

# OpenDoor



Young residents show  
us how it's done

Newsletter for all Southern Housing Group residents

## Winter 2011

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More than 80 young residents joined us at Glaziers Hall in London Bridge on 27 October, to give us their perspective on housing.

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# Involving all ages

“Last year, more than 5,600 of you took the time to take part in our resident involvement work.”

says Chief Executive Tom Dacey

We were delighted to host our first-ever youth conference in October, attended by more than 80 young residents aged between 10 and 25, who gave us their perspective on current housing issues.

They also discussed topics that are important to them, including anti-social behaviour and the physical environment, and gave us helpful feedback. Having our young residents identify concerns in the various housing fields we work in, and then present recommendations for the way forward, provides a clear message and direction for the Group when we come to shape future services and programmes.

Our Social and Economic Regeneration Department also held their second annual ‘Unlocking the Potential of People Awards’, which celebrated and recognised those residents who have made a positive difference to their communities.

It was an incredibly successful event and highlighted some of the great

work that our residents do and cemented our commitment to helping you achieve even more next year!

Internally we are also increasing our efforts to improve the services we offer you. Last year, more than 5,600 of you took the time to take part in our resident involvement work, providing valuable feedback on how we can improve and develop the work we do. All this information will go towards shaping our future services and help us to work with you to influence ‘local offers’. On page 10, you can read about how residents at Beaver Court sheltered scheme in Ashford in Kent have already been doing this.

We have also recently started a major review of resident services, looking at how we handle your calls to the Service Centre and our regional arrangements for responding to areas such as anti-social behaviour, lettings and estate/scheme matters. Our aims are to improve your experience of the



service we provide, achieve efficiencies and enable resident services staff to focus more on what matters to residents. We will report back on what changes we plan to make in future editions of Open Door.

The coming year will no doubt bring a new set of challenges with it in terms of changes to legislation and funding, but ‘unlocking the potential of people and places’ will remain a priority for us in 2012 and onwards.

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Our performance



# News update

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me&shg



Southern  
Housing  
Group



## me&shg new portal goes live!

**me&shg is the new name for the resident self-service section of our website. It gives you 24/7 access to your account details. You can also pay your rent online and request a repair.**

The name given to the new site was inspired by a suggestion from Mr K Griffin from Basingstoke, who received £50 in high street vouchers.

"me&shg is really catchy and relevant," said Andy French, who oversees the online service. "We are very pleased that residents were involved in naming the new site."

The new-look site replaces 'See my Data'. It provides 24-hour access to your rent account information, repairs history and account details, as well as the facility to make online rent

payments or request a repair. Residents who sign up to the site could also win one of our prize draws. Winners to date include: Ms Jacy Reid from Fulham, Mrs Wilma Walpole from Rochester and Mr David Clark from the Isle of Wight.

**It's easy to sign up to the new site. Visit [www.shgroup.org.uk/ResLogin](http://www.shgroup.org.uk/ResLogin) and follow the instructions.**

News



Before & after: residents work together at Cyprus Street. Photos by Emily Shepherd.

## Snapped up: Emily's winning shot

**Emily Shepherd from Bethnal Green sent in the winning entry for our photo competition. Not only did she win herself £25 of vouchers, but her photo was pictured in the Annual Report to Residents.**

Pam Bhamra, Director of Housing and Resident Services, said: "In total we received over 60 entries. We were very

impressed with the range of photos sent in and it was a tough decision to find a winner!

"In the end we thought Emily's photo was a great example of what residents and staff can achieve when they come together on community projects, such as the one on Cyprus Street."



Left to right: Green Doctors Ola Alawa, Tony Arowolo, Kris Dzeglelewski (Breyers), Robert Allan and Jermaine Isiguzo.

## Green Doctors save residents money

### Top tips:

"When you get hot, don't immediately open the windows - turn your thermostat down instead."

**Jermaine Isiguzo**

"Be conscious of how long you are in the shower for. Could you use a low-flow shower head instead?"

**Anne Marsden**

"Don't keep your TV on standby!"

**Tony Arowolo**

Five London residents, recruited and trained as Green Doctors by Groundwork, an environmental charity, have been helping London residents reduce their fuel bills.

The Green Doctors were trained to provide energy-saving advice, tips on selecting the best energy tariff and how to make simple changes to help reduce residents' fuel bills.

Between February and August 2011 they carried out over 650 home energy visits to residents, installing over 4,700 energy-saving devices, reducing carbon emissions from each property by 0.2 tonnes and saving each household approximately £50 a year on their fuel bills. That's a total saving of more than £30,000!

The service was provided free of charge and measures installed included energy-saving light bulbs, draught-proofing, power-down plugs, low-flow shower heads and radiator panels.

The enthusiasm and determination of the Green Doctors helped to ensure the project was a huge success and through their training and visits they have undergone a huge learning experience, becoming experts in energy advice. We are currently evaluating the project and considering whether it could be rolled out to the rest of the Group's regions.

### Our Green Doctors are:

- Anne Marsden
- Jermaine Isiguzo
- Tony Arowolo
- Robert Allan
- Ola Alawa.

# Young residents show us how it's done

**Some of our youngest residents ensured their voices were heard during a recent lively youth conference.**

More than 80 young residents from across the Group, aged five to 25, gathered at Glaziers Hall in London Bridge on 27 October, to provide a young person's perspective on housing.

The planning and coordination of the event was entrusted to a select group of young residents, who were overseen by community interest company KSinProgress.

The day challenged young people to set up their own housing association, decide on a name, vision and charter and discuss key housing-related issues including anti-social behaviour, the physical environment, community involvement and personal development.

The individual teams then presented recommendations to a panel of

Southern Housing Group staff, including Chief Executive Tom Dacey, outlining the support, consultation and projects they would like to see us consider in the future.

KSinProgress Director and Co-Founder, Keji Okeowo, said the event gave young people an opportunity to express their views.

"We were privileged to work alongside a group of dedicated young residents who contributed their own experiences and advice to ensure it was an engaging, fun and insightful event. The commitment shown by the young residents, both in the planning process and on the day, was very impressive."

Resident, Sophie Kelly, 18, felt the event had gone well.

"Both the young people who attended and those who helped out, took away new knowledge and experiences that will be sure to help them in the future."



Abubakar Siddique and Shola Arowosekila from the organising committee.

## Skills day gives job seekers a helping hand



**Thirteen lucky residents spent a day brushing up their employment skills with the help of one of the world's leading professional business services firms, PwC.**

The residents, all currently receiving support from our London and Thames Gateway employment advisors, were invited to attend and benefit from the experience. They were put through their paces with workshops on interview skills, CV surgeries and mock-interviews.

For PwC this was part of a nationwide community day, on the theme of employability. When they offered to share their skills to help our residents prepare for and find suitable employment, our Southern Works team, which works with residents looking to get into employment, snapped up their offer.

Following his participation in the volunteering event, Tony Hodgson, sponsoring PwC partner said: "It was a privilege to welcome Southern Housing Group and some of their residents into one of our London offices. I know that every PwC volunteer took a great amount of pride, satisfaction and enjoyment in being able to help our guests work on their confidence and preparedness to get back into work."

# Our 'Oscar' nominations

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Sub-let properties have been recovered, thanks to our strategy for tackling unauthorised occupancy

10

Resident volunteers have been central to our Computers in Communities project



Jean Cotterill (left) and Audrey Lees (right), from Courtney King House in Brighton, boost their IT skills.

**Two of the Group's projects were shortlisted in the UK housing awards 2011. Seen as the 'Oscars' of the housing world, these awards recognise excellence and outstanding achievement by housing associations in the UK.**

The Group's Tackling Unauthorised Occupancy Strategy was one of six entries shortlisted in the new Making the Best Use of Stock category. We have previously reported on this new strategy and how we have improved the ways we prevent and detect housing fraud. Last year, the Group recovered 11 properties that were being sub-let.

Our Computers in Communities project helps residents to improve their computer skills, giving them greater confidence to go online for professional and personal use. This project was shortlisted in the Supporting Social and Economic Inclusion category.

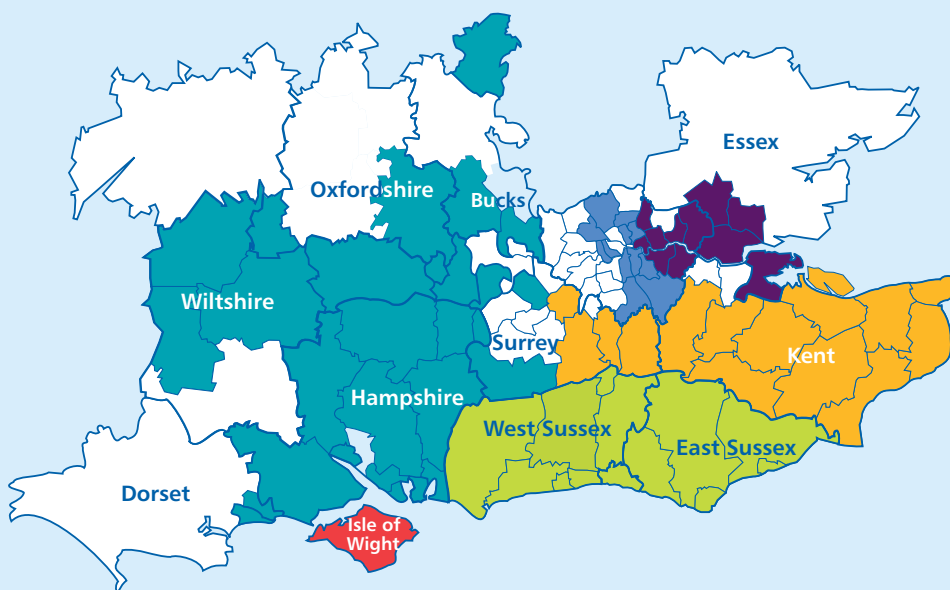
"Both projects benefit residents in our local communities and reflect that we are 'unlocking the potential of people and places'," said Anabel Palmer, Group Social and Economic Regeneration Director. Adding: "We were delighted to be shortlisted and this is a great achievement for us."

## Know your number Calls Direct goes west

Every Group resident will soon be able to contact contractors directly to report a repair, following the introduction of new Service Centre numbers. This will mean you will be offered a more suitable appointment straight away, as well as getting more accurate advice the first time you call.

Residents in the West region – the last to move to the new system – will be able to use their new number from January 2012. They will shortly be sent full details.

Our 0300 numbers are charged at the same rate as standard landline numbers, whether you make your call from a landline or a mobile.



London: Breyer Group	Thames Gateway: Axis Europe	Kent: MHS	South West: Axis Europe	Isle of Wight: Mountjoy	West: DW Contractors
0300 303 1061	0300 303 1062	0300 303 1773	0300 303 1063	0300 303 1772	0300 303 1064

## Talking your language

**We want to provide information in a way that meets your requirements, so that you don't miss out on important information about your home and the services we offer.**

To do this, we need to know how you would prefer us to communicate with you. For example, would you rather receive information electronically, in a larger print, or translated into another language.

Contact the Service Centre to ensure we have your preferences recorded.

## Switched on in West Sussex

### You said:

A resident told us about vandalism to light switches in the communal areas of Heron Court in West Sussex. The switches were being tampered with so that the lights stayed on all the time. This led to the switches becoming damaged and then breaking, meaning the lights could not be turned on at all.

### We did:

We replaced the lights with sensor lights, which respond to movement without the need for switches. As a result, there has been no more vandalism and the lights work effectively and are also energy efficient.

### Your feedback:

Once we completed the work we were contacted by a resident who said that she loved the new lighting. As she has mobility problems, she likes it that the lights now stay on all the way up the stairs.



## Fair and equal lettings

**We recently carried out an Equality Impact Assessment on our lettings process, which means that we checked whether it meets the requirements of all our residents and potential residents from an equality and diversity point of view.**

This involved looking at our internal processes from the first application or nomination stage to the successful letting of a home. We mainly offer homes based on housing need, but we need to know that, in a given period, the homes went to a fair range of those in housing need, when looked at from the point of view of race and ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

As well as carrying out an internal audit on our processes we also gathered resident feedback by conducting post-lettings phone surveys. And we took into account research carried out by other, independent, organisations.

Some of the things we want to make sure the process addresses are:

- ensuring the service is easy to access for all potential residents
- the specific needs of residents who need to move because of domestic violence or harassment, or who are going through a decant process, or moving due to underoccupation or overcrowding
- taking into account the communication and language preferences of residents by providing

information in alternative formats and languages where appropriate

- making sure we communicate key parts of the process
- ensuring there is proper monitoring to gather resident feedback.

One example is that we looked at the breakdown of lettings to residents from different ethnic groups across our regions. Whilst in London over 50% of homes are let to residents who are black or from an ethnic minority, the same can only be said of 1% of lettings on the Isle of Wight. However, this represents the demographic of people in housing need in those specific areas, so for now we do not need to take any action.

Overall we are pleased to say that the service is fair and equal to all and the assessment did not highlight any areas of discrimination. There were a few areas where we can improve, including:

- improving the information we provide
- improving our understanding of what customers want from our service
- continuing to work with local authorities to ensure our lettings process meets local housing need.

But what do you think? Do you have any feedback or suggestions? If so, contact us on 0300 303 1771 or email the Service Centre.



Residents discussing the issues at the conference we held in London last year.

Bengali Turkish

# Understanding what matters to residents

**Each year, Southern Housing Group carries out a programme of surveys aimed at understanding resident satisfaction and resident experiences of using our services. The surveys also capture residents' ideas on how those services can be improved.**

In 2010-11, approximately 5,600 surveys were completed by residents, providing important feedback and ideas for improvements in key service areas.

You can see the 2010-11 overall satisfaction results for each service, compared to the previous year's results, in the table provided on the opposite page.

Whilst it is important that we understand resident satisfaction with our services, it is equally important that this information is used to improve our services in the future.

All of our surveys ask residents to tell us what we need to do to improve the service they received. We are using residents' ideas and improvement suggestions to review our work and to plan improvements that matter to residents. On the next page, there are examples of improvement work that is underway.

## Your satisfaction levels – how they have changed

Service	Satisfied residents in 2009-10	Satisfied residents in 2010-11	Change since 2010
Aids and adaptations	87%	90%	+3%
Anti-social behaviour	53%	77%	+24%
Complaints handling	41%	41%	0%
External redecorations	84%	92%	+8%
Gas servicing	88%	94%	+6%
Lettings	87%	91%	+4%
Major works to homes	95%	86%	-9%
New homes	81%	90%	+9%
Rent payments	94%	94%	0%
Repairs	86%	84%	-2%
Sales and marketing	94%	90%	-4%



Taking part in the residents' conference.

## Improving your services – some current work

### Making good use of your complaints feedback

One of the key issues to come out of our complaints handling survey is that residents feel complaints take too long to be resolved.

In the coming three months, we will be looking at the time it takes to resolve each type of complaint. We will focus on the complaints that take the longest to resolve.



Our aim is to reduce the number of repeat complaints and the time taken to resolve them.

### Learning from your repairs feedback

Residents who completed our repairs surveys last year told us that repairs take too long to complete.



Each region is now looking at the longest beginning to end time by job type, to try to understand why some jobs take longer and to work out what action we can take.

### Using your major works feedback to keep standards high

Last year's major works to your home surveys gave us an 86% satisfaction score. But this was less than residents gave us the previous year.

One of the key concerns for residents is dissatisfaction with the quality of the work completed.

We have introduced a change to the process, so that in future we will ask residents to tell us straight away what they think about the quality of work done to their homes – rather than asking them after all the work at their scheme has been completed. This will mean that we can ask contractors to correct any problems before they leave the site.



In future editions of Open Door we will be reporting back on the progress we are making in using resident survey feedback to shape our service improvement work.

# Beaver Court residents shape 'Local Offer'

## Top tips:

1. Take part in your estate inspections

2. Let your neighbours know you are taking part

3. Call a meeting to discuss local concerns

## Beaver Court residents



Beaver Court residents from Ashford in Kent meet with staff and MHS contractors to have their say.

### Residents from Beaver Court sheltered scheme in Kent have been working with our Resident Services team and contractors to help plan next year's scheme improvements.

Beaver Court is home to 40 residents and has an active social committee. Members of the committee attend the scheme's regular estate inspections, organised by Resident Services Officer Andrew Millen. This gives them the chance to raise any problems at the scheme.

By working together, we have been able to understand the real needs of the people who live at Beaver Court. Using this information, a Local Offer for Beaver Court has been developed, which sets out what the scheme needs in terms of improvements, services and communication.

In September, our Resident Services team met with residents to present the Local Offer, before giving them the opportunity to talk through the draft plan with our partner contractors MHS. The final plan is likely to be put to residents at an open meeting in December, with work expected to start in spring 2012.

Resident Services Officer Andrew Millen said: "I am pleased that the residents have worked with us to draw up this Local Offer. For the most part, the requests are about improving the external environment, upgrades or repairs to the existing building and grounds, and we've picked up on these through our inspections.

"Working in partnership with residents is crucial to their satisfaction with the services we provide and their homes. Financial support from the Group's Environmental Improvement Funds will ensure that all needs identified can be delivered."

Secretary of the Social Committee Jack Cowen said: "We've worked closely with Andrew and the team to make sure that they know what we need and that they understand why we want it. If we didn't take part in meetings, or make sure residents are represented at estate inspections, the Group wouldn't be able to see things from our point of view."

### Want to get more involved in local issues?

Here are just a few suggestions from the residents at Beaver Court:

- Take part in your estate inspections. It's the best way of bringing any problems to our attention. Look out on your estate/scheme notice boards for the dates of your next one.
- If you're taking part, let your neighbours know. That way, people who are genuinely unable to attend may be able to pass their thoughts on to you.
- If you and your neighbours have some burning concerns, why not call a meeting and invite your local housing managers along to discuss what's on your mind.

# Affordable rent: a new type of tenure

**The government has made changes to the way newly built social housing is funded. At the same time, it has introduced a new tenure called 'affordable rent'.**

The new tenure allows housing associations like us to charge a rent of up to 80% of local market rent on new homes built as part of the Affordable Homes programme. Local market rent varies from place to place. It reflects the local cost of renting a property privately.

We plan to relet a number of our existing properties on affordable rent tenancies when they become empty. This will generate income that will help us continue to build new homes.

In May 2011, we put in a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for funding to develop around 550 new homes specifically for affordable rent tenants. We put a lot of work into ensuring this was an achievable and realistic bid and we were delighted when it was accepted.

## What does this mean for you?

If you are currently a tenant in one of our homes your tenancy and rent will not be affected.

## What does it mean for new Southern Housing Group residents?

Affordable rent may be more attractive to working households on low incomes. Applications can come from local authorities, choice-based lettings schemes, zone agents, our current waiting lists and external advertising.

New residents will be asked for a deposit. They will have to supply references and will receive a full inventory when they move in. We may be including additional fittings and fixtures, in recognition of the higher rent charge.

We will charge 60% of market rent in London and 80% outside London. The total amount payable in rent will be no more than 40% of the household's income.

## Will affordable rent residents get the same type of tenancy as existing residents?

No. There will be a fixed-term tenancy for affordable rent homes. This will be a 'starter' tenancy for one year, followed by a five-year fixed-term assured shorthold tenancy, providing there have been no breaches of the starter tenancy agreement.

Before the five years are over, we will visit the resident to

discuss options with them and check eligibility. They may be in a position to look at shared ownership options and we would be able to offer support with that, or they may sign up for a further five years, or they may move to another type of property.

## Will this affect current tenants if they want to move to another home?

It will only affect current tenants if they choose either to make a mutual exchange with a resident who is already in a home let on an affordable rent tenancy, or if they choose to apply to move to a vacant home that will be let on an affordable rent tenancy. We will explain any changes before residents make a decision to do this.

## When will this start?

We are currently undertaking a trial to assess how best to manage this new tenure. We will let you know how we get on with this in the next edition.

## Where can I find out more information?

The Group's approach to affordable rent is outlined in our strategy, which can be found in the publications section of our website. Or you can contact the Service Centre and they will send you a copy.



## Information

Bengali Turkish



## Are you ready?

**To ensure residents can watch TV when the last areas move to digital signals next March, we have so far upgraded 98% of homes with shared aerials.**

The remaining homes are in listed buildings or in conservation areas. We will make sure they are upgraded in time, but may install alternative aerials where satellite dishes are restricted. In all homes, we have installed one aerial connection.

The exact date of digital switchover depends on where in the UK you live.

In order to watch TV after switchover, you don't have to buy a new TV. All current TVs, with very few exceptions, can be converted by connecting a digital box – even black and white ones.

When buying TV equipment, look for the 'Digital Tick' logo, which indicates products and services are designed to work before, during and after switchover.

### Don't have a shared aerial?

Homes which currently use their own aerials have not been included in this upgrade. Those residents are responsible for upgrading their own TV equipment to receive a digital TV signal.

For more advice, visit [www.ricability-digitaltv.org.uk](http://www.ricability-digitaltv.org.uk), an independent consumer research organisation, or [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk), or call 08456 50 50 50.

There is also a Help Scheme to assist those aged 75 and over, or eligible disabled. Visit [www.helpscheme.co.uk](http://www.helpscheme.co.uk) or call 0800 40 85 900.

## Information

Bengali Turkish

## Gas servicing **saves lives**

**To ensure the safety of our residents, we carry out a free 30-minute annual service and safety check to all gas appliances. This includes boilers, flues, cookers, gas fires and pipework.**

Not only is it a legal requirement for us to do this every year, it is a serious safety issue. Unsafe gas appliances are potentially lethal. Many people die in the UK as a result of Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning or explosions. CO is particularly dangerous as human senses cannot detect it and it can have devastating effects within minutes. If you live in a block of flats, the risk also extends to neighbours, when the gas passes between walls and floors.

We check 99% of homes every year with little difficulty, but some residents fail to let us carry out these checks. It is very important that you do so, for your own safety. We can seek formal action to gain access to your home if necessary.

If you own your Group home, we have teamed up with Robert Heath Heating to offer an annual gas safety check for a very competitive fee.

The annual check will cost £68 (incl. VAT) and a full annual breakdown and repair service, including an annual check is £170.87 (incl. VAT). For details, call Robert Heath Heating on 020 8336 6767 or email [info@robertheathheating.co.uk](mailto:info@robertheathheating.co.uk)

## Information

Bengali Turkish

## Get covered with contents insurance

To benefit from the value-for-money savings offered by the 'My Home' insurance scheme Southern Housing Group belongs to, contact the Service Centre, or phone Jardine Lloyd Thompson direct on 08453 372 463.

## Advice

Bengali Turkish

## How to deal with **frozen pipes**

**If temperatures drop below freezing, the water in your pipes could freeze. Frozen water can expand and crack pipes, causing flooding when it thaws.**

To minimise the risk of freezing pipes:

- Cover, or preferably insulate, any exposed water pipes in cupboards, under sinks or in lofts. For a

temporary solution, use old blankets or clothes to wrap pipes.

- Leave your heating on a low setting if you are away. Set your timer to come on for short periods during the day and night.

If you have frozen pipes, call the Service Centre or visit our website at [www.shgroup.org.uk](http://www.shgroup.org.uk) for information.

## Information

Bengali Turkish

## Free inspection for open fires

**Do you have an open fire or a solid fuel burner?** If so, we would like to arrange for an inspection and free chimney sweeping. Burning coal and wood leads to the build-up of soot, which can lead to fires or cause a potentially dangerous blockage. Please call the Service Centre to arrange a visit.

Information

# A day in the working life of Quality Assurance Advisor **Will Sfakiotakis**

**Will tells us how his role has a direct impact on the services received by our residents.**

"I joined the Group in August 2008 as a Customer Service Advisor for the maintenance and repairs team, delivering a service which is of a consistently high standard, in keeping with the Group's expectations.

## Calls Direct

"In July 2010, 'Calls Direct' was introduced and I began a new role as a Quality Assurance Advisor, working with our repairs contractors. My role is to ensure that regardless which contractor our residents contact, the service received is the same.

"My role is a mixture of developing and delivering training. However, the majority of my time is spent quality assuring and ensuring that Service Centre staff provide excellent customer service. My role is interesting, as every contractor is different and, most importantly, so are the needs of our residents. It is extremely satisfying knowing I've had a part to play in meeting their needs.

"No two days are the same. I'm not office based so I need to be extremely well organised and plan visits up to a year in advance. I currently visit the following contractors: Axis, Breyer, MHS, Robert Heath Heating and Mountjoy, and

spend three to five days with each every two months.

## Customer care

"When I carry out my visits I listen to four pre-recorded in-bound calls per advisor from our residents, as well as delivering induction and procedure training. I check the delivery and quality of customer care by the advisor. During the calls I look out for 34 specific points across eight different customer service areas and score where applicable, ensuring our contractors meet the service standards delivered by our Service Centre.

"I am also there to support the team should they have any questions, which is great because I still get a chance to positively influence the service delivered to our residents.

## Coaching

"The next stage is advisor coaching. I meet on a one-to-one basis with the advisors I have quality checked. My coaching approach is to get the advisor to tell me what they think about the service they have delivered and, if applicable, either recognise their success in achieving previous goals, or set new goals towards improvement.

"I then draft a report which summarises the team's

performance from my visits and feedback from other areas of the Group. I meet with the contractor to share best practice examples and set objectives for future improvement. Our aims are always the same – to deliver the best possible customer service to our residents.

"My role is evolving all the time, as is that of our contractors. We're always finding new ways to quality assure and together we form a team which I am proud to be part of."

"Our aim is to deliver the best possible customer service."



# Your page

**We want to hear from you!** Write to the Editor via the Service Centre or email [opendoor@shgroup.org.uk](mailto:opendoor@shgroup.org.uk)

## Aylesham Amateur Boxing Club Kent



Resident Granville Cosier wrote to thank us for supporting Aylesham Amateur Boxing Club.

"Funded to the tune of £4,500 by the Group's Social and Economic Regeneration grant scheme, our club has reason to be very proud of its boxers, who include Barry McGuigan's son Shane, already a champion with our club.

"This week, one of our members, Jack Thompson [pictured left], who is now in the army, won the 67kg national title at Aldershot... Kim Frost also boxed with distinction and class, so we are very proud of both of them.

"Last year, Alex Brazier, another member now in the Army, won a national Army title. Our Boxing Club salutes trainers Paul (Geezer) Giles [pictured right] and Paul Sillingbourne, without whom these achievements would not be possible. Trainers Supreme.

"For such a small village, this is a fantastic achievement... Thanks to Southern Housing Group for their help. Much appreciated."

## Snowdown Court Aylesham



Residents at Snowdown Court in Aylesham, Kent, got together to share 20 years of memories during recent anniversary celebrations.

Residents were entertained by singing and piano performances, before enjoying a buffet lunch. Photographs of the scheme from the last two decades were displayed at the event, with former staff attending to toast the occasion.

To commemorate the event, six residents who have lived at the scheme since it opened in 1991 were presented with gift vouchers.

## London



Eggs, sacks and a large slide provided hours of fun for the 400 children who participated in our annual Activate London Sports Challenge.

The 2011 Lottery-funded challenge was held at Mile End Stadium on Saturday 2 July, with children attending from several boroughs including Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Barking, Tower Hamlets and Southwark.

Group Chief Executive Tom Dacey presented winners with medals and awards, before the day concluded with a fun tug-of-war session.

Mother Lisa Baker and her daughter Phoebe, seven, from Hammersmith, attended the event for the second year running. "It was such a brilliant day, everything was so well organised and the kids thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Everyone was having fun; it was a positive environment and a great time for all involved."

## Frank Horwill Isle of Dogs



Congratulations to Mr Frank Horwill from the Isle of Dogs in London, who was awarded the honour of MBE in the Queen's birthday honours list on 11 June 2011, for voluntary coaching to British Athletics.

Frank has been involved in athletics since 1960 and was the founder of the British Milers' club, a middle-distance athletics club.

# Our performance

This page tells you about our performance in recent months. These key service standards were chosen by residents.



## Customer care 1 April to 30 September 2011

	Target met	
Service standard set	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept
1 We will answer 80% of phone calls to the Service Centre within 20 seconds	77%	77%

## Managing where you live 1 April to 30 September 2011

	Target met	
Service standards set	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept
2 We will inspect where you live as often as we agree with you (monthly, or every three or six months)	743	849
3 We will get rid of offensive graffiti within one working day of being told about it	100%	100%
4 If you report an incident of anti-social behaviour that we think is high risk, we will contact you within 24 hours	–	13%

## Paying rent & service charges 1 April to 30 September 2011

	Target met	
Service standards set	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept
5 We will make sure your payment is on your rent or service charge account within two working days (if you send a cheque we must receive it first)	100%	100%
6 We will keep the amount of overdue rent as low as possible (total on last days of June and September)	3.8%	4%



## Letting homes 1 January to 1 April to 30 September 2011

	Target met	
Service standard set	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept
7 We will keep as low as possible the average number of days it takes us to tidy up and relet empty homes (totals on last days of June and September)	22 days	20 days



## Repairs and maintenance 1 April to 30 September 2011

	Target met	
Service standards set	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept
8 We will visit you to carry out quality checks (at least 10% of all repairs each month)	10.1%	8.2%
9 We will try to get repairs completed in one visit	91%	90%
10 We will get a valid gas safety certificate for all our homes every year (totals on last days of June and September)	99.6%	99.6%

# Diary dates

## Service Centre Christmas opening times

### December 2011 to January 2012

F	S	S	M	T	W	T
<b>23rd</b> Close 4pm	<b>24th</b> Closed	<b>25th</b> Closed	<b>26th</b> Closed	<b>27th</b> Closed	<b>28th</b> 10am to 4pm	<b>29th</b> 10am to 4pm
<b>30th</b> 10am to 4pm	<b>31st</b> Closed	<b>1st</b> Closed	<b>2nd</b> Closed	<b>3rd onwards</b> Normal working hours 8am to 8pm		

Our repair contractors' opening hours will also be as above over Christmas. Please call your normal Service Centre number to report a repair outside of these times. Your call will be put through to an out-of-hours service.



## Competition

Find the answers to the questions below, in this issue of **Open Door**, for the chance to win one of three vouchers.

- 1 How many residents took part in the skills day at PwC?
- 2 Which is the last region to receive a new Service Centre number?
- 3 What is the name of new type of property tenure we are introducing?

Email [opendoor@shgroup.org.uk](mailto:opendoor@shgroup.org.uk) or write your answers on the back of an envelope or postcard with your name, and address and post to: Open Door Competition, Southern Housing Group, Fleet House, 59-61 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1M 5LA. The closing date is **Friday 30 March 2012**.

**Winners from last issue:** have been notified.

Win!  
£20  
in  
vouchers

## Editor

Editor Celia Pearce

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You can write to the editor via the Service Centre or send an email to [opendoor@shgroup.org.uk](mailto:opendoor@shgroup.org.uk). The deadline for contributions to the next issue is Friday 30 March 2012.



## Contact us

**Service Centre opening hours**  
8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday

Phone us on:

- London region – 0300 303 1061
- Thames Gateway – 0300 303 1062
- Kent – 0300 303 1773
- South West – 0300 303 1063
- Isle of Wight – 0300 303 1772
- West region – 0300 303 1064

Email us at  
[servicecentre@shgroup.org.uk](mailto:servicecentre@shgroup.org.uk)

Write to Service Centre  
Southern Housing Group,  
PO Box 643, Horsham RH12 1XJ

**Out-of-hours emergencies**  
If you rent a home on the UK mainland, phone Homeserve on 08457 573 764 (all regions except West) or 08456 013 225 (West region)

If you own a home on the UK mainland, phone Homeserve on 08456 000 453

## Translations

For help with translations, or information in Braille, large print or as an audio version, contact the Service Centre on 0300 303 1771.

### Arabic

إذا كنت تريد الحصول على ترجمة لإحدى المقالات،  
اتصل برقم 0300 303 1771.

### Bengali

যেসব আর্টিকলে এই চিহ্ন দেয়া আছে আমরা সেগুলির  
বাংলাতে সারসংক্ষেপ সরবরাহ করি। কপির জন্য  
0300 303 1682 নাম্বারে ফোন করুন।

Bengali

### French

Si vous souhaitez faire traduire un article,  
appelez le 0300 303 1771.

### Somali

Haddii aad rabtid in maqaalka lagu turjumo  
wac 0300 303 1771.

### Spanish

Si desea que le traduzcamos algún artículo,  
llame al 0300 303 1771.

### Turkish

Üzerinde bu işaret bulunan yazıların Türkçe  
özetini verebiliriz. Bir kopya edinmek isterseniz  
0300 303 1683'ü arayın.

Turkish