contact the offices on these numbers:

Customer Services

0800 587 3595 or **020 7288 8310**

(Calls to 0800 numbers are free from landlines, but charged at your network rate from mobiles)

Emergency out of hours repairs

0800 587 3595 (5 pm – 8.30 am, weekends and bank holidays).

Minicom 020 7354 9121

Relay UK: If on telephone calls you can't hear

the other person's voice or don't catch all that they're saying, or they can't understand what you're saying, the Next Generation Text (NGT Service can help you to contact us. To find out how to use the service, visit their website at www.relayuk.bt.com

Rent payments

By 24-hour telepay: **020 7527 8000** Option 3 (at any time)

Through Islington Council's website using most debit or credit cards. Visit www.islington.gov.uk for more info.

At PayPoints (this may take up to 5 working days to be credited to your account)

To find your nearest PayPoint visit www.paypoint.com

At the Post Office (this may take up to 5 working days to be credited to your account)

To find your nearest branch visit www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder

Visit us in person

You can visit our office between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, at:

4-6 Colebrooke Place
London N1 8HZ





Section 1 – your rights and responsibilities as an introductory or secure tenant

About your tenancy

Partners manage your property on behalf of Islington Council, and you are a tenant of the Council.

The tenancy agreement you have signed is a legal contract. The conditions of tenancy that we gave you when your tenancy started explain the terms of the contract. The contract means that we, as your landlord (being the Council's managing agent), are responsible for certain things and you, as the tenant, have certain responsibilities for looking after your home and behaving in an appropriate way.

There are two types of council tenancy:

- **an introductory tenancy**
- **a secure tenancy**

Introductory tenancy

You will start your tenancy as an introductory tenant, unless you were previously a secure tenant.

As an introductory tenant you have fewer legal rights than a secure tenant.

Your introductory tenancy is for a trial period, usually 12 months. You must show us that you are responsible enough to keep your home.

If you break any of the conditions of an introductory tenancy we can ask the Court to give us possession of your home. As an introductory tenant the Court automatically have to grant a possession order against you.

But if you show us that you can act responsibly, you will automatically become a secure tenant after the period of your introductory tenancy. When you become a secure tenant you will get additional legal rights.

Secure tenancy

If you pass your trial period as an introductory tenant, you will become a secure tenant. A secure tenancy gives you a number of legal rights as set out below. However should you breach the conditions of your secure tenancy we can still seek possession of your home through the Court, but the Court will not automatically grant a possession order. The Court will consider the evidence in order to make a decision.

Changes of tenancy

The right to one succession of tenancy *(This right does not apply to introductory tenants)*

If you are a secure tenant, the law gives certain people the right to succeed (take over) your tenancy when you die:

- If you are a joint tenant, then the other joint tenant will automatically succeed to the tenancy;
- If your spouse or civil partner is living with you when you die, they have the right to succeed to your tenancy.

For tenancies which commenced before 1 April 2012, a partner or another family member, such as a son or daughter, can also succeed to the tenancy provided certain qualifying criteria are met.

By law, a tenancy can only be succeeded to once.

The right to one assignment of the tenancy *(This right does not apply to introductory tenants)*

If you are a secure tenant and need to leave your property to live elsewhere, the law gives you the right to assign (hand over) your tenancy to someone else in some circumstances. You can assign the tenancy only to those people who would have the right to succeed (see above). If you have succeeded to the tenancy (taken it over from someone who died), you don't have the right to assign it.

If you wish to assign your tenancy, you must apply to do so before you leave the property and the person you want to assign the property to must meet the qualifying criteria.

The right to swap homes with someone else (mutual exchange) *(This right does not apply to introductory tenants)*

You can swap homes ('mutual exchange') with another tenant of a Council or housing association, but you must first get permission from both landlords. There are a number of ways to find someone to exchange with – contact your Housing Services Officer using the details at the front of this handbook for more details.

When you have found someone suitable, and submitted an application it will be considered and a decision will be made within 42 days. You must clear any rent arrears in full before we agree a mutual exchange.

Section 1 – your rights and responsibilities as an introductory or secure tenant

Sole and joint tenancies

- When you first sign up for a tenancy, you can be either a sole tenant or a joint tenant with a partner.
- If you have a joint tenancy, both of you are responsible for keeping to the conditions in the tenancy agreement – including paying all the rent.
- If you hold a sole tenancy and later want to change to a joint tenancy, you must make an application to do so. We will agree to award a joint tenancy in certain circumstances.
- Either joint tenant can give notice to end the tenancy at any time even if the other joint tenant does not agree.

Other Tenancy Rights

The right to take in lodgers

(This right does not apply to introductory tenants)

A lodger is someone living with you in your property who pays you rent. You have the right to take in lodgers as long as we, as the landlord, think this is reasonable.

You must ask us for permission before you take in a lodger, and we will then consider whether this is reasonable. We will look at how many people are already living in the property and whether having a lodger would result in overcrowding. If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit, you must tell the council's Housing Benefit department and declare the rent you are receiving from your lodger.

A secure tenant does not have the right to sublet their property. If you do sublet your property:

- you will lose your security of tenure
- we will take legal action to repossess the property.

The right to buy

(This right does not apply to introductory tenants)

You have the right to buy your home at a discount when you have been a secure tenant for at least two or five years, depending when your tenancy started. More information on the right to buy can be obtained from Islington Council – www.islington.gov.uk.

The right to improve your home

(This right does not apply to introductory tenants)

You have the right to make alterations, additions, or improvements to your home, provided you have our permission in writing to do so.

You will become responsible for the ongoing maintenance of any improvements you make

The right to manage

A tenants' or residents' organisation has the right to set up a Tenant Management Organisation, which may be able to take on responsibility for the day-to-day management of your homes. If you would like more information about this right, please contact us.

The right to be consulted

You have the right to be consulted about major changes in how we manage your home. We will consider any comments received during consultation before we reach a decision.

The right to see your housing records

You have the right to see your personal housing file. If you want a copy of part of your file, or the whole file, we will make a small administration charge.

The right to repair

We must carry out some types of repairs within a set time, as agreed with the Council. If we fail to carry out the repairs to your property which are our responsibility you can make a legal claim for disrepair. See the 'Repairs, gas servicing, and cyclical decorations' section for more information about reporting repairs to us.





Section 2 - Paying your rent and claiming Universal Credit

The Council decides how much rent and other charges you must pay. Paying your rent each week on time helps to keep the rent as low as possible for all tenants.

Your weekly rent includes:

- basic rent – the charge for providing your home;

Changes in rent and other charges

Any changes in the amount of rent and other charges you pay usually take effect in April. The Council will send a letter giving you reasonable notice of any change. This letter is called a Notice of Variation.

When to pay your rent

Your tenancy conditions say you must pay your weekly rent every Monday. You can pay your rent every fortnight or month if you prefer, but you must:

- agree this with us
- always pay your rent in advance; your account should never be in arrears.
- contact us as soon as possible if you can't pay your rent on time, and arrange to clear any arrears within a reasonable time

How to pay your rent

There are several ways to pay your rent – you can choose the one that suits you. Please see the "How to contact us" section at the front of the handbook for more details.

The Council will send you a rent statement twice a year showing your balance. This is usually in March and September. You can also ask us for a current rent balance at any time. We can give you a statement if you call into either of our offices, but you must have proof of identity. You can ask us to send a statement to your home at any time. Check the statement carefully; if you have any questions, contact your Income Officer.

If your rent account is in credit because you have paid too much, you can apply to your Income Officer for a refund, or you can leave the credit in your account to pay your future rent.

Universal Credit

Tenants who receive state benefits or who are on a low income can apply for Universal Credit to help pay their rent. You may be entitled to Universal Credit even if you are working. What you get depends on:

- you and your partner's income and savings – some benefits such as disability living allowance or attendance allowance aren't counted as income

- the number of grown-up children or other adults you have living with you – your entitlement to Universal Credit is reduced if you have non-dependants (for example, lodgers or children who have left school) living with you
- the amount of rent you must pay – only your basic rent is covered, not water rates

You can apply for Universal Credit online at www.gov.uk. Please contact Citizens Advice or Partners for advice.

Money and Debt Advice

Whether you want to get to grips with budgeting or are looking for a bit of free, confidential advice on how to get out of financial difficulty, we're here to help. We can also support you to maximise your income and plan for a stable financial future.

Things we can help with:

- Confidential money and debt advice and help to plan for the future
- Help with setting up a payment plan so you don't get into arrears
- Help with budgeting for household bills
- Help with identifying ways that you could maximise your income

To find out more about money and debt advice, please contact us using the details in "How to Contact Us".

Section 2 - Paying your rent and claiming Universal Credit

Failure to pay your rent – rent arrears

As the Council's managing agent, we are responsible for monitoring your rent payments and collecting any rent you owe (called arrears). You must pay your rent in full and on time, and your rent account must not show arrears at any time. If you don't pay your rent, you will be breaking the conditions of your tenancy agreement and we will take tenancy enforcement action against you.

Good reasons not to get into rent arrears

- If you are evicted from your home for rent arrears, the Council will not normally rehouse you.
- You may have trouble getting credit such as loans and hire purchase.
- A possession order always carries a money judgement (this affects your credit rating) for the amount of arrears, plus court costs. This lasts for twelve years.
- You may not be able to get a mortgage if building societies and other lenders ask us for a rent payment reference.
- You won't normally be able to get a transfer (move to another home) or carry out a mutual exchange (swap homes with someone else).
- You won't be allowed to rent a garage, parking space or car cage. If you already rent one, it will be taken away from you.
- You risk losing your right to buy your home.

If you do get into rent arrears

If you are struggling to pay your rent, contact your Income Officer, who will be able to advise you. We will do all we can to help keep you in your home and we will consider legal action only when we have tried everything else.

If you have rent arrears and ignore the situation, your Income Officer will take action to recover the amount owing. As long as your rent account is in arrears, we are obliged to contact you.

Legal action to recover rent arrears

If you do not pay your rent despite our attempts to contact you, we will serve you with a Notice of Seeking Possession. If you still don't pay the arrears we will apply to the Court for a Possession Order. The Court will set a hearing for your case, which you must attend. If the Court agrees with our application they will grant either;

A Suspended Possession Order

– this means that as long as you make the payments that the Court has ordered, we will take no further action. But if you break the agreement, we will apply for a bailiff's warrant to evict you.

A Full or Outright Possession Order

– this means that the Court grants us possession of the property, and we can immediately apply to evict you.

If the Court grants either of these orders, you will lose some of your tenancy rights and it will affect your security of tenure. You may also have to pay extra costs that the Court may award us for having to take you to court.

Section 3 – Repairs, gas servicing and cyclical decorations

Repairs

We are responsible for keeping the **structure and exterior** of your property in a good state of repair.

We will repair:

- external walls of your property, doors, window frames and cills;
- leaks or blockages in drains, gutters and external pipework;
- any defects in the systems that supply water, gas, electricity and sanitation to your home;
- any faults to your heating or hot water system.

We will also carry out a periodic electrical safety check, this is normally every 6 or 10 years.

If you need the repair because of damage you have caused, we will charge you for the cost of doing the repair.

You must:

- take care of your home and any fixtures or fittings we have supplied;
- keep the property in a clean condition and the internal decoration in good order;
- allow us reasonable access to carry out repairs, annual gas services and electrical safety checks;
- repair some items inside your property if they fail, even if this is due to wear and tear.

Repairs you are responsible for include:

- internal doors;
- internal fittings including skirting boards, architraves around doors and windows, bath panels, toilet seats, plugs and chains in sinks and baths, curtain rails and pelmets;

- internal decoration;
- repairing doors and drawers of kitchen units;
- letterboxes;
- replacing light bulbs and fuses;
- replacing tap washers and plumbing installed for washing machines and dishwashers;
- any repair relating to an improvement you have made yourself, for example if you have fitted a new kitchen that now needs repairing;
- changing locks if you have lost the keys.

You can report a repair in a number of ways:

- By telephone – between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, dial our Freephone number. If you need an emergency repair outside these hours, you can ring our out-of-hours emergency number. This service is for emergency repairs only, which cannot wait until normal working hours, in most circumstances we will only make the problem safe out of hours and return to carry out a temporary repair during working hours;
- Online – you can report repairs online;
- In person – you can call our office between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday;
- By letter (non-emergencies only) – you can write to us at our office.

See 'How to contact us' at the front of this handbook for our contact details.

Reporting emergency repairs out of office hours

After 5pm all emergency repairs go through to our emergency call-out centre. The emergency call-out centre will take details of the emergency repair and then ask for appointed contractors to do what is needed to make the property safe. All other repair work needed after the property has been made safe will be dealt with within the usual timescales, listed below.

The contact number can be found in the 'How to contact us' section at the front of this handbook.

When you report a repair, we need to know:

- your name (in the form you would like us to use).
- your full address.
- a contact telephone number .
- when it would be most convenient for us to visit.
- any special needs you have, for example if you are hard of hearing or can't answer the door quickly.

When you report a repair:

- We will tell you the day we can carry out your repair and whether we will come in the morning or afternoon.
- We will give you a reference number in case you need to contact us again about the repair.
- We will allocate the repair an appropriate time scale, depending on the work needed. We have agreed time scales for completing repairs in our contract with the Council.
- We will aim to complete the repair within the relevant time scale.

Section 3 – Repairs, gas servicing and cyclical decorations

- When we have completed the repair, the staff member will leave a card asking for your comments on how well they did the job. Please send the card back to us as this helps us improve our service.

We have three time scales for repairs:

- **Emergency Repairs** – An emergency is a problem that could endanger the health and safety of anyone living in your home if we don't put it right. We will complete the work within one working day.
- **Urgent Repairs** – Urgent repairs are those that are needed to allow you to live in your home in comfort, for example a blocked bath or sink. We will complete an urgent repair within 3 to 7 working days.
- **Routine Repairs** – All other repairs are classified as routine, for example making good plastering on a wall. We will complete a routine repair within 25 to 28 working days.

Major Repairs

On occasion we will be unable to complete a repair, because the problem is beyond economical repair or requires replacement. Should this be the case, the repairs operative will complete a temporary repair and refer the issue to the Major Repairs Team.

We aim to complete all major repairs within 12 weeks of our first inspection. However, if there are leaseholders in the block we may need to consult them first.

Gas servicing

Each year, we will check the safety of any gas appliances that we or the Council have supplied. We won't check any gas appliances that you have fitted yourself, but if we feel these appliances are dangerous we must disconnect them.

This gas safety check is very important as defective gas appliances can kill without warning. We will give you reasonable notice that we need to come in. If you don't let us in when we ask, we will try to sort this out speedily. If it becomes necessary we may take court action against you.

Cyclical Decorations

Over the life of our contract, we will carry out cyclical decorations on the external and communal areas of your home.

When we do, scaffolding will be erected to the front and back of your home to provide access for the external decoration. During this time, the security of your home will be your responsibility. To support you with this, we will advise you to inform your insurers of the scaffolding.

Once the scaffolding has been erected, there will be a period of 3-4 weeks where no works will take place. During this time a number of surveys will be carried out to understand exactly what works need doing. Following these surveys, works can commence.

The works will take approximately 6-8 weeks, weather permitting and depending on access.

We will paint and decorate the:

- External parts of the building, including all previously painted areas;
- External woodwork, including windows and front and rear entrance doors;
- Internal flat entrance doors to tenanted dwellings;
- Railings and gates to the front of the property;
- Previously painted steel staircases to rear gardens;
- Internal communal areas.



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Construction Site
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Cyclical Works Team
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CAUTION
CONSTRUCTION SITE



Section 4 – Anti social behaviour, harassment and domestic violence

The term 'anti social behaviour' includes all behaviour which causes annoyance, nuisance or disturbance to someone's quality of life.

Your responsibilities as a tenant

You are responsible for the behaviour of everyone living in or visiting your property, including children. You are responsible for their behaviour in the property, in shared areas, and around the property. All the properties we manage are in Victorian or Edwardian houses, which have often been converted into several flats or maisonettes. This means you will be living close to your neighbours and sharing some areas of the property. Many of the things you do may affect your neighbours. Please read the section 'Getting Along with your neighbours' for some things to consider.

We take all complaints about anti social behaviour seriously. If you report anti social behaviour to us, we will:

- support and advise you throughout
- take full details from you of what has happened
- arrange an interpreter if you need one
- investigate by telling the other party your allegation (we will not mention your name if you do not want us to)
- consider the most appropriate action, when we have fully investigated
- contact any other agencies that may be able to help to resolve the situation

- take action whenever we feel it is in our power to do so
- work with the Police and other agencies when we need to.

Criminal Behaviour Orders, Injunctions and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

These can resolve problems of anti-social behaviour. You must work closely with us and other agencies to help resolve the problem. Every ward has a Local Police team and you can approach them directly. See 'Other contacts' at the end for details of your local team.

What is Harassment?

Harassment is an activity where someone behaves deliberately to cause an individual or group of people distress.

Harassment can take many forms and happen for many reasons. Racial harassment is perhaps the most well-known example, but people can be harassed for many other reasons, for example because of their sexuality.

You have the right to live in your home without harassment or violence by others. We take any report of harassment seriously, whatever its type, and investigate thoroughly. We will work closely with you and any other relevant body to try to solve the problem.

If you experience harassment

- Contact the Police and Partners;
- Keep a record of all incidents, noting the date, time, place, what happened, who was involved and the names of any witnesses;
- Try to take photographs of any damage (such as graffiti or vandalism) and record any damage to your belongings;
- If you are hurt, go to your doctor or the nearest Accident and Emergency department. As well as treating you, they will record your injuries and treatment. This can be valuable evidence if you take your attacker to court.

What we will do

- When you report harassment to us, we will investigate it;
- We will record all the details and give you the name of someone to contact if you have another incident;
- We will arrange an interpreter if you need one;
- We will take suitable action, which may include:
 - carrying out any repairs and removing graffiti
 - helping to make your home safe
 - moving you to another home
 - taking action against the person harassing you.
- We will agree with you what we will do and confirm this in writing. We will also let you know how your case is progressing.

Section 4 – Anti social behaviour, harassment and domestic violence

If you or your family is in clear danger, we can refer you to the Council's Housing Aid Centre. They can place you in temporary accommodation or rehouse you permanently. Where we can, we will take action against the person harassing you. Your safety is always our main concern.

What can the Police do?

In an emergency call 999. Otherwise, contact your Local Police team. You can find a list of the teams in 'Other contacts' at the end of this handbook.

The Police can take action against anyone who has:

- physically attacked you
- deliberately damaged your property
- threatened or abused you

The Police will take details of any incident, whoever reports it. They will investigate and interview witnesses. If there is enough evidence and they know who is harassing you, the Police will prosecute them if you wish. If the incident is one of a series of attacks against you, the Police may be able to arrange support for you.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is physical, psychological, sexual or financial abuse that takes place within an intimate or family type relationship, and forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour.

Domestic abuse is a crime and the Police have specially trained officers to help you. They can also take action to protect you.

In an emergency, call 999. Otherwise, contact your Local Police team. You can find details of these teams in 'Other contacts' at the end of this handbook.

If you suffer violence or are threatened with violence, report it to your Anti Social Behaviour Officer as soon as possible. The Anti Social Behaviour Officer can advise you and will record the incident. If you need emergency accommodation, they can refer you to the Council's Housing Aid Centre for help.

There are other means of support:
Women's Aid (Solace) – see 'Other contacts' at the end of this handbook.

If you choose to stay at your property, an assessment will be carried out to make you feel safe in your home; eg changing/adding locks

As well as helping the victims of domestic abuse, we can also take action against the person causing the violence. Domestic abuse is unacceptable and we aim to stop people who are violent from benefiting from their behaviour. We will take action only if you agree, and will discuss with you what action may be suitable. If the person causing the violence also lives in our property we will consider evicting them.



Volume



Section 5 – Getting along with your neighbours

All the properties we manage were built as individual houses, and many have been converted into several flats or maisonettes. This means that many properties are close to each other and have areas that are shared between several neighbours.

Some things you want to do may affect others living near you, even if you don't intend this. This section advises you what to consider so you can avoid problems with your neighbours.

If you are having problems with your neighbours, contact your Housing Services Officer. They can advise you on what to do. Your Housing Services Officer can also tell you whether the situation is serious enough to be dealt with through our anti social behaviour or harassment policies.

You can find out more about these policies in the section 'Anti social behaviour, harassment and domestic violence'.

Noise

Noise from neighbours is one of the most frequent complaints we get. Sound travels very easily from one home to another in converted Victorian and Edwardian houses. You must be aware of this and try to minimise noise travelling from your home. Here is some general advice for you to bear in mind:

- You are not allowed to lay laminate or wooden flooring in your home. Hard flooring makes noise from your home sound louder, so the noise from e.g. foot steps may be loud enough to disturb your neighbours. You must comply with the conditions of tenancy by fitting carpets to absorb noise.
- Don't play loud music late at night or early in the morning. It is likely to disturb your neighbours. Be considerate at all other times.
- Don't let your visitors make a lot of noise if they are leaving your property, particularly late at night, or early in the morning. Each tenant is responsible for the behaviour of all visitors to their property.
- Don't use your washing machine or vacuum cleaner early in the morning or late at night.
- Speak to your neighbours in advance if you plan to have a party on a special occasion, and be reasonable about the length of time it lasts.
- Listen to what your neighbours say, if they say you are making excessive noise, and respond in a reasonable way.

If you are being disturbed by neighbours making excessive noise, or noise at unreasonable hours, your Anti Social Behaviour Officer can advise you.

If you feel able to talk to your neighbour directly about the noise, approach them calmly and politely, explaining what they are doing to disturb you. Try to come to an agreement with them.

If you cannot agree with your neighbour, please tell us about the problem. In more serious cases, we will work with the Council's Environmental Health Team to decide what action is necessary. We will consider:

- Installing a noise recorder;
- sending your neighbour a formal warning letter;
- asking Environmental Health to serve an Abatement Notice (an Abatement Notice is a formal legal document that may result in a fine or the seizure of equipment);
- applying for an injunction;
- in extreme cases, applying for a Possession Order.

If you are bothered by noise at night and feel you can't deal with it alone, you can contact the Council's out-of-hours Noise Patrol. See 'Other contacts' for details.

Section 5 – Getting along with your neighbours

Keeping the communal (shared) hallways clean and tidy

If properties share a hallway, you must arrange with your neighbours to keep these areas clean and tidy. If you have recently moved in, ask your neighbours what arrangements are already in place.

If windows are so dirty that they endanger health or safety, we can arrange a one-off clean.

You must not keep any of your personal belongings in a communal hallway that may cause an obstruction to others, or block access or exits in the event of an emergency, for example a fire. If they do we will ask you to remove them. If you do not we will remove them and dispose of them ourselves.

Repairs to the communal areas

If repairs are needed to communal areas, please report them to us.

Gardens

Many of the properties we manage have gardens. Where gardens are communal (shared), residents must come to an arrangement about who maintains the garden. Whether your garden is communal or just for your own use, it is your responsibility as a tenant to ensure that you maintain your garden and do not allow it to become overgrown. If you are aged over 70 or have a disability and are unable to manage your garden, we may be able to help through our Assisted Gardening Scheme which offers a one-off garden tidy. If you want to discuss issues with your garden, please contact your Housing Services Officer.

Disposing of rubbish & recycling

Recycling

In Islington it is compulsory to recycle using your recycling services at home. This includes household recycling (e.g. plastic, cans, glass bottles, cardboard), as well as food waste and garden waste if you have these services. This means you must not throw away anything in the rubbish bin which you can recycle at home using the services the Council provides, otherwise you may receive a fine.

Recycling is the cheapest and most sensible way to dispose of your waste. Recycling more means the money saved can be spent on important Islington services.

Household Rubbish

Make sure you wrap all household rubbish in securely tied bags before putting them in the dustbin or refuse store if you have one. If you don't have a refuse store, keep bin bags in a place where they won't block your neighbours' way or annoy them.

If you have your own dustbin, put it in front of your home on collection day. If you share bins with your neighbours, agree with them who will be responsible for putting them out on the correct day. If you store your rubbish in bags, leave them in the correct place to be collected on the right day of the week.

Don't put rubbish out onto the street before collection day.

If you have large items to dispose of, for example old furniture, you can arrange disposal through the Council. See 'Bulk Rubbish' in 'Other contacts' for details.





Section 6 - Keeping a pet

Your tenancy conditions state that:

- You may not keep any dog in your property without our written permission.
- You must not keep any animal which is wild, dangerous, or poisonous, or livestock.
- You must not allow any animal you keep at the property to cause a nuisance to anyone in the local area, including our employees, agents, or contractors.
- You must not cause a nuisance by breeding animals or birds at the property.
- You must not allow animals to foul in the communal areas of the property, or on footpaths, or in play areas in the local area.
- You must remove and dispose of faeces hygienically.
- You must not deliberately feed pigeons, squirrels, or other vermin either at the property or in communal areas.
- You must not allow your property to become a nuisance by failing to look after your pets appropriately.

If a pet or other animal causes nuisance to other people, we will ask you to control your pet's behaviour. If we continue to receive complaints we will ask you to remove it from the property.

In the UK it is against the law to own certain breeds of dog, these are;

- Pit Bull Terrier;
- Japanese Tosa;
- Dogo Argentino;
- Fila Brasileiro.

Under NO circumstances will permission be granted for any of these breeds to be housed in Partners managed properties.

Any of these breeds will be reported to the Council's Animal Warden for removal

If you have any concerns about dangerous dogs in your area, you can contact the Council's Animal Welfare Team; see 'Other contacts' at the end for details.

Section 7 - Improving your home

If you are thinking of carrying out any home improvements, you must follow these steps:

Find out whether you need Building Control approval for the work

If you are thinking about altering the structure of, or drainage in, your home, you need to get Building Control approval. Contact the Building Control section at the Council (see 'Other Contacts for details'); they will be able to advise you.

Find out whether your home is in a listed building or Conservation Area

Many of the properties we manage are in Conservation Areas, and some are listed buildings. If your home is in a listed building or conservation area, you must comply with the Council's requirements. You can find out if your home is in one of these categories by asking Planning Enquiries or checking the Council's website. See 'Other Contacts' for details.

Get our permission

As well as getting approval from Planning and Building Control, if you need it, you must get our written permission before you improve your home. When you have a proposal, apply to us in writing, giving as much information as possible.

Two common requests for permission to improve homes are:

Laminate or wooden flooring

We will not permit you to install laminate or wooden flooring.

This is because sound travels very easily from one property to another, and laminate and wooden flooring makes it louder.

Satellite dishes and aerials

If you live in a Conservation Area, the Council will insist the dish goes on the back of the property. If you get permission to install a satellite dish or aerial, we will ask you to remove it if we do major work on your home and you must pay any associated costs. If you install a satellite dish without getting permission, we may ask you to remove it and to pay any associated costs.





Section 8 – Moving Home

If you want to move to another home, there are a number of schemes to consider. However council homes in Islington are in high demand and there aren't enough for everyone who wants one. There are thousands of people on the housing register, many of whom are in temporary accommodation.

Moving within Islington

The Council allocates all its own and some housing association properties in Islington through the Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

If you want to move to another council or housing association property, you need to make a transfer application online at www.islington.gov.uk.

The Council's Housing Options Team – not Partners – will:

- assess the application and award you transfer points based on your circumstances.
- tell you whether your points make you eligible to 'bid' for a property
- give you a user ID number and a PIN, if you have enough points to bid.

Properties which are available to let are advertised on the Home Connections website. If you are interested in any of the available properties, you must bid for them.

You can bid online by visiting the Council's Home Connections website, by a 24 hour automated telephone service, or by SMS text. The Council also has a Home Connections Bidding App.

You can bid for up to three properties each week.

When a deadline to bid closes the Council;

- draws up a shortlist of applicants with the highest number of housing points for each property
- contacts each of them and invites them to view the property
- following the viewing offers the property to the person with the most points who has advised they want to be considered for it.

If you are in rent arrears, you won't generally be eligible for a transfer. You must clear any rent arrears in order to be eligible to bid.

You can get more information by visiting the Council's website at www.islington.gov.uk or by calling the Housing Options Team. See 'Other contacts' at the end for details.

Moving to a smaller home (through the under-occupancy scheme)

If you are living in a home with more bedrooms than you need, you may want to move to a smaller property.

The Council offer a grant for each spare room that is given up, and assistance with removal expenses.

For more information go to Islington's website www.islington.gov.uk or contact the housing options team. See 'Other contacts' for details.

New Generation Scheme

If you want to move because you are overcrowded, and you have someone who is over 18 living with you who would like a home of their own, the New Generation Scheme may be an option. You can get more information on this scheme from the Council's Rehousing team. See 'Other contacts' for details.

Swapping your home (through the mutual exchange scheme)

Mutual exchange is a way for council or housing-association tenants to swap their properties for a more suitable home anywhere in the UK. The mutual exchange scheme is an advisable alternative to the Choice Based Lettings points systems for rehousing.

Section 8 – Moving Home

You may have more success in moving home by finding another tenant who would like to swap homes with you.

To help tenants find mutual exchanges Islington subscribe to www.homeswapper.co.uk which is a search site and is free to Islington Council tenants including Partners managed tenants.

When you find someone to exchange with, you must submit a mutual exchange application to the Council. We will consider your application and make a decision on whether or not the exchange can go ahead within 42 days. It is illegal to offer or accept money as an incentive to carry out a mutual exchange.

For more information go to the Council's website www.islington.gov.uk or contact the Housing Options Team. See 'Other contacts' for details.

Sheltered housing schemes

Sheltered housing is specially designed for older people, usually aged 55 or over. In sheltered schemes, tenants can live independently, but some support is available if needed. For more information go to Islington's website at www.islington.gov.uk or please contact the Housing Options Team. See 'Other contacts' for details.

Moving outside Islington

Moving into council or housing association property in another area is often difficult. If you want to move to another area, contact the local council for that area. Generally, councils in the Greater London area are unlikely to be able to find you family-sized housing.

You can get information about other housing mobility schemes from the Council's website at www.islington.gov.uk or by calling their Housing Options Team. See 'Other contacts' for details.







Section 9 – Insuring your home contents

You are responsible for insuring your home contents, and we strongly advise you to take out a policy with a reputable provider. In the event of theft, fire or flood, your belongings could be stolen or badly damaged. If they weren't insured, you would have to pay to replace them. Neither we nor the Council would be liable to contribute towards this cost. This could prove very expensive.

Special insurance service for Council tenants

The Council administers a special low cost household insurance scheme which is only available to tenants and Right to Buy leaseholders.

You can pay the insurance by standing order or PayPoint when you pay your rent.

To apply for the Council's insurance scheme contact them direct, 'see 'Other Contacts'

Third-party cover

Make sure the insurance policy you choose includes 'third-party cover'. This covers you if you or a member of your household accidentally damages your neighbours' belongings. If your neighbours claim against you for the cost of replacing their damaged items, you can claim under your policy.

Shop around

There are many good insurance companies, and we advise you to look at a variety of policies. It is worth shopping around to find the best deal. You may want to contact the Association of British Insurers for advice. See 'Other contacts' for details

Section 10 - Keeping your home safe and secure

You can improve the security of your home in many ways that don't cost much money. This section suggests some of these.

Preventing burglaries

- Close all windows and lock external doors when you go out, even for a short time. Most thefts happen during the day and take only a few minutes.
- Fit locks to your ground-floor windows – they are quite cheap and work well. Make sure you always know where the keys are in case of emergency, such as a fire.
- Close windows on the ground floor and near pipes or flat roofs at night.
- Never leave keys under a mat or on a string inside the letterbox.
- Don't leave notes for callers saying you are going away from home.

Callers to your home

Our staff and contractors carry identity cards. Anyone from the gas or electricity suppliers, or the water board, should also carry one. Always ask them to prove their identity, even if they have an appointment with you. Never let anyone into your home unless you are completely satisfied they are who they say. If a caller leaves when you challenge them, call the Police straight away.

Crime Prevention Officers at your local police station are always happy to give you more advice about protecting your home. They can also help if you want to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your area.

Preventing fire

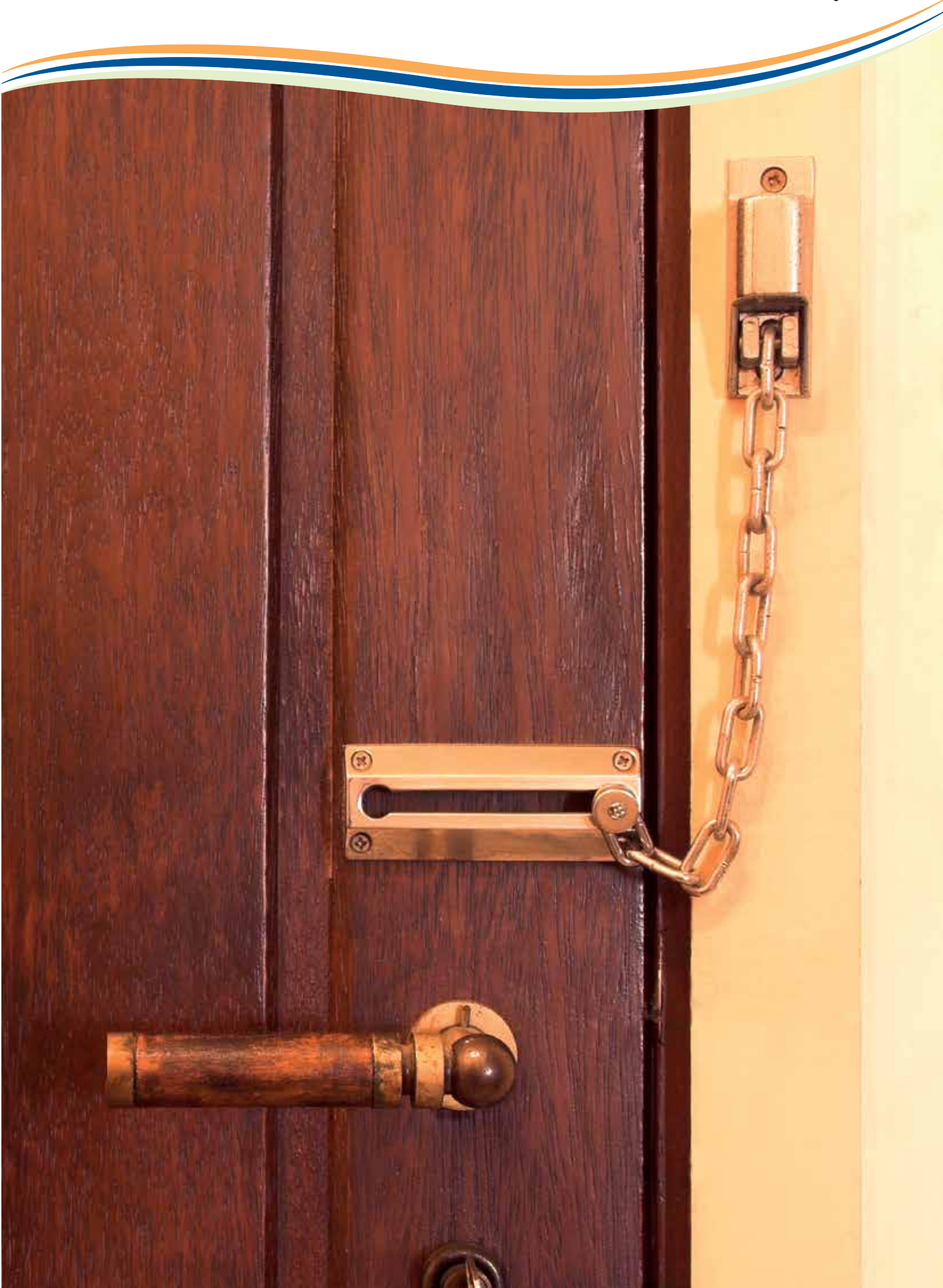
Many fires in the home are caused by simple carelessness, so remember to follow this advice:

- Put cigarettes out properly before you empty ashtrays.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Don't smoke in bed.
- Don't dry or air clothes around fires or cookers.
- Keep matches away from children.
- Put fireguards around fires.
- Unplug or switch off all electrical equipment when you aren't using it.
- Look out for the danger signs of faulty appliances or wiring – such as hot plugs and sockets, fuses that blow for no obvious reason, lights flickering, and scorch marks on plugs and sockets.
- Close all doors before going to bed.
- Take extra care when deep-frying chips or other food. Never leave a chip pan unattended. If it does catch fire, smother it with a damp cloth – don't throw water on the pan.
- You must not keep flammable materials, such as gas cylinders, in your home.

Your home should be fitted with a smoke alarm. You must check the battery from time to time to make sure it works, and replace it if not. Most smoke alarms have a test button so you can easily check they are working.

If a fire does start

- Close all doors to stop the fire spreading if safe to do so.
- Get everyone out quickly.
- Call the fire brigade on 999 and give the exact address of the fire. (Use a neighbour's phone or public call box – never go back into your home to use your land line)
- Stay out of your home until the fire brigade tells you it is safe to return.





Section 11 – Telling us what you think

We believe it is important to:

- find out what you think of our services
- work with you to find ways of improving them
- ask for your views when we're thinking of making a change to the way we work
- check with you that the changes we have made have resulted in service improvements.

We will give you a variety of opportunities to tell us what you think. This section tells you about these opportunities.

We give you regular information about our services

We send regular newsletters to all tenants, giving general information about our services. Articles range from topical issues to reports about how satisfied tenants are with our services. All Partners newsletters are available on our website www.partnersislington.net

If you are interested in getting involved in producing our regular newsletters, please contact our Communications Team.

We regularly check what you think about the standard of our services

We continually monitor tenants' views about the repairs service. We will send you a customer satisfaction card when you tell us you need a repair. If you don't return your satisfaction card, we may telephone you to find out if you are satisfied. If you aren't satisfied, we will investigate how we handled your repair.

We do a variety of surveys following major work to your home. These give you an opportunity to tell us whether you are satisfied with both the standard of the work and the staff who did the work.

Partners and Islington Council carry out regular surveys to find out what you think about all aspects of our service. We use the survey to measure how satisfied tenants are and to identify where we need to improve.

Resident Engagement Opportunities

We provide a variety of ways for you to get involved with Partners and help us improve our services

Examples of these are:

- Resident Scrutiny Panel – A team of residents scrutinise an area of Partners service to identify improvement opportunities. The Panel have around six 2 hour meetings where they interview staff, review procedures and speak to residents. They produce a feedback report and present their findings to Partners senior management teams.
- Mystery Shopping – A group of trained residents are given scenarios which they use to test Partners service.
- Focus Forums – An open meeting to share information and get resident feedback, focusing on a specific service area or proposed change.
- Open Forum – A bi-monthly open meeting for residents to share experiences and raise questions and issues with Partners.

- Repairs and Leasehold surgeries – Book an appointment with a member of the Repairs or Housing Services Team to ask a question or get an update on an enquiry.
- Multimedia consultation – Consultation with a wider group of residents using a range of methods such as online forms, text messages or emails
- Resident Involvement Register – Residents who are happy to volunteer for a variety of activities providing feedback and support with service improvement. To join the register fill in a Resident Engagement form which you can get from Partners receptions or our website.

To find out more about what's happening in Resident Engagement go to our website www.partnersislington.net or contact the Service Improvement and Engagement Team using the number in "How to Contact us" section.

Tenants' and residents' associations

We will support tenants' and residents' associations if they comply with the Council's recognition criteria. If you want information about associations in your area, or you are interested in starting one, please contact either your Housing Services Officer or our Service Improvement & Engagement Team.

Section 12 – Making a complaint or a suggestion

We are always ready to listen to your views on how to improve our services.

At Partners we:

- take complaints or suggestions seriously
- investigate service alerts and complaints thoroughly to see what lessons we can learn and what improvements can be made from them
- value you taking the time to tell us what you think of our service.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received from us, please contact us and let us know. You will find our contact details in the section "How to contact us". We will do what we can to put things right as quickly as possible.

Making a formal complaint

Stage One complaints – You can make a complaint over the phone, by email, by letter, or by filling out a complaints form on our website and sending it by post. Tell us what's gone wrong, and our Complaints Team will investigate the issues you have raised. They will contact you by telephone to discuss your complaint and then formally respond to you within 15 working days.

If you are dissatisfied with the Stage One outcome to your complaint you can contact us within 10 working days and give the reasons why you still remain unsatisfied with the Stage One response. Your request will then be considered by the Central Complaints Team at Islington Council who will let you know if they intend to proceed with an investigation.

You can find the contact details for Islington Council's Central Complaints in the 'Other Contacts' Section.

Please note there is no automatic right to an escalation of your complaint to the Chief Executive Stage. If the Central Complaints Team decides that the complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily at Stage One, no further investigation will take place.

Finally, if you still aren't satisfied with the outcome, you can complain to the Housing Ombudsman Service. The Housing Ombudsman Service will investigate a complaint only after you have completed all stages of the local complaints procedure described above. See the 'Other contacts' section for details.

Useful Council services

Some of the services to your properties are provided directly by the Council. This section gives you some information about the services you may find most useful.

Refuse collection

The Council collects household rubbish once a week. You must put all your household rubbish in the correct place outside the property on rubbish collection day.

Don't put rubbish out before the collection day.

Details of the day that your rubbish is collected are available on the Council's website. Remember: the collection day may change now and then, for example when there is a Bank Holiday, so watch out for information about this.

Bulk refuse

The Council will collect up to ten items of bulk waste from each property each year, there is a charge for this service. This includes one item of 'white goods' (such as a fridge). If you need to arrange for an item of bulk refuse to be collected, contact the Council.

Recycling

The Council runs a variety of recycling schemes for residents in street properties (that is, not on estates). These are:

- a 'green box scheme', which collects plastic bottles, cardboard, paper, glass and cans from your house once a week
- a green garden waste collection service
- a kitchen waste collection service
- a reuse collection service, which takes quality furniture for reuse.

Other recycling services are available to the public:

- You can take mixed paper, glass and cans to any of 66 public recycling points, and textiles to 12 textile recycling points.
- You can also take your waste and recycling to the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre. Car access is through Hornsey Street; if you are on foot, use the drop-off facilities or go to the reception in Cottage Road, off Caledonian Road.
- If you have green waste, the Council sponsors wormeries and compost bins, which turn garden waste into useful compost.
- The Council offers a discount on a nappy laundry service or on buying cloth nappies.

You can get more details on any of these schemes from Contact Islington or through the Council's website. See the 'Other contacts' section for details.

Parking

Many streets in Islington are designated as Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs). If you live in a street with controlled parking, you must have a residents' parking permit. For more details on which streets are CPZs and how to get a parking permit, contact the Council. See 'Other contacts' for details.

Energy efficiency in your home

The Council has an Energy Advice Team that provides free, independent advice on energy use. They can advise you on understanding bills, using low-energy lighting and improving your home so it is easier to keep warm. See 'Other contacts' for details.

Other contacts

Animal welfare

Telephone: 020 7527 3222
(the Council's Public Protection Division)
Fax: 020 7527 3228
Email:
animal.welfare@islington.gov.uk

Anti Social Behaviour reporting line

Telephone: 020 7527 7272
(Outside office hours, if during office hours contact Partners' ASB Team)

Building Control

Telephone: 020 7527 5999
Email:
building.control@islington.gov.uk
Address: 222 Upper Street,
London N1 1XR

Bulk rubbish

Telephone: 020 7527 2000
(to arrange removal of bulk rubbish)
E-mail:
contact@islington.gov.uk
Website:
www.islington.gov.uk/services/
rubbish-recycling/rubbish/Pages/
bulky-waste.aspx

Buying your home

For advice on buying your home and to apply for the right to buy, contact the Council's Home Ownership Team.
Telephone: 020 7527 2000

E-mail:
homeownership@islington.gov.uk
Address: 222 Upper Street,
London N1 1XR

Complaints

If you want to make a stage 1 complaint, contact us (see 'How to contact us' at the front of the handbook).

If you want to make a stage 2 complaint, contact the Chief Executive's Central Complaints Unit:
Telephone: 020 7527 2000
Email:
central.complaints@islington.gov.uk
Address: Town Hall, Upper Street N1 2UD

Conservation Areas

Telephone: 020 7527 6743
(Planning Enquiries)

Contact Islington

Telephone: 020 7527 2000 (to find out more about any Council services)

Council Tax

Telephone: 020 7527 2000
E-mail:
council.tax@islington.gov.uk
Address: 222 Upper Street,
London N1 1XR

Doctors

Call the NHS Patient Information Line to register with your nearest GP.

Telephone: 0300 311 2233
Or go to www.nhs.uk for more information

Energy Advice Team -SHINE

Telephone: 0300 555 0195
advice on using energy efficiently and understanding your fuel bill)
Email:
SHINE@islington.gov.uk

Gas

Telephone: 0845 555 700
(British Gas – to arrange a supply)
0800 111 999
(National Grid – to report a gas leak)

Home Connections

You can 'bid' for a Council home through Home Connections.

Telephone: 020 7527 4140
Website: <http://www.islington.homeconnections.org.uk>

Islington Council

Upper Street
Telephone: 020 75272000
Email:
homesandcommunities@islington.gov.uk
Address: 222 Upper Street,
London N1 1XR

Housing Aid Centre

To apply for housing or emergency rehousing, and for general housing advice and help, contact the Housing Aid Centre.

Telephone: 020 7527 2000
Address: 222 Upper Street,
London N1 1XR

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support

Benefits Service

Telephone: 020 7527 4990
E-mail: benefits.service@islington.gov.uk
Address: PO Box 34750,
London N7 9WF

Housing Ombudsman Service

Telephone: 0300 111 3000
(lines are open Monday to Friday from 9:15 to 17:15)
Fax: 020 7831 1942
E-mail: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Address: 81 Aldwych,
London,
WC2B 4HN

Insurance

Council's Insurance section
Telephone: 020 7527 2000
Address: 222 Upper Street,
London N1 1XR

Association of British Insurers
Website: www.abi.org.uk

Islington Telecare

Telecare provides services which help you live independently at home.

Islington Telecare
Contact Islington
222 Upper Street
London N1 1XR
Telephone: 020 7527 5456
(24 hour number)
Email: assistivetech@islington.gov.uk
Fax: 020 7527 5001

Listed buildings

Telephone: 020 7527 2000
(Planning Enquiries)

Moving out of Islington

Website: www.direct.gov.uk or more information about the available schemes)

NHS Non-Emergency Number

Telephone: 111 (for health advice and information)

Noise Patrol (Islington Council)

The easiest and quickest way to report noise is online through the Council's website:
<http://www.islington.gov.uk>

Pest control

To get rid of pests, please contact us (see 'How to contact us' at the front of the handbook).

For general advice on treating pests such as mice, rats, cockroaches, pharaoh ants and wasps, contact the Council's Pest Control service:

Telephone: 020 7527 2000
Address: Upper Street,
London N1 1XR
(where you can call in)

Police

Emergencies: Telephone 999
Non emergencies: Telephone 101

Rehousing

Islington Council Housing Options Team

Telephone: 020 7527 4140 (for general queries on rehousing)

Website:
www.islington.gov.uk

Rent Payments

By 24-hour telepay

Telephone: 020 7527 8000

Option 3 (at any time)

Through Islington Council's website using most debit or credit cards

Website: <http://www.islington.gov.uk>

At PayPoints (this may take up to 5 working days to be credited to your account)

To find your nearest PayPoint visit www.paypoint.com

At the Post Office (this may take up to 5 working days to be credited to your account)

To find your nearest branch visit <http://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder>

Sheltered housing

Contact Islington Council's Rehousing team:
rehousing@islington.gov.uk
0207 527 4140

Water

Thames Water
Telephone: 0800 009 4238
(water services) Website:
www.thameswater.co.uk

Address: Thames Water,
PO Box 286,
Swindon SN38 2RA

Women's Aid (Solace)

Freephone: 0808 802 5565

Email:
advice@solacewomensaid.org

Address:
Unit 5-7,
Blenheim Court,
62 Brewery Road,
London N7 9NY





4-6 Colebrooke Place
London N1 8HZ

t. 020 7288 8310

e. enquiries@partnersislinton.net
www.partnersislinton.net