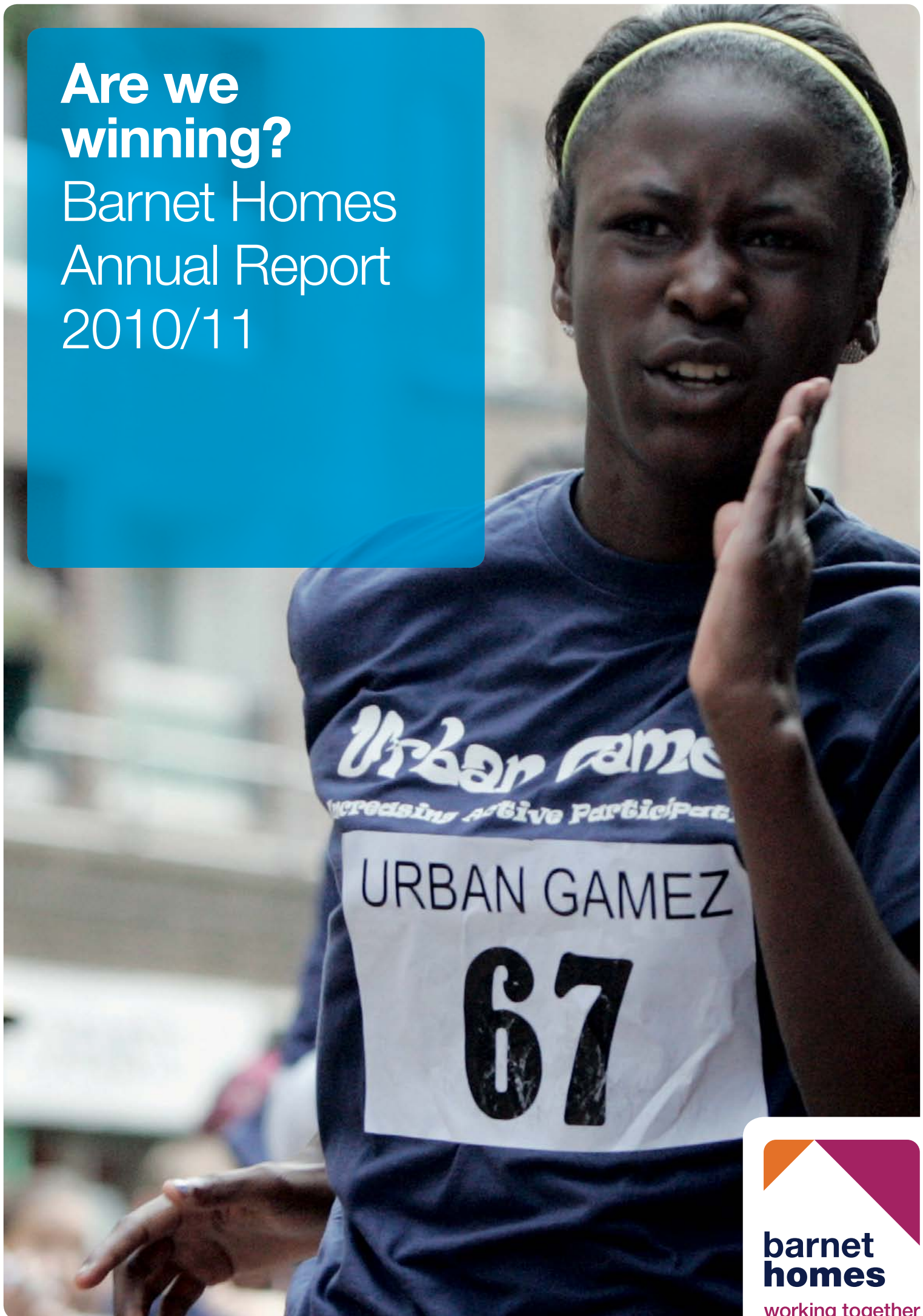


**Are we
winning?**
Barnet Homes
Annual Report
2010/11



Editor's introduction

I am very pleased to have been invited to edit this Annual Report on behalf of resident members of our Performance Advisory Group. For those of you not familiar with the group, we were set up in late 2009 to monitor Barnet Homes' performance and delivery of services, and to make recommendations for improvement where needed to the Board.

We have already reviewed a number of areas from a resident's perspective and I feel we have made a useful contribution so far. You can find more information on our work in this report.

One of our key aims has been to make Barnet Homes increasingly accountable to residents. I hope this Annual Report succeeds in supporting that aim.



Gary Kinnane
Chair of the Performance Advisory Group

This report also looks back at key performance information from 2010-11, some of the key events and activities during the year, and how Barnet Homes spends your rent or service charges.

I know many of you will be looking forward to the London 2012 Games, and we have given this report an Olympic theme.



Warming up

Key events and activities in 2010-11 included:

- The introduction of a series of 'Love where you live' events with staff and residents working side by side to spruce up their local neighbourhoods.
- Housing Direct and Service Charge Direct went live on the Barnet Homes website allowing tenants and leaseholders to see their account details online at www.barnethomes.org
- Twenty flats in East Barnet were transformed into the borough's first low energy eco estate.
- Barnet Homes agreed a contract with Lovell to provide a repairs service for its 15,000 homes after former contractor Connaught went into administration, and saved the jobs of the previous repairs workforce.
- Residents in Childs Hill were asked for their views on the future appearance of the three Granville Road tower blocks, as Barnet Homes started the biggest refurbishment project in its history, costing £9.5million.
- Residents took part in Barnet Homes' very own Dragon's Den style consultation about how money should be spent.
- Barnet Homes set up a new re-use charity, the Barnet Furniture Centre, which opened its doors selling low cost second hand furniture that might otherwise go to landfill. www.barnetfurniturecentre.org
- Two fraud officers were employed to uncover cases of illegal occupation and subletting.



Starting numbers

Barnet Homes evicted **13** tenants and obtained **126** possession orders to clamp down on issues ranging from non-payment of rent to antisocial behaviour.

14 households received a helping hand towards owning their own home through Barnet Homes' Cash Incentive Scheme. Grants of up to £29,000 are available.

Barnet Homes gave support to **20** garden clubs, enabling residents without their own garden to grow plants and vegetables.

74 households were given help to move to smaller and more suitable accommodation through Fresh Start incentives.

There were **155** detailed estate inspections, inviting residents to join Barnet Homes staff in looking at areas for improvement.

Quarterly Hub meetings were attended by a record **350** people.

374 homes were adapted to meet the needs of disabled or older tenants.

Barnet Homes received **952** complaints about its services, a **16** per cent drop on the previous year.

There were **3,434** responses to consultations about services, helping Barnet Homes to plan for future improvements.

There were **42,457** repairs carried out at Barnet Homes properties.

There were **102,238** calls to Barnet Homes' Freephone number 0800 3895225.



Children enjoying the Love where you live event at Fosters estate NW4

The Decent Homes marathon

One of the main reasons for Barnet Homes' creation in 2004 was to unlock funding to bring thousands of homes up to the government's Decent Homes standard. 2010-11 saw the final leg of this work, enabling residents to enjoy modern facilities and a warmer home. A total of 8,741 homes were modernised during the six-year programme.

By the time Barnet Homes reached the finishing line in March 2011, the Decent Homes programme had seen:

- **258** new roofs
- **2,231** new bathrooms
- **2,305** new heating (boiler only or full system)
- **3,979** homes fitted with new windows
- **5,031** new kitchens
- **6,076** electrical works (full or part rewire)

Among the benefits have been:

- a major reduction in CO₂ emissions from Barnet's council homes
- the creation of Barnet's first eco estate in Churchmead Close, East Barnet
- lower fuel bills for residents
- improved thermal comfort for residents
- training and apprenticeship opportunities
- fun days for residents.

Work on a separate £9.5million modernisation scheme for the three 15-storey tower blocks at Granville Road in Childs Hill is now well underway, thanks to a successful bid for funding from the London Development Agency.

Disappointingly, however, Barnet Homes was unsuccessful with an additional funding bid to bring an extra 1,500 homes on regeneration estates up to the Decent Homes standard.

The Homes and Communities Agency, which administers the funding, received bids nationally for almost double the money it had available.

Barnet Homes is now looking at alternative ways of investing in these properties to keep them at a decent standard.



Celebrations at Elmshurst Crescent, N2, to mark the completion of Decent Homes work at 8,741 properties



Regeneration relay!

We are pleased to report that regeneration is well underway at some of Barnet's largest estates following a difficult period as a result of the economic downturn.

Barnet Homes is gradually handing over the baton for management of these estates to housing associations as the regeneration plans take shape.

Grahame Park's Phase 1a regeneration plans continued at the newly named Heybourne Park.

The area's new green space and pond were formally opened in April for everyone to enjoy.

A number of families have moved into the new homes already, but when Phase 1a is completed in summer 2012, 134 existing secure tenants will have moved into these new homes.

Several more blocks at Grahame Park have been demolished with more to follow.

At Stonegrove/Spur Road 32 homes were demolished and 65 existing secure tenants moved to new homes on the estate.

Meanwhile 22 homes have been demolished at the West Hendon Estate, with 43 existing tenants due to move in the new homes at the end of 2011.

News about Barnet Council's regeneration partner for Dollis Valley is expected by the end of September 2011, after this Annual Report went to press.



Part of the newly completed Heybourne Park

Carol Johnson,
Heybourne Park



"I just love my new home at Heybourne Park. It feels like I've come full circle as it overlooks a pond just like my first home in Grahame Park 37 years ago."

"I have lived here since then and was involved in the resident design panels for the new homes. Regeneration has taken longer than anticipated, but they have been very good at keeping us informed."

"For the last five years I've been part of the regeneration partnership board with developers, landlords and the council."

"My claim to fame is that I was the Grahame Park resident who explained to the big banks why they should lend £85million to finance the Grahame Park regeneration. Luckily they agreed with me!"

Are we winning?

Over these three pages we look at how Barnet Homes is performing against each of the 20 standards, based on surveys of residents and official data.

Last summer saw a major consultation with residents to develop 20 new service standards. These are designed to help you assess performance and hold the organisation to account.

The resident Performance Advisory Group has also scrutinised these performance figures during the year.

The standards were based on guidelines issued by the housing regulator, the Tenant Services Authority. Additional standards were added for leaseholders, who make up a quarter of Barnet Homes residents, and for the important area of health and safety.

In future years we will be able to show you whether performance in these areas is improving, declining or remaining the same.



#1

We will deal with your enquiries in a prompt, polite, friendly, sensitive and effective manner with a can-do attitude.

How we did this year...

67% of those surveyed were satisfied with the Contact Centre response.
97% of letters were responded to in ten working days.

#2

We will get repairs right first time in terms of: appointments, quality of work and quality assurance.

How we did this year...

98.5% of appointments kept,
93% repairs completed on time, 96% passed quality checks and 98% of tenants surveyed were satisfied.

#3

All blocks will have high standards of cleanliness inside and out, and this will be closely monitored

How we did this year...

94% of blocks achieved a rating of good or above at reality checks.

#4

We will complete all necessary health and safety works and consult residents annually on their spending priorities for work.

How we did this year...

All buildings of two storeys or above have been risk assessed and high priority repairs completed. Residents were consulted on budget priorities in December 2010.

#5

In the case of serious antisocial behaviour, we will contact you within one working day.

How we did this year...

All serious cases were contacted within one working day.

#6

Communal grass will be cut 14 times a year.

How we did this year...

81% rated grounds maintenance as good and 99% rated it good or average.

#9

We will oversee a year on year improvement in the percentage of rent account credits refunded within 20 working days of the request.

How we did this year...

New! Tracking started in April 2011. 100% refunded in time (April to June 2011-12).

#10

We will acknowledge referrals for major adaptations within two working days of receipt from your occupational therapist.

How we did this year...

New! Tracking started in April 2011. 80% acknowledged in time (April to June 2011-12).

#11

We will oversee a year on year improvement in satisfaction with new homes being safe, secure, clean, tidy and ready to move into.

How we did this year...

89% were satisfied with the condition of their home.

#12

We will offer a meeting within 24 hours of receiving a report of domestic violence.

How we did this year...

New! Tracking started in April 2011. 80% offered a meeting within 24 hours (April to June 2011-12).

#13

We will answer at least 90 per cent of alarm calls within 30 seconds of the call being received by the Assist centre.

How we did this year...

New! Tracking started in April 2011. 91% answered in time (April to June 2011-12).

#14

Housing support plans will be reviewed with the resident.

How we did this year...

New! Tracking started in April 2011. 42 housing support plans reviewed (April to June 2011-12).

#15

When we receive a complaint, staff will listen, apologise and try to put things right quickly and informally.

How we did this year...

Only 4% were escalated beyond the first complaint.

#16

Urgent health and safety works will be completed within 24 hours.

How we did this year...

94% of urgent repair work was completed within 24 hours.

#17

We will ask for profile data for all tenants and leaseholders moving into a new home.

How we did this year...

We requested this from all new tenants and followed up any missing data.



The final three!

Some of our new service standards can't be measured through numbers or statistics. These relate to how we are involving residents in developing our services and in our annual budget setting, as well as how we are working with other organisations to improve people's quality of life.

Service standard #18:

Residents will help to decide on annual spending priorities through consultation.

Barnet Homes held its own Dragon's Den to consult residents on their spending priorities for 2011-12, as well as consulting through its *athome* newsletter and website.

Residents took on the role of dragons to choose which services they most wanted to invest in. They heard from senior managers and joined a 'speed dating' session with staff from different sections of the company before deciding how they might allocate £100,000.

The most popular services were repairs and maintenance, supported and sheltered housing, resident participation and training, and antisocial behaviour. The residents gave less priority to translation, communication, homeownership and neighbourhood services.

Service standard #19:

Residents will be encouraged to get involved in developing and improving a range of services.

Throughout the year Barnet Homes collected feedback from residents through 38 surveys on a variety of topics and services. Staff also met with 288 residents who came along to one of the Hub involvement meetings held across the borough.

More than 3,000 households have now joined the Viewpoint group, agreeing to be surveyed on a range of topics of their choice.

Following recommendations from the Performance Advisory Group, a new easy-to-use online form was introduced for residents to give feedback on any repairs they have received. Alternatively you can fill in the new repairs survey and post it to Barnet Homes for free.

For more details of how residents are getting involved and making neighbourhood improvements, see p7 of this report.



Service standard #20:

We will work with our local partners such as Barnet Council and the police, and publish our successes annually in the resident magazine *athome*.

An 'Enjoy where you live' campaign launched on three estates in 2010-11 is just one example of this in action.

Designed to combat antisocial behaviour where residents reported problems, Barnet Homes worked with the council, Police Safer Neighbourhood teams, Dogs Trust and Probation Service to make an improvement in these areas. The work was reported in a series of local newsletters.

We also piloted a Family Intervention programme, through which families found to be at risk of losing their tenancy due to nuisance were allocated a single key worker to help them change. This is improving the life chances of children.

A similar programme has since been taken up by Barnet Council to help the borough's more vulnerable families and produce significant savings for taxpayers.



Jan Andersson



John Davies



Modinat Dinehin



Mary Joyce



Angela Purcell



Angela Shine

Performance centre

Barnet Homes already has residents represented on its Board of Directors and is proud to have a Barnet Homes leaseholder as Chair of our Board.

The role of residents in developing services has now been enhanced through the creation of the Performance Advisory Group. Members of the group work with senior managers to scrutinise services and give recommendations for improvements.

Their work has already led to changes to the way Barnet Homes presents performance information – visit www.barnethomes.org for regular updates.

The members have also been involved in:

- procuring new repairs and maintenance contractors
- introducing a new online repairs satisfaction form
- challenging the way that empty homes are relet
- producing new publicity to encourage more residents to attend estate inspections
- hosting a resident hub meeting on service standards
- running workshops on scrutiny for other landlords
- editing this Annual Report!

If you have suggestions for improving a service offered by Barnet Homes, you can contact the PAG members by emailing pag@barnethomes.org

All of the PAG meetings are open to members of the public to attend. Visit our website at www.barnethomes.org for details of future meetings or call **020 8359 4776**.

If you are interested in joining the group in the future please sign up to our Viewpoint group. These are residents who have volunteered to be consulted on issues that matter to them in a way that suits them.

Sign up online at www.barnethomes.org or call **020 8359 4580**.

Jumping the hurdles



We know the financial climate continues to have an impact on many residents. Whether it's getting back into the workplace, or dealing with changes to the benefits system, Barnet Homes may be able to offer you support through its ongoing **Feeling the Squeeze** campaign.

Launched in 2009, the campaign has seen a variety of schemes to try to help you through difficult economic times.

In 2010-11 these included:

- individual housing benefit and money advice for tenants needing help
- cavity wall insulation for 2,500 homes to cut energy bills
- advice on volunteering opportunities, training courses and apprenticeships
- places on a new Barnet Homes work experience scheme
- setting up job clubs for residents to support each other
- free training for a qualification in housing, along with work experience
- creating the Barnet Furniture Centre, selling recycled furniture, white goods and paint at discounted prices.

Barnet Homes continues to offer a wide range of training, apprenticeship and volunteering programmes to help you into the work place.

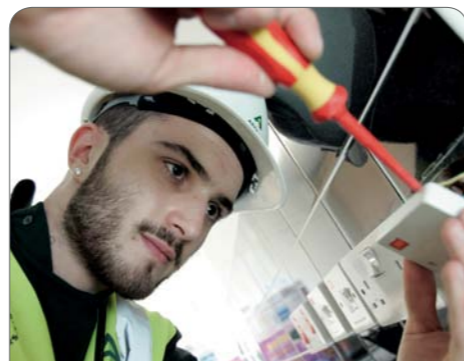
It could be that you're looking for your first job, or that you're looking to get back into work after having a break to bring up children.

More information about these opportunities can be found at www.barnethomes.org

Alternatively, call Jacqui Jones on **020 8359 4777** or email jacqui.jones@barnethomes.org

Also, look out for regular features on how to save money and energy at home, along with other financial advice, in the *athome* newsletter.

Feeling the squeeze?



Apollo electrical apprentice Toby Cook



John Hodgson, a volunteer at Barnet Furniture Centre

Leaseholder long jump

A number of initiatives have been introduced with the aim of improving services to leaseholders.

A dedicated menu for leaseholders was created on the Barnet Homes website at www.barnethomes.org, along with an online facility to enable you to check your service charge details and any communal repairs where you live.

Barnet Homes has also increased consultation about major works and enhanced communications, so that you have a clearer idea of what the work involves and what you are paying for.

Meanwhile, it also worked with the council to extend repayment periods for modernisation and other work taking place at your block.

A survey in 2010 showed a substantial rise in leaseholder satisfaction with our services, from 31 per cent to 40 per cent.

We welcome your feedback and ideas to improve this still further. You can visit regular surgeries – details on the website and in *athome* – or email lhs@barnethomes.org

Synchronised swimming

Barnet Homes believes by working together with residents and partner organisations, it can make a positive difference to people's lives, their homes and communities.

Barnet Homes is committed to providing great services at great value. But it is residents who make the difference.

You can receive help with getting the tools and resources you need to get the most out of life and benefit your neighbourhood.

Personal bests

- Twenty garden clubs are taking care of their communal grounds – one group has even taken on the grass cutting instead of Barnet Homes.
- A small gardening scheme at Alexandra Road, Muswell Hill, has blossomed into a popular neighbourhood project. It's enabling people without gardens to grow plants and vegetables in a new communal greenhouse.
- With support and encouragement the North Road residents' group in Burnt Oak has grown to create a really strong sense of community in their area and will be taking over the management of their local community centre.
- Two tenants have gained official qualifications as estate inspectors and are keeping Barnet Homes and neighbouring housing services on their toes.

Barnet Homes can offer you support to turn ideas for community projects into reality. That includes help with funding applications. Call Deborah Beckford on **020 8359 5307** or email get.involved@barnethomes.org

Youth games

Barnet Homes runs a youth forum, VoiceBox, for children and young people living in its properties.

More than 350 young people have signed up to take part in discussions and social events.

You can find out more by texting **07535 002210**, emailing voice_box@live.com or visiting Voicebox on Facebook.

Barnet Homes has also worked closely with the youth empowerment group, Nutmeg, supporting a number of events for young people in and around estates.

Meanwhile, the Youth Engagement Fund offers £30,000 a year for youth projects suggested by residents or staff. This has funded:

- five VoiceBox events across the borough, covering subjects ranging from knife and gun crime to citizenship and the Big Society
- new youth clubs at the Fosters and North Road estates
- a youth worker for Stonegrove
- a football project with Barnet FC
- a grant for West Hendon youth club
- a young people's gardening project at West Hendon
- a residential confidence building course for young girls from West Hendon.



Norman Ardener shows Barnet Homes Chair Vi Britchfield around the Alexandra Road greenhouse

Winnie Kitone Stonegrove



"VoiceBox and its funding for local youth projects is an amazing organisation that reaches out to young people across the borough. I've been running activities on its behalf including dance workshops in the community centre at Stonegrove and seen the changes it makes."

"Since the classes, I've noticed young people talking to each other more and playing together locally. They seem more confident and able to give me their ideas for more VoiceBox activities."

Closing ceremony

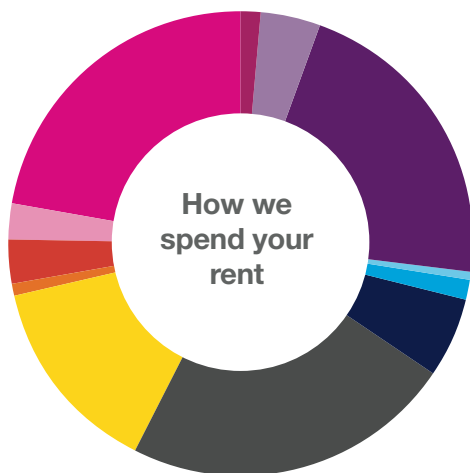
How we spend your rent

Your rent is set by a government formula. The average weekly rent is currently £88.82 including a £3.50 service charge.

You can see the breakdown of how your rent is spent below.

Barnet Homes constantly reviews spending in these areas to ensure services are provided at the best possible value for money, and that spending reflects residents' priorities.

Here's how your rent was spent in 2010-11 on these different services:



- Grounds maintenance (£1.33)
- Caretaking (£3.62)
- Repairs and maintenance (£19.04)
- Antisocial behaviour (£0.66)
- Rent losses through bad debt (£1.05)
- Loan interest (£5.06)
- Contribution to major works costs (£20.33)
- Housing management staff and costs (£12.48)
- Call centre staff and costs (£0.81)
- Other estate services staff and costs (£2.69)
- Other service areas (£2.08)
- Rent we have to return to government (£19.68)

Where does Barnet Homes' money come from?

Most money comes via the council through its Housing Revenue Account. This includes money from rent and service charge payments and covers day-to-day housing management costs and repairs.

From April next year there will be changes to the way council housing is funded. The current system involves a redistribution of rent around councils, which means some of your rent is spent in other areas of the country.

Under the new system, councils will become 'self-financing' so that they become responsible for investing all rent received.

That should enable Barnet Homes and Barnet Council to plan investment over a longer period and engage in a more meaningful discussion with you over how you want your rent to be spent.

The year in numbers

- Barnet Homes collected **99.2%** of the rent owed (including arrears).
- Its average weekly management cost is **£27.92** per home.
- Its average weekly maintenance cost is **£14.56** per home.
- It spent about **£17million** on modernising and improving homes and on adaptations to help people live independently. This funding comes from government loans to Barnet Council.
- **£26million** was spent on housing management, repairs and maintenance.
- It made cost and efficiency savings of **£1.2million** by changing the way it does things. Some of this money has been saved by restructuring its management team.
- Barnet Homes received income from new business of just over **£100,000** and approved grants of more than **£300,000**.



Want more?

You can find audited accounts and much more information on performance on the Barnet Homes website www.barnethomes.org