

# Nottingham City Homes

# New Lease

The newsletter for Nottingham city leaseholders

July 2011



## New media – survey results are in!

In the last issue of 'New Lease' we included a survey, asking your opinion on the use of 'new media' in our service, such as e-mailing non-formal notices.

We also sent the survey to more than 200 customers by e-mail. Thanks to all of you who responded and took the time to give us your views.

### The survey showed us:

- 70% of respondents would be happy to receive letters, documents and newsletters by e-mail.
- 50% would be happy to receive text messages about communal repairs and possible future events
- 77% would like to be able to access their service charges and account balances from our website
- 31% would like to see us develop a smart phone application to enable them to view their account or find out about repairs
- 18% would be interested in paying an annual subscription to use our internal repairs service
- 32% would be interested in hiring Nottingham City Homes to help find them a suitable tenant for their leasehold property.

These results, along with your comments from the management and administration fee consultation are directly affecting the way we shape our future service.

*The future? Your smart phone could hold 'apps' – linking you directly to our services...*



### In this issue:

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Taking care and staying safe

Get advice in St Ann's

How to raise a communal repair

and more...

Leasehold and Rechargeable Repairs Team: 0115 915 7385  
E-mail: [leaseholders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:leaseholders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

Rents Contact Centre (for service charge payments): 0115 915 4920

# A word from the Chair



Welcome to the latest edition of New Lease.

Recently there have been some important changes made to improve the services we get from Nottingham City Homes. The Leasehold and Rechargeable Repairs Team (LRRT) now manages the buildings insurance scheme on behalf of the council. We hope this will make it easier for you to raise queries about insurance and service charges at the same time.

It's great to see so many of you paying your service charges and insurance either by Direct Debit or debit/credit card.

It is really important that as customers we get involved with Nottingham City Homes to help look at new ways to improve the service. We are holding our next Leaseholder Forum on Monday, 1 August at 14 Hounds Gate, Nottingham from 5pm – so why not come along?

Minutes from all the previous meetings can be found on the website [www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk) – in the Get Involved section, click on 'Consultation Forums' and you will find a section on the Leaseholder Forum. There is now also a surgery held from 4.30pm until 5pm, where you can speak to a member of the team and raise personal issues before the meeting starts.

Kate Bowley  
Chair, Leaseholder Forum

## Do you have the right insurance?

The Leasehold Team will now be managing all building insurance enquiries.

Under the terms of your lease, you must take out basic insurance which covers the structure and exterior of the building. Please check your lease to see if the responsibility to insure is Nottingham City Council's or your own. But if something happened inside your property, would the basic insurance cover you?

Last year during one of the coldest winters on record, a number of you contacted us to say frozen and burst pipes had caused damage to the inside of your property. Unfortunately, some of you didn't have sufficient insurance to pay for the damage.

**Don't let this happen to you!**

We offer top up cover which protects the interior, fixtures and fittings of the property. Interested? Call the Leasehold Team on **0115 915 7385** for more details.

**Contents cover**

Did you know you can use the same low cost contents insurance scheme as our tenants? For an application form, please contact our Rents Team on **0115 915 7161** or e-mail: [rents@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:rents@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk).



## Get advice in St Ann's

In these tough financial times, many of us have concerns about employment, welfare benefits, debt and rising fuel costs.

There is help on hand right here in the city – and it is absolutely **FREE!** The St Ann's Advice Centre, based at the Neighbourhood Centre, Robin Hood Chase, St Ann's, Nottingham, can offer advice and guidance on a range of these issues.

Call them on **0115 950 6867** or e-mail: [info@stannsadvic.org.uk](mailto:info@stannsadvic.org.uk) to find out more.

# CHANGES AT HOUNDS GATE

We are currently building a new call centre on the ground floor at our offices on Hounds Gate.

This means we no longer have meeting rooms available to speak to you face-to-face.

If you would prefer to speak to us in person, we can arrange a meeting either at the library on Angel Row, your nearest housing office or we can visit you at home.

But the easiest and quickest way to resolve your issue is to call the LRRT on **0115 915 7385** or e-mail: [leaseholders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:leaseholders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk).

# Management and administration fee

In April we sent you a 'notice of intention' about our proposals to change the management and administration fee calculation.

We asked for your comments and feedback on our proposals. If you raised a query with us, you will have already received a full response. You can see the queries raised, and the responses we gave on our website:

[www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk/leaseholders](http://www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk/leaseholders). You will shortly be receiving the second stage of the consultation outlining our proposals of a new system and estimated charges.

To receive a hard copy of the comments, contact the LRRT on **0115 915 7385**, or e-mail: [leaseholders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:leaseholders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk).



# Taking care and staying safe

At the start of July we sent you a consultation notice about the maintenance contract for care and fire alarms.

We have to inform every leaseholder when a contract is up for renewal if:

- Any leaseholder might have to contribute more than £100 annually
- Or if we might in the future use the contractor for communal works which could cost each leaseholder more than £250.

We know the majority of you don't currently benefit from this service. But there may be an option in the future for leaseholders to take advantage of this scheme or a requirement to install further fire alarms in communal areas in the future.

If you would like to comment on this contract, please follow the instructions in the 'notice of intention' which you will have received through the post.



# PAYING YOUR SERVICE CHARGES

We would like to thank those of you who agreed payment within the credit terms of the invoices. Unfortunately not all of you believe you should pay your service charges.

If you have been contacted by Philips Collection Services it will be due to you having outstanding amounts which after many failed attempts by Nottingham City Homes, still remain unpaid. In these circumstances we have passed the outstanding arrears to our chosen external collection agency, Philips.

If you have been contacted by Philips you will need to follow their procedures and make contact and payments directly to them. Their details are below:



Philips Collection Services, PO Box 231, Darlington, Co Durham DL1 9GG **Telephone:** 0844 800 4588

We must stress the importance of paying outstanding invoices. If you are having problems with your finances please contact the LRRT to discuss your issues. If you ignore the problem it won't go away!

# want to sell up?

If you are considering selling your leasehold property, there are some rules you have to consider:

- If you bought your property through the Right to Buy scheme and want to sell within the five year 'reference period' (usually the first five years of the lease) you will have to pay back some of your discount. For more information on selling your flat during this period, please contact the Right to Buy Team at Nottingham City Council on **0115 876 4386**
- If you sell your property on the open market, you or your solicitors should tell the conveyancing section at Nottingham City Council (**0115 876 4347**) who will inform us of the sale and change of assignment of the property
- You must contact Nottingham City Council if you sell your property. If you don't, we will continue to issue correspondence in your name and, without the property being re-assigned, you will still be liable for any charges outstanding.

## How to raise a communal repair

To report a communal repair, such as guttering on your block, or lighting in corridors, please report directly to our repairs contact centre.

To help our operative locate the position of the repair, you need to make it clear that you are reporting a communal repair on your block, and provide the block code which is on your invoice (for example, Newark Crescent block D (20 – 36) would be 290012430D).

Alternatively, you can text REPAIRS followed by your name, address and the repair you want to report, to 80800. Communal Repairs are not allocated a specific appointment date.

We are not responsible for your internal repairs. But if you contact the LRRT directly, we may be able to carry out the work and recharge you. Please note, Nottingham City Homes holds the right to not provide a quote for internal repairs.

