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PARTNERS

gazette

Residents'
Newsletter
July 2024
Issue 71

Paying Your Rent

Every April the Council increase tenants' rents. You should have received a letter from the Council explaining the increase and how much your new payments are. If you did not receive your letter or have any questions about paying your rent, please contact us on **0800 587 3595** or via enquiries@partnersislington.net.

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 on **0800 587 3595** or enquiries@partnersislington.net as soon as possible if you are experiencing difficulties paying your rent on time, and make an arrangement to clear any arrears within a reasonable time

If you are paying rent monthly, you need to allow for the fact that this financial year is a 53 week year (1 April 2024 to 6 April 2025). The monthly rent is therefore the weekly rent multiplied by 53, divided by 12. Please ensure you are paying the correct monthly amount.

You can pay your rent in a variety of ways:

1. On the Islington Council website - www.islington.gov.uk
2. via Standing Order (PDF form which you download, print and post from Islington's website)
3. via Direct Debit (PDF form which you download, print and post from Islington's website)
4. Pay by phone - 24 Hour Telepay System - call **020 7527 8000**.
5. Pay using swipe card at the nearest Paypoint.

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 in serious breach of your tenancy conditions, and we will take tenancy enforcement action against you.



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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.

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, our Account's Advisors are here to help. They can refer you to Islington Council's specialist team who can support you to maximise your income and plan for a stable financial future.

To find out more about money and debt advice, please contact your Account Advisor by calling **0800 587 3595** or **enquiries@partnersislington.net**.

If you do get into rent arrears

If you are struggling to pay your rent, contact your Accounts Advisor, who will be able to advise you. We will do all we can to help keep you in your home and we will only consider legal action as a last resort.

If you have rent arrears and ignore the situation, your Accounts Advisor will take legal action to recover the amount owing. Each week that your rent account remains 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. This is the first step in the legal process. 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;

1. **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 bailiffs warrant to evict you.
2. **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.

You may also have to pay extra costs that the Court may award us for having to take you to court.

Income Maximisation Team

The Islington Income Maximisation Team (IMAX) has been around for more than 15 years, and offers a phone advice and casework service to help residents improve their finances on several areas, including:

- checking your benefits to make sure you are getting the correct amount of money.
- supporting you to make benefit claims.
- helping you challenge and appeal benefit decisions.
- review how much help you may get with childcare costs, going into work and help with your benefits when you start work or have a change in circumstances.
- advise and support with benefit changes such as 'Bedroom Tax', Benefit Cap and Universal Credit.

You can call the team direct on **020 7527 8600** or email them on **claimit@islington.gov.uk**

Major Repairs – What To Expect

When you report a repair to us, we arrange an appointment for one of our team to attend and complete the repair.

Sometimes our operative will find that the repair is a bigger or more complex than expected and the repair is referred to Partners Major Repairs Team. Our operative will take all the information needed to complete the referral and ensure that the area is left safe and watertight.

Examples of the sort of work that would be referred to our Major Repairs Team include damp work, ceiling collapse, subsidence and rebuilding a wall.

Our Major Repairs Team have up to 12 weeks to complete a repair, but they always endeavour to get works completed as quickly as possible.

Some works may be subject to a section 20 consultation, a party wall notice or listed building consents.

All these processes can be lengthy and add delays to work starting but are a requirement that we have to complete before any works can start.

When a repair is referred to our Major Repairs Team you will be sent a letter and leaflet which gives all the information you'll need.

You can contact the Major Repairs Team by calling between the hours of 8am – 5pm, Monday – Friday **0345 450 0110** or by email to **enquiries@partnersislinton.net**. For all other non-major repairs enquiries please call our general number **0800 587 3595**.



Garden Waste Collections

The Council have introduced a new garden waste collection process. Since Tuesday 2 April 2024 you now need a new permit with a £75 annual fee for green garden waste collections.

Who can use this service?

Residents can subscribe to the garden waste collection service if you live in a property with a garden that you or a number of residents maintain and are able to leave garden waste sacks outside your property for collection.

If you live in a property with a shared garden, you and your neighbours will need to agree between you who will apply for the permit and how you share the use of the permit.

How it works

The Council will collect your garden waste every two weeks (fortnightly) after you have bought and received your permit. You will get information about what day and week your collections will be along with your permit. Your collection day and week is printed on your permit tag.

1. Subscribe by filling in the form here: www.islington.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/recycling/garden-waste-recycling and pay the fee.
2. You will get a garden waste permit in the post.
3. Attach the permit to the handle of your reusable garden waste sack(s). You can have up to three bags per property with each permit.
4. Your bag(s) must be left within the boundary of your property by 8am on your collection day.

Each permit allows you to use three garden waste sacks per collection. You can have up to three permits per property.

Cost

- £75 a year.
- £37.50 a year if you receive Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support or Universal Credit - you'll need to tell us your support number when you sign up.
- This pays for up to 26 collections - one every two weeks (fortnightly) - at £2.88 per collection (£1.44 discounted rate) starting from when the service began on 2 April 2024. You will be paying for fewer collections if you sign up and pay after this date.

Collection days and weeks

- Check your garden waste tag for your collection day (Monday to Friday) and week (either 1/A or 2/B).
- Your collection day will normally be the same day as your recycling and refuse day, but every two weeks.
- You can check your next collection day by scanning the QR code that came with your tag with any smartphone.
- You can check dates for week 1/A or 2/B under 'more information'.



Order reusable garden waste sacks

These are green or brown hessian sacks that you can use for garden waste. You can order up to three bags for free on Islington's website: www.islington.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/recycling-and-rubbish-collections/recycling-and-rubbish-containers-guide/garden-waste-recycling-bags

If you don't need a collection every two weeks

The price is a flat fee of £75 but you don't need to leave bags out every fortnight. You can subscribe to the service any time, but you will receive fewer collections.



What you can recycle

- Grass clippings.
- Leaves.
- Plants and prunings.
- Garden weeds.
- Small tree branches.
- Hedge trimmings.



What you can't recycle

- Soil.
- Food waste.
- Bricks or rubble.
- Plastic plant pots or bags.
- Large tree branches.
- Any other non-garden waste like oil canisters.





Resident Support Scheme

Islington's Resident Support Scheme provides support to residents facing severe financial hardship and in need of one off or temporary help with urgent living costs.

The scheme brings together several funding streams - aimed at helping those in financial hardship - into one single pot, with a single application process. This makes it easier for residents in crisis to apply for help.

The scheme provides a safety net to Islington residents who find themselves in severe financial hardship and are unable to afford basic necessities or living costs.

It provides one off or short-term support to help in an immediate crisis and puts residents in touch with other support that can help in the longer-term.

What the Resident Support Scheme can provide

- **Crisis provision** - grants in the form of vouchers to buy food and fuel (energy) for those in crisis
- **Community Care grants** - for vulnerable residents to meet the costs of purchasing or replacing essential household items
- **Council tax reduction** - a contribution towards Council Tax bill for those in exceptional circumstances

- **Discretionary Housing Payments** - some residents claiming housing benefit or housing support through Universal Credit may be eligible for support with housing costs. This could include help to meet any shortfall in rent as a result of Bedroom Tax, Benefit Cap or Local Housing Allowance, rent deposits, helps with removal costs.

Who can apply

- Residents who are in severe financial hardship and who do not have access to alternative funding or savings may be eligible for an award.
- An award for crisis provision will not normally be paid if you are in receipt of a welfare benefit, including Universal Credit, ESA, JSA, IS and Tax Credits.
- Not everyone will be eligible - we will ask applicants a series of questions to see if they are eligible for help through the scheme. The operation of the scheme is at the Councils discretion and applicants do not have an automatic right to an award.

Applying to the scheme

Please contact Partners on **0800 587 3595** or enquiries@partnersislington.net to discuss and we will complete an application form on your behalf.

Handypersons Scheme

Islington Council's handypersons scheme can carry out small repairs around the home. These might be things that the Partners' repairs service would not normally cover.

Here are examples of the services they can provide:

- Home maintenance, for example, fitting curtain rails or shelves, assembling flat pack furniture, fitting lightbulbs, fixing minor problems with doors and windows.
- Plumbing such as plumbing in washing machines, repair of minor leaks to taps and sink waste.
- Fitting security measures like door and window locks, spyholes and chains, and hinge bolts.

This is not a complete list. Please contact the team to find out if the repair you need is covered by the scheme.

Eligibility

- The service is for older residents and those with a disability.
- Carers who get Carer's Allowance or Direct Payments can also use the service.

- You do not need to live in a council property to be eligible.
- The service does not cover repairs that are the responsibility of a Partners.

Charges for the service

There are two rates.

- Rate for households on low income, receiving a means-tested benefit: £10 per hour
- Rate 2 for households not on low income: £25 per hour

If you are eligible for the low-income rate, there is a free 15-minute service for quick jobs such as changing light bulbs.

The team will advise you on eligibility and the rate you will be charged. Please be ready to show proof of benefits you get if this applies to you.

Contact the team on:

- From landline phone: **0800 694 3344**, then press option 6
- From a mobile phone: **020 7527 5400**, then press option 6
- Email: **repairs@islington.gov.uk**



Window Restrictors

Many of the windows in your homes are sash windows.

We install window restrictors in your sash windows and some others, depending on their style and height to limit the amount that they can open. This is because opening them fully could be dangerous. A Partners resident recently ended up in hospital after falling from a window which they had removed the restrictors from.

Please do not remove your window restrictors. They are there to protect you. If you have removed them, please put them back.

If you have any issues with your restrictors not working or you think they need to be installed, please contact our Repairs Team on **0800 587 3595** or email **enquiries@partnersislington.net**.



Help us learn from our complaints

Partners' Complaints Panel is a group of resident volunteers who have kindly agreed to review a selection of our complaint responses twice a year and give us feedback on any improvements they identify.

Panel members are sent two complaints and Partners' response to them and are asked to complete a questionnaire which asks whether they think we've understood the complaint, demonstrated empathy, offered appropriate solutions, and apologised if appropriate.

We can meet online or in person to discuss the complaints and the information is sent both via email and in the post.

The purpose of the Panel is to help us improve our complaint handling and reduce the number of residents who are not happy with our response to their complaint.

Two reviews have been completed so far and you can read the reports on our website here: www.partnersislington.net/get-involved/complaints-panel/

If you're interested in joining the Complaints Panel, please contact Katrina Dalby on enquiries@partnersislington.net or **020 7288 7733**.

Thank you to the residents who've already joined the Panel.



Date for Your Diary

This year's Partner's residents' Christmas party will be on Wednesday 4 December 2024. The party will be at the same venue as last year, The Lift, White Lion Street.

To book your place please contact Katrina Dalby on Katrina.dalby@partnersislington.net or **020 7288 7733**.

Leaseholders Email Alerts

Leaseholders! You can register for automated email alerts notifying you when a Section 20 or Final Account has been posted.

Sign up by emailing PFIHOT@partnersislington.net with your name, address and the email address you'd like us to use.

We'll record your details and when we post you a S20 or Final Account you'll get an email telling you it's on its way. If you don't receive the item after 10 days, contact us and we'll issue a replacement.

If we email you a Section 20 or Final Account, it will be done using a secure service called 'WeTransfer'. This will ensure that your

documents are safe. You will be asked to click on to open your files and the WeTransfer website looks like this:



If you have any questions about this service, please contact our Home Ownership Team on **0800 587 3595** or enquiries@partnersislington.net.






How are we doing?

Last year we asked residents at our Open Forum and via Partners Gazette what kind of information you'd like to regularly see on how well our service is performing. We created a feedback page on our website based on the suggestions you made here:

www.partnersislington.net/how-are-partners-performing

If there's anything different you'd like to see on this page or if you have any questions about the information please contact Partners Service Improvement and Engagement Team on **0800 587 3595** or enquiries@partnersislington.net.

Here is May's performance, the website is updated monthly:

Partners for Improvement in Islington		May 2024 Performance
<p><u>Repairs completed on time</u></p> <p>% of individual repairs completed on time</p> <p>99.82%</p> <p>Target: 95%</p> 	<p><u>Gas Supply</u></p> <p>% of rented dwellings with Gas supply, with CP12 under 1 year old</p> <p>99.88%</p> 	<p><u>How quickly we reply to your emails, letters and online forms</u></p> <p>Standard correspondence answered in under 10 working days</p> <p>184 out of 188</p> <p>97.87% </p> <p>Complaints answered in under 10 working days</p> <p>5 out of 5</p> <p>100% </p> <p>Target: 96%</p>
<p><u>Resident Satisfaction with Repairs</u></p> <p>Resident Satisfaction with repairs 99.29%</p> <p>Target 75%</p> <p>Calculated using resident responses from telephone surveys, Operative's PDAs and returned satisfaction cards.</p> <p><small>**Maximum 75% achievable for PDA's and Maximum 25% for Telephone Surveys.</small></p>		<p><u>Checking the Safety of your Communal Area</u></p> <p>Communal Area Risk Assessments (CARAs)</p> <p>211 carried out so far this year</p> <p>Aim: 774 by 31 March 2025</p> <p>% of CARA's completed YTD 27.26% </p>



Check www.partnersislington.net for up-to-date information on how we're performing against the targets set by Islington council.

If you have a vulnerability which affects the how you would prefer to receive services from us, now or in the future, please tell us so that we can record your preferences. Contact our Housing Team on **0800 587 3595** or enquiries@partnersislington.net. This information will allow us to try to meet your requirements and if your needs cannot be met, we will tell you clearly why and work with you to find a reasonable solution.



Partners Open Forum 2024

We continue to meet via Zoom with some in person meetings, in agreement with the attendees. Always check our website www.partnersislington.net for up-to-date information about the meetings and details of which Partners teams will be represented. A member of Islington Council's Clienting Team also usually attends.

Thanks to everyone who attended our May meeting where with representatives from the Council's Fire Safety team we discussed their programme to deliver fire safety detection improvements.



Meeting dates for the remainder of the year:

19 September, 21 November 2024.

If you have any questions about the Open Forum, please contact Katrina Dalby on enquiries@partnersislington.net or **0800 587 3595**.

Partners Text Message Surveys

In our last edition we told you that we were introducing a new way to get feedback on our services from you via text messages.

Every Wednesday we send a text message satisfaction survey to all residents who've called us the previous week. If you don't respond to the message within 72 hours a follow up reminder text will be sent.

If you don't want to receive texts from us the message will include an opt out link. Alternatively you can contact us on **0800 587 3595** or enquiries@partnersislington.net and let us know that you don't want to receive texts.

Here are the results from May's text message surveys:



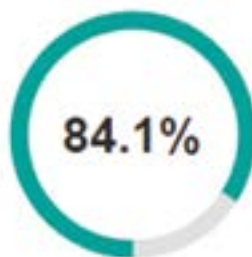
TOTAL RECORDS



INVITES SENT



LISTENED & RESPECTED



HELPFUL INFORMATION



SATISFIED OVERALL

HELP ON YOUR DOORSTEP
GOOD NEIGHBOURS SCHEME



COMMUNITY

FUN
DAY

SAT 24TH AUGUST 2024 1PM -4PM

HIGH CUBITT COMMUNITY CENTRE
& OUTDOOR PRIORY GREEN ESTATE SPACE
48 COLLIER STREET N1 9QZ

FACE PAINTING, BOUNCY CASTLE,
HENNA TATTOOIST, ARTS & CRAFTS,
FUN GAMES, KIDS FOOTBALL, BOXING,
ZUMBA, SEATED EXERCISE, INFORMATION STALLS,
FOOD & REFRESHMENTS,
& MUCH MORE!

ALL FREE!

For more information contact Gita on: 07884887033

Email: Ggupta@helponyourdoorstep.com

THIS EVENT IS FUNDED BY PEABODY HOUSING &
ISLINGTON GIVING



DISABILITY SWIMMING COMMUNITY



SOCIAL & SAFE

Old St: Tuesday 7.15pm
Barbican: Wednesday 6.15pm £2 per session

Our team of volunteers provide:
1:1 support, motivation and a friendly face.
Adults of all disabilities and abilities are welcome.

Info & apply at www.WeSwim.club
Contact: cameron@weswim.club

When we call you, we will always give you our name and say we're calling from Partners.

If you are concerned that a caller who says they're from Partners isn't from Partners, please end the call and call us back on **0800 587 3595** or **020 7288 8310** so we can investigate.



Please treat Partners staff with respect. When you call, we must ask you for information to make sure that we understand your query and can transfer you to the right team. **Please be patient, we want to help. Staff will end a call if a resident continues to be rude or offensive.**

How to contact us

You can contact any of our teams by email at enquiries@partnersislington.net or by phone on 0800 587 3595 or 020 7288 8310

You can also reach us through our website at www.partnersislington.net/contact-us

If you want to contact us by post, our postal address is 4-6 Colebrooke Place, N1 8HZ and our Freepost address is Partners for improvement in Islington, FREEPOST NATE 1235, London N1 8BR.

Where to find us

Our Main reception is at 4-6 Colebrooke Place, N1 8HZ and is open between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday (closed Bank Holidays)



PARTNERS



Tell us what you think! We want to know...

Partners wants to receive your comments, complaints and compliments. You can tell us what you think about our services or your experience of our services in a number of ways:

- Correspondence • Letter
- Over the telephone
- E-mail • In person • Website