



# Spitalfields improves communication with a new website

As part of our commitment to improve communication and ongoing efforts to enhance the quality and availability of information to our residents and stakeholders, Spitalfields HA has launched a brand new website.

The new website of Spitalfields HA went live on 12th July 2016 and is located at the same address: <http://www.spitalfieldsha.co.uk>.

The website's user-friendly nature provides users with more efficient access to the organisation's resources. The new website will help Spitalfields HA engage more effectively with its residents, especially the growing number of them who want to access information online. The new website has a fresh, uncluttered design, an easy to navigate layout and high levels of accessibility. Improved content contains information on the many services that Spitalfields HA

provides as well as giving residents the ability to easily report a repair, submit complaints, pay rent and give their feedback online.

The new website is accessible from standard desktop computers and laptops as well as being 'mobile-responsive' (which allows mobile phones and tablets to access information too).

We consulted with a range of users, including residents and staff, to make sure the site focussed on their requirements. A number of other features on the website will be launched in the coming months.

Rocky Charles, Chief Executive at Spitalfields HA, said: "We are delighted to be launching our new website and feel it will make a big contribution to the way we communicate with residents and others who use or seek our services."



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## Management Changes

I have enjoyed my time at Spitalfields Housing Association and want to thank all the staff and residents for the encouragement and support shown to me. It has been a challenging period for all Registered Providers having to deal with the new legislation coming into effect. We are well placed to meet the challenges ahead as we have prepared our business plan to include all the changes required. Spitalfields HA took handover of 64 units at Pedley Street and 2 units at Dinmont Estate in the last ten months. We continue to develop on our own land and have a big development pipeline for the future.

The new Chief Executive, Sue Philpott, will be taking over from 1 August 2016. Sue has had over twenty five years working at the executive level in the housing sector and is well placed to carry the baton on the next leg of Spitalfields Housing Association. Sue has had extensive experience of corporate governance, business planning, strategic and business development.

I will be around for a while longer to enable a smooth transition. You will all be missed as I move on to newer pastures. It has been a pleasure working with you and serving you all.

Rocky Charles  
Chief Executive

# Out-of-hours repairs service

Spitalfields Housing Association provides an out of hours repair service for residents; the service entails residents to make a phone call to the out of hour's number to make a report. Unfortunately the service is being misused. The out of hours team have reported a vast amount of the out-of-hours calls are not deemed as an emergency. This is costing the Association huge amount of money.

The following is a list of repairs that are deemed as an emergency and can be reported out of hours

- Burst pipes, overflows (serious water leaks that cannot be contained)
- Internal power failure
- Total loss of water
- Rain pouring in
- Fire damage
- Flooding
- Storm damage
- Offensive or racist graffiti

If the repair does not fall under any of the above, this should not be reported out of hours. Please consider the nature of the repair before making a call, there are some questions that you can ask yourself. Can this wait until the morning when the Spitalfields office is open; as we do offer emergency appointments throughout the day. Can I temporarily switch off the water supply from a stop cock or isolator valve to stop

a leak? Am I able to switch the electric supply back on from the consumer unit and etc?

Due to the recent increased number of calls to the out of hours service, and with majority of the calls not classified as an emergency, we will now be recharging for any calls that are not categorised as an out of hours call out. From now on any calls made to out of hours will automatically generate a visit by an operative as there will be no filtering of calls. Therefore, we strongly urge you to think before making a call.

Our out-of-hours service operates from 5:30pm to 9:30am on weekdays, and all day on weekends and public/bank holidays. We aim to attend to emergency repairs within two hours. To report an emergency outside of office hours, call the out-of-hours number on 020 7375 3949. For boiler emergencies please contact Robert Heath Heating on 020 8336 6767. Repairs can also be reported during 9:30am – 5:30pm on 0800 644 6441 / 020 7392 5400 (option 1).

# Deeplake text message service



The repairs department is using the text message service to carry out post repair surveys. After the completion of a repair, residents will receive messages with questions. Residents are required to respond to these messages to provide feedback. This was a chosen method of surveys by residents as part of a resident consultation.

Many residents are providing their feedback, this is very useful for the association in order to be able to monitor and make improvements. However, we have encountered some confusion with the residents in their responses. Spitalfields HA makes calls to any responses received as poor, from the information we have collected it seems like residents are responding to surveys based on different repair jobs. This is utilizing the association's resources in investigations and it is affecting satisfaction statistics. Therefore, we would request all residents to ensure feedback is being provided in accordance to the actual repair, not a previous repair, to enable an accurate recording of satisfaction levels.

Furthermore, we are happy to inform that the text message service is being used by many residents. However, many messages are being received as an "Unhandled message." This is predominately due to not following the messaging procedure. As a reminder for all residents, guidance is as follows:

- To use the text messaging service, text 07407 468 518 and start your message with:
- RENTS** – Contact Housing Officer
- BAL** – Receive rent account balance
- REPAIR** – Report a repair
- CARD** – Order a new payment card
- DD** – Set up or change a direct debit for rent.

Please remember messages need to start with one of the above options, then a dash and the actual message. As an example a message would look like this; 'REPAIR – leak under kitchen sink'.

Deeplake system will automatically identify the sender of the message if the number is registered. If you have recently changed or would like to register a new number, please contact the Spitalfields HA customer service and speak to an advisor.

# Staff changes

We have had some staff changes in our Housing Management department.

Nurul Islam who we are sure almost all of our residents knew had been working for Spitalfields Housing Association as a Housing Officer for over 2 decades, and has taken a decision to take early retirement (earlier this year). We wish him a very well deserved happy retirement.

We are pleased to report and welcome Lindon Jonas who has taken Nurul's post as a full time permanent Housing Officer. Lindon is a very experienced and competent housing officer with over 20 years of experience working at various Local authorities and Housing Associations in similar fields. A statement from Lindon enclosed.

We are also pleased to introduce our Tenancy Support Officer [TSO] Pauline Roach who has been working at Spitalfields HA over a year now (on a part time basis). Pauline is also a very experienced person who possess the knowledge of Housing and Welfare Benefit advice - a unique combination with an experience of over 30 years. We are extremely pleased to report that Pauline is now a full time permanent member of the Housing Management Team. A statement from Pauline is also enclosed.



**Pauline Roach – Tenancy Support Officer (TSO)**

I am the TSO. I support tenants to sustain their tenancy; provide welfare benefits and tenancy support services to residents.

I provide support to tenants to maximise their income, I also provide information and advice on benefit entitlements and do benefit calculations with residents and can assist tenants with housing benefits issues.

I work with new tenants, carrying out the affordability assessments, support new tenants with their housing benefit and grant application if required.

For those affected by Welfare Reform I provide basic employment support and can refer tenants for pre employment support provided by other agencies

I work closely with the Housing Management team

I can be contacted on 0207 392 5423.

I am writing this brief note to introduce myself as the new Housing officer.



**Lindon Jonas - Housing Officer**

I have over 20 years of experience in Leasehold & Housing Management. I am very happy to be working at Spitalfields Housing Association. I am happy to assist our residents with any queries regarding housing advice, Income management advice and ways to help sustain your tenancies.

My aim is to ensure that all residents feel safe and secure in their homes & communities. If you would like to meet with me to have a discussion relating to your tenancy matters, Please contact me on 0207-392 5406

# Parking Update

Spitalfields Housing Association has been introducing parking enforcement to improve the quality of parking on our estates. Those who have a valid permit are able to park in a designated bay legitimately.

Parking enforcement is vital to reduce congestion and obstruction on our estates it helps to create a better environment for residents, We currently have a contract with Parking and Ticketing who patrol the areas regularly. Residents have informed us that this is working well and they are pleased with the improvement it has made. For those who have a valid permit please remember these must be displayed at all times. Unfortunately parking is not available for residents who live on a car free development.

If you are a blue badge holder and parking is not available on your estate please contact the council who may be able to allocate on street parking near your property.

## Success Story



We are happy to inform you that Husna Parvin, our resident has successfully held a Fruit Carving exhibition at Rich Mix in May 2016; showcasing her art, please see her pictures as they speak for themselves! This results from International Women's Day 2016 where our residents and Inspire Women's Circle held a stall and took part in the Employment & Enterprise day.

We worked closely together, and further to our outreach and partnership work, there were many successes on the day. However Husna was recruited as the face of Idea Stores for 2016, and now held her exhibition in her own right.

Here we believe in supporting and showcasing your talents and success.

Many Congratulations Husna!

## Your responsibility to keep your block tidy

If you live in a block with shared communal areas such as landings, stairwells and walkways, you must make sure it is kept clear of personal possessions and other items.

It is a condition of your tenancy or lease agreement that you don't block shared areas, exits and entrances or leave rubbish in shared areas.

Leaving clutter in the communal areas can:

- get in the way of emergency escape routes
- block fire doors
- create slipping or tripping hazards

This can also be unpleasant to look at for other residents living in the block.

If we find any clutter in communal areas, we will ask the resident to remove it straight away. If they don't,

we will remove any items, and may pass on the costs of doing so to the owner, before they are returned.

### Baby buggies

Buggies must not be kept in communal areas because they can:

- get in the way and stop you and others from getting out of the block quickly in an emergency
- block fire doors
- give off toxic fumes and smoke if there was a fire.

You must keep your baby buggy in your home or, if you have one, your storage shed.

### Bikes

Bikes can get in the way, or topple over and hurt someone. If you chain your bike to stair rails it can be particularly dangerous, as it can get in the way during an emergency and stop other residents from being able to hold onto the hand rail. If you

have a storage space you should use it to store your bike.

There may be somewhere suitable near your home to store your bike, please speak with your housing officer for further details.

### Pets

You must not:

- allow your pet to roam about unsupervised
- leave food, litter trays or other items in communal areas.

### Rubbish

You must not leave any rubbish or waste outside your door, even if it is securely sealed and bagged up. Keep all rubbish inside your home until you are ready to take it to the chute or bin area. If you have large or bulky items of household waste, you can apply for a collection by calling Streetline Team on 020 7364 5004.

## Important contacts

### Police

For non-emergency dial 101.

For emergency always call 999.

Anti-social behaviour Dial 101.

### Drug dealing

Dial 101 or Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111

### Environment and waste

For commercial waste service, dumped rubbish, Enviro-Champions, fly-posting, graffiti, litter and litter bins, pavements, potholes, recycling, rubbish collection, street cleaning & street lighting Streetline: 020 7364 5004

### Hate crime reporting: 0800 138 0521 - 24 hour

To report any kind of hate crime anonymously including, racial and other kinds of harassment motivated by someone's age, disability, faith or sexual orientation.

### Fire

Telephone 999 in an emergency

### Noise pollution

If you wish to speak to someone about noise, please ring: 020 7364 5007.

### Safeguarding

#### Child protection

If you have any concerns about a child or a child protection issue then please contact: 020 7364 5006.