

**Tower
Hamlets
Homes**

opendoor



AUTUMN/WINTER 2019 THH.ORG.UK

Palaces of fun

Community celebrations

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Tackling anti-social behaviour

Activities for young people

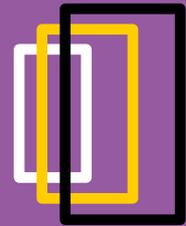
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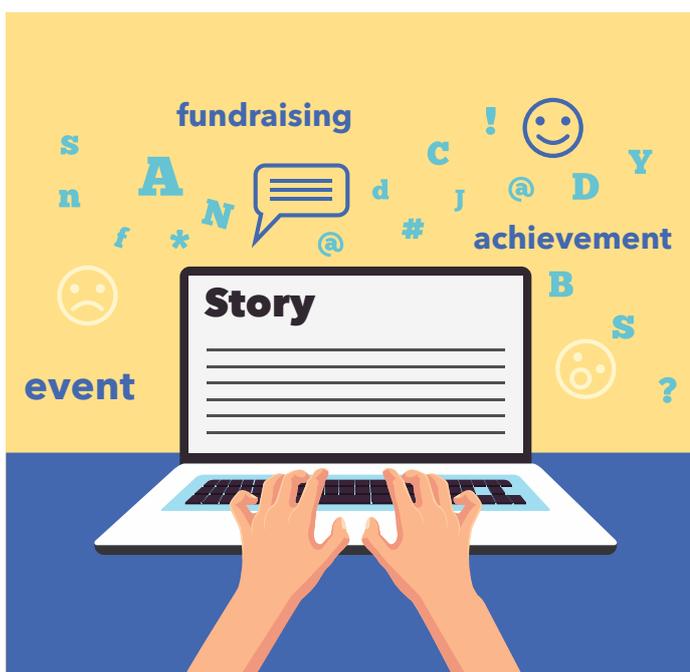
TOWER HAMLETS HOMES
Autumn/Winter 2019

opendoor

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Have your story featured in opendoor

If you've got a story you'd like to share – whether it's a personal achievement, a successful event or a fun-filled fundraiser – we'd like to hear from you. We want to see inspiring residents' stories in opendoor – so get in touch.

Contact our editors
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Tower Hamlets Homes

MyTHH

Manage your account online 24/7

Tower Hamlets Homes

Manage your services online 24/7 with **MyTHH** | my.thh.org.uk
thh.org.uk | 020 7364 5015

More than 5,300 THH residents have now signed up - why not join them? Signing up is quick and easy – just follow the steps below and you'll be able to check all the details of your rent, leasehold or garage account online – whenever it suits you.

Not registered yet? sign up at my.thh.org.uk

Visit my.thh.org.uk and click 'view my details' – this will take you to the login page – at the bottom there's a link - 'Click here to sign up for MyTHH'

On the registration page you'll need to enter the following information:

- Surname
- Date of birth
- Payment reference number for tenants (on your rent payment card or any rent letters from us)
- Leasehold account number (on your statement of account).

This information will be matched with what we already hold about you.

Need help registering?

If you're having trouble, try the following:

- **Surname** – check your statements and other letters we've sent you, have we got the correct spelling? You may find you can register if you match the spelling on the letter, or you may need to contact us on 020 7364 5015 to update your details before you can register.
- **Date of Birth** – If you're a leaseholder who purchased your property from an existing leaseholder it's likely you won't have given us your date of birth previously. To protect your account from unauthorised access we will have set your 'date of birth' on our system to the date you purchased your property. If you can't remember this date

or still have problems you may need to contact us on 020 7364 5015 to update your details before you can register.

Once you've registered we'll send you two emails – one containing your username and one containing your password. (Don't forget to check your junk/spam folder in your email account).

The first time you register you'll be able to change both of these to something more memorable. You'll also be asked to set a memorable question and answer, which you'll then be asked to enter every time you login.

If you're still having problems just follow our simple step-by-step guide, available on the website at thh.org.uk/mythh

KNOW

this isn't love

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse includes any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse – psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.

Why domestic abuse is important to THH

One in four women and one in six men experience domestic abuse. It can happen to anyone. As your landlord, THH has a responsibility to provide support for any residents experiencing domestic abuse.

How THH help?

All of our staff receive training around domestic abuse, you can call us in confidence on 020 7364 5015 and we will put you through to your housing officer or a member of their team.

Your housing officer can arrange to meet with you face to face (if you prefer we can say this is for a repairs query or a property audit, so that others in your household do not know). Our officers can meet you at your home, at one of our offices or



It was a mistake the first time.
Now if I don't do what he says
he'll share the video of me.

elsewhere and your meeting with them will be totally confidential.

Your housing officer can then talk to you about what we can do to help – that might be supporting you to stay in your own home, finding refuge or rehousing. With your consent, we can also refer you to a specialist support agency who can give advice on different options, for example, applying for an injunction which stops the abuser from entering your home.

Your housing officer will not tell anyone about the things you discuss unless you agree or unless you or your family are in serious, immediate danger. If THH cannot help you directly, we can refer you to organisations that can.

If you are in immediate danger ring 999. If you need to speak to someone out of hours call the domestic violence helpline 0808 2000 247.

Support from Tower Hamlets Council

The council have a dedicated team who can also help with anything related to domestic abuse. Their team run a confidential drop-in service at the Idea Store Whitechapel every Thursday morning (9:30am-12:30pm).

At these sessions you can speak to a specialist team from the council, the police, housing options, solicitors and victim support. These sessions are totally confidential and discrete and you will not be pressured into taking any action that you don't want to.

A representative from the domestic abuse team at the council is also available at a separate drop-in session, held every Tuesday 10am – 4pm at Albert Jacob House 62 Roman Road E2 0PG.

Helpful numbers

Domestic violence helpline
0808 2000 247

GALOP – National LGBT & Domestic Abuse Helpline: emotional and practical support for LGBT+ people experiencing domestic abuse 0800 999 5428

Karma Nirvana – advice and support for victims of honour-based abuse and forced marriage, UK helpline 0800 599 9247

Men's Advice Line:
support for male victims
0808 801 0327

Respect Phonenumber:
support for perpetrators (male & female) to stop using abusive/violent behaviour 0808 8024 040

Victim Support Tower Hamlets
020 7364 2448/7957

Domestic abuse one stop shop

The one stop shop has advocates, solicitors and police all in one place for support.

When: every Thursday
9:30am to 12:30pm

Where: Whitechapel IDEA store, 321 Whitechapel Road, London, E1 1BU

The other side of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse takes many forms – from physical and sexual to emotional and psychological. The perpetrators aren't always men – women and young people also use violence and abuse at home and in relationships.

An organisation called Respect supports male, female and young perpetrators of domestic abuse, and men who experience domestic abuse.

It runs two advice lines: the Respect Phonenumber (Freephone 0808 802 4040 www.respectphonenumber.org.uk) is for perpetrators of domestic abuse, and for professionals who are trying to help them. The helpline offers information and advice to support perpetrators to change their abusive behaviours.

The Men's Advice Line (Freephone 0808 801 0327 www.mensadvice.org.uk)

is a confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic abuse.



Buy less, give more

Money saving and environmental

It's a situation that can feel all too familiar - running around the shops at the last minute on Christmas Eve, trying to find something, anything, for those tricky people in our lives. Unfortunately the likelihood of that last minute gift being unwanted is very high. In the UK every year, we spend £700 million on gifts which are unwanted, returned or re-gifted.

By buying less new things we can reduce the amount of unused and unwanted presents, these pages contain a few ideas.

Christmas gifts – facts and figures

£700 million

The amount of money spent on unwanted and returned Christmas gifts in the UK every year.

£330

The average amount a UK adult spends on buying Christmas presents.

230,000 tonnes

The amount of wasted Christmas food thrown away each year in the UK.

Give memories, not things

Studies have shown that 10% of UK residents can't remember what they got for Christmas last year. To combat this, why not try giving an experience? One Mile End (comedyeast.london) does cracking comedy nights for as little as £1 (we promise that's not a typo) or take the kids to the panto in Stratford for just

a tenner. If theatre isn't their thing, check out ticket sales websites to see which bands are in town or TV shows that might have audience tickets available. You can guarantee they'll remember it forever.

Upcycle

Reduce waste by recycling and swapping what you already have. Perhaps you have toy cars that your little one has outgrown but are in search of Lego blocks? That dress you wore once for a wedding might look great on your sister? Better yet, get a few friends round and hold a clothes swap. This way you've given gifts without spending a penny.

Make it or bake it

Why buy chocolates when you can make them? Truffles are surprisingly easy to put together and go down a treat with big groups. If you don't fancy channelling your inner Paul Hollywood, how about tapping into that creative talent some other way? Perhaps you're handy with a paintbrush or nifty with a needle – just get creative! Get inspiration from online 'how to' videos.

Buy second hand

A brand new t-shirt takes over three years' worth of fresh water to make - that's 2,700 litres. Luckily, vintage is always a good look – Traid for example, has shops across London (including Dalston), and an online store where you can find pre-loved designer, vintage and modern clothing for a fraction of the price of new.

If books and games are more your thing then check out your local Oxfam bookshop (Islington and Greenwich) for gifts that give twice.

Buy local

So, you've upcycled all your old things, run out of clothes to swap and handed out your mince pies - what next? Roman Road market has great stalls all year round, but December is its time to shine. Clothes, perfume, pet accessories and more can be found here, while Santa takes a break from his busy schedule to dole out gifts to local children in the sparkliest grotto in East London. Local specialist grocery stores sell interesting confectionery, spices and unusual wines and spirits.

re this Christmas

onmental benefits tips

Spread the word

And finally, remember to tell all your friends and family your plans for present giving this Christmas – they might just be inspired to join you.





Yes he Khan

Meet our
board
member

“ It’s equally important that Tower Hamlets Homes gets the basics right. ”

As a THH board member for just a year, you might think that Councillor Tarik Khan had been thrown in at the deep end. But he has been willing to jump in and take on the challenges that come with responsibility. He says:

“The board makes long-term decisions and decides on new projects and that’s important, but it’s equally important that Tower Hamlets Homes gets the basics right. For example, I know from my surgeries that we can have the best plans in the world, but they count for nothing if repairs aren’t being done on time and to a high standard.

“Looking to the future, there are some big challenges ahead. Fire safety remains extremely important and we want to keep on top of that. New rules on building safety mean this is going to be huge priority.

“The anti-social behaviour team, police and Parkguard are doing everything they can to combat anti-social behaviour and targeting where the problems are greatest. With the resources available we have to target hotspots. I’ve been working since the summer on the Collingwood estate to tackle drug dealing - inspecting the area with residents, THH and the police. Across Tower Hamlets we’re seeing arrests and criminal charges and these are the kind of results I want to see more of.

“I’ve been a youth worker for 15 years and I know from experience that we need to encourage more young people into sports and other activities on our estates. I was pleased to see the intervention by Streets Of Growth, who work with young people and encourage them to take part in more positive activities. There was a 48 per cent reduction in anti-social behaviour complaints on the three estates they worked on.

“There was work with young people on our estates over the summer (See pages 18-19). Some estates had never seen such activities. Collingwood saw the council’s youth services and the THH summer activities programme working together and we had a great fun day. I want to see this happening every summer, throughout the borough. I want to see the resources so we can have more people joining in, a stronger community and more activities for local people. If we engage young people early on we can mitigate issues later on.

“Housing is one of the biggest issues we face. There are 20,000 people on the waiting list. Overcrowding is a huge issue. The council has pledged to deliver 2,000 council homes by 2022. They’ll be managed by Tower Hamlets Homes. So we’ll be managing new homes and improving services while making savings.”

Tarik Khan is a THH board member and councillor for St Peter’s ward.

Licencing regulations for leaseholders who are subletting



sharing amenities such as a bathroom. It's sometimes called a house share and includes properties that have been split into separate bedsits.

THH leaseholders

The new scheme affects THH leaseholders if they are subletting their THH managed leasehold property. There's more information at towerhamlets.gov.uk by searching for 'health and housing'.

Leaseholders need to meet the required standards for private rented housing before a license can be issued. Leaseholders must obtain the correct licence before subletting their property to avoid penalties such as rent payment orders, loss of eviction powers and unlimited fines.

A reminder of general terms of lease

Leaseholders must also comply with their responsibilities under the general terms of their lease, which are:

1. You must register any subletting of your property with THH as soon as it has

been let. This is separate from obtaining a landlord license from the council.

2. When subletting you will always remain responsible for complying with all the terms of the lease, paying the service charges, maintaining the property and in all cases, retain the responsibility over the conduct of your tenants, their family members and visitors.
3. Please note that many of the leases issued for THH managed leasehold properties specify that properties may only be used solely as a private residential dwelling. This may mean that subletting a property as a HMO is not allowed. Please refer to your lease document prior to making an application for a landlord license.

Short term or holiday lets

Leaseholders are not permitted to let their property as a short term or holiday let (e.g Airbnb) even if a licence has been obtained from the Council.

[Find out more
thh.org.uk](http://thh.org.uk)

On 1 April 2019, Tower Hamlets Council introduced a new landlord licensing scheme for the whole borough, apart from three designated wards (Weavers, Whitechapel and Spitalfields & Bangla Town) where a selective licensing scheme already operates.

The new additional licensing scheme applies to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), including those that are within a purpose built block.

What is an HMO?

For the purposes of licensing requirements, an HMO is a property occupied by three or more people living as two or more households and



Help us design our new website

Fill in our survey and you could win **£100** of shopping vouchers

To help make it easier for our residents to access services online we are replacing our website and we need your help.

Why are we changing our website?

We know that many of our customers prefer to do things like report repairs or check their rent balance online and

that our current website needs improving.

The website address won't change it will still be **thh.org.uk**

We would like the views and suggestion of our residents, who are best placed to tell us what works and what doesn't.

How to get involved

Go to our website and you'll see a news item on our homepage – click on the link and answer the questions.

Prefer a paper copy?
Email us and we will send a survey by post

Contact details
communications@thh.org.uk
020 7364 5015



Use your mobile phone camera to start the survey.

First birthday celebrations for the Financial Health Centre and national award win!



sent off on time. I was very happy that this was possible.”

Tower Hamlets Homes Chief Executive, Susmita Sen, said: “It’s very clear from the number of people who have come through the doors over this last year that the help being provided by the FHC is crucial. Our goal for the next year is to grow and continue to help even more residents of the borough.”

An award winning service
On 10 October the FHC was recognised for its outstanding work by the national 24 Housing Awards, winning the Welfare Wise category.

Contact the Financial Health Centre
For help and advice on welfare benefit matters, contact the FHC on **020 7364 2200** or email **fhc@thh.org.uk**. The centre is located at Raynham House, Massingham Street, London E1 4EB.

Opening times
The FHC is open between 9:30am – 4:30pm Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays)

Monday 17 September marked the first anniversary of the Financial Health Centre (FHC) located in Globe Town. The centre brings together a number of community organisations to assist residents who are facing a range of issues which impact on their financial wellbeing.

There are over ten delivery partners, including Account3, Citizen Advice Bureau, Go-Train, LBTH and Limehouse Project.

Achievements in the first year

In its first year, over 2000 residents had accessed the services at the FHC which helped them consolidate £450,000 worth of debt and £1.4m benefit applications were made.

Employment and training programmes are also offered

and 540 residents undertook various types of training with 172 people being supported into secure employment.

A Tower Hamlets vulnerable resident who was visited at home by one of our FHC advisors said:

“I am so happy with the service I received. I was scared my Personal Independence Payment form would not be



Find out how we did in our last financial year. We set ourselves targets in some areas to make sure we give you the best service possible.

If we have met a target, these symbols show if we have:

😊 met it 😐 almost met it 😞 didn't meet it

Resident involvement



Money



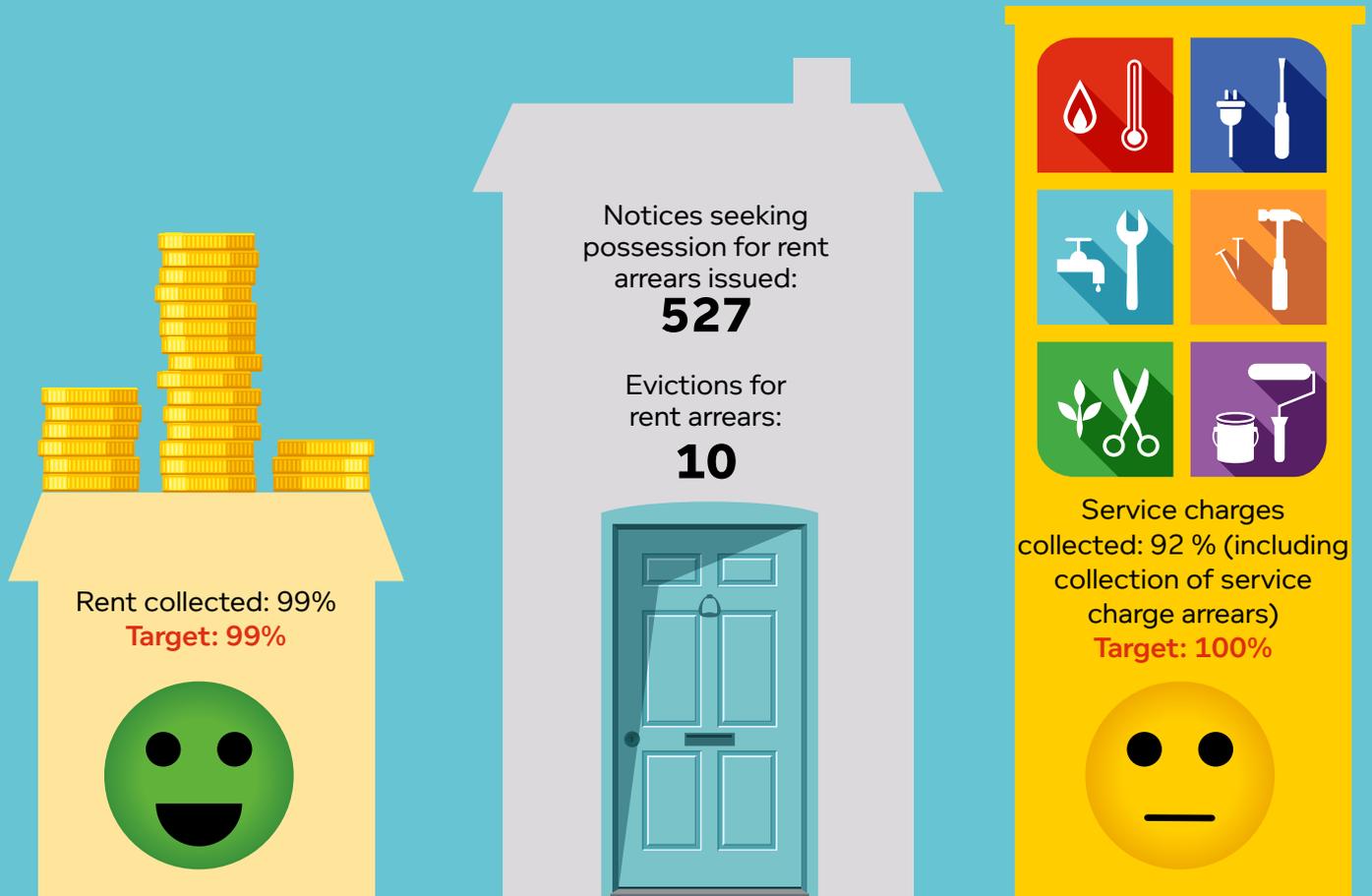
Income from the Council:

£92m

(including management fee £31.4m)

Expenditure:	£92m
Major works:	£26.1m
Planned & cyclical maintenance:	£2.4m
Estate services:	£10.7m
Housing management:	£8.4m
Other direct costs:	£12.9m
Leasehold services:	£2.6m
Repairs & maintenance:	£14.8m
Fire safety:	£3.5m
Overheads	£10.6m

Rents & service charges



* includes collection of service charge arrears

Tenancy



Total number of lettings:
324



Tenancies accepted on first offer:
65%



Successful fraud prevention cases
35*



Average number of days to let homes:
21

Target: 23
☹️ ↓ 2

*29 unauthorised recovered + 9 fraudulent RTBs

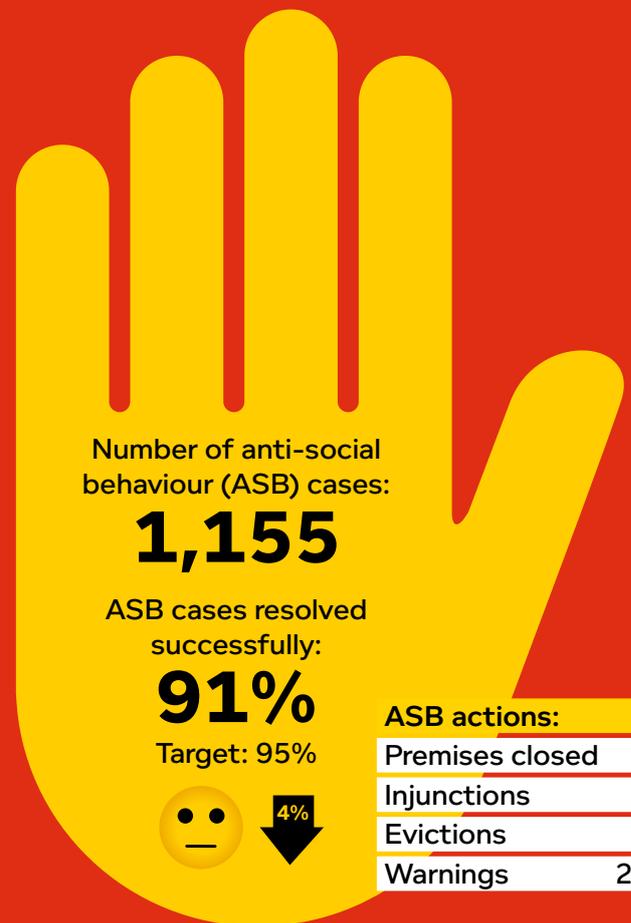
Neighbourhood & community



Satisfaction with caretaking:
86%
Target: 85%



Satisfaction with gardening:
89%



Number of anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases:
1,155

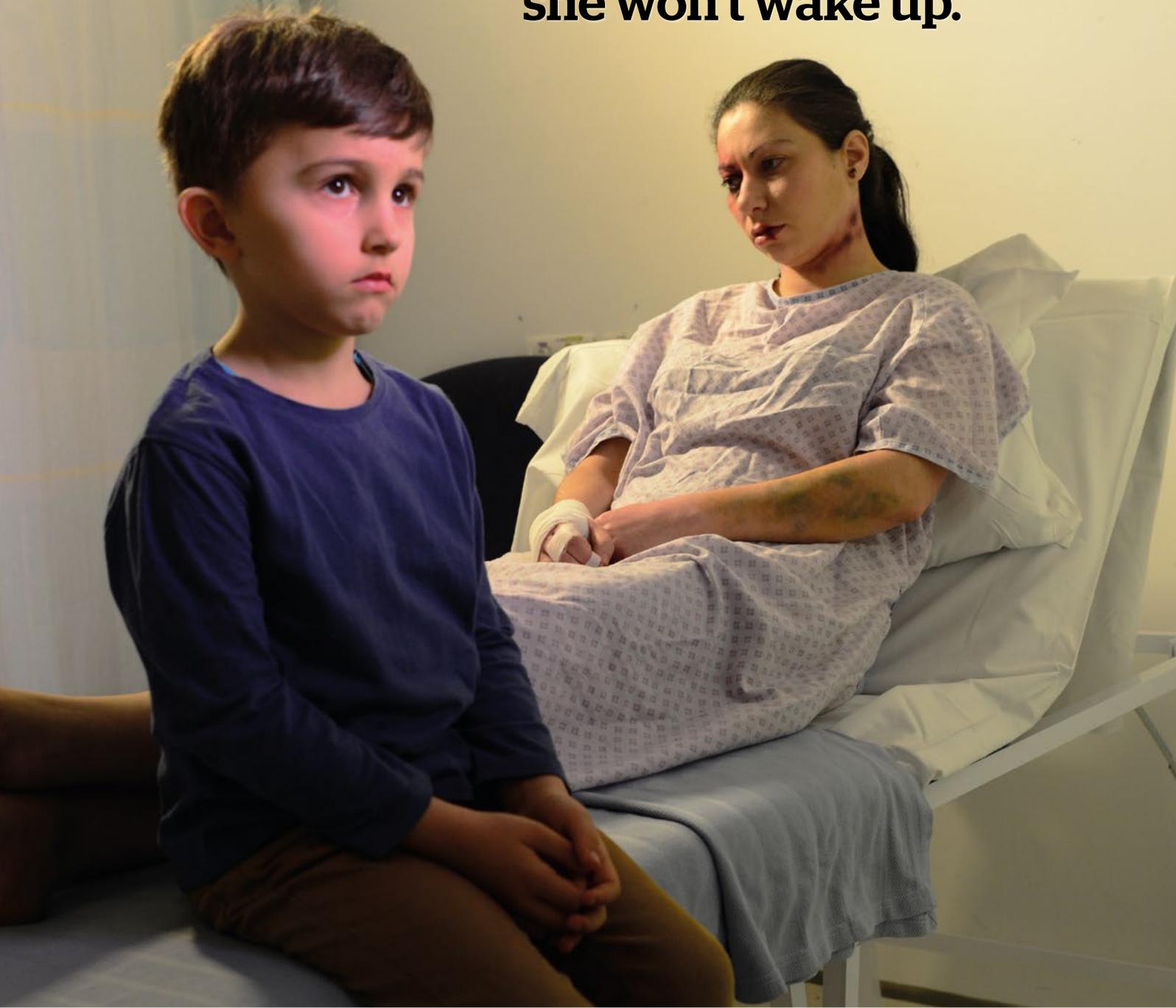
ASB cases resolved successfully:
91%
Target: 95%



ASB actions:

Premises closed	25
Injunctions	23
Evictions	6
Warnings	298

**Daddy hits mummy.
I'm scared that next time
she won't wake up.**



KNOW
you're not alone

**Tower
Hamlets
Homes**

We're here and we can help. If you are experiencing Domestic Abuse call us on 020 7364 5015. You can also contact the National Domestic Violence helpline (0808 2000 247) 24/7

Youth Services - helping to tackle anti-social behaviour

THH is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) with our dedicated ASB team, Parkguard and our council-funded police team through enforcement. ASB is a complex issue to tackle and requires more than just enforcement activities. Our youth engagement programme allows us to tackle some of the underlying causes of ASB.



Over the last two years we have been piloting a youth engagement and development programme that has sought to engage with young people and following its success we are now set to expand this programme.

A dedicated programme works with those already engaged in crime and ASB to help change their life outcomes using a targeted intervention programme. A second programme places youth workers on the estates

to help prevent young people becoming involved in crime and ASB, by providing diversionary activities such as sports, arts and crafts and other activities.

Detached Youth Work Programme - THH Homes Youth Summer Programme

Summer holiday period is linked with an increase in ASB and youth-on-youth violence. Families on low incomes can struggle to provide activities to keep young people occupied during school holidays.

In August we launched our Summer Youth Programme made up of seven youth and community organisations to provide a low cost and free summer holiday activity programme across our estates including sports, arts, training and community fun days.

The programme was delivered in partnership with seven organisations - Society Link, Vallance Community Sports Association, Osmani Trust, Newark Youth, Ocean Youth Connexions, Neighbours in Poplar & Splash and St Hilda's Centre.

Over 750 people attended events over summer and early indications show that there was a drop in reports of ASB compared to the same period last year.

Following the success of the summer programme, we are now rolling out a detached youth work programme to run throughout the year.

Targeted intervention Programme - Streets of Growth's ASB Diversionary Project

In 2017 we commissioned the organisation Streets of Growth and worked with them to develop a targeted intervention programme - the ASB Diversionary Project. The project aims to understand and address



Young people taking part in sports day on the Chicksand Estate

the root-causes of ASB amongst young people from the borough.

In addition to taking direct referrals from the ASB team concerning young people caught engaged in ASB, a team of youth workers have also been working on targeted estates where hotspots of ASB involving young people exist.

During 2018/19 there were 35 young people who had received a court order/ASB warning were referred to Streets of Growth, with 34 (97%) of those young people not re-offending for the six months support and monitoring period.

Case study – creating young leaders around the Oceans estate

By working with the THH ASB team as well as the Police and the Youth Offending team, we have seen a great number of

success stories. Trust has been developed with young people and positive relationships built.

A career programme event in the local youth centre was held, offering young people the opportunity to discuss their career options and apply for relevant opportunities. All the young people who attended are now in employment or education.

An inspirational young leader in the Oceans estate area was discovered - Mahfuzal, a young man who has overcome personal challenges and now uses this to help inspire others in similar situations. Mahfuzal and other local young people helped in leading a successful Community Safety Awareness event.

Mahfuzal said:
"Leading the Community Safety

event was just the beginning for me. I was confused about what I wanted to do in the future and how to get there, but Streets of Growth have helped me realise that everything is a process. I started putting in the time and effort to attend the sessions they held, which is leading me to the path I know I will enjoy."

The ASB Diversionary Project has empowered young people like Mahfuzal across Tower Hamlets, offering them the chance to uncover new skills and opportunities, whilst becoming leaders in their communities. The next stage is work which will help create more young leaders, raise awareness of the consequences of ASB and reduce harm in Tower Hamlets.

Contact Streets of Growth
020 7515 7356
mail@streetsofgrowth.org



Changes to our housing repairs service

The main contract for completing repairs to resident homes and blocks is due to end in March 2021. The contract which covers day to day repairs, heating and fire safety servicing and repairs was originally let in 2011 and cannot be extended beyond a ten year period.

In consultation with residents we are working to develop a new contract, that will enable contractors to continue to improve quality, value, performance and satisfaction.

Keeping residents involved and informed
We understand how important

our repairs service is to our residents so we have been working with the Residents Panel, Service Development Group and the THH Board as well as the Council from the start of the project so residents can influence how the service is delivered, its efficiency and value for money.

Our consultation also includes our statutory consultation with leaseholders.

We will keep residents updated on progress and provide detailed guides to assist residents in familiarising themselves with the new repairs service.

How to get involved

If you have comments or suggestions about our repairs service we would like to hear from you. If you have a tenants and residents association (TRA) in your area you can speak to them, or contact us in the following ways:

Email: scrutiny@thh.org.uk
Phone: **020 7364 6092**



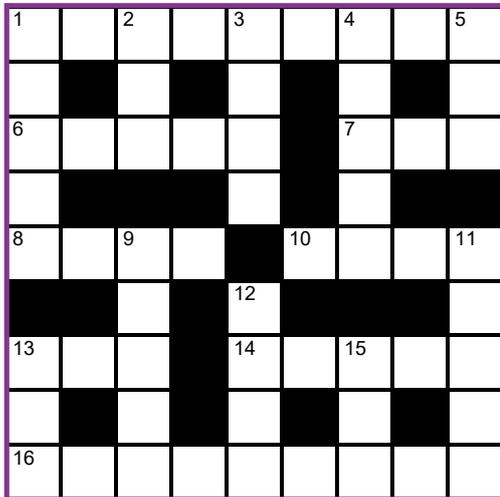
Spot the difference

There are 6 differences between these two pictures – can you spot all the things that have changed in the second picture?



Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Bird in a pear tree? (9)
 - 6 Small bird with a red breast (5)
 - 7 Fasten with string (3)
 - 8 Festive period (4)
 - 10 Queries (4)
 - 13 E.g. pecan (3)
 - 14 Six _ a-laying? (5)
 - 16 Amazing (9)



- DOWN**
- 1 A group celebration (5)
 - 2 Massage (3)
 - 3 Hoop (4)
 - 4 Fruit of a palm tree (5)
 - 5 The day before an event (3)

- 9 Allow to enter (3,2)
- 11 Strong metal (5)
- 12 E.g. Shrek (4)
- 13 Not old or used before (3)
- 15 Small magical creature (3)

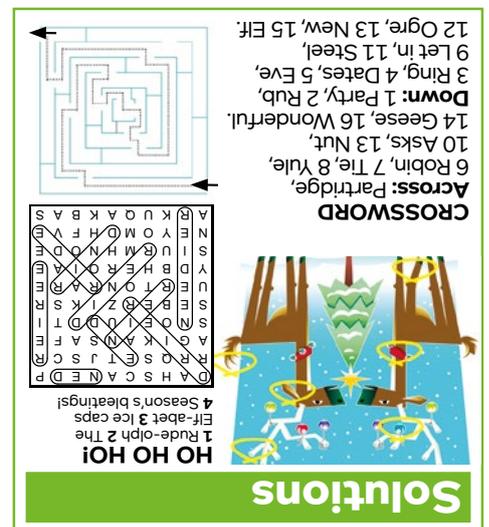
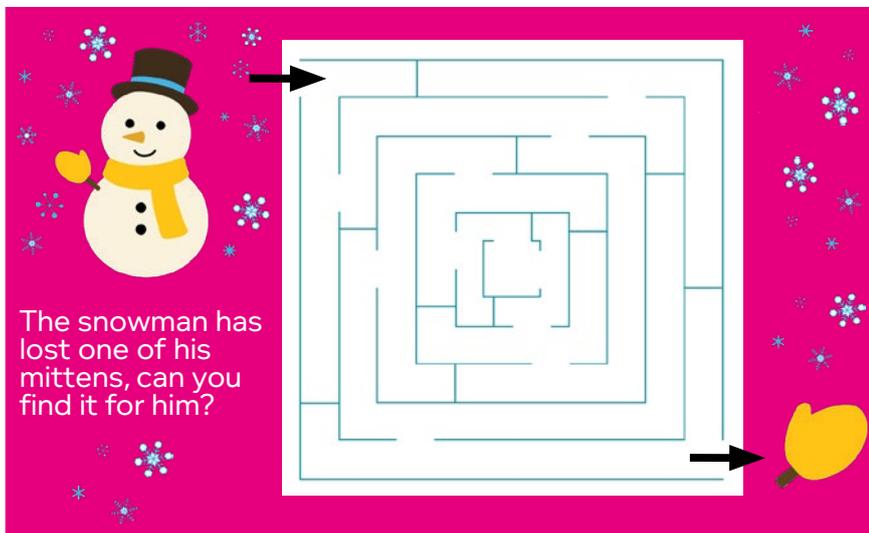
Ho Ho Ho!

- 1 Which reindeer has the worst manners?
- 2 What do elves learn at school?
- 3 What do snowmen wear on their heads?
- 4 What do sheep say at Christmas?

Wordsearch

Can you find the words made from REINDEER in the grid? One word is missing, can you see which one?

- DEN
- DINER
- DRIER
- EERIER
- END
- NEEDIER
- RED
- REIN
- RIDE
- RIND



Message from the Mayor

Tower Hamlets Homes – management agreement



Mayor of Tower Hamlets, John Biggs, enjoys a basketball game - part of our summer programme events.

"Tower Hamlets Homes management agreement has been extended by up to eight years, with a review at four years, following consultation and an independent review. This means that it will continue to manage 22,000 homes on behalf of the council and I look forward to working in partnership with Tower Hamlets Homes to deliver for our residents. THH is not perfect but I think there has been good progress and I was not persuaded that ending the arrangements would have benefits at this time.

As a council we've consulted on our council budget and continue to have to make savings due to cuts from central government. We've had to make £190 million in savings since 2010 but we still have to save an extra £39 million by 2023. I'm proud that we have protected our frontline services like our Idea Stores and libraries, gyms and leisure centres. The final proposals will be voted on by all councillors in February.

Life can be challenging for many and we're delighted that 2,000 people were helped by

the Tower Hamlets Homes Financial Health Centre in its first year. Our outreach team will be starting a second day a week there due to customer demand. This is part of our Tackling Poverty Fund which is investing £6.6m to help the most vulnerable residents including outreach advice and support.

We're continuing to try to tackle our poor Air Quality through our Breathe Clean campaign. We're investing in school and play streets to close some roads to traffic to protect

Mayor of Tower Hamlets

our young people's lungs. My Liveable Streets programme also complements this work. It aims to improve the look and feel of public spaces in neighbourhoods across the borough and make it easier, safer, and more convenient to get around by foot, bike and public transport. We also want to reduce people making 'rat runs' and shortcuts through residential streets to encourage more sustainable journeys and to improve air quality and road safety. 17 areas will benefit from this £15m investment. I wish all readers a happy and prosperous New Year."

John Biggs
Mayor of
Tower Hamlets



Get in touch with the Mayor

Got a question for the Mayor?

Contact him in the following ways

Email: mayor@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Phone: 020 7364 4000

Twitter: @mayorjohnbiggs



Spitalfields City
FARM

“Local people sharing skills, creating tiny revolutions” Fun Palaces in Tower Hamlets

On 5 October, for the fourth year running, Boundary Estate residents and the local community came together to create a Fun Palace at St Hilda’s East in Bethnal Green. Fun Palaces is a national campaign promoting community at the heart of culture and culture at the heart of community, with an annual

weekend of action created by, for and with local people. THH supported residents to bring a day of fun and learning, including everything from arts and crafts to sport and interactive science events. Hundreds of people came along to enjoy free and affordably priced food, top class music and fascinating talks.

Activities included:

- Knitting, drawing, crochet, origami and jewellery making
- Talks on local history – fascinating but little known figures
- Opportunities to try violin playing with a member of the London Euphonia Orchestra
- Physics workshops – make your own space badge
- Meet furry friends from Spitalfields Farm (see ferret above)
- Recycling challenge from
- Exploring photos maps and plans from London Metropolitan Archives



Get involved next year

If you weren’t able to attend this year then watch out for next year’s event. There may be one in your local area and if not then why not set one up? Next year’s Fun Palace events will take place on 3 and 4 October 2020.

Find out more
funpalaces.co.uk

REDUCING LONELINESS PROJECT

Tower Hamlets Homes

Tower Hamlets Homes is working in partnership with East London Cares and Neighbours in Poplar, in order to reduce loneliness and isolation amongst Tower Hamlets residents.



Do you know anyone aged 65 or over? Do they want to have fun and try new things?

The aim of the programme is to improve wellbeing, resilience and independence for older residents. The project will offer free community events and activities, 1-2-1 and group sessions some of which will look to improve their health and wellbeing.

East London Cares is working in targeted North Estates in the borough:

Neighbours in Poplar is working in targeted South Estates in the borough:

To find out more from East London Cares and Neighbours in Poplar visit their website, and follow us on twitter [@thhomes](#).

To get in touch with East London Cares:

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Christmas tips on

Staying safe in your home is important all year round but the Christmas and New Year holiday can sometimes bring higher risks of fire at home. Friends and family coming together brings excitement and fun but can also mean distractions from your usual routine.

With so much going on it is easy to forget how important it is to keep you and any family members safe; information on this page will help.



Smoke alarms

Make sure you have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home. A working alarm can give you and your family the vital time needed to escape a fire. Ensure you test your smoke alarms regularly and never remove batteries.



Electrics

Don't overload sockets, for example with Christmas tree lights and only use one plug per socket. Always turn off plugs when they are not in use, except those that are designed to be left on, for example on fridges.



Door closers'

Door closers are important fire protection measures. Do not remove them and report any repairs when necessary.



Make plans

Make a fire escape plan and discuss it with your family and make sure any visiting friends or family are aware of it. Have a bedtime safety check routine, such as checking Christmas lights are off, candles are blown out etc, before you go to bed.



Enjoying a drink at Christmas

The Fire Brigade state that the direct cause of 25% of all fires can be associated with alcohol and in 33% of all fires alcohol consumption was a contributing factor. Never cook after drinking – you can easily become distracted.

fire safety



Safer Christmas cooking

The majority of fires start in the kitchen, making it a high risk area. Many of us enjoy a Christmas tippie over the festive season but be sure to avoid cooking whilst under the influence of alcohol. If you've been out for the night get a take away rather than attempt to cook. Remember to turn off all appliances when you have finished cooking and never leave pots and pans unattended.



Candle safety

Keep candles away from decorations, wrapping paper and cards. Don't put candles on Christmas trees or on heaters or electrical items such as televisions. Never leave burning candles unattended and ensure that candles are out of reach from pets and children.



Christmas lights

Unplug Christmas lights when you're going to bed or leaving the house. Check lights conform to a safety standard, e.g. British Standard 60598 and always use an RCD (residual current device) on outdoor electrical equipment, for example if you have lights decorating the outside of your house or balcony area. An RCD can save lives by instantly switching off the power if there is a fault. They can be purchased at DIY stores.



Fire exits and communal shared areas

Don't block exits with Christmas trees, presents etc.



Using heaters

If you are using extra heaters ensure they are away from curtains, sofas, Christmas trees and decorations etc.



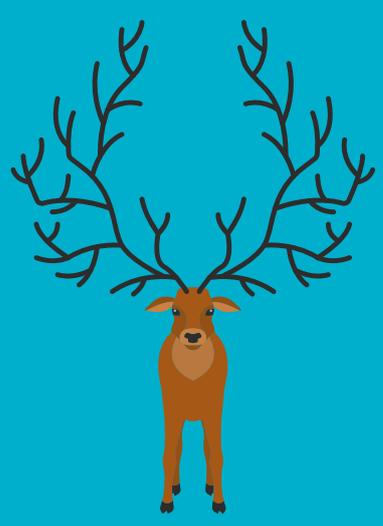
Smoking

Make sure that all cigarettes are put out properly and double-check this. Make sure your cigarette is fully extinguished and take care when under the influence of alcohol or tired. It's very easy to fall asleep while your cigarette is still burning and set furniture alight. It's always recommended never to smoke in bed.

Find out more: london-fire.gov.uk



Christmas and New Year opening arrangements (2019-20)



From 3pm on Tuesday 24 December 2019 (Christmas Eve) to 8am Friday 27 December we will provide an emergency only phone service. Usual service will resume on Thursday 2 January.

What to do if you have an emergency during the holiday period

If you have an emergency during this period please call our repairs helpline 020 7 364 5015 or 0800 376 1637. For all other enquiries please contact us when we re-open on Friday 27 December.

Over the Christmas and New Year break our Rushmead and Watney Market counters will be open as shown in the table below.



<p>Mon 23 Dec Usual opening times</p>	<p>Tue 24 Dec (Christmas Eve) Rushmead: 9am to 4:30pm Watney Market One Stop Shop: 9am to 3:30pm</p>	<p>Wed 25 Dec (Christmas Day) Offices closed</p>	<p>Thu 26 Dec (Boxing Day) Offices closed</p>	
<p>Fri 27 Dec Rushmead: 9am to 4:30pm Watney Market One Stop Shop: Closed</p>		<p>Sat 28 Dec Offices closed</p>		<p>Sun 29 Dec Offices closed</p>
<p>Mon 30 Dec Usual opening times</p>	<p>Tue 31 Dec (New Years Eve) Rushmead: Closed Watney Market One Stop Shop: Closed</p>	<p>Wed 1 Jan 2020 (New Years Day) Rushmead: Closed Watney Market One Stop Shop: Closed</p>	<p>Thu 2 Jan 2020 Usual opening times</p>	

