

**Minutes of Regional Consumer Panel Meeting  
Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009 at 6.00pm – 8.00pm  
Island House Community Centre**

<b>Members present:</b>		
	Tony Ford (TF)	Nadia Maywood (NM)
	Dave Keeley (DK)	Jan Bros (JB)
	Sammy Samuels (SS)	Claire Higgins (CH)
	Emmanuel Ejimonyeabala (EE)	Pam Cole (PC) <i>Board Representative</i>
	Jill Skeels (JS)	
<b>OHG:</b>	Michelle Mulcare – Jennifer Jones – Barbara Wellington - Christine Foley -	Group Community Investment Manager OHG Chair (MM) Community Investment Officer – OHG – Secretary (JJ) Service Improvement Officer – OHG (BW) Housing Services Manager – Island Homes (CF)
<b>Guest's:</b>	Amanda Ball -	Group Income Manager – OHG (AB)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mary Graham - Christine Foley -	Your Shout Communications Housing Services Manager – Island Homes

<b>MINUTES</b>		
<b>Minutes from previous meeting – Agreed</b>		
<b>Matters arising from minutes – Amendment to notes made.</b>		
		<b>Action</b>
1.	Welcome and Introductions	
1.0	MM introduced herself to Panel Members and welcomed Clair Higgins and Pam Cole.	
1.1	MM introduced Amanda Ball to Panel Members.	

1.2	<b>Income Presentation:</b>  AB read gave Panel Members a copy of her presentation and read through it and asked for comments.	
2.	SS asked how the water charges were divided up between Leaseholder and Tenants.	
2.0	AB stated that Leaseholders paid their Water Charges Direct to the Water Board and that Tenants paid for their water within their Service Charges.	
3.	JS Stated that leaseholder's service charge payments were not hitting their accounts.	<b>AB</b>
3.0	AB stated that as there was a three card system this should not be the case.	
3.1	MM stated that residents must ensure that they use the right card for the service i.e. Garage Hire, Rent or Service Charge.	
3.2	JS Stated that there are a lot of issues affecting all residence on this issue of payments not hitting the correct account.	
3.3	DK stated that he had received a letter which contained the incorrect account number details.	
3.4	MM suggested that as this appeared to be a problem affecting a few leaseholders that AB should take JS case as an example to track down any problems with the system. <b>Action: AB to contact JS</b>	
3.5	EE How are tenants charged for water? When in one family you may have three persons and in another you have six.	
3.6	AB it's based on property size.	
3.7	AB stated that Housing Benefit Credits should only show one week's arrears with the new Bac's System from Housing Benefit to Island Homes.	
3.8	NM asked if your rent is paid monthly would it still show one to two weeks in arrears.	
3.9	AB Stated that if you are paying monthly then your weekly rent/charges should be multiplied by 52 weeks and divided by 12 months.	
3.10	EE what date do you pay your rent when paying monthly.	
3.11	AB stated that Rent is due on the first of every month.	

3.12	AB All payments made between Monday and Friday, are credited within that week.	
3.13	TF Stated that statements do not read correctly as they state credit arrears, credit arrears.	
3.14	AB stated that she would take this back to the office. <b>Action AB to take back to the office for feedback</b>	<b>AB</b>
3.15	MM asked AB how many residents attended Surgeries.	
3.16	AB stated that the take up is quite good.	
3.17	EE stated that residents should cross check their payments and not worry if a statement has not taken in to account a payment, as long as it has been paid.	
3.18	AB stated that there is a closing balance stated on statements.	
3.19	TF Stated that residents have put their views over to OHG on the process of collection, but that they are not listening.	
3.20	NM asked if a resident is two weeks in arrears, what the turn around for an arrears letter is.	
3.21	AB You receive a reminder letter after two weeks (see page two of hand out)	
3.22	CH asked what happens with Special Needs Residents etc.	
3.23	AB We have some information on residents needs and are currently collecting more with the residents profile form. <b>Action: Panel Members to be sent a copy.</b>	<b>JJ</b>
3.24	MM stated that this showed how important it was that that resident took the time to complete the Resident Profile Form.	
3.25	CH suggested that door knocking is also undertaken.	
3.26	MM Agreed.	
3.27	JB Suggested that an audit of vulnerable residents is carried out	
3.28	MM Agreed.	
3.29	MM Handed out the Toynbee 'Housing and Debt Advice' leaflet, and confirmed that the number was correct.	
3.30	MM stated that OHG also run Money Matters Classes.	
3.31	CH asked if tenets could have metered water.	

3.32	AB Not at present, although OHG are in talks with Thames Water.	
3.33	DK Asked when do the rent charge cease after death.	
3.34	AB four weeks notice is required.	
3.35	DK How is the former tenant or family meant to know that they are going to die and give four weeks notice.	
3.36	JS Pointed out those families are under a lot of stress during times of bereavement and asked if the bereaved family could not be given two weeks compassionate leave.	
3.37	AB Our governors would not agree to this.	
3.38	PC asked for figures on the amount of tenants who had gained their tenancy by a succession. <b>Action: MM to feed back to Panel Members.</b>	<b>MM</b>
3.39	MM asked Panel Members if they would find a copy of the succession procedure helpful – Panel Members Agreed <b>Action: MM to provide copies at the next meeting</b>	<b>MM</b>
3.40	MM Stated that other organisation have the same policy as OHG.	
3.41	NM can tenants bequeath their tenancies to someone.	
3.42	MM and AB stated that this was not possible.	
3.43	CH That someone from Leasehold Services be in attendance at a meeting to answer questions.	
3.44	MM stated that she would be asking Steve Schollar again to attend a scheduled meeting to answer questions on Leasehold Services <b>Action: MM to invite Steve Schollar</b>	<b>MM</b>
3.45	TF stated that considering the figures in the presentation handout – a zero tolerance could be understood.	
3.46	MM suggested the panel might find it beneficial to benchmark against other organisations and feed back to the group with any ideas that they have <b>Action: Panel Members to feed back.</b>	<b>ALL</b>
3.47	CH why should we care, it's an OHG concern not ours if residents fail to pay – panel members disagreed and stated that none payments affected service delivery and cost's.	
3.48	PC stated that any Benchmarking must be alongside a similar organisation.	
3.49	SS asked how the organisation goes about resolving issues arising from subletting.	

3.50	MM stated she would get leasehold services to feed back on this. <b>Action: MM to liaise with Leasehold Services.</b>	<b>MM</b>
3.51	PC asked what the planning process was for leaseholders.	
3.52	DK asked that a specific question is put to them to answer: “What is the process to making a change of use from multiple occupations to multiple uses”.	
3.53	MM stated that she would make every attempt someone from Tower Hamlets Planning Dept to attend a meeting and give a response to the question poised. <b>Action: MM to invite Tower Hamlets Planning Manager/Officer to an Island Homes Regional Consumer Panel Meeting.</b>	<b>MM</b>
3.54	DK Suggested that OHG put in water meters, which would result in Thames Water having to bill individual tenants and chase for arrears.	
4.	<b>Former Tenants Arrears:</b>	
4.0	AB read gave Panel Members a copy of her presentation and read through it and asked for comments.	
4.1	NM asked AB if the OHG had any major concerns in this area.	
4.2	AB stated that there were no concerns at the moment, and that OHG did chase arrears but would also write them off.	
4.3	TF asked if OHG sold on Debts.	
4.4	AB replied that they did not, but they only paid debt collectors if they recouped the debt.	
4.5	CH asked what investigation the OHG had made to find out why residents got in to debt.	
4.6	AB that is a question that would be addressed within the action plan framework i.e. Surveys.	
4.7	MM asked about the new ways available to pay to residents.	
4.8	AB stated that Direct Debit Payment were on their way in, and that recently they have introduced payment by Credit Card, Debit Card over the phone and on online.	
4.9	AB stated that soon Rent Accounts would be available on line.	
4.10	MM reminded Panel Members to contact AB directly with any further questions or concerns.	

<p>5.</p> <p>5.0</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p><b>Service Standards:</b></p> <p>MM gave Panel Members a copy of the Service Standards Document and Highlighted Key Points and asked for comments.</p> <p>Panel members requested more time. <b>Action: Panel Members to feedback to Holly Brown by Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009.</b></p> <p>TF asked if the document was for all residents to feed back on or just tenants.</p> <p>MM stated that it was for all residents.</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p> <p>6.7</p> <p>6.8</p>	<p><b>AOB:</b></p> <p>MM Stated that as there are a number of issues around the call centre and service delivery, would the Panel find a visit there and the opportunity to ask question useful – Panel Members agreed <b>Action: MM and JJ to arrange by September 2009</b></p> <p>MM inform Panel Members that more Mystery Shoppers where required to perform spot inspections, and stated that training would be given.</p> <p>SS Stated that inspections should be random without notice.</p> <p>MM stated that dates are published to allow residents to attend.</p> <p>SS stated that ID should be worn when conducting Estate Inspections.</p> <p>MM stated that if a resident is representing OHG they would be given ID.</p> <p>MM Apologised for Tabled Documents.</p> <p>MM Informed Panel Members that the Community Chest Applications are now available on request or on the OHG Website or Local Offices.</p>	<p><b>MM/JJ</b></p>
	<p><b>Next Meeting:</b></p> <p>The date and time of the next Island Homes Regional Consumer Panel Meeting is</p> <p>Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at 6.00pm – 8.00pm</p> <p>@</p> <p><b>Docklands Sailing &amp; Watersports Centre</b>  <b>235a Westferry Road</b>  <b>Isle of Dogs</b>  <b>London</b>  <b>E14 3QS</b></p> <p><b>Tel: 020 7537 2626</b></p>	