

Changes to the repairs service

Hanover recently carried out a project looking at the responsive repairs process based on using a single national contractor. Feedback from residents and staff indicated that they liked using a network of local contractors and were unhappy about using one national contractor. The decision was taken to stop and rethink the strategy.

In terms of the future service, we want to maintain and build upon residents' existing high levels of satisfaction. We have therefore decided to retain the best of the existing process and improve upon it. We hope to retain a high level of resident satisfaction, whilst also reducing the management risks and inefficiencies with the process.

Residents of home ownership estates are already accustomed to having an input into the repairs budget and the contractors who are used to undertake maintenance. We envisage all residents (rented and homeowners), working with their Estate Manager or the Repairs Centre, will have local accountability for;

- contractor selection
- job priority
- appointments



- budget
- value for money
- reporting service satisfaction (including health and safety and the quality of work).

For further information about the new process, please refer to the recent mailing you will have received from us. If you have not received a repairs leaflet, or if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to speak with your Estate Manager, or you can contact the repairs team on repairs@hanover.org.uk

Photo credit: Carpentry tools: Bart Coenders



Greenshoots grants
Summer house at Bury



Get set, go...
for this years' Hanover
in Bloom competition

Have a go at Sudoku!

The rules of Sudoku are very simple:

- Every column must contain the numbers 1-9 inclusive (this automatically means it must only contain each number once);
- Every row must contain the numbers 1-9 inclusive (this automatically means it must only contain each number once);
- Every major sub-square must contain the numbers 1-9 inclusive (this automatically means it must only contain each number once).

To solve the Sudoku puzzle you must apply these rules and by a process of elimination establish which numbers belong where. **Watch out for the solution in the next edition of Hanover News!**

	2	4	3	8				
					6			7
	5	8				4		
4				1				
			7		5			
				2				8
		1				6	7	
3			5					
				4	9	2	1	

Vote now!



Electing Residents' Council members

Responsive repairs



Changes to your responsive repairs service

Local agreements



A local agreement for each estate

How to contact us with your feedback:

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This publication is printed on paper sourced from certified sustainable forests.

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Welcome...

to the summer edition of Hanover News

We've been listening to all of your feedback received on the last few editions and hope that in this edition we've managed to create a better balance of articles that provide you with a better magazine to read.

We're lucky to have a number of you involved in the production panel and reading panel for the magazine. If you would like the opportunity to give us your views, then why not join the Intouch panel? We would love for you to get involved in the many projects and discussions currently taking place.

In this edition we cover the changes to the repairs service, a feature on the popular Greenshoots programme, an outline of homeowners' insurance details, and we've also profiled the role of a resident representative - see page 5 for more details. We also tell you about the process for Residents' Council elections. Don't miss out on your chance to vote - ensure you have a resident representative elected to get your chance to vote.

If you have any ideas for future articles, or have a comment about this edition then please do get in touch to let us know.

Alternative formats

Last year we made a promise to provide all our residents with a copy of Hanover News to ensure you are kept up to date with corporate news, announcements and improvements. So, if you would like to receive Hanover News in an audio version (CD or tape), please contact your Estate Manager or the engagement team on 01784 446117 or email engagement@hanover.org.uk

➔ If you wish to receive this publication in a format other than audio, please speak with your Estate Manager in the first instance.

Homeowners' insurance

What are the current arrangements for buildings insurance?

Before Hanover's building insurance policy expired in 2008 the policy was tendered for all properties we managed - whether rented or home ownership properties. The cost of insurance for homeowners tends to be collected through the service charge, and for those renting a property it is collected as part of the rent payment.

When selecting an insurer it was agreed by Hanover that the focus should be on getting the best value for money for residents. Because of this, it was decided that Hanover would not take commission from an insurer for placing a policy with them. Instead, an excess for each claim made would be imposed by the insurance company.

How am I affected?

Primary General Insurance won the tender process last year. An excess of £50 is in place for each claim made with this buildings insurance policy. This will normally be paid for by the resident making the claim. If however the claim is for something which Hanover is responsible for repairing, such as a roof leak, then the £50 excess can be reimbursed by the Estate Manager/ Retirement Housing Manager using the service charge.

How do I make a claim?

If you need to make a claim, it should be made in your own name. Estate Managers will be able to provide support with

completing all the necessary paperwork. They will also remain responsible for processing claims which affect the whole building.

Acumus are the claims handler for our current buildings insurance policy. They will take details of your claim and will try to help in any way they can. Being a homeowner brings a number of benefits and responsibilities. You can choose to appoint your own contractor to carry out the works, or if you prefer then Acumus are happy to instruct a contractor from their approved panel on your behalf.

This means that we are able to offer a service very similar to now the but with Acumus carrying out the administrative work.

If I have any questions who do I ask?

For further information about the current policy, the terms and conditions, or how to make a claim, then please speak in the first instance with your Estate Manager.



Photo credit: House in hand: bluestocking



Residents' Council - election time

The Hanover Residents' Council is intended to support, coordinate and examine the activities of other groups and methods of resident involvement (both formal and informal) that will continue to operate across different parts of Hanover.

A lot of work has taken place recently with Residents' Council to review the composition of the Residents' Council and their role in influencing decision making, ensuring appropriate levels of resident involvement and that the involvement of residents makes a real difference.

Desirable personal qualities of members of the Residents' Council are that they should be motivated, approachable and able to communicate effectively.

All members of Hanover's Residents' Council will be required to be elected or selected either annually or bi-annually with a maximum term of office of five years.

A new election process

We are just about to start a new election process for Residents' Council members. Of the fifteen members of the Council, 10 will need to be elected via the resident forum Annual General Meeting's that are due to take place in July. Each of the five regions will elect two residents to become a member of the Council - Residents elected will need to be Resident Representatives. The other five members will be selected by a panel to ensure a fair balance. These five places are open for anyone to put themselves forward for. If you are interested, please speak with your Estate Manager or contact the engagement team on engagement@hanover.org.uk or 01784 446117.

To ensure your estate gets the chance to vote for the Residents' Council members they want appointed, make sure you have a resident representative for your estate, and that they attend the forum. Only forum members in attendance at the AGM's will be eligible to vote.

Electing resident representatives

To ensure the best possible opportunities for your estate to be represented in decision making, it is suggested that every estate has a resident representative - regardless of the tenure of your estate. This is because resident representatives are a vital way for us to engage with our residents. They represent the collective views of residents on their estate.

By involving as many residents as possible in our decision making it makes it possible to listen to and respond to the views of residents and ensure we continue to provide you with a service that you want to receive.

What is the role of a resident representative?

- We encourage all representatives to attend quarterly forum meetings - to meet with other resident representatives, and staff, to discuss general issues relating to the overall management

Estates that have a residents' association that is properly constituted and recognised by Hanover can nominate a committee member to be their estate representative and attend forum meetings.



of Hanover, including consultation on proposed changes to policies and working practices.

- Representatives are encouraged to seek the views of fellow residents on their estate, as it is important that the views of residents are well represented in the decision making at Hanover.

What to do if your estate doesn't have a resident representative

Being a resident representative is a great way to be involved at Hanover. If your estate doesn't

have a representative, you may wish to consider putting your name forward.

Speak with your Estate Manager to find out more information, or alternatively you can contact the engagement team on 01784 446117 or engagement@hanover.org.uk

→ If being a resident representative doesn't really interest you, but you'd still like to be involved in the decision making at Hanover, then why not join the Intouch panel. For more details please contact the engagement team.

How to exchange a property

Have you ever thought about exchanging your property for another? Perhaps you'd like to move to an alternative property on the estate you are currently living on, or maybe you would like to move areas.

At Hanover, those living in rented properties may exchange with someone else as long as:

- You are over the age of 60;
 - Your rent account is clear.
- To exchange your property, you need to have found an exchange partner:
- On your existing estate;
 - On another Hanover estate;
 - With another RSL (Registered Social Landlord).



Once you have found an exchange partner, the lettings team will coordinate the process with you.

→ For more information about exchanging your property please make contact with the Customer Services team in the Service Centre on 0800 280 2575.

Photo credit: Homeowner with keys: VisualField

What is Greenshoots?

Greenshoots is a small grants programme for all Hanover residents, regardless of tenure, to help improve the quality of life where they live. We want to achieve this by encouraging residents to work together - and provide grants to fund activities that can make a bit of a difference.

Who can apply for funding?

Any estate can apply. All you need to have is agreement from the majority of the residents on your estate and have raised some funds to go towards your project. When making an application for funding you will need to demonstrate you've met the criteria.

Film time!

Greenshoots recently presented funding to the 'Lounge Lizards' group at Dunster Court. This homeownership estate in Winscombe, North Somerset applied for TV and DVD equipment to watch films and musicals in their common room. Before making the application, the Estate Manager and residents checked the licenses they needed to have so that they could watch films. The group were able to apply for the equipment and the licenses from Greenshoots and will soon be able to have regular film events!

A bit of extra space!

Having spent several coffee mornings cramped in the Estate Manager's office, with borrowed plastic chairs and only enough room to use the door if somebody moved out of the way, residents at Hanover Close in Bury St Edmunds (*see photo*) decided to do something about it. They formed a residents' association and applied for Greenshoots funding for a summer house, having already raised funds from donations, a raffle and several car boot sales!

Several meetings and one rather large

Successful grant applications have been provided for:

- garden furniture
- garden shrubs, plants and water butts
- summer house
- social events
- hearing loops
- cinema/tv equipment
- computer equipment

cheque later, the work on the summer house began. The Summer House was delivered on the 14th May and after only two short days it was up and ready to use. The residents do still have quite a bit of work to do - the wood needs protecting and painting and the carpet tiles need to be laid. But it's up! The residents are happy, and now they can have their coffee mornings in spacious and attractive surroundings.

How can I find out more or consider applying

More detailed information about Greenshoots and guidance about applying can be provided by the engagement team. To apply for funding you will need to complete the small grants application form. This can be obtained by contacting the engagement team on engagement@hanover.org.uk or by calling 01480 223995.



DVD/film licenses

We have recently had a number of enquiries about the possible need for a special license to show DVDs/films in the communal lounges of our estates.

What license is required?

We have been advised that any Estate which has DVD facilities in communal areas is required by law to obtain an annual license to ensure its residents are legally covered to watch the DVDs. This is due to the Copyright Design and Patent Act 1998, which states that the showing of any DVD in public requires a special license. Licenses vary in cost depending upon the number of people on an estate.

How is a license purchased?

Your Estate Manager or Retirement Housing Manager will need to buy the license on



your estates' behalf. This can be obtained from many companies, including The Motion Picture Licensing Company (International) Ltd (MPLC) on 01323 649647 or visit www.mplcuk.com

Applications for Greenshoots funding are welcomed for initial license applications. Subsequent licenses will need to be covered by an estate.

➔ For further information please contact **Loraine Harris in the Engagement Team on 01480 223995**, or **Mira Malic in the Procurement Team on 01784 446019**.

Photo credit: Movie night: MBPHOTO

New paperless direct debits

We have done some preparation recently so that we can make improvements to the direct debit system. We are adding the option for paperless direct debits. This change doesn't make any difference to the three main safeguards of the Direct Debit scheme which are:

- immediate refund in the event of an error;
- at least 10 working days advance notice of any change;
- the right to cancel at any time.

There are other benefits to this paperless system including:

- quicker set up times - you won't have to wait for a direct debit mandate form to be sent in the post to you and we don't have to wait to receive your form back before setting it up and sending it off to the bank;

- more highly efficient way of making collections - paper work can not go missing in the post as everything is submitted electronically to the payers bank/building society and it also eliminates postage costs.

Why would I set up a direct debit?

You may wish to set up a direct debit to pay your service charge or your rent. This would offer you a number of benefits:

- less expensive than paying by cheque - no stationery or postage costs;
- saves time - no cheque to post;
- reduces possibility of forgetting to make a payment;
- it's the only payment method with a money back guarantee - the payer retains control due to the safe guards of this guarantee.

➔ If you are interested in setting up an electronic direct debit, please make contact with the **Income Management team on 01480 223113** or income@hanover.org.uk

The Digital TV switchover has begun

What is the current situation?

You may have seen television or newspaper articles about the national change over to digital television signals. Some digital signals are already in use, but at switchover the analogue signals will be turned off and the full range of digital channels made available. This process started with the Border region last year and is currently taking place in the West Country region.

The regions affected later this year are Wales and the Granada region. The remaining regions will switchover by 2012. You will be contacted well in advance for the switchover time in your area.



Photo credit: Aeri-Ali; Terry May

What is Hanover doing?

In preparation for the switchover we will ensure that if there is a communal aerial on your estate it is upgraded to cope with a full range of the new and existing signals. We will schedule this to take place as much as 12 months before the switchover in your region.

During the time between the aerial being upgraded and the switchover to digital, you can continue to watch programmes on your existing television. If you have suitable new equipment, you can begin watching digital as soon as it becomes available.

What do I have to do?

Prior to the analogue signal being switched off, you will need to ensure your television is capable of using the new digital signals. If you do not already have a digital television that works with the new digital signal, you will need:

- a 'digital box' that simply plugs in between the aerial and your existing television (these can be purchased at high street stores for under £40); or
- a new digital-ready television

What other support is available?

The government has set up the switchover Help Scheme. This is to help those people eligible for the scheme to select, install and use digital television. To see if you are eligible and for further details about their support and any costs involved please contact the switchover Help Scheme.

Who do I contact for more information?

More information can be obtained from the switchover Help Scheme free on **0800 408 5900** or www.helpscheme.co.uk or contact Digital UK on **08456 50 50 50** or visit www.digitaluk.co.uk

Alternatively please contact your estate manager or the Service Centre.

Look for the digital tick logo on new equipment



Categories

- Best kept estate
- Best kept individual garden
- Best individual gardening project
- Best vegetable garden
- Most improved garden

Summer Competition

What is Hanover in Bloom?

Hanover in Bloom is an annual national competition open to all Hanover residents.

How does it work?

To enter the competition, please speak with your Estate Manager. Estates without an Estate Manager can make contact with their Retirement Housing Manager.

There are five categories to choose from, although you may wish to enter more than one category. Once submitted, all entries are then judged by a panel - including members from the Intouch panel. The winning entry in each category is then chosen and wins some garden vouchers.

What are the key dates?

The closing date for entries is **28 August 2009**.



Status survey update

In 2008 we carried out a 'STATUS' (large scale resident satisfaction) survey; which we are required to do by our regulator every three years. This survey allows us to assess our results with other housing providers, and compare results with those of previous surveys we've carried out. The results of these surveys provide us with a good indicator of what some of our residents think of the service we provide and assist us in making improvements to these services.

We reported in the last edition of Hanover News that, while residents had very positive views about Hanover, the survey also highlighted issues that needed further attention. Resident forums and the Residents' Council have commented on these, and an action plan has been agreed by the Group Management Team. This article gives you some ideas on how we intend to progress.

Main issues from the survey and what we intend to do

The main issues highlighted by the survey were:

- Lower levels of satisfaction among some residents, notably leaseholders, residents from BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups and those living in Hackney - we will develop local agreements with

residents on all estates by the end of September 2009 addressing what residents can expect and what Hanover can provide. We will also produce an annual statement of costs incurred and works undertaken for each estate, undertake Hanover Quality Standard inspections on all estates, and work to enhance the diversity of the residents we serve;

- Residents generally felt that whilst we are good at keeping them informed we are not so good at listening to what they tell us - we aim to increase the numbers of residents involved in decision making through the Intouch panel to reach 10% of residents by March 2010; but most importantly we are listening to the views of residents by developing local agreements and carrying out Hanover Quality Standard inspections to determine the services and property improvements that are important to you;
- Residents value and wish to retain the frequent face to face contact they have with Estate Managers - by the end of September 2009 we will ensure Estate Managers are provided with improved training and access to information to better assist residents with their queries;
- Newer residents are more satisfied with Hanover than those who have lived with us for a longer time - we will be offering a range of options for ownership and renting to new and existing residents by the end of September 2009.

What happens next?

We are also reviewing the set of questions asked in the survey as there was a level of dissatisfaction with some questions posed. We are in discussions with the National Housing Federation (NHF) to make changes to the questionnaire. The NHF is responsible for designing the questionnaire which all housing associations have to use to ensure their results can be compared.

We will keep you up to date on the progress being made with the action plan.

Photo credit: Form filling: Nathan Gleave



Local Agreements

What is the purpose of a local agreement?

Local agreements are a written agreement between Hanover and the residents of each particular estate which determine the services that are provided on that particular estate by Hanover. We want you to have a choice how you choose to live your life, offering services that promote independence. We want to be clear about what services we can and cannot provide and give residents as much choice as possible in determining service levels locally.

What is included in the agreement and how will it affect me?

The local agreement is a document very much driven by residents and will develop in time as engagement and options for choice are widened. The agreement will ensure that clarity is given to the services you are to be provided with on your estate. The repairs section, for example, will develop to include the list of contractors resident have agreed for their estate as well as information on annual budgets.

What has been done so far?

Many residents will already have been involved in the process on their estate.

The first stage of this process is to have an agreement in place by the end of September detailing the services that we currently deliver on your estate and noting any areas that residents would like us to review in phase 2.

What happens next?

Once an agreement is in place on each estate phase 2 will begin. This phase will involve Estate Managers reviewing elements of service that residents have identified as areas for improvement, and will also seek to gain further feedback on areas of service where this is found to be necessary. Phase 2 may, if appropriate, also include discussions on the Estate Manager service, catering service, estate contracts (such as cleaning or gardening), hairdressing, shop and other services, social and leisure activities, and the wider community interaction with the estate.

It is intended that local agreements are regularly reviewed, guided by feedback from residents, and lessons learned from complaints and contract reviews.

If I have any questions who do I ask?

In the first instance, please speak with your Estate Manager. Alternatively you can make contact with the Customer Services team in the service centre on **0800 2802575**.

